

## She was a regular at this gallery. Now her work is showing there - EXAMINER TAS



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Anne O'Connor has a new exhibition at Raincoat Gallery. The show is called 'Pathway to Change'. Picture by Phillip Biggs

Since Raincoat Gallery opened in August of last year, Anne O'Connor has been one of its regulars. She'd pop into the space - a quaint one in a former store room above the Centreway Arcade - for a tea and a chat, and to peruse the art. But, for months, the Launcestonian kept a secret from the gallery's owners. She never mentioned that she was an artist herself.

O'Connor, who has taken photographs for much of her life, was "so used to people always saying no" to exhibiting her work, that she didn't bother. Until one day, she did. Then the gallery's owners were smitten with her work - "When can you show?" they asked. The result is '*Pathway to Change*', O'Connor's first solo exhibition in a number of years. Looking at it, it's difficult to see why she had been turned back by other galleries and art spaces.

On through February 1 to 28 at Raincoat, the show is dominated by an abstract collection of photographs combined with cotton thread that add a textural finish - a technique O'Connor developed while studying for her fine arts degree at the University of TAS.

A self-described conceptual and contemporary photographic artist, O'Connor said she was ecstatic to be showing a selection of her works from recent and past years, though she was also a tad nervous.



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"It's a bit of pressure, but it's all done now and it's all up on the walls," O'Connor, who was the first female recipient of the Master of the Federation of International Photographic Art in 2014, said, referring to the art.

"There's a lot of my older work here, and you grow. I look at these pieces and I think how I would do them differently; I shouldn't have done it that way. But then I wouldn't be where I am without them."

'Pathway' is filled with images - of shadows on the bark of gum trees or sand where the ocean has just been - that could be traditional, but in O'Connor's hands take on a different abstract aspect.

"It is ephemeral things, which for me are a matter of imagination," she said.

"With this kind of photography, you're not taking an image of something real. It doesn't exist after it's happened once, and it can never exist again. They might be a place, nature or lifestyle but they're not regular."

She added: "They're real but not real. It's photography from inside my head."

'Pathways to Change' is showing at Raincoat Gallery, upstairs left side Centreway Arcade, off Brisbane Street (The Avenue) through to February 28 (Wednesday - Friday 10am-2pm).