



LAUREN O'CONNOR

Two Moons



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7 – 30 March 2024

Opening Celebration, Thursday 7 March, 5 – 7pm

Lauren O'Connor's practice reminds us that the natural world is in constant flux, re-affirmed in each painting to the point of mantra. Her works are disorderly stratum of decisive, colourful brushwork; each bed of paint either obfuscates or reveals a window to the preceding. What we see in the surface is a distillation of the many sensations impressed upon the artist when painting. It also hides the myriad of layers underneath – sometimes teased out on the periphery or under diaphanous washes of pigment – that internalise a wealth of secrets in each piece. Like the infinite breadth of nature, the content of her painting cannot be captured all at once. Compositions that spring from this contain something beyond our immediate comprehension; they don't reject our presence, but rather, can comfortably exist without our attention.

Monographs on Tony Tuckson, Emily Kam Ngwarray, and Arthur Boyd readily appear amongst the stacks of books in O'Connor's studio from which this new exhibition, titled 'Two Moons', has coalesced. The series introduces elements characteristic of O'Connor's strengths; an overtly painterly vernacular, currently predicated on the harmonisation of colour over a sequence of energetically accumulating layers. As an environmentalist, the political underpinnings of her work are evidenced in the poetic secrecy of her titles, suggesting a reluctance to reveal specific locations and to conserve their privacy.

O'Connor examines the diversity of habitats existing within this vast continent, scaling her observations from a bedside orchid to the enormity of a mountain. Her careful fieldwork has involved retreats to Gamilaraay Country (New England Region, NSW) and an artist's residency in Wodi Wodi Country (Kangaroo Valley, NSW), where she has gathered and absorbed a range of resources, preserved both in paper and memory. Moreover, a residency on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (South Australia) in 2022 has injected a warmer palette characterised by strong ochres incorporated throughout the series.

Atmosphere and terrain infinitely fold and unfold onto one another through paint. Horizons, fault lines, cliff faces, gradient skies, and compact bush foliage are intertwined and compressed together. O'Connor's marks move in lockstep, meander, and tumble in all different directions. Where they settle and diffuse is in the recurring fields of apricot-tinted whites, providing the beholder some momentary relief. With loosely sketched vertical and horizontal strokes, she carefully stirs the landscape into existence, conjuring up the red cedars, gulleys, rainforest canopies, mountains, native flowers, waterfalls, and ever-present sun and moon.

The exhibition's title, 'Two Moons' – the bright and dark side – hints at a condition that lays at the heart of the painting's research; exploring what is dialectically present and hidden in all things. The sequestered locations O'Connor visited and drew from remain private, enclosed within each painterly surface. Instead of being mapped, her environs are metabolised. They are dissolved into vivid rhizomes; rebuffing the scopic regimes of description and Cartesian perspectivalism long used to model the landscape. Perhaps no painting of O'Connor's is ever resolved, they are kindled into this world as captured flux – seized – but with a gentle grasp.

Tim Marvin

Lauren O'Connor is a graduate of the National Art School in Sydney and was announced as a winner of the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship in 2023. She has been a finalist in various prizes including the Paddington Art Prize (2023, 2021), Northern Beaches Environmental Art & Design Prize (2023), Mosman Art Prize (2022) and was awarded the 2022 AACI Internship placement at Ernabella Arts Centre, APY Lands.



Sunbathers – Murramarang

acrylic on board

153 x 124.5 cm (framed)

\$6,990



The orchid next to my pillow

acrylic on board

93 x 63 cm (framed)

\$2,600



Blush

acrylic on board

93 x 63 cm (framed)

\$2,600



Sunday Orb-Weaver
acrylic on board
123 x 92 cm (framed)
\$4,990



Two moons, yours and mine

acrylic on board

125 x 246.5 cm (framed)

\$11,000



My mountain/moving closer

acrylic on board

123 x 92 cm (framed)

\$4,990



The sun above faultlines

acrylic on board

125 x 246.5 cm (framed)

\$11,000



Piscean
acrylic on board
153 x 124.5 cm (framed)
\$6,990



Surfacing

acrylic on board

93 x 63 cm (framed)

\$2,600



Hidden but for your hands

acrylic on board

93 x 63 cm (framed)

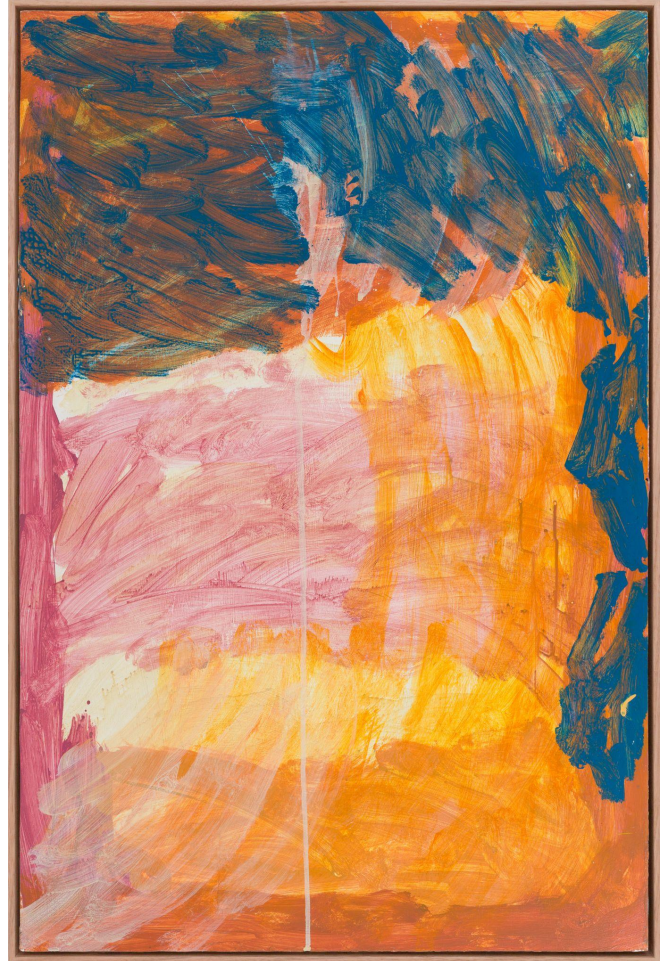
\$2,600



Birthday Poppies
acrylic on board
93 x 63 cm (framed)
\$2,600



View from your kitchen, Mount Geera
acrylic on board
93 x 63 cm (framed)
\$2,600



Spider silk (Wodi Wodi country)

acrylic on board

123 x 92 cm (framed)

\$4,990



LAUREN O'CONNOR

Born 1994, Bowral, Australia

EDUCATION

- 2020 Bachelor of Visual Arts, National Art School, Sydney
2017 Bachelor of Communications (Journalism), University of Technology Sydney

AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

- 2023 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, Sydney – Shark Island Residency Winner
Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, Finalist
FLOW Contemporary Watercolour Prize, Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist
Northern Beaches Environmental Art & Design Prize, Manly Art Gallery & Museum Sydney, NSW, Finalist
2022 Kangaroo Valley Art Prize, Tony White Memorial Art Prize – Winner
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist
AACI Internship placement at Ernabella Arts Centre, APY Lands/Pukatja South Australia
2021 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, Finalist
2019 Belle Property Landscape Prize, BDAS, Bowral NSW – Second Place

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Two Moons', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2022 'Eating Wild Honey', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Ignite – Women for Change', The Sibyl, Sydney NSW
'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2023 'Australian Abstract', Michael Reid Art Bar, Sydney NSW
'Paper & Clay', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney NSW
2022 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Residue', Ambush Gallery, Waterloo Sydney
2021 'Coming Home', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'I Came to See', Outdoor Exhibition, Presented by the NAS, Sydney, NSW
'Modern Love', AK Bellinger Gallery, Inverell NSW
'To Tend To', female artists group show, Point Five Gallery, Marrickville
2020 'Graduate Exhibition,' National Art School, Sydney, NSW
Black Lives Matter Art Auction 321 Crown Street exhibition space
RFS Art Auction Goodspace Chippendale
'Arts in the Valley', Kangaroo Valley, NSW

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Australian Arts Review, 'Six young artists awarded the 25th annual Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship', October 2023
Amber Creswell Bell, Australian Abstract, 2023
National Art School Graduate Exhibition Yearbook

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