

ARTIST PROFILE

LAURE PROUVOST
CLIFFORD HOW
HELEN EAGER
NICK SANTORO
AL POULET

Prudence FLINT

with Saskia Beudel

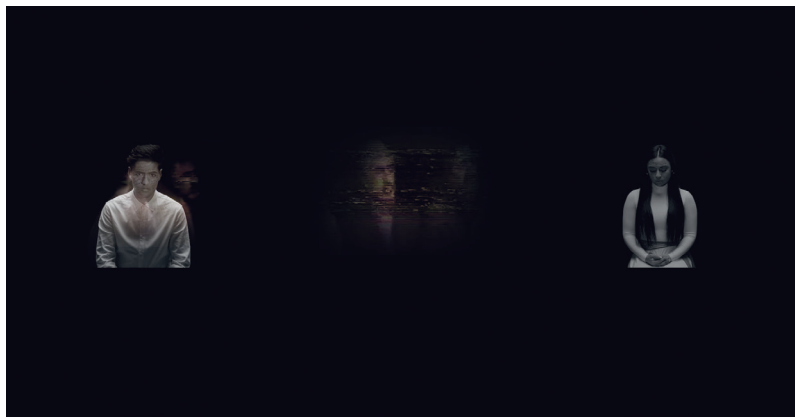
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Around the Grounds



HOME

The annual 'Home' exhibition, curated by the City of Greater Dandenong, supports artists seeking asylum or those with a refugee background. The program enables six artists from across Australia to undertake professional development opportunities, including an exhibition, workshops, artist talks, a publication and a range of online offerings. The presentation, staged at Walker St Gallery and Arts Centre, celebrates diversity through works that give voice to each artist's story

and history, centred on the theme of 'home' – something that has taken on new meaning in our current Covid world. The artists in this year's program are: Dr Dacchi Dang, Elham Eshraghian, Humaira Fayazi, Mastaneh Azarnia, Mirela Cufurovic and Saidin Salkic.

9 July to 15 August 2020
Walker St Gallery and Arts Centre, Victoria

01 Mirela Cufurovic, *ihsān (Excellence in Faith)*, watercolour on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm

02 Elham Eshraghian, *The End Is Glorious If We Only Persevere* (still), 2019, 3 channel video, 14:51
Courtesy the artists

TWENTYONE

Operating outside of the traditional gallery space within built and natural environments, TwentyOne is a curatorial program that recognises the importance of site-specificity in exhibition programming. Bringing together works by Dean Cross and Alasdair McLuckie, 'TwentyOne_004' takes form through bill posters and stickers, examining marketing strategies and ideas of 'hype building' while suggesting that the promotion of an event outweighs the physical experience. This ephemeral exhibition will stay on view by those who pass by until it is removed by the City of Sydney, and the documentation takes the form of an online archive which becomes the exhibition space itself.



4 June, until removed by the City of Sydney

Various Sydney locations

Alasdair McLuckie, *The Snail Logic / Sugar Water*, 2018, archival inkjet print and paper collage on paper, 58 x 33 cm
Courtesy the artist, Murray White Room, Melbourne, and mothers tankstation limited, Dublin and London



THE HORIZON

SAM FIELD

SAM FIELD'S PAINTINGS HUMBLy TACKLE THE COMPLEX PUZZLE OF AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY, TRAVERSING HISTORY, LANDSCAPES, FOLKLORE, POPULAR CULTURE AND POLITICS WITH HEARTFELT INTEGRITY. DESCRIBING HIS WORK AS 'NEO-HISTORY PAINTINGS', FIELD DEFTLY NAVIGATES THE SPACE LEFT VACANT BY THE AUSTRALIAN DREAM.

Preview

PIPPA MOTT

In 'The Horizon' series, Field's typically fractured, frenetic compositions achieve greater focus, with the landscape assuming terrific potency and presence. Produced in the wake of a 15,000km journey throughout Australia's interior, the imagery derives from a combination of sources and experiences accumulated en route – from brochures and books to plein air studies and photographs taken by the artist. The journey took place not long before fires consumed much of the country over summer. Landscapes and figures are forged with agitated, fidgeting brushstrokes that charge every element with a vibrational static.

The effects of Australia's rapacious and entitled attitude towards the land are keenly felt. Field's travels led him to recognise that the fingers of enterprise extend their grip throughout the continent's vast centre. 'Even in the moonscape north of Pimba 'caution, stock ahead' signs trail the road like breadcrumbs', says Field, 'we've destroyed the country and rivers, yet people still try to clear land to run more stock. It's a bedraggled, constricted, hot landscape

27 May to 21 June 2020
Despard Gallery, Hobart

@samfieldartista

Man and Woman Walking Through Dry River of Empire (Man Laying Dog Bait), 2020, oil on board, 132 x 122 cm
Courtesy the artist and Despard Gallery, Hobart

that's barely holding on.' *Man and Woman Walking Through Dry River of Empire (Man Laying Dog Bait)* (2020) depicts pastoralists as spectres, hovering over the punished earth, fundamentally out of place and out of touch.

Figures variously alternate between anonymity, celebrity and legend. Russell Crow makes a cameo in *Man in Hole* (2020), resuming his role as the water diviner. Field pokes fun at this archetypal turn of the century macho man, who hails salvation as he wallows in his muddy hole. In *Quintessential Australian Landscape (The Ghost of Makybe Diva Over Wilpena Pound)* (2020) the prize-winning thoroughbred prances mid-air above a spectacular natural amphitheatre, in a moment of apotheosis. Relegated to the status of a deity, the racehorse assumes greater cultural prominence than the ancient landscape that it overwhelms. Venturing further, still, into the mystic, *Fortune Teller* (2020) depicts a lonesome cowboy, standing with contrapposto swagger, flanked by red-belly black snakes, his black Stetson hat casually on fire. Field embraces the absurd as a vehicle to dissect our values, myth-making and national image.

Field talks modestly about his process, describing painting as 'a problem you create for yourself that you have to solve.' It is this spirit of enquiry that underscores his work and allows him to confront complex themes with dogged tenacity. 'The Horizon' paintings convey equal measures of dashed hopes, guilt, nostalgia and fatalistic resignation as our sunburnt country, our land of sweeping plains, reaches its tipping point.



01



02



03

POSTURE, PLACE AND SENSATION
TONEE MESSIAH

Preview

LEE-ANN JOY

Painter Tonee Messiah returns to Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne, for her latest exhibition, 'Posture, Place and Sensation', exploring three recurring themes. Yet in her new work, familiar compositional movements and spatial relationships have been reanalysed by the unexpected confines of her home during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Observation of spaces has always played a key role in Messiah's work, which she believes comes from her early childhood when her family transitioned back and forth between a small Kibbutz in Israel to coastal Australia, before finally settling in Sydney at the age of eleven.

'I became observant of the spaces I inhabited and the people around me as a tactic to try and place myself within the social and physical dynamics of space,' reflects the artist. Interestingly, it wasn't the specific spaces that shaped Messiah's subject but the frequent transitions. She became aware of the social nuances and the shifting energies of each environment, giving her

a deep understanding of the requirements of assimilation, and her present-day ability to analyse and understand a space without relying on the specifics of language.

Utilising a non-use of language, Messiah relies on the stratagem of intuition to develop her work. Drawing on her knowledge and experience of painting, she consciously filters intuitive inclinations. Over the years she has gathered from Egon Schiele, David Hockney, Marlene Damas and most recently Amy Sillman, to refine her responses to spatial relationships and incorporate a soft focus painting technique, enabling a close link to her intuition. This approach becomes a means not to be over-intentional with the areas and planes of the canvas, preferring to create a nuance of sensations and feelings rather than a narrative discussion.

'My work doesn't say specific things, but it ask certain questions and will often avoid having finite resolutions to those questions, reflections on the lived experiences, avoiding the obvious facts of experiences but rather, some nuances of sensations and feelings that language can't articulate very well,' Messiah says.

In 'Posture, Place and Sensation', Messiah uses her home as a testing ground and herself as the subject, exploring the sensation of confinement – where every domestic space has become inter-

connected; the boundaries between each room blurred by the mindless entries and exits of each space. She explains, 'I started to look at what are the shifts in these sensations, and I found a few key areas.' In *All Content No Form* (2020), the sensation of working at her desk with the constant flow of information shooting at her seems to create a *bug-eyed* feeling. Within the painting *Relapse* (2020), the artist analyses the muscular sensations of posture, the bodily sensation of sitting, positioning, and situating. The repeated motif creates a 'perpetual sameness' experienced when you sit for long periods in a confined space, creating a different sense of self and perhaps reinterpretation of the surrounding area. In *Synthesised Waterfall* (2020), the shower, invites a different type of mindfulness and a distinct sense of distance and breadth is upheld, while daydreaming in the shower.

Tonee Messiah's 'Posture, Place and Sensation' grasps the viewer in curious dialogue, and leaves you with the sensation of wonderment within uncertainty.

27 May to 14 June 2020
 Nicholas Thompson
 Gallery, Melbourne
 – currently by
 appointment only

@toneemessiah

01 *Relapse*, 2020, oil on wood panel, 61 x 46 cm

02 *Synthesised Waterfall*, 2020, oil on wood panel, 61 x 46 cm

03 *All Content No Form*, 2020, watercolour and gouache on cotton rag, 38 x 28 cm

Courtesy the artist, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne and Gallery 9, Sydney

JO DAVENPORT

WANDERING THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE, IN A SUMMER THAT BEGAN WITH BUSHFIRES AND ENDED WITH CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN, ALBURY-BASED ARTIST JO DAVENPORT EVOKES EMOTION IN HER AUDIENCE. 'NOW MORE THAN EVER I WANT TO CREATE A VISCERAL BOND,' THE ARTIST SHARES, 'A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE VIEWER AND OUR SUBLIME AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE.'

Preview

EMMA-KATE WILSON

Davenport's upcoming exhibition at Flinders Lane Gallery, currently scheduled for October 2020, mirrors the same methodology of 'Red Sky in the Morning' at Arthouse Gallery in Sydney last year. Created before the bushfires of 2019–20, the works now reveal an eerie warning of what was to come.

Reflecting on the current state of Australia's ecology, the artist was recently spurred to use her work to comment on the thousands of Murray cod found lying dead in the stressed river system. 'I didn't want this work to be a protest,' she reflects, 'but I felt that people have to start taking our land seriously; we need to love our landscape so we give back more than we take.' Today, with the world in isolation, Davenport's paintings are a potent reminder of our need for natural environments as the built environment ever more restricts us.

When the artist moved to Melbourne in 2010 to complete her Master of Fine Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts, city living fused her ideology with the country vistas she's always known. 'It's a very



different experience living in a city to living in the bush,' Davenport explains. 'In the bush, you can feel the landscape. You feel it through the soles of your feet; you can feel it rising through you.'

To begin her paintings, Davenport first turns to the materiality of form and traditional techniques; choosing natural Belgian linen, priming each with rabbit skin glue. The artist lies the canvas flat and approaches it through a series of marks in oil paint, leaving residue of her landscape. She comments, 'it's a very layered response, not only physically but emotionally. There's a lot of tipping and spilling – I'm not trying to take total control of them; it's about the very nature of the building up and letting the paint take form.'

Here, the artworks communicate freely without the constraints of object reality, as the artist creates a gestural nod to the scenery around her. 'I am not trying to paint a topographical landscape but create a sense of place. A lot of people try to find a narrative in my work ... I'm more interested in the history of painting, past styles,

techniques, and how the act of painting can still challenge our contemporary discourse,' Davenport explains.

Fundamentally, Davenport's artworks are about the act of painting and the relationship between material, form, balance, colour, negative and positive space. The resulting abstraction becomes a translation of the environment, and her care for it, forged from residual memories of place. The artist is channelling this didactic energy into her upcoming exhibition, to catch a rhythm of nature and in doing so, constructing the canvas as a unique place for the viewer to dwell, and to contemplate.

6 to 30 October 2020
Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne

@jodavenport_art
jodavenport.com.au

01 *Winter Wetlands*, 2020, oil on Belgian linen, 168 x 183 cm
Courtesy the artist, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne and Arthouse Gallery, Sydney