



EMMA WALKER
Tender Internal

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30 May – 22 June 2024

Opening Celebration, Thursday 30 May, 6 – 8pm

Emma Walker distils beauty from fallibility in her new collection of paintings and sculptures, 'Tender Internal'. Continuing the artist's deepening fascination with the dialectics of outside and inside, the works honour hidden internal spaces and structures of protection and support. The architecture of shells, skeletons, wings and cavities within the body and earth coalesce with freeform mindscapes as Walker empathetically layers the physiological and the psychological.

Defying traditional rectangularity, Walker's organically shaped paintings are like fissures, or portals, into interior spaces. With an approach that is both diagrammatic and symbolic, the artist looks at the vital, visceral parts of our body that are increasingly veiled beneath a glossy veneer. She quarries the tender internal, the truth beneath our skin, actively toppling the common aversions to raw internal spaces endemic to modern western societies. Images evoking vertebrae and veins, muscles and brains are summoned with a soft, somatic palette and the warm tactility of timber. These intimate anatomies are approached cartographically by Walker as vast geographies unfurl across the board. Simultaneously we glimpse details of the natural world – the inside of shells, insect wings, larvae – and through this poetry of plurality Walker shows us, fleetingly, how our innermost selves are interwoven with the eternal universe. The pelvic form in *Protecting the Dreamer* welds skeletal ivories with a convoluted conch, chrysalis, and an abstracted arctic topography, while *Lean In* sees a vertebral structure bridging itself across soft tissues and a network of arteries, or waterways. There is something xylophonic about this pseudo-spine, appealing to our sense of touch, and sound. One gets the feeling that Walker is trying to catch, with her bare hands, some elusive essence – of herself certainly, but also some inexplicable kernel of humanity.

The emphasis on texture and tactility in these works stimulates haptic responses, collapsing the chasm between our bodies and the boards. Spongy cerebral undulations, smooth viscera and dimpled tissue rub up against bones and biological networks – beguiling surfaces that are the result of layer of paint applied on timber, scraped back, sanded, gouged, grinded, scratched, carved and glazed. The physicality of Walker's artmaking process imbues the paintings and sculptures with a sense of struggle and resilience, each piece bearing the memories of Walker's tools like former lives lived. "All of these works have undergone a long-winded metamorphosis over the past year" she reflects, "they have all been worked on together throughout this time, a family of unique individuals. I hand them over to the viewer to make of what they will."

Recently Walker has been experimenting with clay and learning to throw on the wheel. This intuitive process of pulling from both inside and outside, one hand within and one without, has materialised her meditations on the protean nature of previously polar constructs. In many of the works she engages with the fluidity of gender, simultaneously knitting together and pulling apart binary tropes of femininity and masculinity, and the related realms of internal and external. Pink fleshy surfaces, embryonic forms and uterine cavities in paintings such as *Embrace*, *Dreaming*, and *Refuge* see the artist reflecting on her embodied experience of motherhood – in all its multivalence and sublimity. Consciously she hedges these soft internal vistas with hard-edged abstractions and phallic intonations to create subtle pictures of amorphous sexuality.

As Walker gently turns inside out the body, she is also dissolving divisions between materiality and the mind. Shadowy masses akin to radiological imaging reveal, symbolically, the artist burrowing deep into the inky crevices of the human psyche. She's interested in the wilderness of our internal landscape, those hidden parts of ourselves that dwell beyond the cultivated garden of social appearance. The mechanics of Freudian Repression at play, which is, indeed, given great currency in today's world of impeccable façades. "Why is our interior so unacceptable?" questions Walker, "Why must we guard it and not admit to ourselves and others that we ache, that we are vulnerable, that we feel deeply?" These ideas are connected to the artist's ongoing research on Buddhist and Vedic philosophy, identity, gender, perception and being. Yet despite the sincerity of this analysis, there is a timbre of humour in Walker's new series. As the works evolved, the serious nature of her initial intent began to slip as unplanned forms appeared that were unintentionally sexual and comical. The artist concludes, "I have delighted in this process, in allowing for these works to become themselves, without me imposing a version of those very masks that I was initially questioning and peering behind."

Elli Walsh
Principle Writer, Artist Profile

Walker has been exhibiting for over thirty years. Her career has enjoyed the strong support of patrons Ann Lewis AO, Nick Waterlow, OAM and Julian Beaumont OAM. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the National Art School, Sydney, and she has also studied in Italy and travelled extensively. She was a finalist in the Paddington Art Prize (2017, 2013, 2010, 2008) and winner of the prestigious Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award (2014). Walker has held numerous exhibitions in both Sydney and Melbourne, and her work features in several major public and corporate collections including Macquarie Bank, Australian Club, Sydney, Lismore Regional Gallery, Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre and Bathurst Regional Gallery, in addition to various private collections in Australia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and the United States.



Lean In
acrylic & mixed media on board
64 x 61 cm
\$7,200



Threshold
acrylic & mixed media on board
30 x 30 cm
\$3,400



Tenderness
acrylic & mixed media on board
28.5 x 29 cm
\$3,400



Protecting the Dreamer

acrylic & mixed media on board

141 x 122 cm

\$16,500



Gentle

acrylic on board with saddle, velvet, string, ceramic and crystal

116 x 56 cm

\$9,500



Butterflies

acrylic & mixed media on board

143 x 122 cm

\$16,500



Bloom
acrylic & mixed media on board
60 x 59 cm
\$7,200



Worlds Within
acrylic & mixed media on board
122 x 60 cm
\$8,000



Closer
acrylic & mixed media on board
29.5 x 30 cm
\$3,400



Refuge
acrylic & mixed media on board
30 x 28.5 cm
\$3,400



Whim
acrylic & mixed media on board
97.5 x 123 cm
\$15,000



Inception

acrylic & mixed media on board

30 x 29 cm

\$3,400



Dreaming

acrylic & mixed media on board

33 x 37,5 cm

\$3,600



Coexistent
ceramic, leather yoke & quartz
42 x 31 x 15 cm
\$3,900



Soft Landing
acrylic & mixed media on board
60.5 x 61 cm
\$6,200



Little Wing (front & side)
acrylic & ceramic on timber
10 x 20 x 13 cm
\$1,500



Betty
acrylic & mixed media on board
80 x 60 cm
\$7,000



Natural Progression

ceramic, fabric, paint, branch, dowel

14 x 165 cm, (height variable)

\$3,800



Protection

ceramic, acrylic & mixed media on board

30 x 30 cm

\$3,400



Embrace

acrylic & mixed media on board

27 x 28.5 cm

\$3,400



Balancing Act
ceramic, fabric, paint
152 x 76 cm
\$3,600



Happy Birthday

found object, brass & timber

19 x 17 x 12 cm

\$1,500



Sexy Beast
ceramic, timber & string
13 x 17 x 15 cm
\$2,900



Main Stay

ceramic, found object, felt and powder coated steel

125.5 x 41 x 41 cm

\$6,000



EMMA WALKER

Born Sydney, Australia, 1969

EDUCATION

- 2000 Bachelor of Fine Arts, National Art School, Sydney, NSW
- 1992 Diploma of Fine Arts, National Art School, Sydney, NSW

AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

- 2021 King School Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2020 Artist in Residence, Glasshouse Regional Gallery, Port Macquarie, NSW
Waterhouse Natural Science Arts Prize, Joint Winner with Grayson Cooke for *Open Air*
- 2018 Lumen Prize, UK, Shortlisted
ATOM Awards, Best Experimental Film, Winner
- 2017 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2014 Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award (JADA), Grafton Regional Gallery NSW, Winner
- 2013 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2010 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2008 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
Alice Prize, Alice Springs Art Foundation, Alice Springs, NT, Finalist
- 2006 Norvill Art Prize, Murrurundi, NSW, Finalist
- 2002 The Border Art Prize, Murwillumbah Regional Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist
- 2001 National Works on Paper Prize, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 1996 Fishers Ghost Prize, Campbelltown Regional Gallery, NSW, Finalist
- 1995 Artist in Residence, Hill End, NSW

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Tender Internal', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2022 'Spring Comes', Gallery Smith, Melbourne, VIC
- 2021 'Distillations', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Distillations', Port Macquarie Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2019 'The Dark Sublime', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'The Dark Sublime', Lismore Regional Gallery, Lismore, NSW
- 2018 'Surface Immersion', Arthouse Gallery at Sydney Contemporary Art Fair
- 2016 'Sediment Songs', Grafton Regional Gallery, Grafton, NSW
'Sediment Songs', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2015 'Intimate Immensity', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2014 'Art at the Airport', Ballina/Byron Gateway Airport, Ballina, NSW
- 2013 'Walk The Line', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC

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- 2012 'Finding Form', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2010 'The Dawn Language', Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Arts Centre, Murwillumbah, NSW
'Pollination', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2009 'Silent Geography', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2008 'Outliving The Night', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2007 'New Work', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2006 'New Paintings', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 2002 'Floating World', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 2000 'From Little Things', Big Things Grow, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 1999 'Tidal Fragments', Broken Bay, King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 1997 'Somewhere To Fly', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 1991 Pod Gallery, Sydney, NSW

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2023 'Paper & Clay', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'BSA 10 Years', Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Arts Centre, Murwillumbah, NSW
- 2021 'Coming Home', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'I Am Here', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Staff Show', BSA Project Space, Mullumbimby, NSW
'Shared Knowledge', BSA Teachers Exhibition, Tweed Regional Gallery
- 2020 'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'You Are Here', Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Arts Centre, Murwillumbah, NSW
- 2019 'Reflections of a Fading Sky', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
Arthouse Gallery at Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Carriageworks, Sydney
'The Way We Were', Byron School of Art Project Space, Byron Bay, NSW
- 2018 'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'The Way You Came', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'An Invitation Not a Command', Byron School of Art Project Space, Byron Bay, NSW
'A Series of Parts', M Arts Precinct, Murwillumbah, NSW
- 2017 Arthouse Gallery at Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Carriageworks, Sydney
'Works on Paper', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Summer 17', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2016 'Unfolding Splendour', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2015 'Under the Sun', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2014 'Unfolding Splendour', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Celebrating 25 Years', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC

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- 2013 'Eternity', Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Five Big Paintings', Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'A Quartet of Artists', Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2012 'From the Studio', Art Piece Gallery, Mullumbimby, NSW
- 2010 'Gallery Artists', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2009 'Summer Exhibition', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'The View From Here', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'The Australian Landscape', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Australian Contemporary Art', The Rotunda, Hong Kong
- 2008 'Solstice II', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Singapore Art Fair', Gaffer Studio, Singapore
'2x2', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Surface Tension', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'Hong Kong Art Walk', Hong Kong
'Contemporary Australian Art', Gaffer Studio, Hong Kong
'And the Brightness Begins', Cape Gallery, Byron Bay, NSW
'Treasures', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'Paint', John Gordon Gallery, Coffs Harbour, NSW
- 2007 'Pure', Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2006 'Summer Show', Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Local Art', Lismore Regional Gallery, Byron Bay, NSW
- 2005 'Oceans 11', Lismore Regional Gallery, Lismore, NSW
'Group Show', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Last Show of the Year', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2003 'Country Energy Art Prize', Armidale Regional Gallery, Armidale, NSW
'330 Show', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2002 'King Street Gallery at Span Galleries', Melbourne, VIC
- 2001 'Monochromatic', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Bat, Ball and Brush, A Summer of Cricket and Art', SCG, Sydney, NSW
- 2000 'Redlands', Westpac Exhibition, NSW
'Women and the Landscape', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
'Things of Wood', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
'Group show', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 1999 'New 9', Sir Hermann Black Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Last show of the year', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 1998 'Our Collection: The Artists of Hill End, 1947 - 1998', Bathurst Regional Gallery, NSW
'Last show of the year', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW

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- 1998 'Gallery Artists', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
- 1997 'Gallery Artists', King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney, NSW
'Horizon Line', King Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 1996 'Guitar Shaped World', Tamworth Regional Gallery, NSW
- 1995 'The Artists of Hill End', Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, NSW & Regional Tour
'Fresh', Gallery on Booth, Sydney, NSW
'Alumni Exhibition', National Art School, Sydney, NSW
- 1994 'Dissonance', Wollongong University Art Gallery, NSW
- 1992 'Drawing Show', Pod Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 1988 'Dua Bersama, Mitra Budaya', Jakarta, Indonesia
- 1986 'Ad in Fine Art Um', Surry Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW

SELECTED COLLABORATIONS

Open Air, 2018. Grayson Cooke film project in collaboration with Emma Walker and The Necks

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Bathurst Regional Gallery, Bond University Collection, Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre, Lismore Regional Gallery, Macquarie Bank Collection, Gold Coast Regional Gallery, The Australia Club, Jackson Smith Solicitors, Sir Hermann Black Gallery Collection, Sydney University, Ann Lewis AO Collection, Nick Waterlow OAM Collection, Australian Parliament House Art Collection
Tamworth Regional Gallery, Grafton Regional Gallery

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Profile in Byron Art Magazine, Issue 11, 2018
- Profile in Artist Profile, Issue 44, 2018
- Profile in Art Collector, Sydney Contemporary Special Edition, 2018
- Candida Baker, 'Emma Walker: Artist in Full Flood', Veranda Magazine, 2014
- Kate Adams, 'Emma Walker, Field of Dreams', Artist Profile Magazine, p.64-65, Jul 2009
- Lois Randal, Weekend Star, 20 Jan 2007
- Alex Warren, Starters, Inside Out Magazine, p.150, Apr 2006
- Sherine Youssef, 'Sydney Serenity', Maddison Magazine, p.296, Mar 2006
- Lenny Ann Low, SMH Metropolitan, p.15, 21-22 Dec 2002
- Lisa Pryor, SMH Spotlight, 19 Nov 2002
- Sebastian Smee, SMH The Galleries, 20 Apr 1999
- Sebastian Smee, '180 Degrees of Separation', SMH Metro, 20 Jun 1997
- 'Artists of Hill End', In The Picture Exhibition Preview, 1995



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