



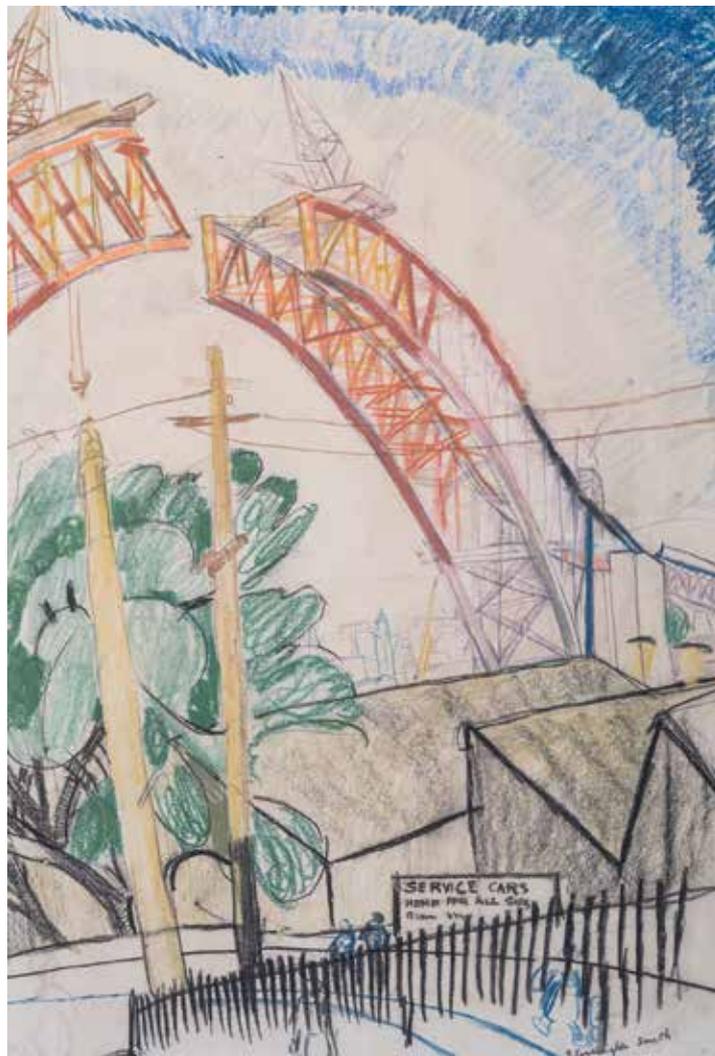
Grace Cossington Smith art award 2014

National prize for two dimensional art



Exhibition of finalists 2 to 25 October 2014

Grace Cossington Smith
The Curve of the Bridge, 1929-30
Pencil and pastel on paper
Courtesy the estate of
Grace Cossington Smith



Grace Cossington Smith art award 2014

National prize for two dimensional art

Selection panel: artist Janet Laurence and curator Nicholas Tsoutas
Judge: Rachel Kent, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

Susan Andrews
Kevin Chin
Julia Davis
Ella Dreyfus
Jacqueline Drinkall
Cherine Fahd
Sara Freeman
Adrienne Gaha
Sarah Goffman
André Hemer
Petrina Hicks
Pollyxenia Joannou
Margaret Loy Pula
Wendy Sharpe
Senye Shen

From the Director

The key focus of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is to creatively engage learners through the arts with the understanding that learning is a dynamic process encountered in all areas of life. The gallery opened to the public in October 2013 and the 2014 exhibition program was designed to foster productive interactions between Abbotsleigh students and their learning environment, and offer quality exhibitions to the public. Art exhibitions actively engage and stimulate the imagination, and in the manner of Socratic elenchus invite lively discussion and inquiry. It is our challenge for the future to provide exceptional visual experiences that provoke critical and conceptual thinking and model rigorous interdisciplinary learning.

A new signature event for the gallery is the Grace Cossington Smith art award. The selection criteria refines the focus to two dimensional art, which reflects a contemporary approach and responds to the theme Making Connections. The art of Grace Cossington Smith is all about connections – ordinary connections that she represents in her observant line and jewels of colour. It is the eye of the artist that makes us take notice, allows us to observe those things that we often do not deem significant or worth more of our time. The artist makes us aware of what we often overlook. Grace's connection to family, to daily domestic life, to Turramurra, to the changing city of Sydney and ultimately to the modern art of Europe allow us a glimpse into her world and even allow us to discover aspects about ourselves.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is fortunate to hold a sketch by Grace of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. A beautiful pastel drawing revealing the observations made prior to her painting *The Bridge in Curve*, now in the National Gallery of Victoria. It is also fortunate to now have the art award named in her honour.

Each year an artwork will be added to the gallery collection and there are significant benefits from this commitment. For Abbotsleigh it is the building of a collection that will have educational and cultural benefits for the students and the public. For the artists it is the chance to progress their art practice, reveal their concepts and expertise and be supported by the wider community.

The artworks of 15 extraordinary artists, selected by Janet Laurence and Nicholas Tsoutas, represent a wide range of approaches in concept and media. These talented artists personally draw upon aesthetic, cultural and imaginative sources in the process of making art. The works of Kevin Chin, Sara Freeman, Sarah Goffman, Margaret Loy Pula and Senye Shen reveal connections with culture and the land. Through his personal migrant experience Kevin's landscapes are occupied by figures connecting with the land they inhabit. Sara Freeman reveals the deep connections suggested by Buddhist concepts. Asian traditional designs inspire Sarah

Goffman and she connects these with contemporary media. It is traditional indigenous culture that provides Margaret with her dreaming and her connection to country. Senye sees connections in the invisible forces of air that create a flow across the land. Artists for whom the formal considerations of material and composition are prioritised are Susan Andrews, André Hemer and Pollyxenia Joannou. Susan chooses colour and form to create connections with the viewer's perceptions of space. It is the layers that exist in the material processes that are important for André as he explores his connections with his 'version' of things. Pollyxenia connects with colour, shape and media to create calm and order in her compositions.

Imaginative connections are active in the works of Ella Dreyfus and Jacqueline Drinkall. Ella is interested in human expression and emotion as her subjects connect with inner feelings and secrets. Jacqueline is fascinated by UFOs and through her painting and documentary photographs creates connections with a mysterious other world. Two artists who explore ideas about the self are Julia Davis and Cherine Fahd. Julia's understanding that culture informs space is evidenced in her connections with the body and landscape and self and place. The surreal fabrications of Cherine Fahd reveal her connections between the art of the past, performance, photography, sculpture and herself.

It is art and history that provide inspiration for Adrienne Gaha, Petrina Hicks and Wendy Sharpe. Visits to art galleries and connections with artists such as Rupert Bunny, provided memories and inspiration for Adrienne's artworks. Petrina explores representation of women and self through her connection with mythology and art history. A connection with the pattern and colour of French painter Henri Matisse has inspired Wendy to create her colourful and lively compositions.

Congratulations to all the artists and a sincere thank you for your inspirational contributions to this exhibition. Thanks must also go to the 370 artists who submitted their work for consideration for this year's exhibition. It is your art that enriches our life, expands our creative horizons and adds immeasurable value to our world.

Deepest gratitude must also be extended to our judge Rachel Kent who brings wisdom, passion and experience to the difficult task of selecting the winner.

I am thrilled that the exhibition attracted such an extraordinary group of artists in this inaugural year and am grateful for the expertise provided by such a fine selection panel. I know that the Grace Cossington Smith art award will grow in popularity every year as it continues to attract artists across Australia and take its place amongst Australia's most highly regarded art prizes.

Mary Faith

Director, Grace Cossington Smith Gallery

From the **Headmistress**

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate the winning nominations for the inaugural Grace Cossington Smith Art Award. Each of the chosen finalists has interpreted the theme of Making Connections in different ways demonstrating a diversity of creative thought. Grace Cossington Smith made connections with her world through artworks, and this vibrant exhibition serves as a joyful celebration and reminder of this famous local artist and Old Girl of Abbotsleigh.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery was opened just one year ago and has already hosted eight exquisite exhibitions. The gallery is a wonderful learning resource for the Abbotsleigh students and is shared with the public from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Saturday. Linking with the local community has been an important driver for the vision of the School. Exploring the visual arts in the context of an authentic learning community has provided dynamic learning opportunities that help connect past and present students and with the local community.

Congratulations to all short-listed artists who were chosen to exhibit in this wonderful space. The variety of medium and the different interpretations of the theme provide an interesting and thought provoking exhibition. It will be viewed by many local visitors over the next month and the works will be integrated into the teaching program to inspire the visual arts students. Teachers, Old Girls and students will enjoy the works at their leisure along with the local public.

I would like to thank our selectors, Janet Laurence and Nick Tsoutas , who carefully chose the 15 artists on display from 370 entries, and Rachel Kent who served as the Judge for 2014. We are fortunate to have such highly respected art professionals involved in our inaugural award exhibition.

Janet Laurence is an artist who works in mixed media and installation, drawing on art, science, architecture, imagination and memory. She has studied in Australia, Italy and USA and received Rockefeller and Churchill Fellowships. She has been Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW, on the VAB Board of the Australia Council, and a Visiting Fellow at COFA, University of NSW. Her work has been included in major survey exhibitions, nationally and internationally and she is well known for her public commissions and architectural collaborations. We are also proud to claim Janet as an ex student of Abbotsleigh.

Nicholas Tsoutas is a curator and writer. He was the former Artistic Director of Casula Powerhouse Sydney and the past Executive Director of Artspace Visual Arts Centre Sydney, The Institute of Modern Art Brisbane and The Performance Space Sydney. He

was the Curator and Commissioner for both the Australian pavilion at the Sao Paulo Biennale Brazil, and the Australian pavilion of ARCO Madrid, Spain. Nicholas was chair of MA Research Committee at COFA, UNSW, a Board member of the Australia Council Multicultural Arts Committee and is currently the Zelda Stedman Lecturer in Visual Arts at Sydney College of Arts.

Rachel Kent is the Chief Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney. She previously held the position of Curator at The Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, working across the university's extensive collections, temporary exhibitions and artistic residency program. Rachel has presented exhibitions in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the USA and Canada and she speaks and publishes widely on contemporary art and curatorial practice. She has worked with leading international and Australian artists, curated major survey exhibitions and written catalogues and monographs to accompany major exhibitions.

I would also like to acknowledge the visionary work of the Director of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, Mrs Mary Faith. As we celebrate the first year anniversary of the GCSG, we rejoice in the success of her work. The inspiring exhibitions in 2014 have helped strengthen our links to the local community and provided creative and enriching experiences for Abbotsleigh girls.

I invite you to enjoy this exhibition and join our community of learners as we share in the artist's concepts of Making Connections.

Judith Poole
Headmistress

The Finalists

Susan Andrews

Three by One, 2014

acrylic vinyl on MDF and plywood

89 cm

Courtesy the artist

Three by One is a circular construction of one black, and two coloured planes stacked on top of each other. One half of the circular structure conceals, the other half reveals the underlying structure. From the outside edge of the circle only two planar edges are visible causing the viewer to question where the black plane finished.

In this work I continue to explore a range of structural elements that seek to question how we look or to make us consider more clearly what we are looking at. My aim is to create perceptual awareness in the viewer through the application of colour, materiality, structure and space.

Three, Two, Zero, 2014

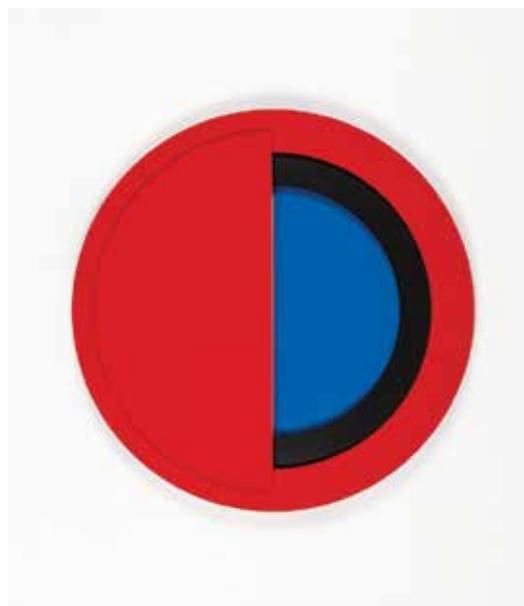
acrylic on wood

40 x 60 cm

Courtesy the artist

Three, Two, Zero is a construction consisting of two rectangular wooden frames joined together, one surface painted blue the other black. When viewed from the front both rectangles appear to sit in a similar spatial plane, the outside and inside edges are painted but there is nothing inside the frame.

Three, Two, Zero denotes the absence of anything other than a painted frame. It places the viewer's perception squarely in-between that zone of infinity and nothing.



Run Deeper, 2013

oil on linen

97 x 147 cm

Courtesy Diane Tanzer Gallery

In *Run Deeper*, a lone figure is searching to make a connection with the land. Based on my own personal migrant experience, the painting reflects a life of wandering and a desire to belong somewhere.

This painting has flown back and forth with me across continents as I have been living between Tokyo and Melbourne this past year. Depicting an imagined wilderness that is both nowhere and everywhere, *Run Deeper* is about making a connection with whichever land you might find yourself on.

The painting process also calls me to think about my connection to the land. I prime the linen transparently to retain its materiality and reveal the linen through painted sections of earth. In this way, I relate the canvas ground to the ground upon which we travel.

Tend the Ground, 2013

oil on linen

97 x 147 cm

Courtesy Diane Tanzer Gallery

In contrast to 'multicultural' Australia, Japan is a country where nationality is still tied to ethnicity. While living between both countries this past year, I observed the many ways that Japanese people connect to the land. *Tend the Ground* depicts the ground sweeping ritual at sumo wrestling matches. The linen of the painting is revealed, primed transparently to retain its materiality. This is to make a tactile connection between the canvas ground and the swept ground of the wrestling ring.

Through the painterly process of rearrangement, the groundsmen have been repositioned back out into the wild. The domestic action of sweeping is thus repositioned in the context of displacement. Their ceremonial garb, also recontextualised, asks us to re-examine cultural signifiers, and the way we make connections between countries and cultures. In this process of translation, I question the relevance of 'home soil' within the context of global mobility.



Consilience: As The World Turns, 2014

inkjet print on museo silver rag

110 x 200 cm

Edition of five

Courtesy the artist

My work explores the effect of time on understandings of the body in relation to landscape and how this underpins our sense of self and place. Active sites such as deserts, volcanoes, coastal precincts and salt lakes provide ways to explore the idea that landscape is cultural space – a space informed by and informing culture.

This image is taken from a time-lapse video that documents a nightlong performance on an inland lake. The project involved working with an astro-photographer and depicts the southern hemisphere sky slowly rotating in accord with the revolution of the earth and the performer. The work references desire, vulnerability and anxiety as well as a sense of being poised at the edge of a world that is fraught with man made and natural disaster.

The term *consilience* means connectivity; arriving at the same point from unrelated sources.

Thanks to Alex Cherney who assisted me with this project.



Intimate Distance No. 4, 2014
chromogenic C type print, edition of 10
60 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist

Intimate Distance No. 6, 2014
chromogenic C type print, edition of 10
60 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist

Intimate Distance portrays pairs of strangers positioned in close relationship to each other across a dark, liminal space where strong emotions and affective encounters are depicted.

The photographic studio is a quiet, womb-like place of intimacy where secrets are often revealed between the subject and the artist. Within this context I captured people on camera as they performed conversations, moods and arguments. I photographed them individually with the intention of recording their facial expressions and body language.

Following the studio sessions I searched through thousands of different images, selecting pairs that resonated with intensity. I placed them opposite each other to form dynamic partnerships.

I invite viewers to interpret the double portraits as they will; to bring their own readings to the subtle looks, gazes and stances, allowing new narratives to emerge and create meaning.



Weatherman UFOlogy (Kandos Occupation), 2013

digital photograph print documenting UFO structure, (mounted between perspex and aluminium)

80 x 53 cm

Courtesy the artist

Weatherman UFOlogy (Kandos Occupation) manifests in a number of artistic mediums and postmediums. This two dimensional aspect of the work is a digital photograph documenting a large 250 x 500 x 500cm UFO structure that is central to my long term and ongoing Weatherman UFOlogy project, which began in 2006. This photo, printed and mounted late last year, captures the UFO luminous in late summer light when the installation of the modular, demountable structure was tested at the inaugural Cementa_13 art festival at Kandos. This photo captures the transcendental fourth dimensional potential of two-dimensional and three-dimensional explorations of architectonic telepathy. The UFO shapes a range of participatory interaction. Many viewers interact with the form, entering into it and some even creating spontaneous performances. I have obsessively documented human and non-human interactions with the UFO, and this photo artwork focuses on light and charismatic camera lens flares.

Weaving My Avatars, 2013

oil on cowrie pine, installation of a cluster of five miniatures

each 25 x 27 cm

85 x 95 cm

Courtesy the artist

Weaving my Avatars is a constellation of miniature paintings that I began during my 2013 Firstdraft residency. This work extends my exploration of weaving with paint. My paint weaving creates a flickering televisual screen that I use to project and weave fragments of my inner psychic and outwardly visualised and performed constructions of self. I am interested in the power of mandalas and halos to help interrupt the weave of the paint and to create an energy dialogue between the abstraction of the flickering woven data field of painterly imagination and the figurative avatars taken both from real life (documentation of Occupy Sydney, and of my UFO) and from my online collaborative virtual world performances (in Blue Mars Lite and Second Life). I used floorboards taken from a street skip outside a Sydney renovation, cut down to more of a laptop screen size. Content and materials combine street and virtual elements.



Plinth Piece, Nike victory study, 2014

c-type photo mounted on dibond

75 x 100 cm

Courtesy Galerie Pompom

Plinth Piece, Nike victory study is one of eight images where I perform and represent myself as well known figurative sculptures. In this instance I seek to perform the winged Greek Goddess Nike. Like a statue on a plinth, I appear fixed to a pedestal and made of materials synonymous with sculpture. However my performance is somewhat absurd, exaggerated more so as marble is replaced with brightly coloured children's play dough.

This image reflects my ongoing interest in the relationship between photography, performance and sculpture. Surrealism too, provides a historical platform from which to manipulate photography's connection to reality. By adopting the Surrealist methods of photo-montage and 'doubling' I have aimed to both represent and fabricate reality and the body.



Sara Freeman

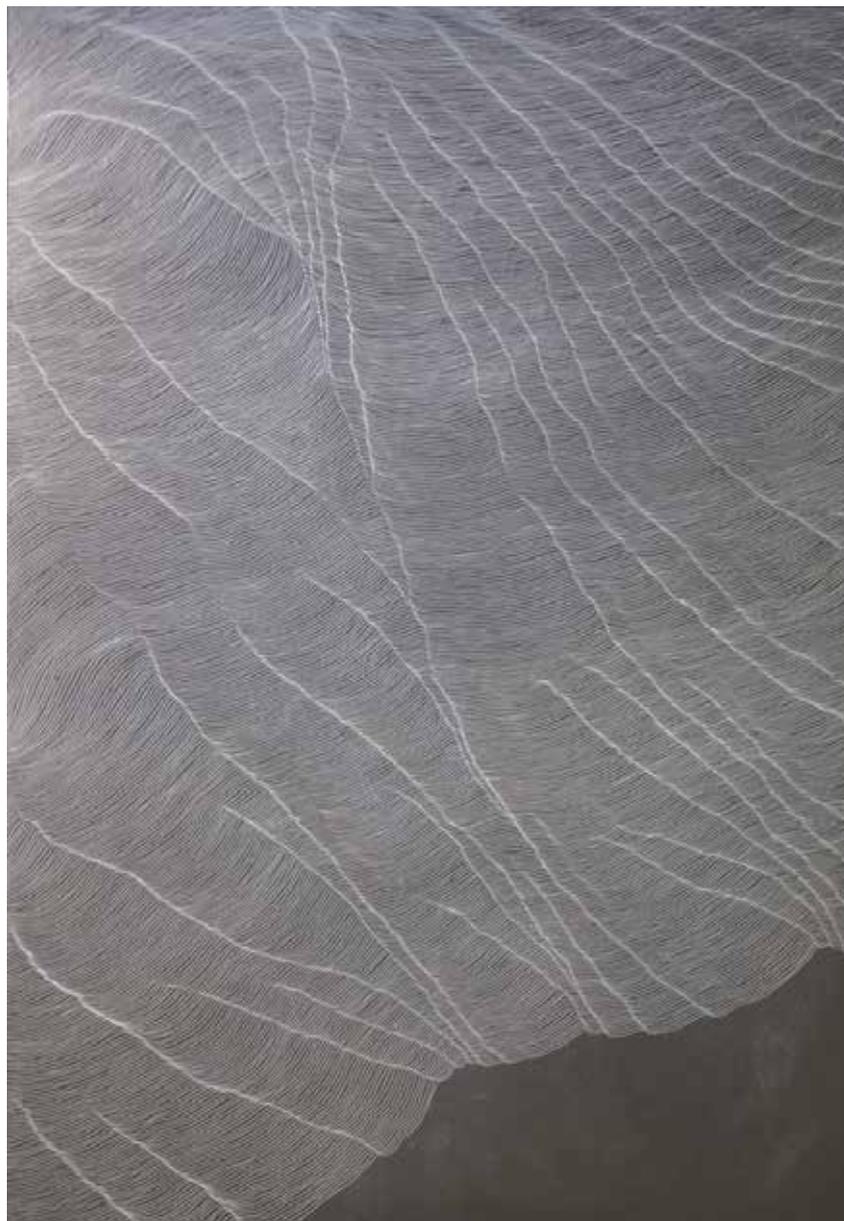
time's veil, 2014

egg tempera and wax on board

140 x 94 cm

Courtesy the artist

Veil-like forms are constructed of fine white lines floating in a dark void. Reflecting on the Buddhist concept of connectivity, this painting looks beyond the dualistic habits of the mind, to a place where we are all connected far deeper than we can imagine.



Ochre Study after Rupert Bunny, 2014

oil paint on linen

168 x 122 cm

Courtesy Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art

This painting is part of a project to revisit those art works that so impressed me when visiting the AGNSW as a child.

While my response to these paintings is nuanced of course by my experiences of the last four decades, I find that some of these works still speak to me with an equivalent intensity.

In particular Rupert Bunny's paintings, where languid female figures lounge in raking light and deep shadow, bound up in their crinolines or in states of undress. They are portrayed as domestic yet mysterious, privileged, ornamental. These are paintings which appeal to escapist tendencies, troubling in their colonising ideals of beauty and order, nostalgia for sunlight and abandon in a man-made paradise.

I have of course mixed feelings about these source paintings. The simultaneous re-conjuring and deconstruction of the imagery is symptomatic of my attraction and ambivalence.

Reworking them is a process of investigating, obliterating, sublimating - and a form of homage.



Sarah Goffman

New Digital Media, 2014

permanent marker on perspex

100 x 170 cm

Courtesy the artist

The work is a tracing of fragments of decoration following the Silk Road from the Middle East, through India and across Asia. I work with found materials and plastics, transforming them into a new dialectic. I like the idea of Chinese whispers where the original is distorted over translation, and in this piece there are discreet contemporary references to oil refineries and media advertising, interlocked with Japanese Kimono designs and Indian paisleys.



Double Lux #1, 2014

acrylic and pigment on canvas

35.5 x 27.9 cm

Courtesy Chalk Horse Gallery

Double Lux #2, 2014

acrylic and pigment on canvas

35.5 x 27.9 cm

Courtesy Chalk Horse Gallery

We are in a contemporary moment where the most mundane material artefacts are represented by countless copies and iterations in the form of online digital imagery. These paintings are about exploring and connecting these 'versions of things'; between digital image and painted materiality.

Akin to a contemporary palimpsest, each work reveals layers of material and process which appear as erasures or ruptures. A digitally transformed image of gold texture sourced from a Google image search sits amid layers of hand-painted gesture and mica glazes, air-brushed painting, and the extruded materiality of sculpted paint.

These paintings materialise and re-materialise the virtual through the object-hood of painting- connecting digital actions and imagery with actual light, shadow, and physicality. In a sense these paintings act to measure our awareness of materiality in painting and contemporary image; akin to the term 'lux' which refers to a measuring of the intensity of light.



Petrina Hicks

Venus and Apollo, 2014

pigment print

85 x 85 cm

Courtesy This is No Fantasy, Melbourne and Michael Reid, Sydney

Venus and Apollo references mythology and art history to explore representation of women and self.



Pollyxenia Joannou

Black Square, split, 2013

polymer acrylic, conte, cotton thread on 5 mm felt

90 x 70 cm

Courtesy the artist

Black Acrylic split, 2013

polymer acrylic, cotton thread on 5 mm felt

70 x 90 cm

Courtesy the artist

Black Acrylic split 2, 2013

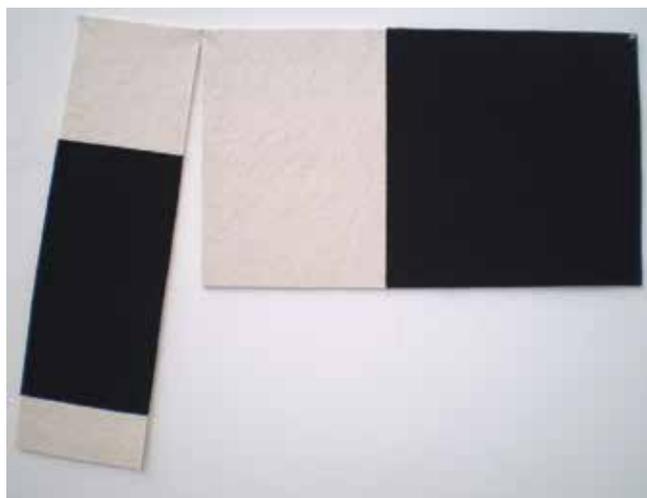
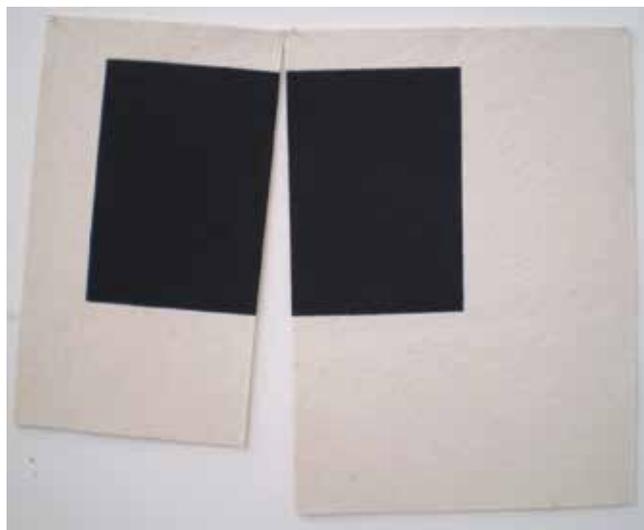
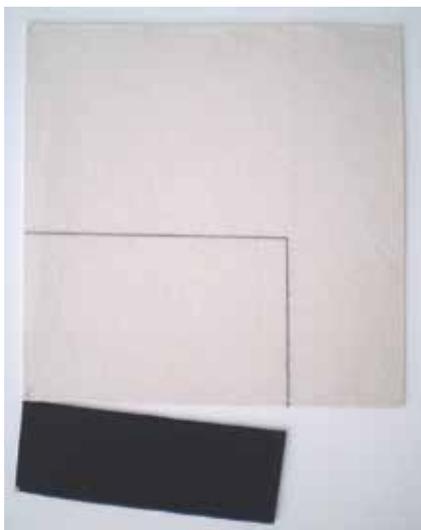
polymer acrylic, cotton thread on 5 mm felt

70 x 95 cm

Courtesy the artist

The work is a continuance of my explorative investigations through an experiential immersive process in the studio. It is an exploration into structure and quietude.

The works are both a conscious and intuitive step backwards to a more simple language of composition and media, which investigates the interplay between attention to surface, materiality, line and form. The work appeals to the tactile and optical dimensions that drawing, painting and sculpture share.



Margaret Loy Pula

Anatye Bush Potato

acrylic on linen

150 x 150 cm

Courtesy Muk Muk Fine Art

Anatye Sweet Potato

acrylic on linen

140 x 140 cm

Courtesy Muk Muk Fine Art

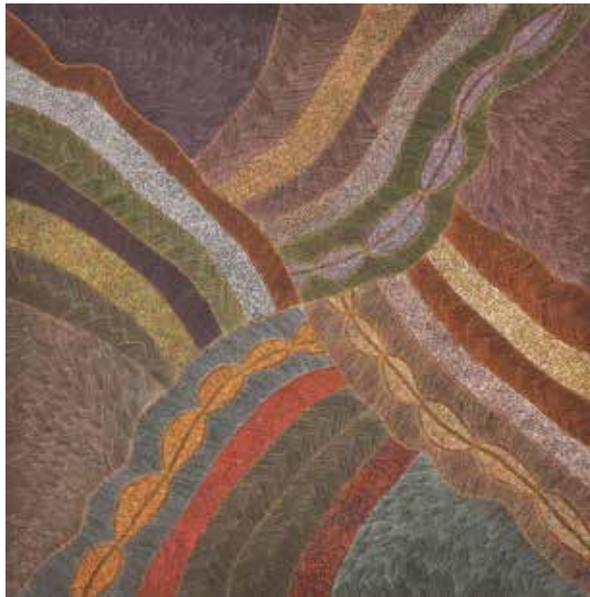
Margaret paints 'Anatye' or Bush Potato dreaming which is portrayed using a series of fine, detailed dots.

Her painting is an aerial view of the growth pattern of the plant. The centre cross is the plant, the vines send out tendrils into the soil and this is where the potato (or bush yam) begins to grow.

The bush potato vine grows after the rains. The women go out to collect the potato. Once collected they are cooked in the hot coals of the fire.

"This painting is about my culture, my family. That's my father's dreaming. This is from my father's country, that country is called 'Unjangola'. That is north of Utopia, not too far but really desert country".

Margaret Loy Pula hails from an incredibly distinguished artistic family. She is the daughter of well known Utopian artist Kathleen Petyarre.



Red Turban, 2013

oil on linen,

122 x 152 cm

Courtesy King Street Gallery on William

The painting is part of a series, *Conversations with Matisse*, where I painted from life in the same locations as Matisse and worked from similar subjects.

In *Red Turban*, there are Matisse references with a small painting of Matisse's house Villa le Reve in the South of France , where I stayed recently, and other 'Matissian' fabrics and props.

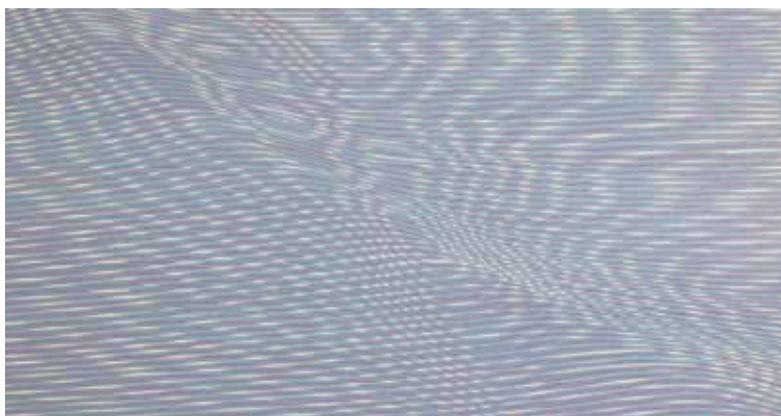
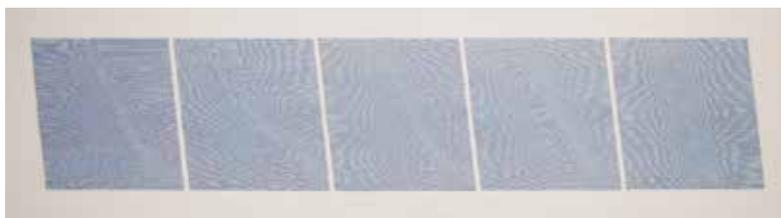


Whisper, 2013
multi-plate linocut
40 x 200 cm
Courtesy the artist

My work is related to the movement of the invisible forces, the flow of air, the whisper of wind, and the folds of wave. It is through the subtle changes in between times and moments, and through the reverberation between the lines with the captured rhythm across the vibrating field, on which to heighten the awareness of the hidden landscape that is endlessly forming and reforming, and to meditate on the nature of existence.

Tide, 2014
multi-plate etching, printed relief
39 x 80 cm
Courtesy the artist

My work explores the invisible forces that are travelling in space and time. Force is voiced in abstract form, while nature entails statement of capture. And these visibilities vary by expansion, conquest and time, together, these micro-becomings form a union of flow, move towards the unknown terrain, on which to order one's experience with a new gaze, and to trace the secret of the origin.





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