

...time and place

Place is a relationship that somehow transcends time. Like a story, it dwells within us, as we live within it. When we think of place, we think about being in the world, how we define ourselves, about body and memory, identity and belonging.

People's sense of place is complex and often tied to experiences of movement and dislocation. Three artists from Catherine Asquith Gallery in Melbourne, make connections to their home in Australia and present evocations of place that are both specific and metaphorical.

In *The Explorer Series*, Melanie Fitzmaurice intimates a time of journeying into uncharted worlds filled with unimaginable perils and discoveries. Her *Torch, Pack, Trail and Helmet* look a lot like museum artefacts, and seem out-of-place in our space as if made for another time. They relate to survival, yet their insular covering of grey fleece no longer offers simple warmth and protection. Strangely familiar and absurd, these garment-tools question the adequacy of our bodies and our sense of fitting and not-fitting with the world. We can only imagine what realms they are intended for, and into what liminal darknesses they may lead.

Moving beyond geographies and into ways of thinking, Fitzmaurice posits the body as 'home' – a place from which and through which we constitute our world. She invites us to extend our understanding of the present and challenges us to venture into new possibilities.

The *Rockface* paintings are part of Kate Briscoe's ongoing investigation into the essence of place and how we come to know it - specifically the remote landscape of Geikie Gorge on the edge of the Kimberley in Western Australia. A compression of form, edge, weight and colour, these works concentrate the artist's sensitive response to being in a particular place-time. There is an intimate gestural quality on a vast scale and colour that is both nuanced and intense. Their strange planar geometry lends a monumentality.

Traces, imprints and cuts appear as if made by elemental forces. We sense the sky pressing on the land and seismic shifts from deep within. In pigment mixed with sand, we read fissure and shadow, river track and finger print, flood lines and oxides in sunbaked and porous rock. Lines and stresses suggest tension, immanence and an enduring presence that merges with the timeless geology of the world.

Briscoe conjures place that is also a space in the mind: a place of things still undone, ages old; a place beyond the self that expresses continuity and interconnectedness.

Jarek Wójcik's paintings are coded with triggers and echoes that play one upon the other to ensnare and transport us. Exploring themes of temptation and enchantment, their resonant compositions are like re-tellings. They chronicle recollection as pilgrimage. Across continents, they speak of the past in the present; of those things we keep returning to so as not-to-forget; affinities; submerged memories and a curious hyper-reality. Laden with painterly and literary references they carry with them a personal sense of history and a whimsical delight in visual appearance. Inhabited by impossible shadow realms and projections, vertiginous spaces, cul-de-sacs and leaden skies, these theatrical renderings question our sense of reality as solid.

Wójcik's cryptic entanglements are secret landscapes of quiet liberation that dwell deep within the emotional ground of the self.

Each of these accomplished artists has developed a distinct language to convey a unique relationship to place. Their many-layered art works invite engagement with the material world through body, memory and imagination. They take us places.

Art emerges from no particular place, but many.

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