

DEFINING THIS: NOW

UN:SIGHTED JULY 17-28

Often the question asked about abstract work is where does it come from?

Meaning is so embedded in representation, what can be seen is often associated with what can be known. Art that doesn't represent anything and only sometimes resembles something we have seen before makes us question our experience. Abstraction generates meaning ahead of naming and posits other means of knowing the world, not as outline or form, equivalence or concept. In thinking about why artists make art and how we engage with it, we also consider why we choose to live the way we do, our mutual relationships and the ways we inhabit and construct our world.

Un:sighted. The exhibition title alludes to the difficulty of terms; non-representative, reductive, non-objective, non-relational, unconstructed, non-compositional... and to the myriad pathways of abstraction. It suggests an interest in the limits of the visual, and refers to a kind of blindness in historical writing about abstraction in Australian art.

In a way, abstraction cannot be defined. It is not a 'thing' to be surrounded or reflected by words. It is a hybrid, in which no one consistent approach or attitude prevails. There is no single history of abstraction, and no fixed inheritance. What these artists have in common with the history of what we call abstract art is the belief that it is not the job of the artist to represent things. They share a desire to address the wholeness of experience; its complexity, fluidity and multivalence.

The concept of the abstract and its creative principles are deployed in various ways in their work. Their practices are founded on a critical relationship to materiality, process and formal structure. Drawing on different models of art practice, each of these approaches exists in the context of the histories and precedents with which they dialogue.

The work is about time and gesture, elaboration and exactitude; the thinking in the making and the process of discovery that happens within the limits of each given practice. Principles of order and chaos are explored, as are the physical and philosophical conditions of making. There is a fascination with the bounded form as well as the unbounded; with the physical reality and the idea of a colour; with the quality of attention and how we experience change.

Instances, intensities, frequencies... thoughts, systems and subjectivities... These are enunciative practices in which abstraction develops itself within its own order for itself. In the gaps where logic is unanticipatable and artists have allowed things to happen, elements of chance, spontaneity, doubt and interference become an intrinsic part of the language. These artists are revising and expanding ideas of making and how we project meaning onto experience. There is a fluent relation to process 'drawn in an indirect way from both the imagined and concrete... the passage of life into language. The real that is abstraction.'¹

So where does the work come from?

In a way it doesn't matter. It is more interesting to see and feel where the work goes, how it behaves, what it is thinking and how we choose to engage.

Martina Copley 2012.

1. Catherine De Zegher, 'Drawn to you', Whitney Biennial 2004, exhibition catalogue, 2004.

ARTISTS
LOUISE BLYTON
TIM GRESHAM
EMMA LANGRIDGE
TROY MENDHAM
LYNETTE SMITH
PETER SUMMERS

Un:sighted

Exhibition Opens
Thursday 19 July 2012, 5 – 7pm
Opening address by Charles Nodrum

Exhibition Runs
Tuesday 17 July – Saturday 28 July

Tue to Thu: 11am – 5pm
Fri: 11am – 7pm
Sat: 12pm – 4pm

The artists would like to acknowledge and thank the sponsors for their support.

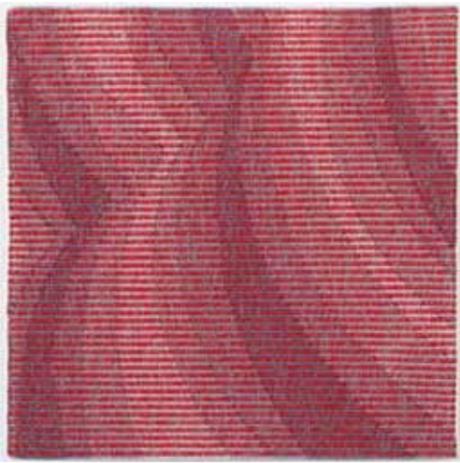


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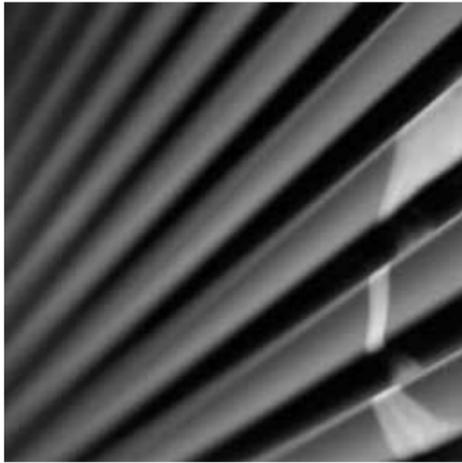
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45 flinders lane
melbourne 3000
telephone
03 9662 9966
facsimile
03 9662 9733
fortyfivedownstairs.com



Tim Gresham, *Surge in Red*, 2012.
Tapestry, 300 x 300mm.



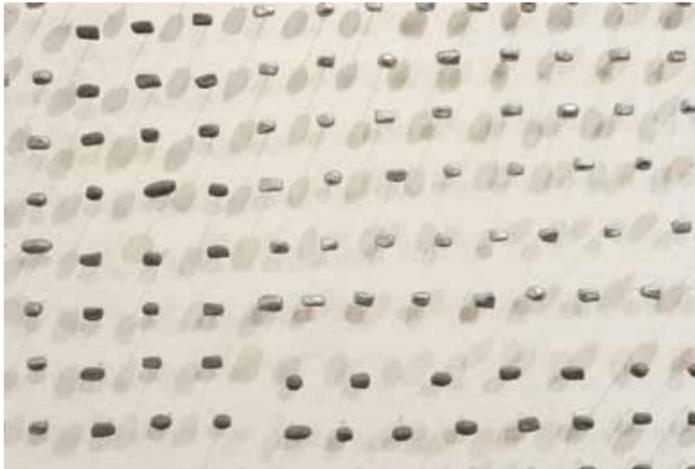
Tim Gresham, *Untitled*, 2012.
Photograph, 300 x 300mm.



Louise Blyton, *Sugarland 21*, 2011.
Pigment on linen on board,
1220 x 1220mm.



Troy Mendham, *Make the swell rise*.
Go home to the impulse. See red.
Inherit the effort. Transmit this living.
Reach the shore. 2012.
Acrylic on canvas, 1780 x 1020mm.



Lynette Smith, *Incomplete*
(Installation detail).



Emma Langridge, *Symmetry II*, 2012.
Acrylic and enamel on aluminium
800 x 800mm.



Peter Summers, *Tonight, I depart*, 2011.
Oil on canvas, 1676 x 1219mm.

LOUISE BLYTON

I have long harboured a love of raw pigments; the amazing saturation of true colour, the intense mattness and the physicality they possess. Similarly, I am drawn to the tactile texture and historical significance of linen, which evokes in me a certain romance. Linen provided a substrate with a rawness and simplicity that partnered beautifully with raw pigments. Both materials have been chosen for their purity, which allows their innate aesthetic to resonate in the work. The reductive nature evident in these materials allows the simplicity of their form, colour and composition to become central, creating works that evoke a sense of quiet. More recently, I have incorporated three dimensional forms and multiple surfaces into my work.

TIM GRESHAM

Working in woven tapestry and photography, I look at similar ideas of structure and pattern. I like the contrast in the processes; the slow methodical growth of a tapestry, and the instant capturing of a photograph. In both mediums I try to respond to the nature of the process, so the resulting works reflect the unique qualities of each medium.

EMMA LANGRIDGE

Through a series of preliminary drawings I distill a composition reconciling the given area. Playing with 'figure and ground' but maintaining ambiguity, I toy with assumptions and attempt to find common ground between balance and imbalance, symmetry and asymmetry.

TROY MENDHAM

There is no conscious intervention, its happening. Thought ends, instincts take over. In 'the zone' the line dictates itself, becomes the feeling. It's not seeking to explain the nature of existence, nor is it an expression of a moment, a time or a place. It's that split second in between thoughts, a provoking wave of energy channelled through the nervous system, which pulses and spans the full gamut of human emotion. Chi laid bare. Not precious, imperfection is sort and encouraged. Hesitation, indecision and weakness give way to fleeting waves of courage and urgency, suddenly, there! ...windows open and new possibilities become evident.

LYNETTE SMITH

I am interested in how a thing, organism or any organised structure comes to be the way it is. The form of something can be treated as evidence of a history, or it can be viewed as a token of some abstract type. This installation can be seen in both lights – it has a form that follows an abstract rule but it also stands as concrete evidence of the history of a person's action. The only way to close this history is to exhaust everything – space, components, the maker. Because of the rule it is intrinsically incomplete.

PETER SUMMERS

Within the confines of a four sided canvas I create a space of contemplative attention and serenity. I am reminded of a photo of myself at the age of three on a rug. I have placed around the perimeter all my toys, an act of defining my space. Through a process of reduction this is what I have been painting for years, the boy in his space, content, secure and free.