

COOL CHANGE CONTEMPORARY

7 FEBRUARY - 29 FEBRUARY, 2020

IMOGEN KOTSOGLO

BERNADETTE KLAVINS

LIAM KENNEDY

SAM HUXTABLE



IMOGEN KOTSOGLO: PHYTO- GALLERY 1

At a time when the environment is in decline and when the climate is in everyone's consciousness from recent catastrophic events, it feels more important than ever to reflect on our natural environment.

Kotsoglo's work brings to light aspects of the natural world that are often overlooked. Drawing inspiration from two extreme environments, Iceland and Australia, renowned for their vast expansiveness and harsh natural beauty, Kotsoglo zooms in close to minute biota in fine detail. It is this care, and the delicate nature of fine graphite dots and hatched lines that translate her thoughtful handling of these depicted ecosystems that will be threatened further if they continue to be overlooked.

We are encouraged to consider the time taken to create the works and perhaps also the time it takes for these delicate systems to grow and form interconnected parts that make up their ecological whole.

The harsh landscapes of Iceland and Australia are often spoken about and recounted in tales of travelers but such accounts of Icelandic landscape don't often reach the minutiae of moss and the delicate ecosystems that allow these to exist. Similarly, people might speak of gum trees, rock or the bright orange hues of the Australian landscape but this rarely extends to the intricate relationships upon which these are based.

In the form of accurate botanical drawings with a more blurred approach to tonal drawings using fine hatched lines at varied degrees apart, Kotsoglo offers us a series

of drawings that allow us to notice these crucial systems upon which we depend. Through these, we are able to access the cruciality of these systems in a way that allows for close looking and reflection without making a physical pilgrimage that may adversely contribute to the fragile lives of these tiny intricate systems.

In rendering us drawings with fine detail and soft multi-toned ink and graphite, Kotsoglo is facilitating discussion rather than providing rhetoric. The power of reflection, level of consideration, and opportunity to discuss what thoughts may surface when spending time with the drawings is left to each viewer. It is Kotsoglo's hope that this awareness may draw us away from anthropocentric thinking gently and purposefully.

In our fast-paced lives the power of slowing and reflection hold an important place. Kotsoglo's drawings demand attention from the viewer just as they demanded careful attention in their making. What plants can't request through human language Kotsoglo has done through drawing, subject and the power of reflection. Her sensitivity to materials and consideration of the subject beyond beauty holds an important and relevant place in both the human and natural world.

This power of reflection shapes how we respond to not only the work in the space, but to how we live, how we coexist with the natural world and how we might live differently in order for both human and natural systems to cycle forwards, develop and survive. We are provided with the opportunity to discuss what we see represented without needing to visit threatened areas and the ecosystems that dwell within them.

By making these series of drawings available at the gallery, we hope that their life might be continued outside



Imogen Kotsoglo, *PHYTO-120*, 2020, ink on arches 300gsm, 56 cm x 76 cm



the gallery at the culmination of the exhibition and they may spark further conversation on a future 'wall home' they might look out from. This could, in turn, lead to action feeding directly back into the lives of the ecosystems that inspired their creation.

What Kotsoglo suggests through her work, is how dependent we are as humans, on natural systems around us. Systems that we may never have previously considered before meditating upon the process of their creation and lives. Just as her work demands particular attention and careful looking, so too does our understanding of how these natural ecosystems work and how vulnerable they are to our modern approaches to living.

Tessa Beale

Tessa Beale is a freelance writer and practicing artist based in Perth with a special interest in print, drawing and metals.

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Imogen Kotsoglo is a Western Australian emerging artist based between Perth and Edinburgh. Having graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2015 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Expanded Studio Practice), Kotsoglo has gone on to exhibit in solo and group exhibitions throughout Finland, Iceland, Italy, Scotland, and Australia.

Kotsoglo's creative output is multifaceted, with a practice deeply rooted in drawing. Her works primarily explore the capacity of drawing and installation to express our relationship with nature.

BERNADETTE KLAVINS: MELTING ACT GALLERY 2

On this stretch, the endless one, we are all alone on the road. Just us, for miles, for as far as the eye can see, beyond the blur of the heat haze and the convergence of everything to a single point in the distance. We know we move because the fence posts count time, a flickering peripheral strobe, but outside of that, nothing changes: the sun is fierce, the sky is blue, the fields of grass flaxen and windswept on either side. I almost imagine I can hear the dry stalks whispering, but it's the rush of air at our open windows. Our hair swirls and tangles, caught up in eddies that dry the sweat from our skin. It's a pretense of relief, but we'll take what we can get. It's an old car.

We'll pull over soon, when we find a rest spot, and we'll sit beneath gum trees at a dusty roadside table, rationing our water and picking at our snacks, letting the car cool under patchy shade. Nobody will pass us. Then it's back to the endlessness, the pothole weaving, the broken ribbon of the centre line.

Out here the roads crumble at the verges, the elements nibbling them away, and I can hear my mother's caution echo through my mind: don't pull off the pavement while you're still slowing down, or the car might flip with the different frictions one side to the next. It scared me then and it scares me now, a tickle of anxiety in my middle. It reminds me to stay focused, to not drift in this infinity. I cycle through the checks of driving more consciously: the mirror, the dash, the far horizon. Where I've come from, where I am, where I'm headed to. We have hours of this to go yet.

By Chase

Chase is an Adelaide based conceptual artist, pop mystic and destroyer of words.

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Each day this week is in excess of 40 degrees; a haze of heat radiates from the city's broad bitumen roads, its hardened surface becoming unbound as tar separates from aggregate, its tacky surface lifting as vehicles roll across. Incrementally, our constructed environments yield to non-human activity; our anthropogenic stratum quietly disrupted and reclaimed. Expansive areas of road and concrete become geological layers with the potential for microclimates, faults, and erosion to occur.

Influenced by the material and spatial language of 1960s minimalist sculpture and the Mono-Ha movement of Japan, *Melting act* draws out the poetic failings of industrial materials and their relationship to deep time. Acts of casting allow one transient layer to be recorded within another, embedding within itself generative histories of time, forces, action, and repair. *Melting act* is a sculptural exploration of our relationship with shifting climates and built spaces in the current age of the Anthropocene.



Image: Bernadette Klavins, *study of act II* (detail), 2019, pewter, 150 cm x 150 cm x 100 cm. Image courtesy of Sam Roberts.



Bernadette Klavins is an emerging artist who works primarily within the field of sculpture.

In 2016, Klavins graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (First Class Honours) from Adelaide Central School of Art, after which she completed a month-long residency at The Icelandic Association of Visual Art in Reykjavik in 2017. Klavins has held solo exhibitions at FELTspace (2016) and Floating Goose Studios (2018), and most recently, has presented a collaborative exhibition with Bridget Currie at Adelaide Central Gallery (2019).

Bernadette Klavins, *act I*, 2019, lead, concrete, water, 600x600x100mm, photo: Sam Roberts

LIAM KENNEDY: EXALTATION – DOGS GALLERY 3

Liam Kennedy in conversation with Cool Change
Contemporary

CC: Why Dogs?

LK: In part dogs hold an emotional connection for people and pull at their heartstrings much more than cats or other animals would. And that's after living with my own cat for 24 years. Dogs are more personally profitable and you are likely to invest more in them. People are also more likely to recognise or associate with their own dogs when faced with a similar looking animal.

CC: Are these works made with certain dogs in mind?

Certainly. All of the dogs are known to me or I am fully aware of the connection their owners have with them. It is this love and honest appreciation that I am hoping to use as leverage in the ransoming of these dogs effigies to their owners. I have also tried to spread the love to different types of dogs as it seems i know almost too many black kelpie crosses!

CC: it seems that this exhibition has an integral focus on the machinations of commerce, are you able to tell us a bit more about this?

LK: this work is fairly similar/close to work I was already making. There is a soft threat to get people involved. My previous works were kind of populated by vague architectural spaces, usually domestic interiors. These were



Liam Kennedy, *Astrid*, 2019, Gouache 20cm x 20cm each. Image courtesy of the artist.



Liam Kennedy, *Oscar & Walter*, 2019, Gouache 20cm x 20cm each. Image courtesy of the artist.

imagined spaces that people didn't necessarily have a connection to. This work however has elements that are designed with specific people, or owners in mind, kind of like a forced and contained target market.

CC: Can you tell us a bit more about the set dressing elements included in the work?

LK: wanted to make it a bit more impactful visually, and also contribute to this sense of this work being an experience, and that the space engages with elements of sale and commercial design.

CC: You've spoken before about these works in relation to elements of board game design. Can you elaborate further on how this plays into the overall design of the show?

LK: this show seeks to contrive some kind of emotional connection in the audience. There is an element of performativity involved in purchasing artwork, and in retail experiences in general, there are set roles of buyer, and salesperson. A fairly recent development in contemporary board game design has been the concept of the 'Legacy'. This is primarily to drive interest in the continued play of the game, but has also become a profitable, marketable element. This style of design adds dynamism between each play, something that this exhibition hopes to emulate. In a way there becomes a dialogue between the players and the game as it evolves. Possibly this approach for the show might entice repeat visits as more works are released to the public via artwork sales. It also adds an element of risk, as there is an unknown until the artworks are revealed, yet the 'game' encourages a fairly fast decision regarding the purchase of the work as there is an external pressure to make a purchase and expand the works

that will be displayed for the show, possibly allowing for other potential 'players' to be invited into the same decision-making.

CC: You also have an ongoing design practice, how does this influence the way you think about art and the way you make it?

LK: I like to be organised, and will make a small sketch or design prior to making the actual paintings. The paintings are made in gouache which dries very quickly so if i am working with a colour that spans several works i will work in layers and apply these colours in an assembly line type sequence. Furthermore, the sculptural or set dressing elements are an element of 'packaging' the presentation of the work. somewhat like a framing device in order to further the understanding and appreciation of the work and the commercially focussed concept.

CC: There is a long tradition of small scale paintings produced to display the wealth of the paintings' patron, these usually include domestic interiors and paintings of domesticated animals. Does this tradition play into the work at all?

LK: people record much of their daily personal lives in a domestic setting, however the format for this record has changed drastically in the contemporary setting. This work is less about these spaces being actual records of existing real spaces in the world and more about creating a document or an image they may have a deeper connection to, like their animals.

CC: there is a kind of irreverence with this work, and the way you talk about it is very tongue in cheek, can you explain a bit more about the extortionist aspect of how

you are targeting specific people for each work?

Well, often our appreciation and observations of dogs are inherently humourous, particularly regarding their depiction in online environments. The idea of (some-what) covertly targeting certain friends by lightly stalking them via social media accounts is inherently silly. Also, all of those owners who know me generally know of my appreciation for irreverence, so in some sense this is also a test of our relationships by gently, but overtly using their dogs as tools to get money out of them. Like any good friend would.

Liam Kennedy is an artist and maker from Fremantle, Western Australia with work spanning painting (with a focus on small-scale, playful interiors), as well as furniture and object-making.

A Bachelor of Arts (3D Design, 2013) from Curtin University, WA and a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing/ Management, 2011) from the University of Western Australia have both informed his approach to artistic practice, particularly in his contemplation of the liminal space between art and commerce.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: SAM HUXTABLE BECOMING -- THEM PROJECT SPACE

How does the space between queer body and world feel? I'm not sure. It feels fierce and wonderful and hot, and uncomfortable and endless.

What is unknown has been a large part of my experience thus far. As a queer nonbinary transmasculine creative, I find myself expected to speak to the experiences of the entire community. Frankly, this is impossible, unfair and holds a vast amount of pressure. How do I present answers to questions about parts of myself that thrive in ambiguity? Short answer; I don't.

Trans and queer folx are often driven to internalise expectations of self-awareness. We are expected to have all the answers. To be resolved and steady in our identities. On one hand, self-analysis is key to uncovering a self stifled by heteronormativity. It is a beautiful tool to have in my arsenal. On the other hand, it becomes a draining, repetitive cycle of self doubt. Dredging up internal muck for the sake of cisgendered and straight understanding. I'm queer and I'm tired! I'm tired of analysing everything about myself, only to have to minimise my selfhood into palatable homonormativity [1]. *Easy Listening Queerness* is a radio station I will no longer play.

Exploring this ever-evolving "unknown" through modes of softness and strength -- on my own terms -- will be key to the work I produce during my residency. Two months ago, I started hormone replacement therapy to masculinise my body. This decision, which was very



Sam Huxtable, *What Body I, orange delicious* (2019). Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist.



deliberate, and subsequently the profound changes I'm beginning to feel, are what I want to explore. I am not searching for concreteness or answers. Power and fear coexist within the act of choosing my own body. Going through this transformation with acute awareness of my physical self will act as a guide to the work I make. I am thinking about the studio as an incubation space for the intensity and emotion so heavily linked with personal experiences. I hope to facilitate my own growth, and even more hopefully the growth of participants and visitors, too. (Queers have a lot of hope.) This work is for us, for me, and for them.

1. Bolen, Derek. "Homonormativity." *The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies*, 2016.

Sam Huxtable is a non-binary/trans, queer artist working in Perth, Australia. Exploring the queer body and psyche, their work finds commonality between fantasy and reality and reaches out for both emotional and visceral response.

Engaging with a range of mediums including digital media, sculpture, installation and performance work, Huxtable navigates the unresolved, expansive notion of existence from a queer perspective - an existence that resides in constant flux - alongside the experience of others in their community. Through these explorations, solitude and togetherness / harshness and tenderness work simultaneously to reflect form and experience which are often overlooked.

Cool Change Contemporary acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional and rightful custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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