

Stella Downer Fine Art

Dealer Consultant & Valuer

Member of the Australian Commercial Galleries Association
ABN 86 229 108 803

ESSAY

ANNABEL BUTLER, DI HOLDSWORTH & LIZ SHREEVE

Re-Creation

10 October – 4 November 2017

Opening Saturday 14 October, 3 - 5 pm

The process of making is inherent in the creation of each of ANNABEL BUTLER, DI HOLDSWORTH & LIZ SHREEVE's diverse practices. Varying in form and content each artist engages with the surface of the object, working physically into it and responding intuitively. Their works reveal hints of their construction, drawing the viewer into consider the play between the artist and the medium in the creation of the work.

Creating abstract landscapes, ANNABEL BUTLER views her paintings as constructions of a place. BUTLER created her first construction in 1998 when she was at the Byam Shaw School of Art in London on a travelling scholarship – greatly influenced by Cezanne's 'Bathers' in the National Gallery. In making her constructions she plays with depth and space, the geometric clean lines of the shapes conflicting with the painterly brushstrokes as they extend the picture far outside its physical borders.

In her latest series, BUTLER explores the changing light along the coast. First working en plein air she then returns to the studio to chop up the paintings and reassembles them to create abstract constructions of the coastline. Methodology is integral to her process – she only works with what is available to her. As a result each work in the series share memories and characteristics of a place – slivers of familiarity to catch the viewer's attention. The result is a cohesive series, with the different constructions linked by tone, light and place.

LIZ SHREEVE also works to set a methodology, responding to the strict geometry of the grid that in its constraints creates a structure where the possibilities are endless. Focussing upon light SHREEVE experiments with numbers and colour. In this latest series SHREEVE responds to the light that reflects and shifts in the ocean.

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The importance of engaging with the surface – physically handling the paper to work through ideas and shapes – renders this seemingly planned process as inherently intuitive. The repetition of complex patterns in three-dimensional paper forms creates intricate works of depth and space. Folding the paper the surface extends out into the space, catching the light and creating chords of colour and shadows that build and lower in intensity over time. It is about the slow change of time and observing this through the effects of the gradual turn of natural light.

Whilst SHREEVE and BUTLER both respond to changing light, HOLDSWORTH inserts light into her works, creating a sense of film noir in the dark nooks and crannies of her interiors. Working with found and made objects she creates intimate narratives that move from the nostalgic to the dark and subversive. In this series of works, HOLDSWORTH engages with the Kewpie Doll, refashioning it into grander imaginary narratives – from dancing with the devil to Madonna and Child and an interior of a radio that recalls the glory of Pharlap and the races.

For HOLDSWORTH time is important in the making of the work, allowing the narrative to reveal itself to her in the process of assembling the memory-laden objects. In this act of play, Holdsworth considers the possibility for objects to form sculptures or to become a part of an interior work. Alongside visual narrative the accompanying music carries a pace and memory that nostalgically alludes to a time that was of a slower pace.

The slowing of pace and time is key to understanding what drives the unique practices of BUTLER, SHREEVE and HOLDSWORTH. Their inherent focus upon process and medium allows for narrative to emerge and works to transform for the viewer.

Lucy Stranger

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