



SIMON WEIR

DISORDER
GALLERY

OPENING :
17 APRIL 5-7 PM
17 - 27 APRIL, 2024

THE SYDNEY SURREALIST

WWW.DISORDERGALLERY.COM WWW.SIMONWEIR.NET

CNR BOURKE
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DARLINGHURST

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DISORDER
GALLERY

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ABSTRACT

On the occasion of the centenary of André Breton's 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*, and in recognition of surrealism's enduring international presence, *The Sydney Surrealist* exhibition presents a branch of surrealism's international presence based in Sydney, Australia. Among historical surrealism's many lines of artistic research, this exhibition focusses on surrealism's philosophical and psychological research. The exhibition is a curated selection of oil paintings and watercolours by Simon Weir reflecting three lines of surrealist philosophical enquiry: mereology, perception and ontology.

The mereological concerns whole-part relationships, objects depicted as assemblies of other objects each with their own identity and intimate relations. The perceptual is present in the form of phenomenal objects and incomplete objects in the process of visual assembly. Finally the ontological, consideration of the most fundamental aspect of existence, is present as scenes of ontological withdrawal and in simulacra of representations.

The media of oil paint on linen and watercolored paper is chosen for its exceptional colour range, material longevity and anachronistic allure. In figurative surrealism, anachronism is associated with the unconscious and the dream. Anachronistic objects are to be interpreted as memory objects met with a mixture of nostalgic sympathy and repulsion in need of repression and sublimation. The precise solicitation of contrary emotions in response to unprecedented combinations of anachronistic objects and other irrational phenomena are part of the surreally subversive aim of undermining faith in "apparent reality" and exercising pressure on the creation of alternate apparent realities.

In addition to the transportation (a meaningfully anachronistic word) and replanting of the seeds of surrealism's fruitfully subversive agenda to Sydney and the New South Wales' (a meaningfully anachronistic name) East coast, the notably new surrealist motif is the feather-leaf-wing. These objects can easily be pinned down to one of three options, but are also objects capable of taking on these identities.

When you look at a feather-leaf-wing, within our perception, you can watch it fall into one of its three identities. See it as a feather, for example, and at this ontologically (phenomenologically) decisive moment, the feather-leaf-wing acquires the qualities associated with feathers. Hence the feather-leaf-wings belong to a category of ontographic objects I call "objects of perception," more specifically in this case, objects actively acquiring and discarding qualities.

Feather-leaf-wings engage with the question of how we perceive objects and are based on Zenon Pylyshyn's finsts. In visual perception, our mind builds a model of reality by beginning with a background scan of the environment and then seeking out objects. Perception places blank token objects, called finsts, onto the visual field and progressively adds qualities onto them. For example, when you first see a person in the distance walking towards you, your mind places a finst and registers the visible qualities. At first you just see movement, then the form of a moving person, as they get closer you recognise who the person is. Now this relatively simple finst has networks of associations appended. Changing this way through short amounts of time, we see that finsts are capable of transforming faster and more radically than the objects that they represent. And with this ability, this hyper-lability, Weir shows that finsts perform a kind of magic of perception which can be translated into magical art. In Pylyshyn's model of perception, once the finsts acquire sufficient qualities to be recollected (in the Bergsonian sense), they become fings. The feather-leaf-wing is therefore not an object of external reality, but an image of a finst in the process of becoming a fing, or in the Kantian sense, a phenomenal object.

Simon Weir

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I remember first becoming aware of Surrealism as a young boy and being completely struck by what I was seeing on the canvasses of the likes of Dali, Magritte and Ernst. It absolutely resonated with my growing curious mind and I picked up every book I could find of the subject. Taking perceived norms and throwing them out the window, not taking everything at face value or even too seriously really appealed to my sense of anarchy and disruption.

Seeing Simon Weir's work immediately brought back the feeling of wonder and excitement that rebellious youth felt all those years ago. Simon's work is masterful, full of fascination and intrigue. There is humour and mystery in every work, the technique is superb and mesmerising. It's truly a privilege to collaborate with Simon to bring these incredible paintings into Disorder Gallery, no doubt they will inspire, and maybe even turn on new audiences to the fabulous world of Surrealism.

Elliott Cole



Live (Guerrilla Bay)
oil on linen
80x42''

THE SYDNEY SURREALIST SIMON WEIR, SURREALIST ARTIST AND ACADEMIC

Surrealist painter Simon Weir became obsessed with the movement after seeing Dali paintings at the age of 17 and realising they spoke to him in a language that immediately made sense. He would go on to read all of Dali's writings (a copious and initially impenetrable oeuvre charting Surrealism's theoretical journey), and become a globally-recognised Dali expert

Weir's Surrealist painting developed along the same time frame, weaving in the movement's complicated debates about dreams and reality with his own intuition about how the world can be perceived and re-created on a canvas visually and philosophically.

Based in Sydney, Weir uses the local landscape as inspiration and Surrealist backdrop. A mysterious veiled clump appears on steps in The Rocks, a tentacular creature watched by a little girl haunts Woolloomooloo's Wharf at night, and a gigantic sandy dog's head (or is it a dingo?) rests against Guerrilla Bay's waters on the South Coast.

Seeing Sydney and its surrounds through a Surrealist's eyes is an arresting novelty, and if you're prepared to lean in, Weir's imagination leaves these places quite transformed. Who wouldn't now look for the giant dog if they visit Guerrilla Bay? Will the Wharf's docks in the wee hours ever seem the same? It's like LSD, but free, and there for the taking

Perceiving reality in dreams, versus perceiving dreams (or phenomena) in reality, is an old and ongoing battleground for Surrealists. But once Dali realised that dreams were limited, and that the mind's ability to see phenomena in reality - like a dog in a landscape - was much more fun and interesting, he advocated for seeing the surreal in real life, and so Surrealism grew into a different phase. It's this iteration that Weir evokes most effectively in his own work.



Another lark of Surrealism is one that goes back to de Chirico's edible-but-not-edible, iron-but-not-iron artichokes (*The Melancholy of an Afternoon*). That is, that the painter may insist privately that the work means something utterly different to what is presented, just as de Chirico privately maintained his relatively juicy looking artichokes were made of iron. That idea, with its deception and compelling tension, opened the conceptual gates for Dali, Magritte and other Surrealists, and produced the wonderfully warped logic of "this is not a pipe".

Weir's paintings play less with that sleight of hand, and more sometimes with, perhaps, a sleight of eye. In *Live (Guerrilla Bay)*, he draws the viewer in with classical composition and carefully composed light and colour, and then adds flat, bright objects that look like they've been created in Microsoft Paint Pad. They've no right to be there among the elegant oil and chiaroscuro, but they are, so get used to it. You might even find it trippy. Welcome to Surrealism.

In other paintings, he uses a more recognisable Surrealist composition, where phantasmagoric and incongruous creatures co-exist in serene but odd environments. The painterliness draws you into these little worlds, no two of which are the same, and they are the kind of works that reveal more the more you engage with them.

And finally, there's a composure about Weir's works that may come from the fact that he's not in any rush to complete the paintings. Some take a year or two, he says, in which time he dabbles, not troubled by market demands, until his imagination has run out of alterations, and only then is the painting deemed finished.

By Margie Smithurst.



Spectre Cluster on the Wharf
oil on linen
12x16"

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Among historical surrealism's many research enquiries, this series of images focus on surrealism's philosophical and psychological projects to foreground unconscious and unnoticed forces in art and perception. These oil paintings and watercolours reflect philosophical enquiries into ontology, perception and mereology.

Snails kissing magpies, veiled figures, guarded gateways and ambiguous objects populate the Australian east coast: decayed stone stairways, wharfs, bright beaches, balconies, domestic interiors, as well as twilight vistas and public buildings with their ambiguous statuary. These irrational objects (though we might instead consider them hyper-rational instead, but I digress) prompt the audience's urge to interpret what they see and thereby cognitively capture visual phenomena. Weir's surrealist preparatory response is to both offer and resist this capture, by endowing the objects with multiple mysteries. One mystery is conditional upon our habit of explaining phenomena as occurring outside ourselves, rather than within the unconscious, and consequently interpret surrealism's strange objects as fictional remnants of romantically mythic theatre. This interpretation functions as camouflage for the second, more important, philosophical mystery. If instead the objects are understood as phenomenal, that is, as not corresponding to so-called external reality but corresponding to objectified operations of visual and cognitive mechanisms, the images resemble ontological mysteries, such as the simultaneous sensations of separation and inseparability necessary for the existence of the world.

Simon Weir



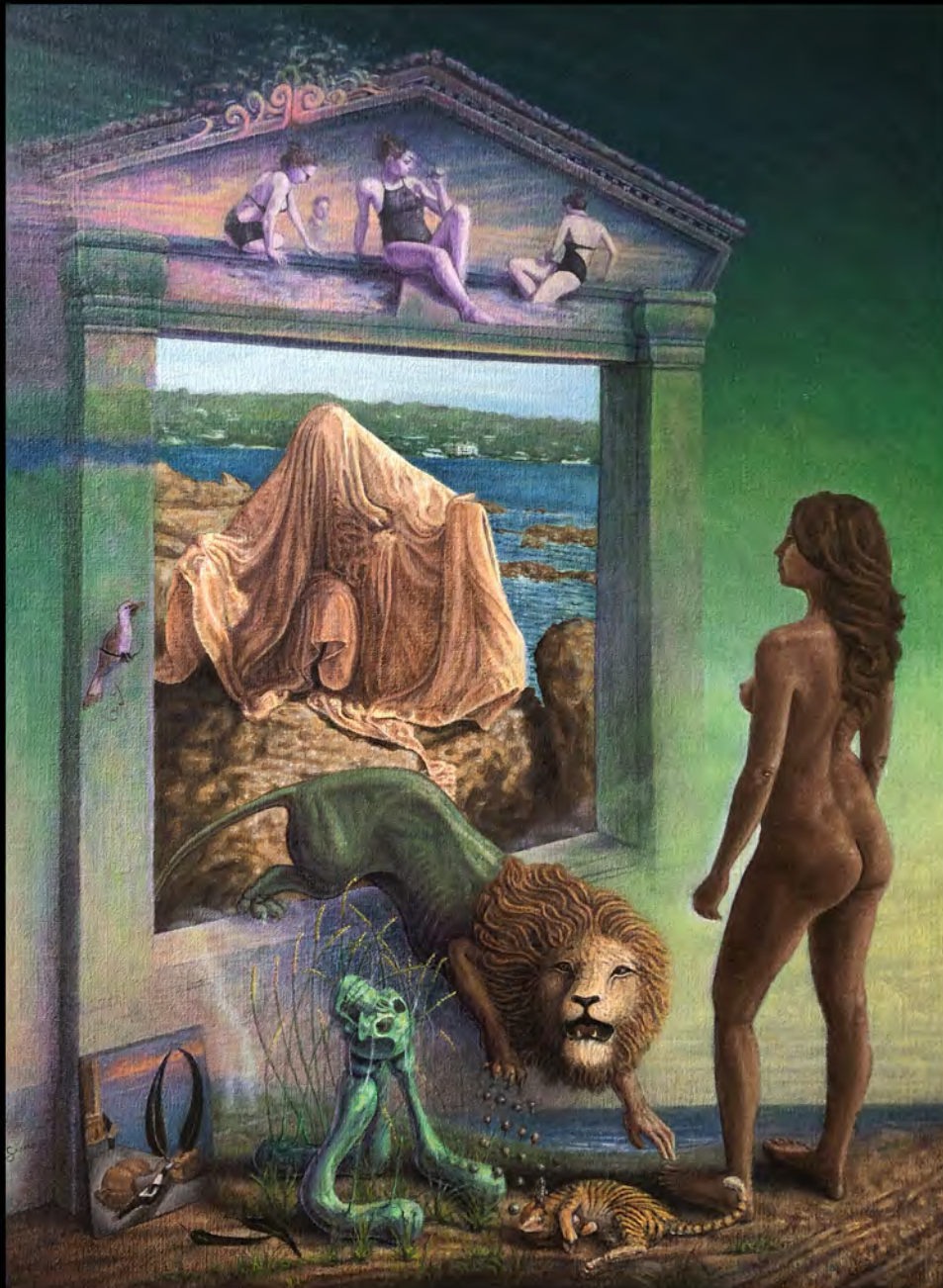
Blackfeather Sanctuary
oil on linen
12x16"



Anecdote
oil on linen
32x42" and 20x16"



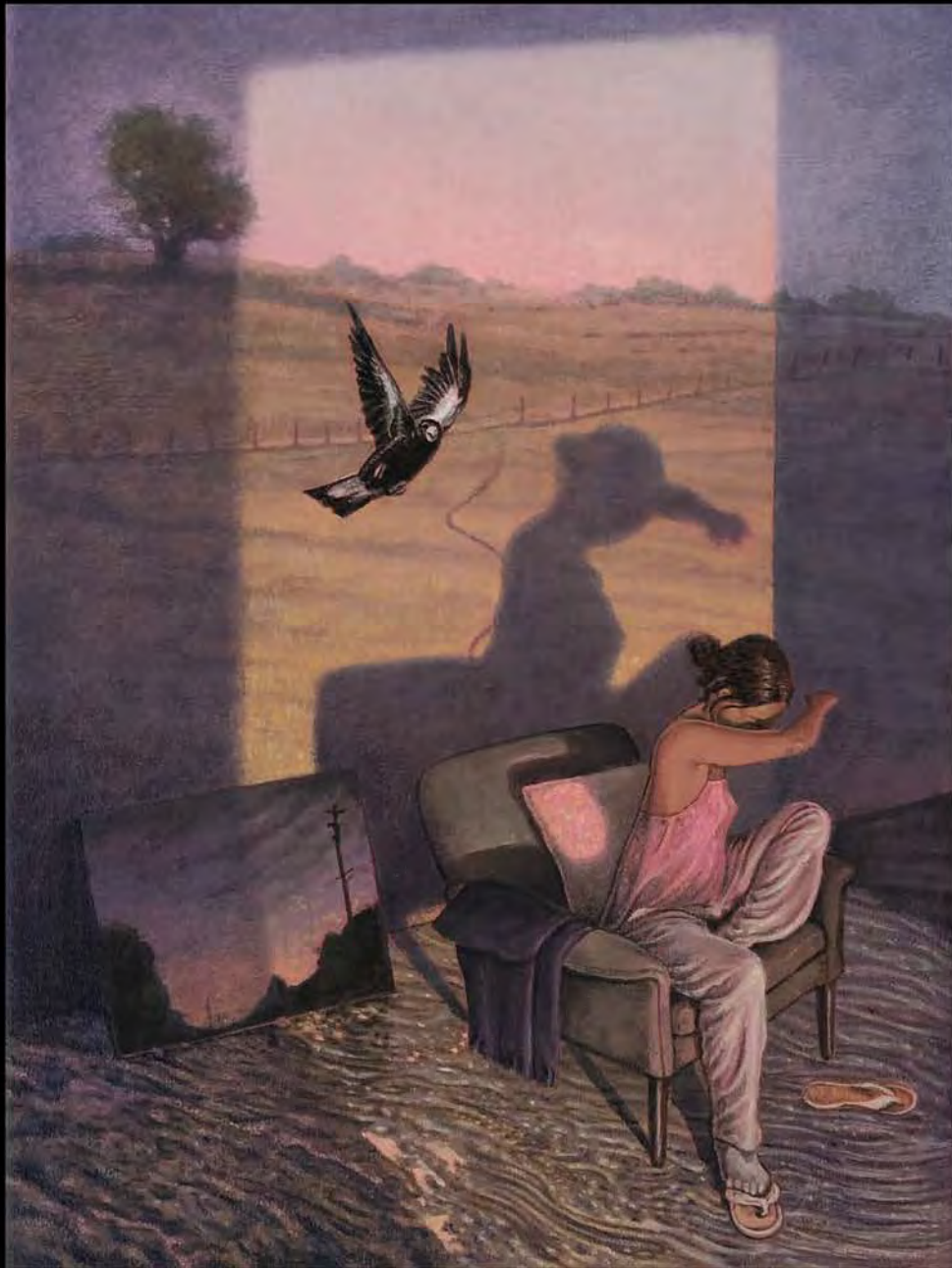
Anecdote
oil on linen on board
~28x14 and 27x13.5cm



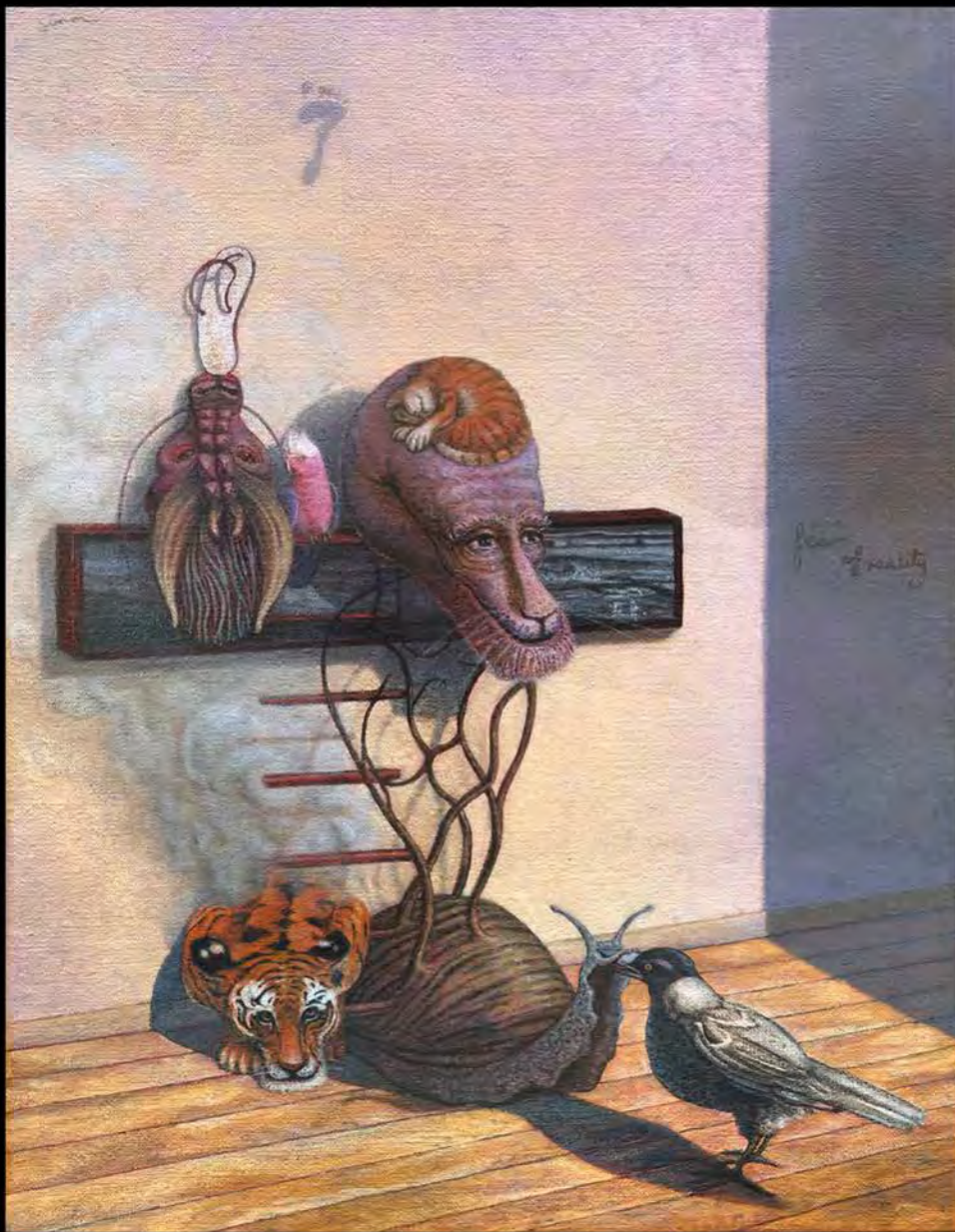
Vicarious Self Portrait of an Introverted Surrealist
oil on linen
12x16"



Mama Conducting the Fish
oil on linen
12x15"



Real and Imaginary Magpie
oil on linen
12x15"



Sensual Ontographic Assemblage
oil on linen
12x16"



Inland Catastrophe
oil on linen
15x12"



Architectural Uncanny
oil on linen
35x27cm

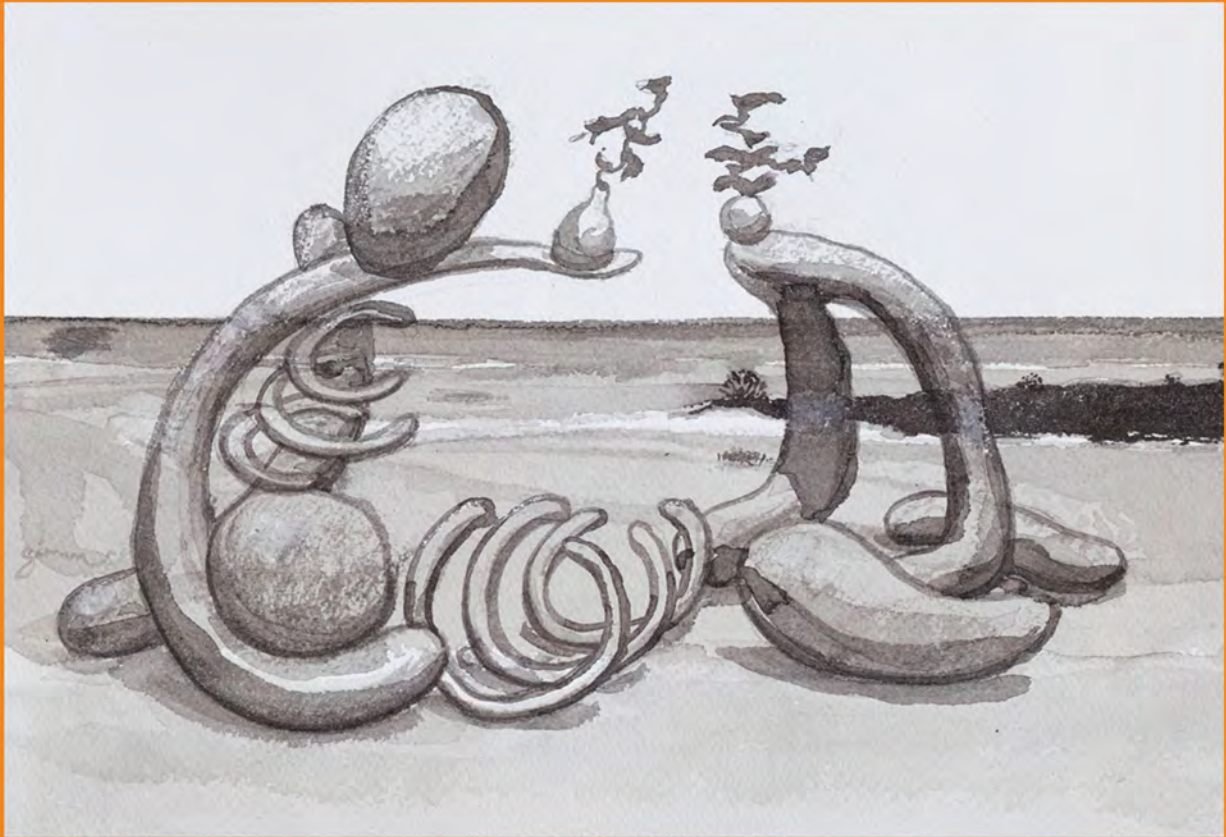
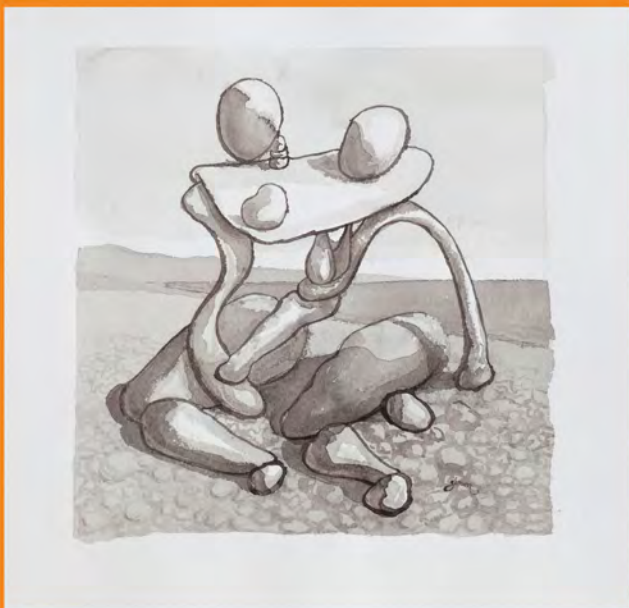


Figure Dying on a Stoney Beach
watercolour on paper
~20x12cm



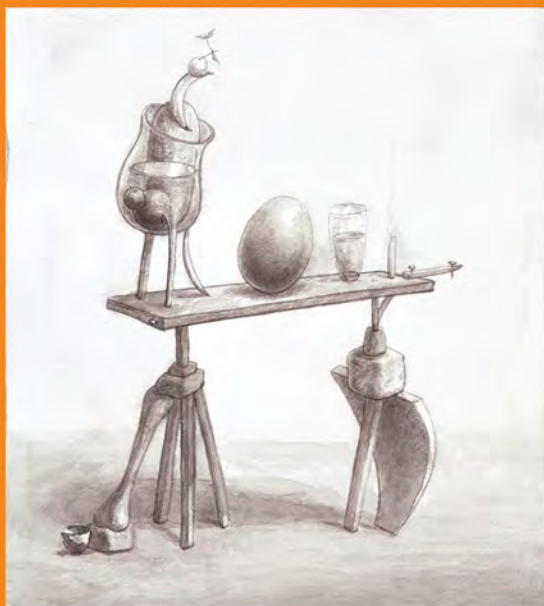
Couple Yoked on a Pebbly Beach
watercolour on paper
~18x18cm



Figure on a Stoney Beach
watercolour on paper
~18x18cm



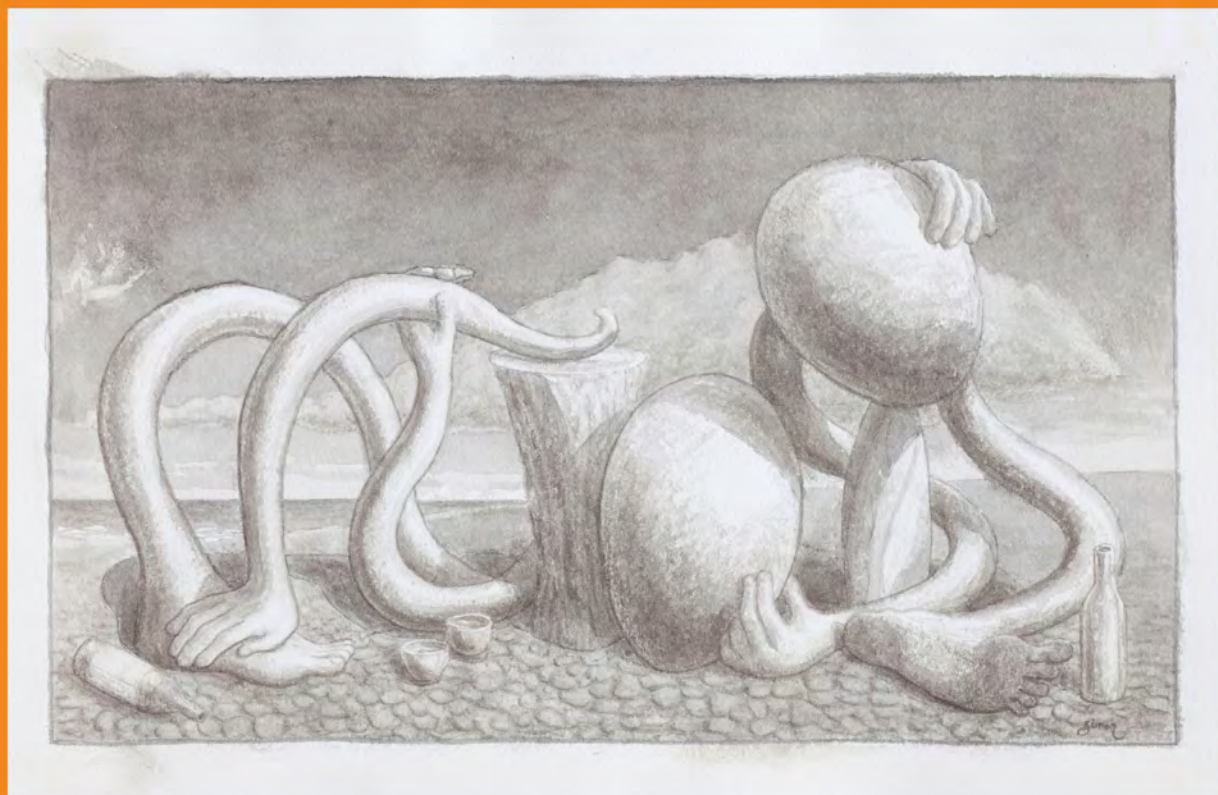
Figure Reclining on a Pebbly Beach
watercolour on paper
~21x10cm



Hunter's Dog
watercolour on paper
~19x20cm



The Dragonfly and The Swan
etching on paper
~26x19cm



Figures on a Stoney Beach
watercolour on paper
~21x10cm



Figures Fruiting
watercolour on paper
~18x20cm



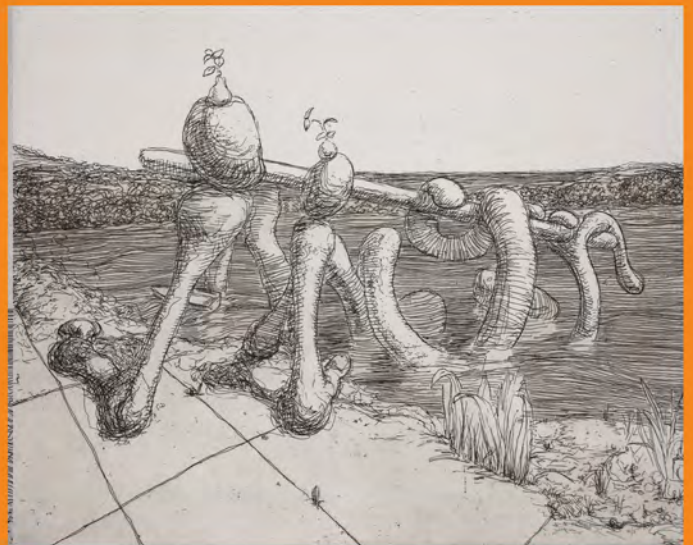
Misty Figure on a Stoney Beach
watercolour on paper
~21x21cm



Woman with Dog
watercolour on paper
~20x13cm



Bottle and Pears
watercolour on paper
~12x20cm



Emergence
etching on paper
~26x19cm



Desire Changing the Appearance of the World
oil on linen
12x16"



Two Black Feathers Boxed Together
oil on linen
12x15"



DISORDER GALLERY

DISORDER IS

Disorder Gallery is an art space in Sydney, Australia,
which first opened its doors and welcomed in the world on March 1st, 2017.
We showcase, embrace and encourage all forms of creativity.

Moving away from the traditions of a white box,
Disorder Gallery is a flexible space bringing together paintings, sculptures,
prints, photographs, installations, poets, writers, music and performers all in one environment.
Our goal is to provide a comfortable space that is alive and ever changing,
a space that encourages conversation and collaboration.

WE BELIEVE

Art has always been at the forefront of social change,
making important statements and changing the way we think and behave.

We believe that art can make a difference.

WE D/O

Disorder Gallery hosts exhibitions, events, and happenings for artists of every ilk in our Sydney Gallery.
We also keep a myriad of art work from local and international artists in our 'Disorder Collection'
which you can find both online and in the gallery.

We also offer custom framing for any of the pieces you purchase at Disorder Gallery
and can install your artwork in your home for you.

We encourage everyone to bring a little bit of Disorder into their lives.

WE ARE

Elliott Cole, Director
Margaret M MacDonald, Design & Media
Dash Cole, Motivation & Positivity

