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CHRISTOPHER BASSI

Hazy and sun-streaked, almost yellowed with age, Meriam and Yupungathi artist **Christopher Bassi**'s paintings are reminiscent of time passed. Quickly worked, light brushstrokes capture a fleeting, memory-like recollection of humidity and sticky heat from which the subject matter — shells, palm and mango trees, self-portraits — originates, exposing the artist's lineage to the Torres Strait and Cape York.

They are the result of Bassi's love of painting, theatrical staging akin to **Manet**, **Degas**, and **Delacroix**. "I'm romantic in that way," the artist muses, "the way they put paint on canvas. The colours and the richness and depth and drama."

Graduating from the Queensland College of Art in 2017 with a Bachelor of Fine Art, Bassi has been steadily working on his practice, exploring the medium of paint in depth. Based in Brisbane, the close-knit community has fostered his career, showing at artist-run initiatives such as Stable Art Spaces, and allowing him to grow his own design business, Dialogue Office, supporting First Nations artists in public art projects after years at UAP. A recent move to a bigger studio in West End allows for the production of four-metre by three-metre works, to be seen at **José Da Silva's** Adelaide Biennial 2024, *Inner Sanctum*.

Now represented by Yavuz Gallery, Sydney and Singapore, Bassi has caught the eye of curators across the country, with recent presentations at *The National 4*, Campbelltown Arts Centre; *Mare Amoris | Sea of Love*, UQ Art Museum; and *Primavera* at Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.



OPPOSITE: Christopher Bassi, *Shade from the Sun*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 240 x 200cm.

RIGHT: Christopher Bassi, *Shell Song*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 250 x 140cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND YAVUZ GALLERY, SYDNEY AND SINGAPORE.

The National 4 and Campbelltown Arts Centre's curator, **Emily Rolfe**, reveals, "when Chris walked me through his exhibition *Northern Verses* at Yavuz Gallery in 2022, I was drawn to the way his works combine multiple worlds and experiences – in medium and concept. His practice transcends current trends and is suggestive of how we can navigate a shared future."

Bassi's artworks become an opportunity to create his own image, reclaiming narrative for a methodology that thinks through heritage, place, and nationhood. "We're up against this idea of representation, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and particularly when you go through the history of Western art or even Australian art, you realise the damage that misrepresentation has done," Bassi concludes. "I'm very conscious of that, [my works become] a way of working through that, to put myself on display."

The combination of seeking perfection in paint, an ability to depict the multifaceted Australian identity, and capturing the attention of curators and gallery directors makes Bassi one to watch. **EMMA-KATE WILSON**





ABOVE: Christopher Bassi, *Island Dove*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 60 x 50cm.
OPPOSITE: Christopher Bassi, *Twin PawPaw*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 100 x 90cm.
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND YAVUZ GALLERY, SYDNEY AND SINGAPORE.

