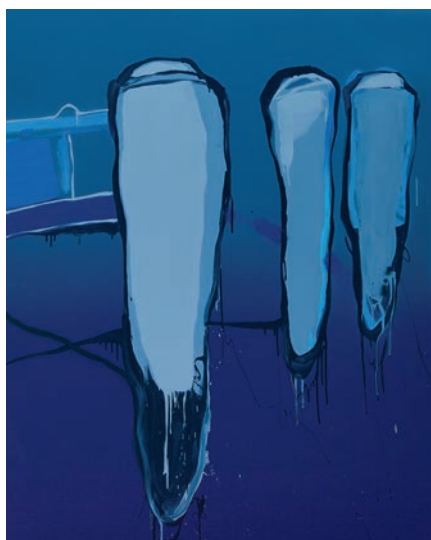
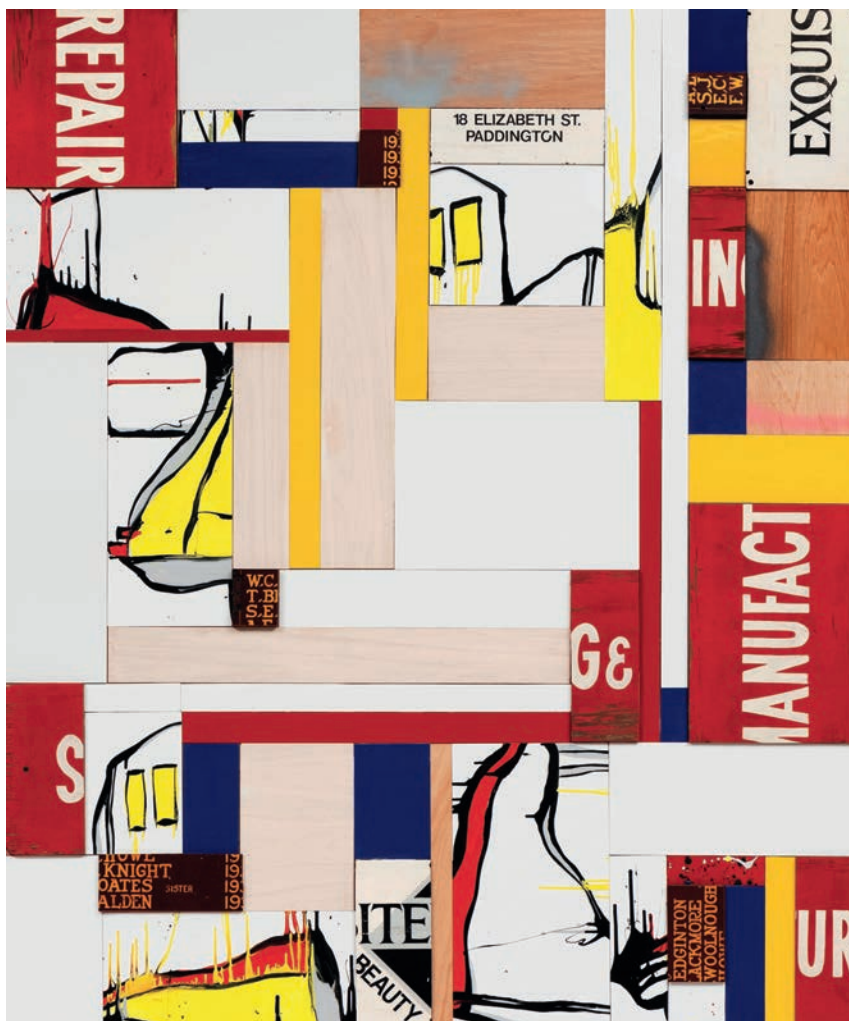


JASPER KNIGHT

STORY
EMMA-KATE
WILSON



01



02

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JASPER KNIGHT'S NAME HAS become known through his brightly coloured abstractions of cars, docks and boats on found objects like signs or abandoned sheets of metal. Entwined with the colonial history of the city Knight lives and works in, his paintings speak to the ethos of industrialism that seeps into everyday life. Yet Knight is ready for a departure towards a new style.

Now he is trying something different, experimenting with fresh motifs and a bold new palette. The move is unnerving for Knight, who says he feels like an entirely new artist venturing into the unknown. To be a successful artist shown in twenty-two worldwide art fairs with numerous sold-out exhibitions internationally – what happens when you try something new?

Knight mentions that he took several months off to 'pour his heart and soul' into his recent paintings for Sydney Contemporary 2018. He says the processes and methods he's developed have been jarring, after almost twenty years as a practising artist making consistent work. 'My usual spiel to journalists has changed', he explains, 'I feel like I'm in different territory, a fresh artist again at the beginning of my career.'

Supported by James Makin Gallery in Melbourne, Knight's latest series will be

exhibited in a solo show in May. Even though they have known each other since Knight's early career, Makin came into his orbit recently with a heartfelt letter, to support Knight's move into new artistic terrain.

In this exhibition, Knight's well-known industrial aesthetic will still feature, yet the paintings have a complete tonal shift. Instead of the blocks of colours that took inspiration from Piet Mondrian and Roy Lichtenstein, we see monochrome repetitions of red, white or blue – though his nod to Pop Art history still appears. The eye is disrupted trying to explore the works as the visceral dripping enamel evokes a sense of abstraction. There is an interplay between painted subject and material object as the forms play off the aluminium panel, which glistens like a mirror. Coupled with the missing painterly hand, the painting itself becomes a piece of material, an artefact of industrialisation.

The presentation will feature seven one-colour paintings at 150 x 120 cm, as well as smaller process works. As seen in previous paintings, the icons of the urban landscape appear, yet the hard-edged geometric forms have been abandoned for a looser line, spontaneous drippings and disruptions of form.

It feels as though these artworks have entered a different zone, with the overt

industrial tropes taking a step back, hidden within the depth of the paintings. There is a sense of rebellion in Knight's bold brushwork, evoking the frenetic energy of street art, and yet a quiet composure settles on the works through their subtle tonal shifts.

The idea of exploring the fear in the unknown for an established painter attempting a new style is refreshing in an industry reliant on consistent sales. Success is an interesting thing to measure as it's so dependent on circumstances. The risk can be that the creativity becomes the routine. James Makin is ready to champion Knight's departure, which, after talking to the artist and seeing these new works, is an exciting move. ■

EXHIBITION

Jasper Knight
1 May to 18 May, 2019
James Makin Gallery, Melbourne

- 01 *Quibaree Park Wharf*, 2018, enamel, synthetic polymer paint on aluminium panel, 150 x 120 cm
 - 02 *Seven Years*, 2017, enamel, gloss acrylic spray paint, aluminium, plywood, vintage wood signs on board, 180 x 150 cm
 - 03 *Fire stair to Nowhere*, 2018, enamel, synthetic polymer paint on aluminium panel, 150 x 120 cm
- Courtesy the artist, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne, Australian Galleries, Sydney and Melbourne, Harvey Galleries, Sydney, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane and Linton + Kay Galleries, Perth

