

LEAH FRASER
Let her go into the darkness

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11 – 29 May 2021

Opening Celebration Saturday 15 May, 1pm

Artist Talk, 1:30pm

Moths, beams of stars, and swooping birds feed into concepts of the occult within Leah Fraser's artworks. The flayed limbs and wild hair of her female figures touch borders of the canvas; the constraints visible and stifling, unabating to their own freedom. Like tarot cards, they welcome us to read them onto ourselves.

Throughout history and culture, we see solitary females making magic cursed as a separation of society. Witches, goddesses, nymphs present a power over humankind that fulfils properties of both fear and idealisation. Yet mythology and fantasy offer conduits for audiences to tap into greater mysteries.

Fraser explores this in 'Let her go into the darkness' — recognising her own role as an artist working creatively in solidarity outside of the typical norms of society. Reading Scott Cunningham's introduction to Wicca, *A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* at 16, inspired the artist to live magically, spiritually, and attuned with nature — connecting a wholesome relationship to Earth.

The narratives of the book continue throughout Fraser's practice, but they become especially relevant to today's audiences. In our covid world, we all faced solitude and isolation — yearning out for nature and interconnectedness. What does this type of energy do to the world?

Motherhood, the occult, nature are expressed through Fraser's paintings. Each work, centred on one female figure who appears floating or falling, never escaping their surroundings. Here, there is an energy of being tightly held in the space. In these depictions feminine power is limitless, diverse and divine. In *For the heart is an organ of fire*, the figure holds a flame while multiple stary hands reach for her. For, *Hold on – the night is coming*, the neighbouring light attracts moths in the darkness, cocoons representing growth and rebirth.

A dreamy colour palette begins organically and continues intuitively, the artist working with a feeling — maybe hands first appear as the rest of the form grows around the figure. Acrylics allow Fraser to work quickly, often painting over the works; each layer revealing multiple states of presence.

The surrounding landscape enters the artworks as ethereal flowers and foliage, birds dip and dive between limbs, while fragrant jasmine and hydrangeas impart smells onto the audience for a multi-sensory affair. Connection to nature is key to Fraser's oeuvre. Her figures are wild women — witches from the forest or Dionysus' cult.

'Let her go into the darkness' raises questions of our disconnection to the environment; destruction for more houses, food, beauty products, clothes. All elements that contemporary women muse over — the artworks ask if there is more to modern life?

These ideas link to lifecycles — symbols of the moon, the female body, the ocean tides. Or stars, connecting the female body to the universe in all its entirety, working with the energy field of matter and our biological bond. This ideology works in two ways; her figures are captured within the busyness, frozen in time, the centre. Using energy, matter and lifecycles, she also links science and magic, explaining the unexplained.

The women within Fraser's artworks feel especially relevant for today's society — as parliament crumbles under allegations that leave women vulnerable, and floods destroy material goods. They also represent seeking for interconnectedness in a post-covid world beyond technology. Fraser's characters fulfil a sense of the Shaman — linking us to a state of healing.

Emma-Kate Wilson
Art and Design Writer



Leah Fraser in her studio.
Photograph via Bed Threads

It was as it had always been, but at the same time it felt new
acrylic on polyester canvas
141 x 105 cm (framed)
\$8,900



And she listened to the wind blow
acrylic on polyester canvas
141 x 105 cm (framed)
\$8,900



Some strange music drew her in
acrylic on polyester canvas
141 x 105 cm (framed)
\$8,900



I crushed the fragile white petals in my fingers. The scent was like oblivion, a trance.

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She flew like night from land to land

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141 x 105 cm (framed)

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Let her go into the darkness
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The night was heavy but the air was alive

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She was waiting to see the light
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I'm thinking of a place that feels so very near

acrylic on polyester canvas

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\$6,000



Hold on – the night is coming

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She burned too brightly for this world

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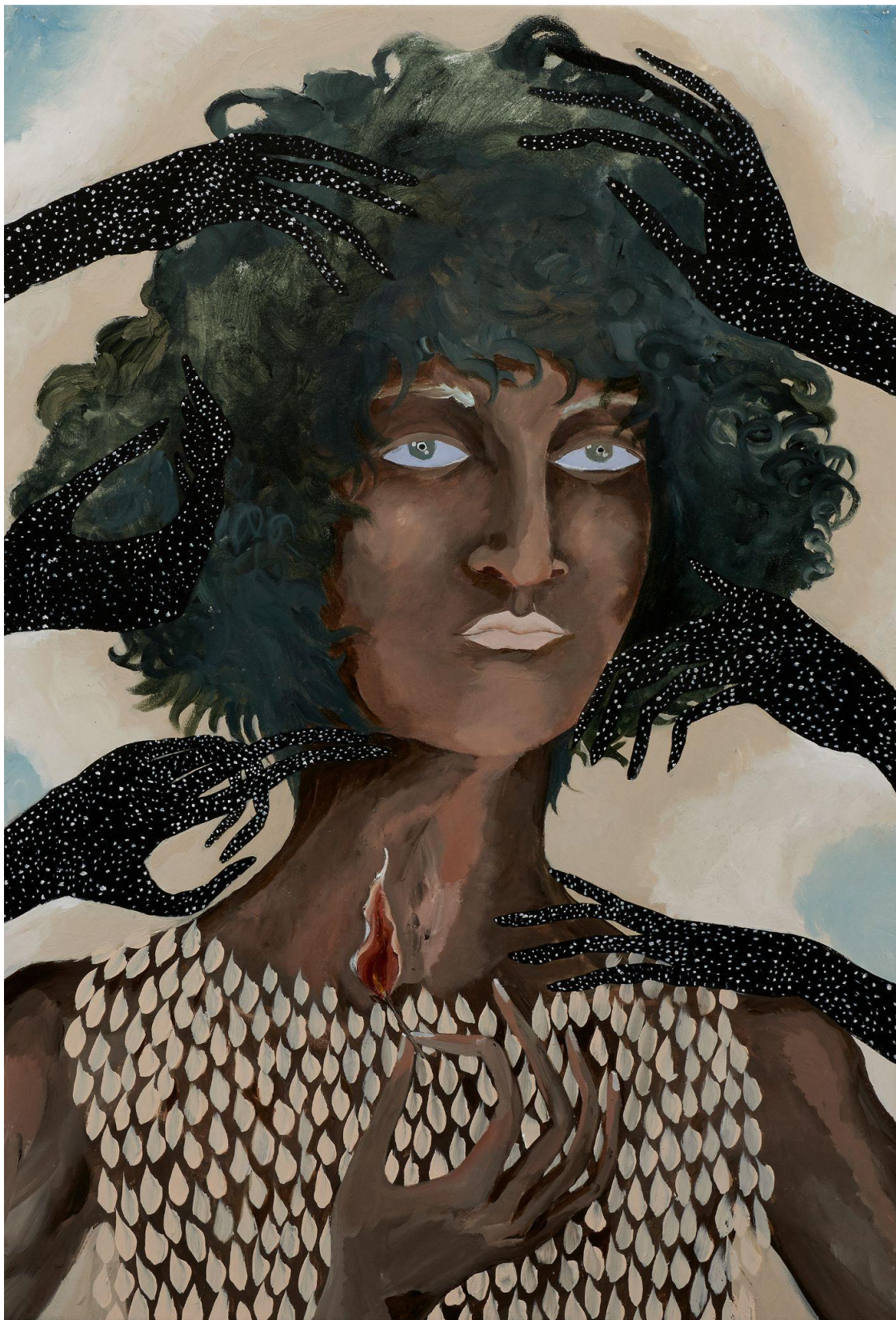


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What was it that made your eyes flicker like that
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I was lonely as the moon
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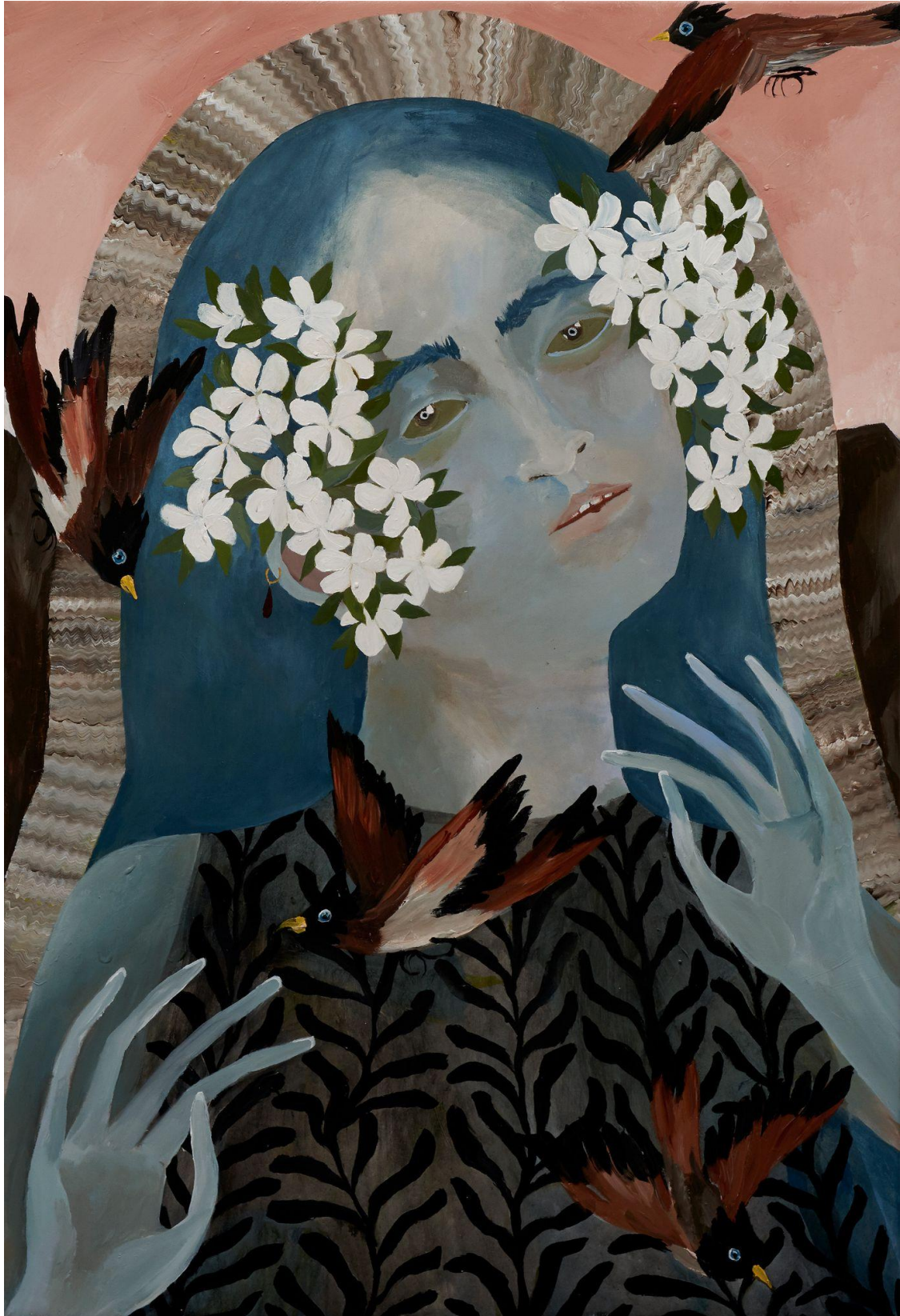


The knowing

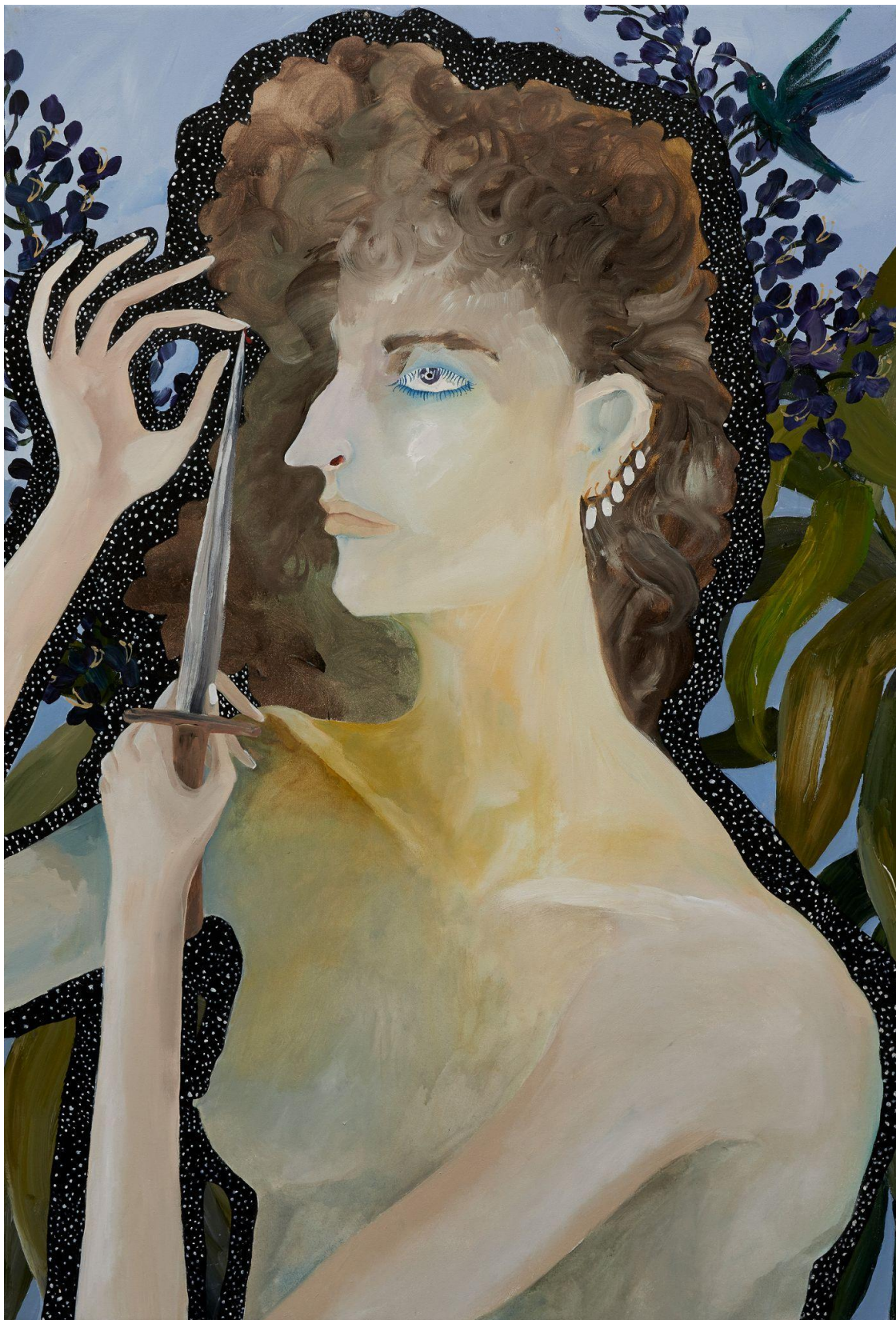
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A deeper understanding
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ACQUIRE



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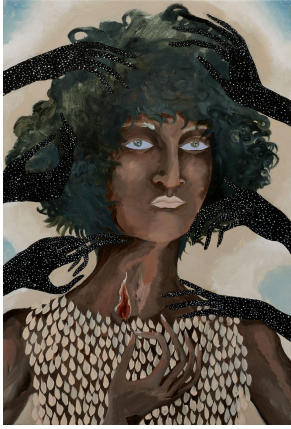
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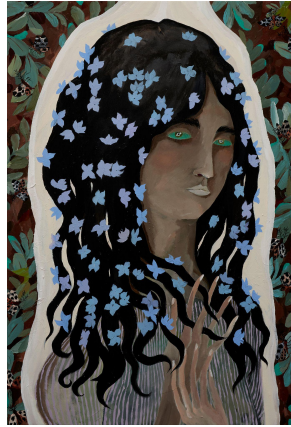
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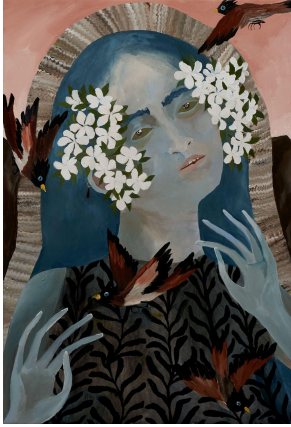
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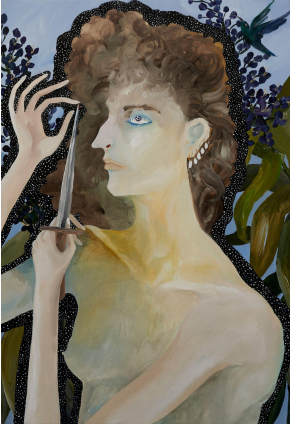
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LEAH FRASER

Born 1983, Sydney, Australia

EDUCATION

2002 Bachelor of Fine Arts, College of Fine Arts, Sydney

AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

2019 Kings Art Prize, Finalist
2017 Portia Geach Memorial Award, Finalist
2016 Moreton Bay Art Prize, Finalist
2016 Waverley Art Prize, Finalist
2014 Blake Prize, Finalist
2014 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Finalist
2012 Art production Residency, Arquetopia, Puebla Mexico
2009 Blake Prize, Finalist

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 'Let her go into the darkness', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2018 'In the beginning there were stars', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2017 'Within You Without You', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2015 'Messages from the World Invisible,' Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2014 'Odyssey and Oracle,' Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2013 'Valley of the Silver Moon,' Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
2010 'The Jabberwocky Prayers,' Gallery at 28, Sydney
'I am the cosmos,' Mills Gallery, Sydney
2009 'Fear and Might,' Black and Blue Gallery, Sydney
'Fever Dreams,' Utopian Slumps, Melbourne
2007 'When Night Comes Falling,' Black and Blue Gallery, Sydney

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 'I AM HERE', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Summer Salon', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2020 'Mystic Woman', Byron School of Art, Byron Bay, NSW
2019 'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2017 Arthouse Gallery Group Show at Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, NSW
Works on Paper Group Show, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2016 'Interstices', Tristian Koenig Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2015 'In the Still', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Under the Sun', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2014 'Mental As', ABC, Sydney, NSW
'Under the Sun,' Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Open House,' The Design Files, Melbourne, VIC
2013 'From the river to the seeker,' Pieces of Eight Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
'Open house,' The Design Files, Sydney, NSW
2010 'Headgear,' Mills Gallery, Sydney, NSW
'Local Produce,' Artfocus Gallery, Sydney, NSW

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2009	'Water,' Gallery at 28, Sydney, NSW 'Red Show,' Gallery at 28, Sydney, NSW
2008	'You Can Count to Ten,' Black and Blue Gallery, Sydney, NSW 'Year Is Over,' Black and Blue Gallery, Sydney, NSW 'Chalk Reindeer,' Chalk Horse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2006	'Emergent iii,' Newport Artworks Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2005	'Grad Show,' COFA Sydney, NSW
2004	'Dissonance,' Kudos Gallery, Sydney, NSW

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 'Profile', The Journal of Australian Ceramics, Vol.53, no.2, 2014
- 'Odyssey and Oracle', The Design Files Blog, Feb 25 2014
- 'Mystic Memories', Vogue Living, Mar-Apr 2014
- 'Victorian Treasure', Country Home Ideas, Vol.13, no.8, 2014
- 'Sydney Home', The Design Files Blog, Feb 20 2013



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