



CURATORIAL+CO.

ISABELLE DE KLEINE

WORLD WAS ON FIRE

SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY 2023

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WORLD WAS ON FIRE

*As the world ignited, you sang your farewell.
And from your hands you dug the earth,
the red rock and the blue that seeped from it.*

My body of work comprises a series of mixed media watercolour paintings that explore the complexities, struggles and richness of human experience. The works speak of the dualities of love and loss, light and dark, the web of experience that weaves together the beautiful and flawed tapestry of ourselves.

The figures depicted are envoys of my contemplations on identity and the psyche. When realisation comes that our reality is fabrication, when we understand the fallibility of ourselves and the falsities we have created; what remains? Who do we become? The works depict the liminal space that we occupy when we are left in loss, and the reconstruction of self that occurs in the wake of grief.

I have taken inspiration from the Western Australian landscape; the land that burns and regrows, the harsh sun and torrential rains, magnificent gorges laced with poison, a place that reinvents itself daily and rises anew. In particular the eastern region of the Pilbara, a place of beauty and destruction. Endless spinifex-covered hills and gorges that divide the land, littered with thermal springs that flow from the disturbed earth. Skies lit both by the bright stars and the glow from distant machines.

The Pilbara holds deep significance for myself as a place that marked the beginning of a new way of being. The symbiosis of this vivid place, as beautiful as it is unnerving.

The essence of opposites in my work is conveyed through both visual and conceptual discussions, aesthetics of fragmentation and collage, the ornamentation of stained glass figuration from the Medieval era. The use of concealment and revelation, aestheticism and discordancy, natural and digital, soft and chaotic; a means to communicate the contrasting nature of reality. Natural and the digital are a further dichotomy, a representation of the constant manipulation and reshaping of self and reality that extends into our physical, metaphysical and digital realms. We are constantly distorted and manipulated through our flawed perceptions. Photo-negative aesthetics, digital distortions, and basic shapes derived from rudimentary Photoshop tools are carried across the body of work.

The images depict primarily female and non-binary figures that move between realism and abstraction, revelation and obfuscation. Faceted shapes, textures and colours intersect the figures, dividing and uniting them. They sit locked in a state of timelessness and quiet contemplation as the world moves around them, finding solace in this recreated land, and meaning in the aftermath.



When the Sky Turned Red, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
153cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$7000



New Versions, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
87.5cm x 68.5cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$3900



Remembering the Sun, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
153cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$7000



In Wittenoom, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
87.5cm x 68.5cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$3900



The Home I Built, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
125cm x 101cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6000



Unspoken, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
125cm x 101cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6000



As the Ash Fell, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
87.5cm x 68.5cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$3900



What Was Left, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
125cm x 101cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6000



Blue Tailings, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
123cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6500



Rewritten, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
123cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6500



In the Liminal, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
87.5cm x 68.5cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$3900



In the Shade, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
123cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6500



The Water Over the Stone, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
153cm x 127cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$7000



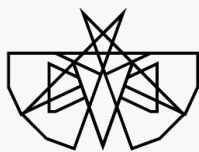
Another Dream, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
125cm x 101cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6000



Running Waters, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
87.5cm x 68.5cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$3900



Strangers of Heart, 2023
Watercolour, gouache + acrylic on paper
125cm x 101cm
Framed under Perspex in Tasmanian oak
\$6000



CURATORIAL+CO.

ART GALLERY + ART CONSULTANCY

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Curatorial+Co. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the country on which the gallery stands, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and cultures.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.