

Sentiment and Sedimentation

Caroline Rannersberger

16 March – 10 April 2016

Despard Gallery, Hobart

Caroline Rannersberger's paintings for Sentiment and Sedimentation speak to the improvisation of the painting process when working directly on site, particularly Bruny Island. As a resident of Bruny, Rannersberger has a strong connection to place, and as such, her work is often driven by intense and impassioned painting sessions. For this exhibition, whilst largely abstract in nature, the artist has focussed on the Isthmus formation joining the north and south islands, locally known as "The Neck", a unique geological feature created by the continual build up of sediment. The layering of sand and the land mass upheavals over millennia, drive Rannersberger's evocative painting method to create a fusion of 'sentiment' and 'sedimentation'.

More broadly Rannersberger's work is a response to the geomorphology of the land. This involves a certain submission to the random 'chaosmos' of the elements that intervene and determine to an extent, the outcome of the painting. To this end, the paint becomes the rock itself; the light; the waves; the reflection in the water. Each panel gives a glimpse of land or ocean around the neck: towards the ends of the natural curvature of the isthmus forming waters where massive rock formations are bastions of the bay: along the stretch of the undulating dunes; inside the shimmering light reflecting off the water; wrapped within the gloaming light of the Neck Lagoon.

The method and experience of painting are dictated both by Rannersberger's surrounds and by the sheer physicality of applying paint. The process of creation involves building dense layers of pigment and medium, creating a kind of archaeological geomorphology in which time itself seems to be captured within each layer, rather like the build up of sediment over time. The application of paint, the scratching back and the rubbing of glazes across the surface, are inseparable from the content and the milieu in which the work is made. This is particularly evident in the "Neck Lagoon Nocturnal series", in which layers of pigment, paint and medium are built up, then scratched back to suggest the experience of painting amongst the scrub and dunes and to mimic how the elements can impact on the process.

Several pieces in this new body of work have developed as a result of collaborating with contemporary musician/composer Julius Schwing over the last year whilst working towards the MONA FOMA exhibition, "EDGE2 Isthmus", held on Bruny Island in January 2016. The darker works in particular resonate with Schwing's piece, "Neck Nocturnal". They recall the Neck at dusk as the shapes and moods shift with the dimming light of the day and the growing swell of darkness forms a chiaroscuro interplay between disappearing light forms and the deepening silhouette of land mass. This experience of the elements is subsumed into the paintings. Similarly, the lighter pieces are almost pure improvisation, where the medium led process and the material are a mimicry of the experience and sensation, as viewed perhaps, (to use another sound track title), "From Above".