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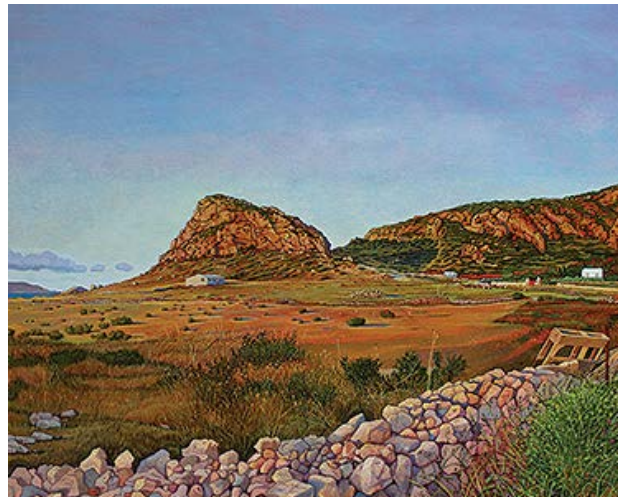
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EXHIBITIONS Eolo Paul Bottaro *Paintings from Sicily* 22nd March 2016 - 16th April 2016

With a professional painting practice that spans 20 years and an uncompromising attitude towards the way in which he works, Eolo Paul Bottaro creates paintings full of symbolism, beauty and intrigue. Staying true to a method of painting that could be likened to the process of the Renaissance Masters, Bottaro continues to grind his own pigments, create compositions based on the mathematics of the Golden Mean. In this debut exhibition at FLG, he draws upon his heritage and the country in which he has spent the last two years while creating this new body of work: Sicily.

Sicily has always been present in my work, because it has been present in me. It is the land my parents left to start a new life in Australia, and growing up it remained a mysterious place in my imagination. It was never quite Italy, but rather a land on its own, a distant country that I had constructed in my mind through hearing the stories of my parents, which often included how happy they were to say goodbye to it in the 1960s. In 2014 I decided to pack up my Northcote studio and all the comforts that come with it. It was time to set sail for this place that authors from Goethe to Peter Robb had written so passionately about. This was serious, checking out from the art world of Australia for a time, and immersing myself in a familiar yet ultimately foreign culture and country. Paintings from Sicily is an exhibition that does not shy away from romance. The romance of ruins, but also of a country steeped in



EoloPaul Bottaro

Warm wind coming from the west - Favignana Sicily 2016

egg tempera and oil on linen

131cm x 162cm

history and brimming with the remnants of various ancient cultures that have sought to possess it through the ages. Yet here we are in the present, and a sense of displacement pervades. The idyllic countryside resplendent with the faded glory of crumbling villas and ancient olive groves, is also punctuated by gaudy billboards, freeways, abandoned building constructions, piles of trash. The past and the present seem somehow out of sync. However the ghosts of the past refuse to leave, and the old bones of Sicilia continue to whisper their strange call to those who have a mind to listen.
Eolo Paul Bottaro, 2015.

Bottaro has an extensive CV and has been a semi-finalist in the Doug Moran Portrait Prize (2013) a finalist in the the Banyule Works on Paper Prize (2013) Fleurieu Art Prize (2013) the Geelong Acquisitive Print Award (2013, Acquired) Muswellbrook Art Prize finalist (2013) the AME Bale Art Prize (2012) Winner of the People's Choice Award at the National Works of Paper Prize at the Mornington Regional Gallery (2012) Winner of the Nillumbik Art Prize 2012, a finalist in the Prometheus Art Prize (2011) a finalist in the Rick Amor Small Drawing Prize (2010) and a finalist in the Archibald Prize in 2008, among many others. His work is held in public and private collections including the National Museum, Canberra; the Geelong Art Gallery, the City of Darebin Art Collection; the Victorian College of the Arts Collection and various private collections nationally.

'In the artist statement for this exhibition, Eolo Paul Bottaro writes "Sicily has always been present in my work, because it has been present in me." A brief survey of his last eight solo exhibitions reveals the truth in these words. This distant land of his ancestors, girt by the cerulean waters of the Mediterranean has long fired Bottaro's artistic imagination, and he has painted various Sicilian themes and locations intermittently over the years. From the snow-covered slopes of Mount Etna, the active volcano that regularly erupts above the city of Catania, to the dry golden hills of the economically impoverished provence of Enna. Each exhibition over the past 15 years has featured at least one major work based on Sicily.

Yet while the land of his parents birth has never been far from the mind of this Melbourne born artist, Bottaro



EoloPaul Bottaro
La Tonnara, Vendicari 2016
egg tempera & oil on linen
119cm x 149cm



EoloPaul Bottaro
Refresh 2016
egg tempera & oil on linen
110cm x 138cm

has built his reputation in Australia through forging a distinctive oeuvre of richly coloured and beautifully composed figurative paintings, mainly of Melbourne. These works often feature contemporary people engaged in enigmatic, mythically inspired scenarios in an urban environment, replete with recognizable landmarks of the artist's home city. This statement of place has always been integral to the expression of identity in Bottaro's works, which boldly proclaim who he is and where he is from.

In this exhibition Bottaro has devoted an entire body of work to exploring a very different place that has been partially dormant, but always present in his psyche. Bottaro moved to Sicily two years ago to set up his studio, and commenced travelling through the island. What he found was like an echo chamber of the various cultures that have sought to claim it through the ages. Since the 7th century BC, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and Normans all settled or invaded Sicily, lured by its fertile lands and strategic position. These influences have shaped a particular cultural identity that while part of Italy is completely unique, expressed in its art and architecture along with the resilient character of the people.

Yet vying against the glorious vestiges of history is the impact of a much uglier modernity. Evidence of the crushing corruption and poverty that led so many Sicilians to depart in the 20th century is easy to find. Abandoned construction sites abound, as do piles of rubbish left rotting on the side of the road. Once glorious historic villas and farm-houses are dotted throughout the island but are left to ruin, and there are countless stories of economic hardship, criminal activity and bureaucratic mess.

Yet while acknowledging the darkness, this exhibition celebrates the natural beauty and cultural richness of Sicily that continues to endure. Subtle symbolic cues still exist in the works (Bottaro always enjoys posing a visual riddle for his viewers), yet he has removed much of the allegorical and mythical content prevalent in his previous works. What remains is an openness – a visual and psychological sense of space that allows the physical environment with its signs of ancient and modern life, to do the talking.

There is much pleasure to be found in viewing these



EoloPaul Bottaro
Self Portrait with Fayum Book 2016
egg tempera & oil on linen
64cm x 56cm



EoloPaul Bottaro
Hotel La Pineta, Chiaramonte 2016
egg tempera & oil on linen
100cm x 80cm



EoloPaul Bottaro
The Call 2016
egg tempera & oil on linen
80cm x 100cm

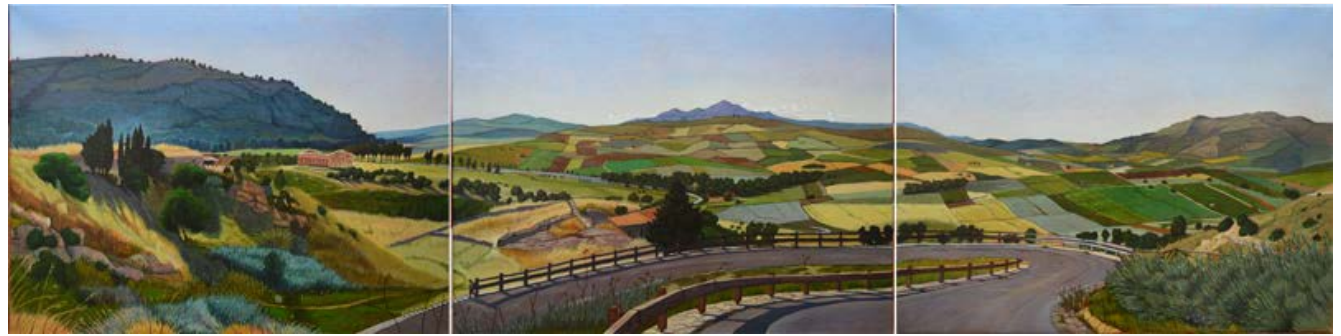
works. Bottaro evokes a sweeping sense of distance and space, where the eye is led through valleys and across vast planes, pausing to take in fine brush strokes that capture individual blades of grass in the foreground, or the rocks of a dry-stone fence or a crumbled ancient structure. While always consistent is the technical skill with which the paintings have been slowly crafted – one glowing glaze of translucent oil paint after another.

In these paintings we look upon Sicily through the un-jaded eyes of one reconnecting with a land that is rich with personal meaning. Transfixed by the spirit of the forms within this new, yet very old place, one gets the sense that for Bottaro this is the beginning of a greater journey into new terrain.'

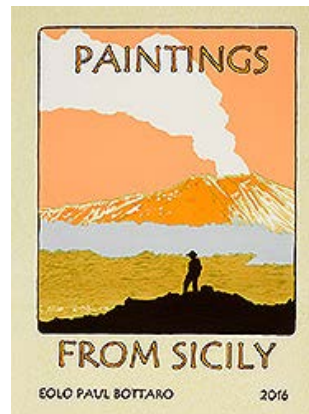
Essay by Marguerite Brown MAArtCur 2016

[EOLOPAUL BOTTARO PROFILE](#)
[DOWNLOAD BIO / CV \(PDF\)](#)

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EoloPaul Bottaro
Segesta 2016
 egg tempera & oil on linen
 45cm x 182cm framed hand-stained Tasmanian oak



EoloPaul Bottaro
Paintings from Sicily 2016
 lithograph - editions 14 of 15
 available
 76cm x 56cm , \$990 unframed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Study of Antonello da Messina (D'ignato Marinaio) 2016
 egg tempera and oil on board



EoloPaul Bottaro
Did you bring the cannoli? 2016
 egg tempera and oil on linen
 36cm x 54cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Road to Acate 2016
 egg tempera and oil on linen
 39cm x 54cm , framed

9cm x 7cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
The Road to Palermo - Remembering Falcone 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
16cm x 20cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Study of Antonello da Messina (Madonna) 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
9cm x 7cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
The Road to Gela 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
18cm x 29cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Roma 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
15cm x 20cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Black 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
14cm x 20cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
The Road to Corleone 2016
egg tempera and oil on board
8cm x 13cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Baroque Catania 2016
egg tempera and oil on
board
18cm x 13cm , framed



EoloPaul Bottaro
Wish You Were Here 2016
egg tempera and oil on linen
25cm x 35cm , framed