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CLAIRE BRIDGE

A TERRIBLE BEAUTY

5 - 27 September 2010

'All things are interconnected. It is a terrible beauty to know this. My work explores the notion that the way in which we as people, as humanity, relate to each other is also reflected in how we relate to the planet. When we are in conflict as peoples, as individuals and as nations - our relationship with the planet is also in conflict. The weather itself, inseparable from Gaia, the eco-system of the planet on which we have a major impact upon, reflects the turbulence or calm of these relationships. We are a culture that responds to form - to the seduction of beauty, sex and drama, more specifically to chaos or even tragedy. We want our heartstrings tugged; we want to feel the pull of attraction and desire. Yet these point to our deeper yearning for connection. My work explores this interconnectedness, the invisible and visible entanglements between each other, between humanity and the natural world. What is in the formless unconscious is reflected in form. Nature is echoing the consciousness of humanity. The planet breathes and sighs to the thoughts of humanity. Symbolism is woven throughout the works. The orchid has at its basis da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, symbolic of the human form and our relationship with the cosmos. The turbulent skies in both "The Bird-Eaters (Theraphosa blondi)" and "Leonardo's Secret" which both have this underlying geometry as their basis, are about my overwhelming sense of awe in the face of Nature. The swirling majesty of the cosmos. The drama and chaos of creation.

Did you feel the Earth Move and Rising Tides, Signs and El Niño Street speak directly to my concerns about climate change and global warming, rising oceans, floods, the impact on population migration and the increasing scarcity of fresh water, drought and earthquakes. The two former paintings embody the notion of the need for a feminine paradigm to arise more prominently in how we relate to each other and to the planet. Imbued in the works are also aspects of eroticism, sexuality and desire. It is through connection that we can make these shifts.

Throughout the works native Australian birds are found, which I have included for both their symbolic qualities of flight, freedom and hope and for the very real and current crisis that our native birds are facing mass extinctions, according to studies by Ralph Mac Nally, Andrew F. Bennett James R. Thomson, James Q. Radford, Gregory Horrocks, Peter A. Vesik in their article "Collapse of an avifauna: climate change appears to exacerbate habitat loss and degradation", Diversity and Distributions, Volume 15, Issue 4. Climate change is impacting on bird populations such that our not only previously threatened birds but also our ordinary birds are disappearing. In a single woodland area studied when the first 2 years of the study were compared with the last 2 years, they observed a decline in bird populations of over 150,000 birds and virtually no bird breeding in the final year.

Diamonds are forever, Pearl Hunter, Le Petit Bijou and To have and not to hold all explore ideas of truth, beauty, love, greed, coveting, consuming and possession. I return again to the constant theme throughout my work of impermanence, the fading of youth, the impermanence of life and of relationships. We can not possess another as much as we might desire to hold on to them. To try to possess another person, or any aspect of the natural world is to distort our relationship with it and create conflict. When we relate to each other with respect, we recognize that we share a space, delicate and fragile. Impermanent. There is wonder in that.'

Claire Bridge 2010

In loving memory of Jameson King.



Leonardo's Secret 2010
oil on linen
167.5 x 134.5cm



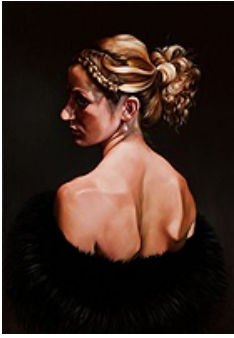
The Bird-eaters (Theraphosa blondi)
oil on linen
167.5 x 134.4cm



Did You Feel The Earth Move? 2010
oil on linen
123 x 104cm



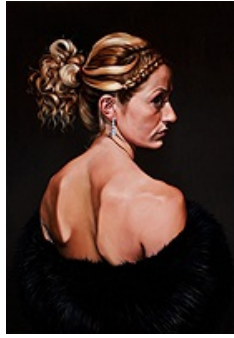
Rising Tides
oil on linen
123 x 104cm



Pearl Hunter
oil on linen
123 x 86cm



To have and not to hold
oil on linen
123 x 86cm



Diamonds are forever
oil on linen
123 x 86cm



Le Petit Bijou
oil on linen
20.2 x 15cm

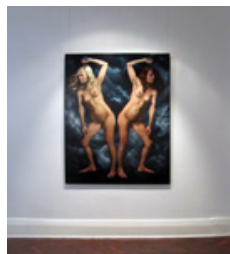
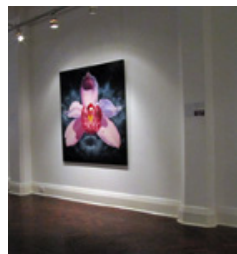
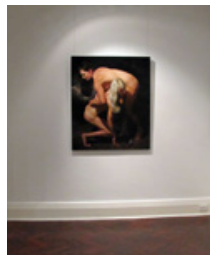
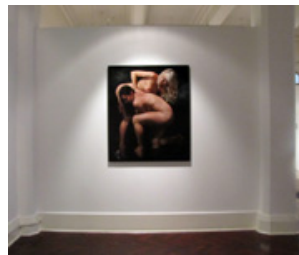
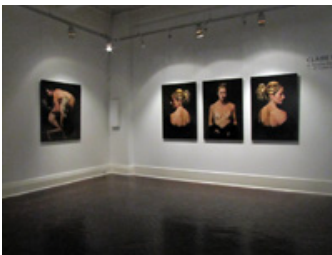
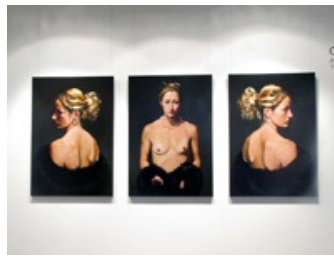
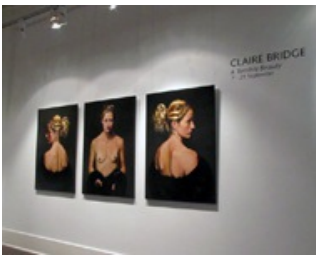


Signs
oil on linen
36.4 x 48.4cm



El Niño Street
oil on linen
36.4 x 48.4cm

Installation views





The Age, Arts Section
7 September 2010