

AMBER-ROSE HULME

Forsaken Tranquility

14 February - 4 March 2017



The glowing hues and gentle visual qualities commonly associated with pastel drawing are a far cry from the grunge aesthetic that characterises contemporary street art. Yet Amber-rose Hulme brings these unlikely bedfellows together in her latest exhibition *Forsaken Tranquility*. In it, Hulme investigates abandoned industrial spaces and the graffiti that enlivens their interiors, finely rendered in the artist's medium of choice – pastel on paper. The exhibition also features a series of self-portraits where graffiti is scrawled upon the artist's skin, shrouding her own visage with an indecipherable language that resonates with untold thoughts and sentiments.

To find source material for this body of work, Hulme scoured derelict industrial sites armed with a camera and an intrepid sense of curiosity. An old brickworks in Box Hill, a former pillow factory and the defunct Fremantle Power Station all feature. Once hubs of industrious activity, these spaces are now empty of any signs of their original purpose, aside from the occasional discarded piece of heavy metal machinery. In the absence of ordered productivity, they do however become filled with other, less tangible things.

There is a long history of portraying ruins in European art and literature, and Hulme's images of contemporary ruination touch on some of these established notions. In the eighteenth century an almost cultish appreciation of ruins developed in artistic circles, as they became a potent symbol of the inexorable forces of time and nature, which render even the greatest civilisations to dust. The vision of crumbling edifices from antique cultures manifested a melancholy awareness of the transience of human endeavour, of beauty tinged with sadness. Such timeless ideas can be detected in Hulme's works, though here they find form through her use of contemporary urban language.

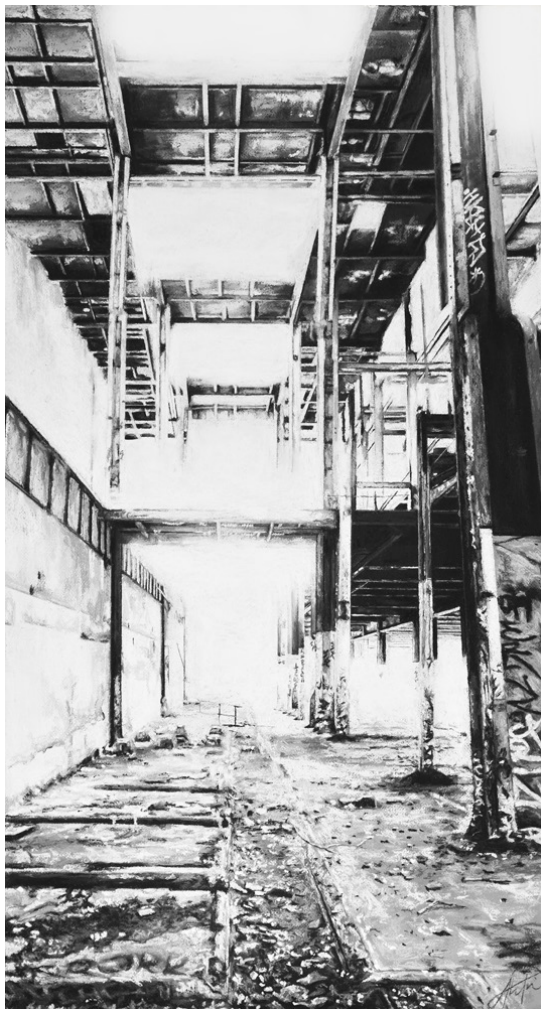
In the current series Hulme's use of light is one of the most powerful tools she deploys to infuse these spaces with evocative atmospherics. In works such as *Forgotten Glow* and *Structured Chaos*, light floods through large warehouse windows to imbue these vast buildings with an almost cathedral-like sublimity. This also serves to illuminate the densely layered graffiti art that such abandoned buildings frequently attract.

Hulme is interested in the idea of graffiti as a visual form of conversation between the many individuals who have contributed to these constantly evolving murals. In the context of these otherwise empty spaces, the letters and shapes that form this unintelligible language seem to clamour for attention in Hulme's work. She renders the graffiti in sections of vivid colour within otherwise monochrome settings, which serve to amplify the voices of those who've left their mark over time. They make a noisy intervention in otherwise silent, forlorn spaces, and augment the aesthetic richness of their fading surrounds.

The inclusion of a series self-portraits that are inscribed with graffiti create an interesting figurative counterpoint within the exhibition. They explore the concept of self identity, with words that act like clues to the hidden realm of the artist's psyche. They also bring a strong human presence into an exhibition that predominantly explores absent places.

In both her portrait and industrial interiors Hulme skillfully describes the rich textures and detail that define her subjects. In doing so she alludes to ideas not so easily perceived, that dwell beneath these finely wrought surfaces.

Essay by Marguerite Brown, MAArtCur, 2017



Cluttered Silence 2017
pastel on paper, framed
101cm x 55cm



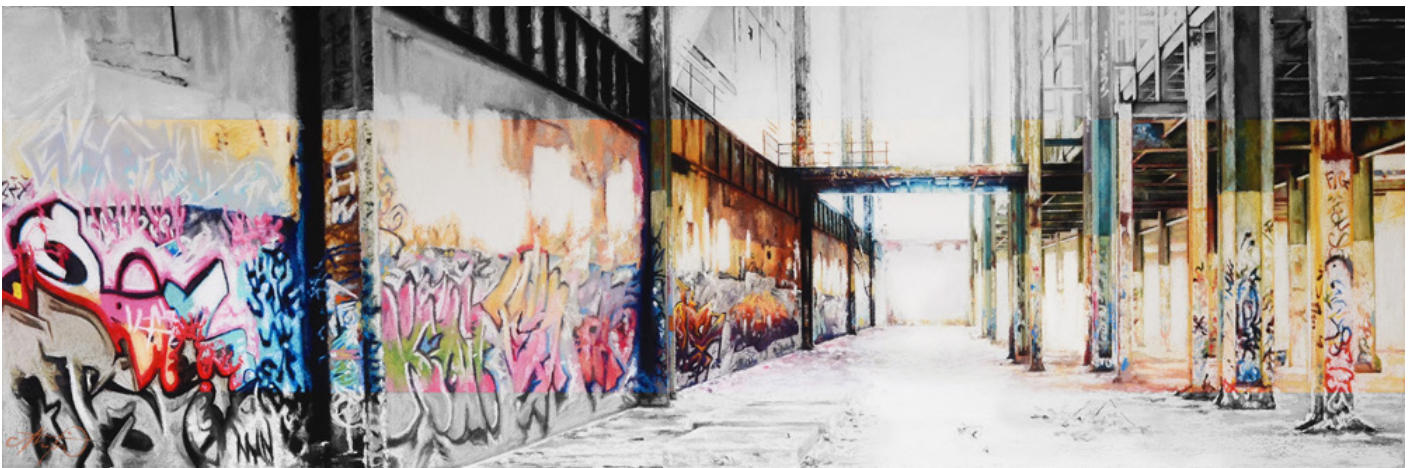
Decommissioned Calm 2017
pastel on paper
150cm x 100cm , framed



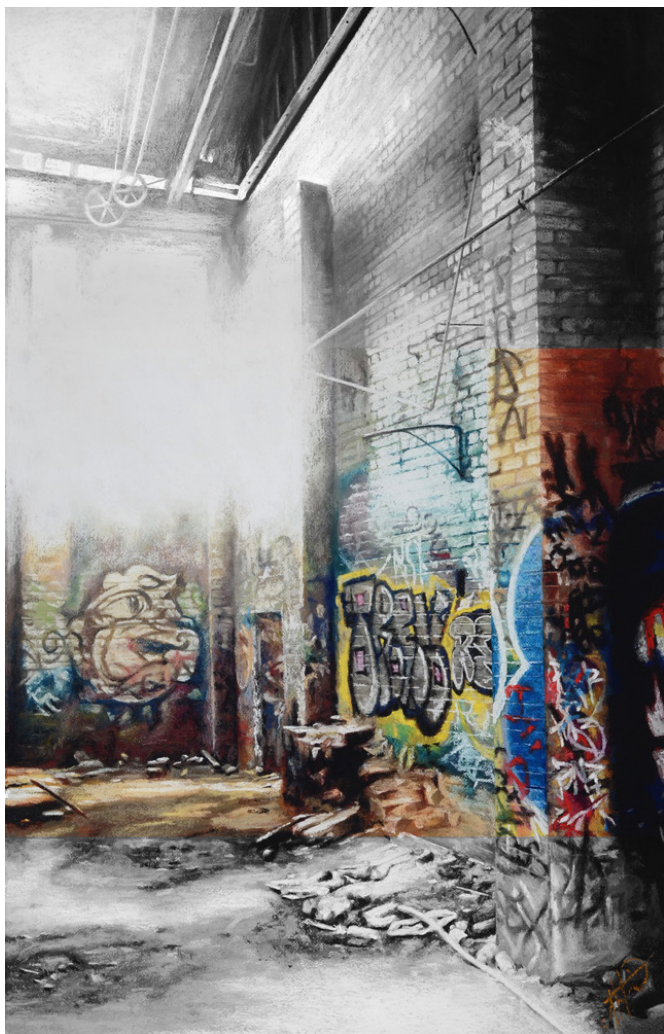
Defined 2017
pastel and acrylic on paper
66cm x 73cm , framed



Discarded Respite 2017
pastel on paper
66cm x 101cm , framed



Distant Conversation 2017
pastel on paper
50cm x 150cm , framed



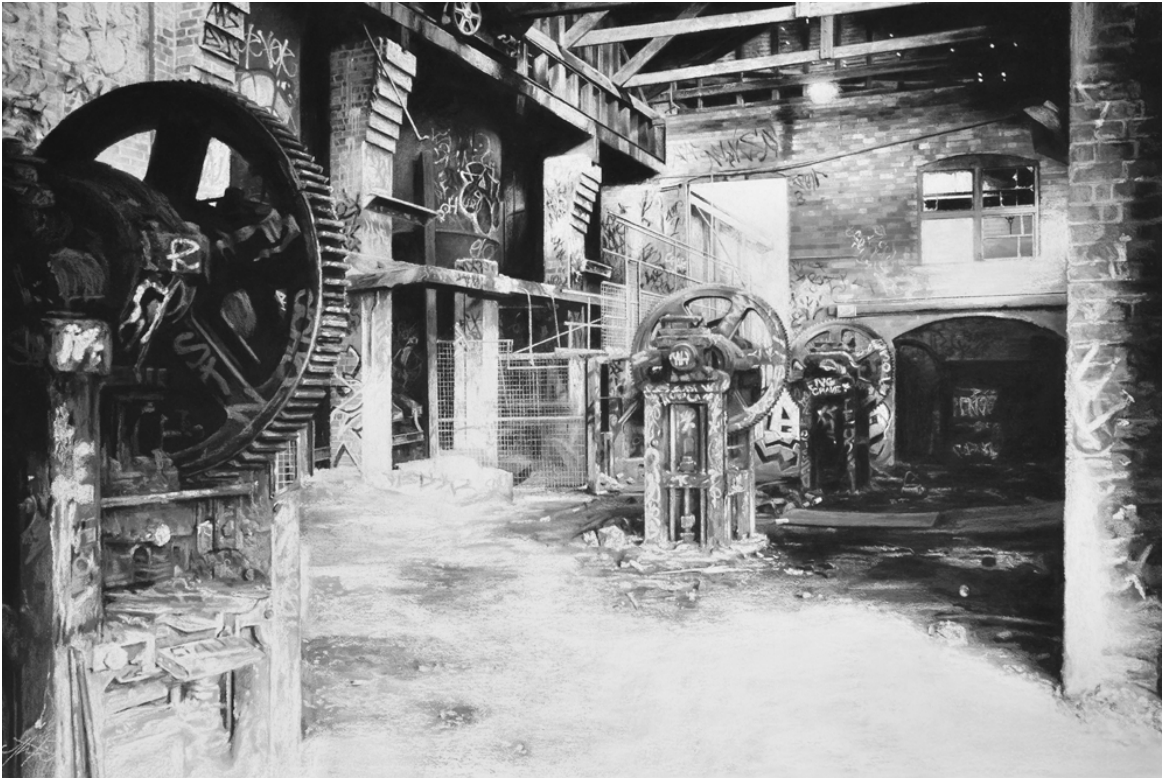
Forgotten Glow 2017
pastel on paper
101cm x 66cm , framed



Identity 2017
pastel on paper
76cm x 56cm , framed



Marked 2017
pastel and acrylic on paper
70cm x 100cm , framed



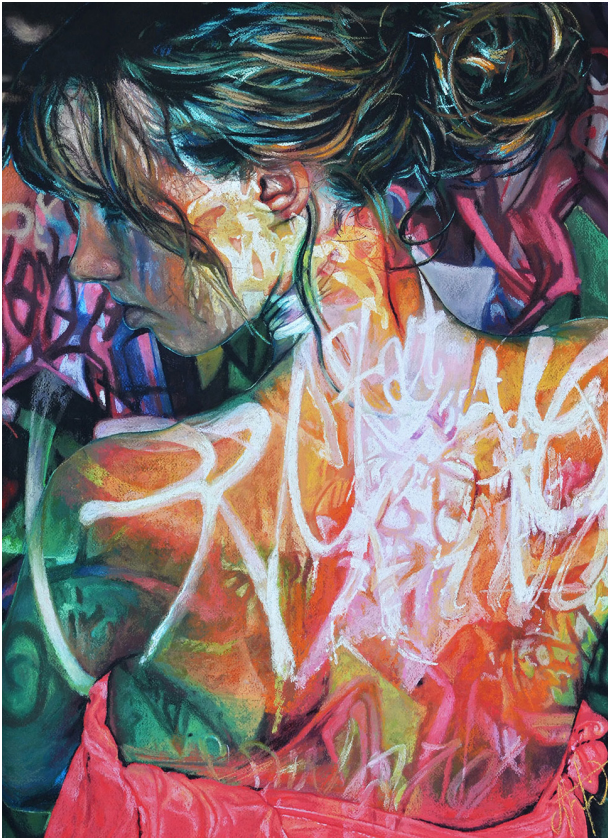
Industriously Numb 2017
pastel on paper
100cm x 150cm , framed



Prevail 2017
pastel on paper
28cm x 28cm , framed



Stand 2017
pastel on paper
28cm x 28cm , framed



Resolve 2017
pastel on paper
76cm x 56cm , framed



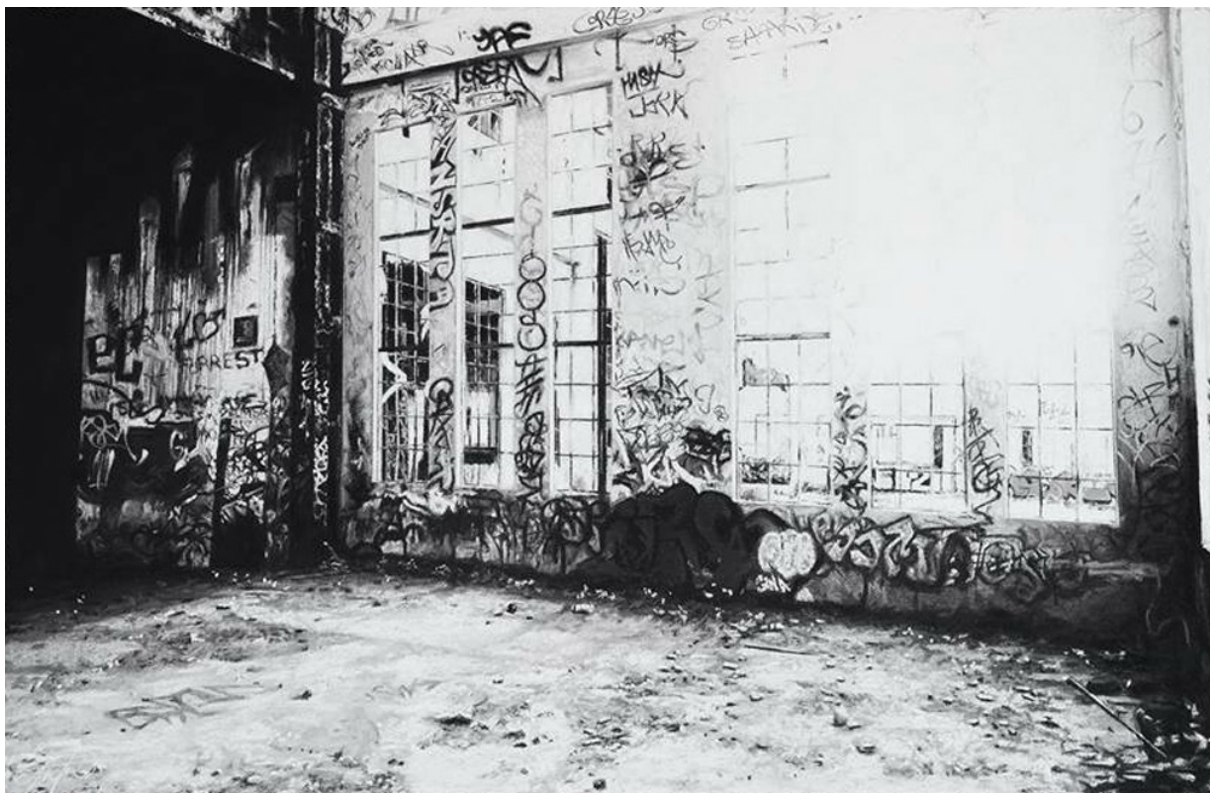
Self 2017
pastel on paper
76cm x 56cm , framed



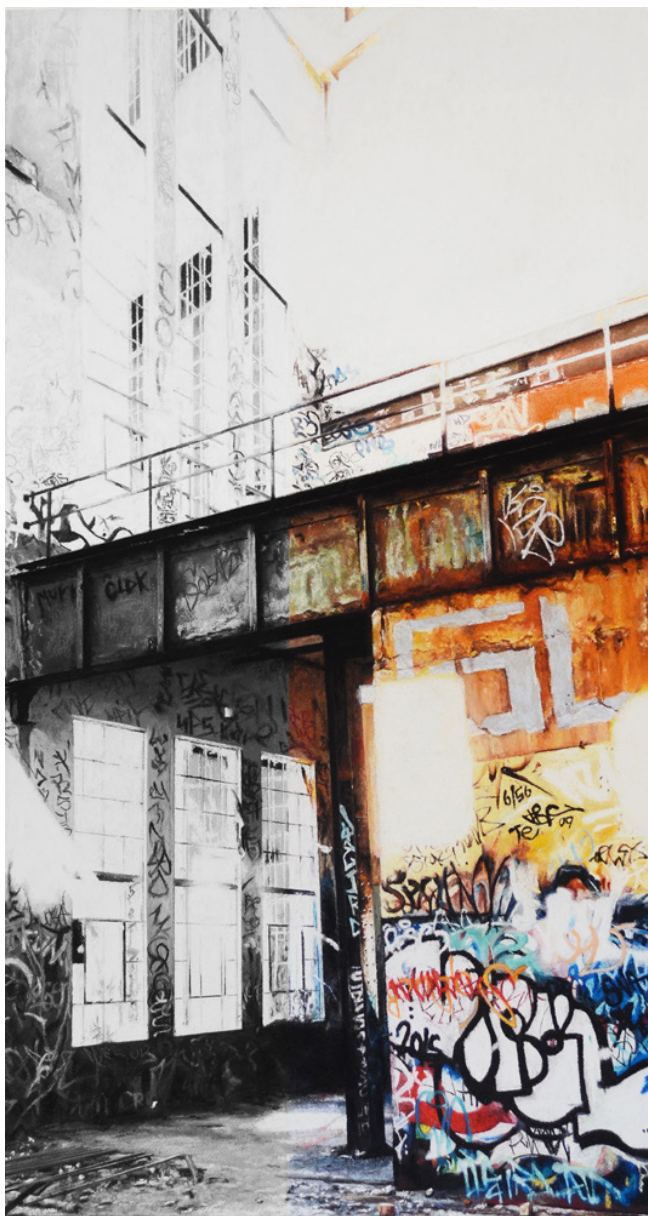
Secluded Rest 2017
pastel on paper
66cm x 101cm , framed



Structured Chaos 2017
pastel on paper
101cm x 66cm , framed



Tranquil Neglect 2017
pastel on paper
66cm x 101cm , framed



Secluded Rest 2017
pastel on paper
66cm x 101cm , framed



Vacant Affinity 2017
pastel on paper
50cm x 150cm , framed