

William Breen



WILLIAM BREEN'S PAINTINGS can be generally divided into two main themes of urban and rural landscapes. William is preoccupied with light, and its effects on these landscapes.

He describes his paintings as being moments of "clarity, suspended in time and space, projected upon an emotive, urban landscape." These urban scapes have a beautiful diffused light, where everything is in sun drenched soft focus. William

carefully selected unusual locations in Perth and Fremantle to paint. These are shop facades and walls that we pass regularly, yet it is their unobtrusiveness, their everyday nature that William finds beguiling and seductive. They include Crackle for Tackle, situated across from the Perth train station, Wildflower factory, located in Fremantle, and Massage specialist, an old Chinese herbalist storefront on Newcastle Street in the city.

Breen states: "I am attracted to the urban landscape... because I can identify with it and personify

myself in it. It is also an excellent vehicle to project my subject matter, shadows and light, which create the mood of the paintings, giving them personality. I try to create a seductively, meditative stillness, and contrast this with orchestrated utopian colour harmonies creating a kind of musical silence, a melancholy bliss. I like to turn something ordinary into something extraordinary, something beyond reality. Create something beautiful from something banal."

These urban landscapes will be contrasted with a series of

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contemplative rural landscapes that are dwarfed by clouded Victorian skies. Two verge on being abstract interpretations of clouds, or hills viewed through thick mist. They are an important addition to the exhibition, as they represent some of the dualities and contradictions that William finds intriguing: Individual / Universal, Romantic / Clinical, Classical / Contemporary, Figurative / Abstract, Melancholic / Inspiring, Static image / Changing reality.

William Breen's enviable skill in depicting rural landscapes and distinctly Melbourne landmarks communicates a suspended moment that encapsulates both beauty and stillness. Best characterized by his use of soft



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focus and subtle veneration, his paintings are testament to his skills of observation and spatial rendering. Cool and quiet, they seduce the viewer with their classical composition. Situated in a space somewhere between painting and photography, the meditative contemplation of Breen's work expresses both a moment of significance and the promise of possibility.

Breen says: "The images echo a state of suspended animation, when everything slows down to a point where one can appreciate the contemplative nature of a world in balance, a world where everything is in its right place: an ideal vision. Although each painting is an intuitive "moment of clarity", there is also a nostalgic quality, a half remembered past. The scenes are suspended in time and space in an emotive architectural landscape. Bathed in a diffused atmospheric light, the meditative nature of the urban image transcends the banal or familiar, into something sublime". ■

William Breen is represented by Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne.

EXHIBITION
5 to 23 August, 2014
Flinders Lane Gallery

www.flg.com.au

- 01 Lowlands, 2014, oil on linen, 92 x 137cm
 - 02 The Road 1, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 51cm
 - 03 The Road 2, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 51cm
 - 04 The Road 3, 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 51cm
 - 05 Delicious, 2014, oil on linen, 82 x 183cm
- Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne