

Hermitage

ADRIAN JACKMAN PATRICK MALONE GRANT WHIBLEY

HERMITAGE

Think about the idea of a hermitage and you think of retreat, of private endeavour, seclusion and reflection – it could be a metaphor for the experience of the artist in the world. Thinking further and *The Hermitage* is also the name of a Russian museum with one of the most extensive art collections in existence. They say it is so overwhelming that visitors are encouraged to tour the museum in a series of brief visits rather than one frenetic and exhausting marathon tour – this again seems an apt analogy for the wider experiencing of art. In the context of this 2007 exhibition, titled *Hermitage*, showing work by painters Adrian Jackman, Patrick Malone and Grant Whibley, the place for and role of the painter, and with it the nature of painting, is examined. As Whibley notes, the exhibition provides this group of three painters the chance to explore the commonality of their interest in painting as they take the opportunity to emerge from the seclusion of their own practices to “come out into the light of day, share a mystery with others and then go back inside.” While each artist has developed their ideas individually they acknowledge the tight thread that exists between them as painters who are responding to the multi-disciplined art world, the culture of mass information and the rapidly changing environment around them.

Adrian Jackman, Patrick Malone and Grant Whibley are three artists who first met during their early days at Elam in the 1990's. Now, 16 years later, the connection remains strong along with an enduring understanding that painting is the most direct form of expression these artists utilise. **H**

Moving into painting

Adrian Jackman

Reflecting on the nature of painting and the role of the painter, Adrian Jackman advocates for a return to the studio. “This is the starting point,” he says. “Here, in the studio, the artist can set up a framework, a series of experiments or conditions for painting. Then you can start to develop ideas around style, methods and intention, and set about to bring it all together – start to move from a position of narrative into an exploration of painting itself.” Acting as continuous threads in his work have been issues surrounding environmentalism, the interaction between painting and photography, and the manufactured landscape but central to his thinking is the artist and the studio. In fact, Jackman describes the interior of the studio as a laboratory or, at the extreme, a zone of exclusion.

A flipping between exteriors and the often isolated structures of interiors, between the public and the private, then, is a recurring theme in his work. The geometric patterning of the studio floor forms a grid like structure in paintings such as *Departed*, 2007 and *Ghost Ship*, 2007, while the playful painting of objects such as a melting ice-cream signal the passage of time.



GHOST SHIP, 2007. Acrylic on canvas, 1524 x 1220mm

Adrian Jackman

In *Happiness*, 2006, it is an external melting we encounter, as Jackman paints a landscape from another zone of exclusion, that around the destroyed Chernobyl Power plant. Now, as the forces of nature and time take over once again, it is the artificial, striped pink buildings that are melting away.

Jackman has long been interested in dislocated time and the clash between history and contemporary culture. He draws together a sci-fi sense of the artificial computer world, with its flat lighting, pixilated surfaces, photo-shopped imagery, and edgy colours, interpreting its constructed reality through art historical painterly practices – the treatment of interiors in Dutch paintings for example, or the flat perspective found in the early Renaissance. In paintings such as *Fat over Lean*, 2006, Jackman combines these influences to create a dream like interior that time-travels between eras and presents a theatrical scenario that hovers between the fabricated and the real, between destruction and optimism. It is a reality conjured up from within the mind of the artist and the zone of the studio. **H**



Adrian Jackman

FAT OVER LEAN, 2006. Acrylic, pencil & silver leaf on canvas, 1677 x 2241mm



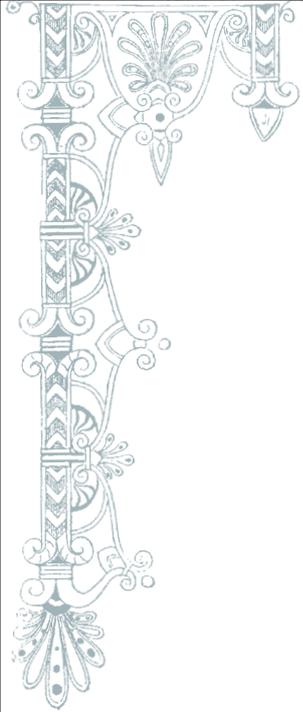
Adrian Jackman

THE GENERATION GAME, 2007. Acrylic on canvas, 914 x 1220mm



Adrian Jackman

HAPPINESS, 2007. Acrylic on canvas, 1524 x 1220 mm



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