

An abstract painting featuring a figure in the upper half, wearing a white head covering and a white garment. The figure's face is partially obscured by dark, expressive lines. Below the figure is a large, vibrant area of orange and red, with some blue and purple tones. The overall style is gestural and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a mix of colors.

COMA

Sydney Contemporary  
*Fair Magazine*

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A painting of a person's back and shoulder, rendered in a style that emphasizes texture and color. The upper portion of the image shows the back and shoulder in shades of beige, tan, and light brown, with visible brushstrokes and a sense of depth. The lower portion of the image shows a bright blue cloth or fabric draped over the person's back, also with visible brushstrokes. The overall composition is a close-up, focusing on the physical form and the interplay of light and shadow.

Kansas

Smeaton

*In*

*Conversation*

**Chloe Morrissey:** Your current series expands upon the themes on the themes from your first exhibition, *Desire*. Can you describe how your artistic focus has evolved?

**Kansas Smeaton:** The initial show was really an introduction to the innate experiences of desire, referencing Rococo and 18th-century painters like (François) Boucher. It was about tapping into something universal—how desire is an in-built, evolutionary aspect of humanity. From there, my next show started to introduce elements of darkness and mythology, continuing to explore desire, but beginning to focus more on specific mythological figures like Diana and Artemis (The Greek goddess Artemis and her Roman Equivalent Diana) and how concepts of desire have unfolded historically.



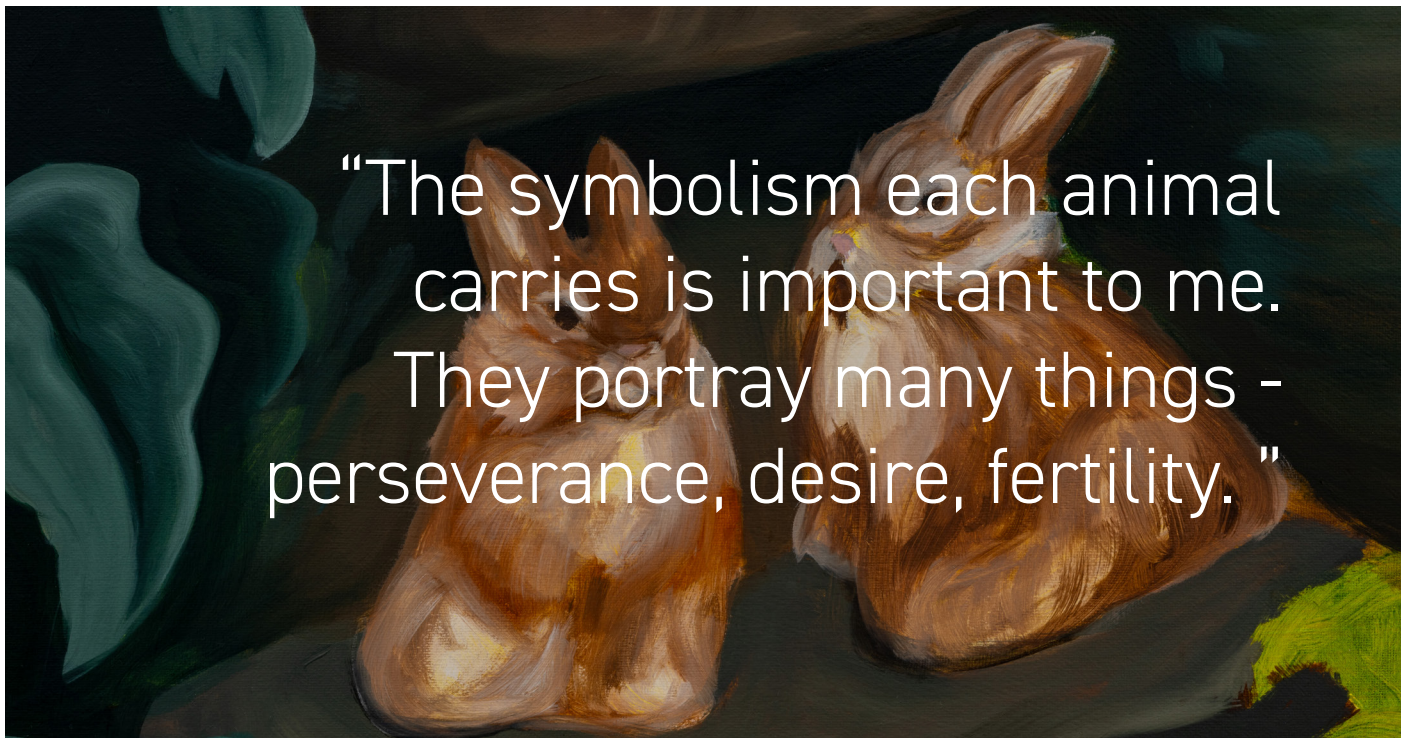
“Mythology resonates across all cultures and societies; it’s a lens through which we view our own cultural identities.”

**CM:** I can see in a lot of your reference images the use of a mirror or nods to reflection and perspective. Is this a literal expression of this idea of holding up a lens or mirror to yourself and the inner psyche?

**KS:** I wanted to use the mirror as a reference to these ideas of the shadow self, a concept I’m very much still exploring. It represents the parts of ourselves that we prefer to keep hidden. In mythology, gods and

goddesses often display both admirable and dark attributes. This duality is fascinating because it challenges how we perceive strength and anger in women. The shadow self, according to Jung, is a facet of our personality or our sense of self that we might consider shameful or wrong somehow. It is something that is driven by emotion and primal instinct and more often than not is repressed. I think the shadow self is a really interesting idea because it is something that is considered to be a deep, internal part of our soul yet it is also dictated by the external world.

**CM:** In earlier works you began to introduce animals on the periphery of scenes, but in these works they have become more of a focal point. Why is that?

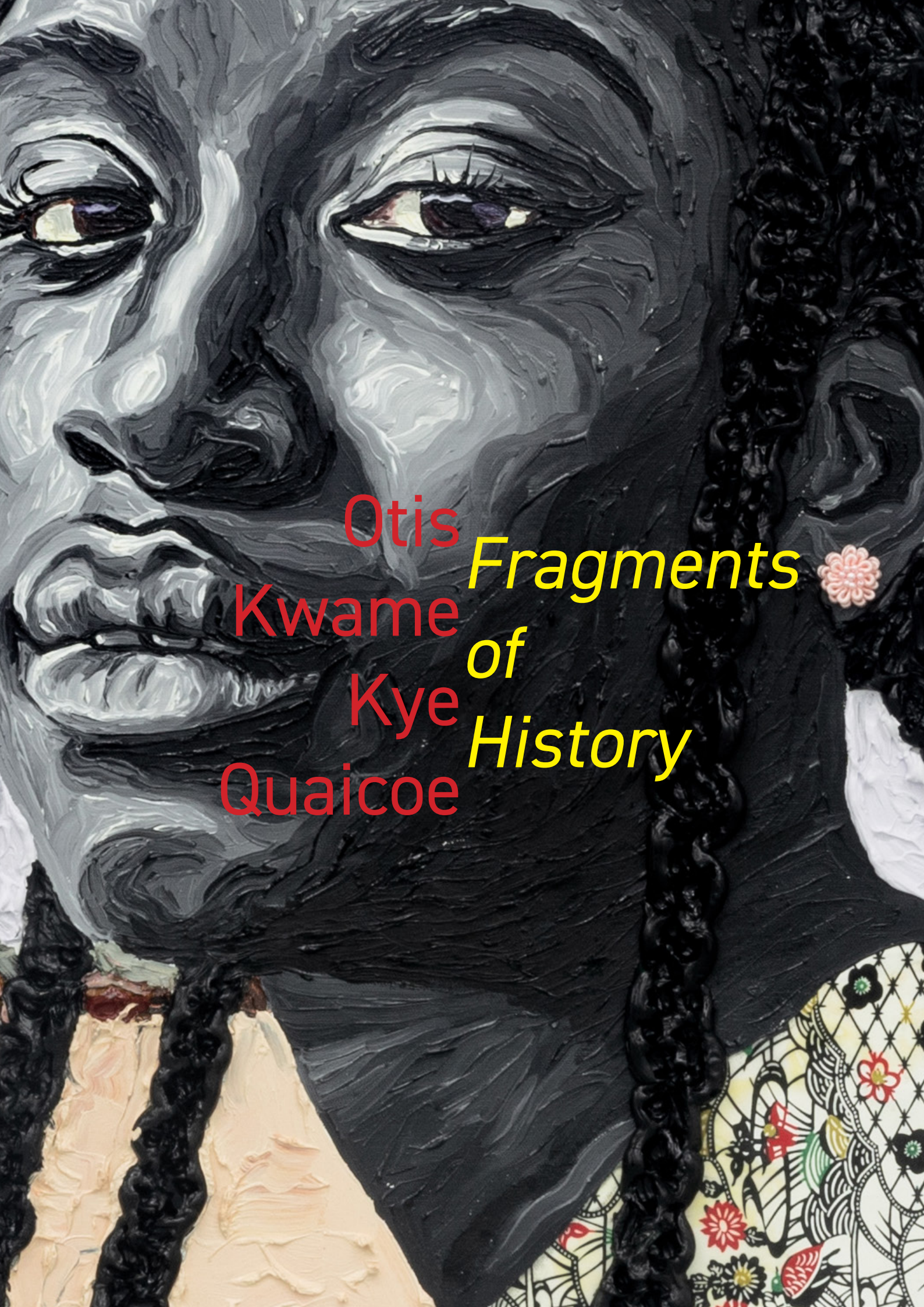


**KS:** Animals have begun to play a significant role in my paintings, particularly in this new body of work for Sydney Contemporary that is focusing on various aspects of Diana and Artemis' Domain, such as the Greyhound, which is linked to hunting and has historical status symbolism. Animals also reference Diana's connection to wildness. A wild woman. A person free from the shackles and order of the city and its society. A place where pure primal instinct is how one survives. I'm also still working heavily with the visual language of the rococo and baroque periods and I

use a lot of their symbolism as well. I am working on a painting that features a rat but the symbolism is potent: They live in the shadows, and are vilified and feared through no fault of their own, they are simply existing, yet through this relentless persecution they prevail. They also represent the invisible, intricate workings of the unconscious to overcome obstacles. For me, the link to desire here is one of a desire for authenticity and autonomy despite trials and tribulations.

My 2025 show will be a continuation of these themes but more focused. I am setting the stage with these initial pieces, each on a vignette into a larger narrative I am working to construct. The series will delve deeper into mythology and identity, and the interplay of light and shadow, both literally and metaphorically.





Otis  
Kwame  
Kye  
Quaicoe

*Fragments  
of  
History*



On view at COMA during Sydney Contemporary is a solo exhibition titled, Fragments of History, by Ghanaian artist Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe (b.1988), on view Friday 30 August - 28 September. This is the artist's first solo presentation with the gallery and taking place at 2/27-39 Abercrombie Street, NSW, 2008.



In this new series of paintings, the artist explores the remnants of colonisation in his hometown of Accra, Ghana. The portraits are built up using thick layers of oil paint, often incorporating found objects and patterned collage. References to colonial era uniforms and architecture slowly reveal fragments of histories shared across cultures.







Sotiris Sotiriou

Zoe Paulsen



*In the following conversation Sotiris Sotiriou, the founder of COMA, and Zoe Paulsen, Sydney Contemporary's Fair Director, discuss the appetite for contemporary art in Sydney, the current state of art fairs, patronage today and how to build a valuable arts ecosystem.*

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**Sotiris Sotiriou:** I think I met you through your mother and that would have been just after I opened COMA. This was the very end of 2017, so we've probably known each other now for five or six years.

**Zoe Paulson:** And then when did you move the gallery?

**SS:** I moved a couple of years after I opened, simply because I realised Sydney and its arts ecosystem had really changed, and at the time we were in a strange location physically- geographically fine, but physically strange. I think people would travel and traverse our city more so now to see art, but this was seven years ago, the Australian arts ecosystem was totally different.

**ZP:** I am interested in that, expand on that.

**SS:** I think the idea of operating galleries in Australia has changed recently because of the number of galleries, for a regional location there are still a lot of galleries in this city and there are more now than there were seven years ago. I think that is important to note.

“The more galleries there are the more people's attitudes change towards seeing art, people become a little bit more adventurous and happier to travel outside their comfort zones to see art.”

**ZP:** I think that in this day and age an art fair is such a wonderful platform for people to come and see a hell of a lot of quality art all in one place. I think it is interesting what you say in regard to those people that when they are visiting they are obviously really engaged.

“An art fair is a great platform to look at growing the market and encouraging visitors that potentially wouldn't think to go into galleries, to come and explore and get a better understanding of what the industry is all about.”

It's one of the best things about an art fair, seeing such a varied audience and it's catering to seasoned art collectors that visit galleries constantly right through to the occasional art buyer and the general public that have an interest but also aren't necessarily visiting galleries every Saturday. One of our main focuses obviously is about growing that market and I think the fact that you can see close to 100 galleries under one roof across a five-day period - it's such an exciting event.

**SS:** Also like we are saying, more galleries in Sydney, generally leads to more growth in the market. It's interesting because we are talking about the way in which Australian's view fairs and visit fairs and this is your first year at the fair. So prior to this you were looking at Sydney Contemporary as a viewer. What do you think of Sydney Contemporary right now in the current ecosystem? Where do you feel it sits? And how do you feel about it as a whole before your first run at the fair?

**ZP:** Well, let's just say the bar has been set very high. It (Sydney Contemporary) is such an important platform for the industry.

**SS:** Did you find it important before taking on the role?

**ZP:** Absolutely, my past experience has been running art events, but nothing like the size and scale of Sydney Contemporary. These past experiences have all shared a common goal of promoting art and artists, and supporting market growth. But Sydney Contemporary is a whole other scale. I think the opportunities it provides our galleries and our artists, not just locally but abroad as well, makes it a really interesting platform. And I think that you can speak to that particularly in regards to your mission as a gallery, can you speak more in regards to that broader international context.

**SS:** Well this is something that we always think about and my focus has been outward looking for a very long time so Sydney Contemporary has become much more important to COMA because a large part of our strategy at this point in time skews more inward looking. One of the questions I wrote down to ask you was “is our regionality an advantage?” This always makes me consider Australia’s place in the international art world, how COMA previously bridged this gap, how fairs bridge the gap and how our offering at the fair is indicative of that as well. There will be a huge international component of what we bring to the fair. But what COMA is always talking about is how to communicate that and then how to contextualise it in the right way so an Australian audience understands the significance.

**ZP:** And how do you do that?

**SS:** It’s always been difficult because you know you’re taking artists that have runs on the board, have really interesting exhibiting CV’s, they are prominent artists working internationally at a high level but as with all regional markets when you bring them to market here it’s a whole new process of education because the audience don’t know the work. So we also have to educate ourselves as galleries because we understand the significance, that’s why we are bringing it here (to Australia), we believe it’s the best work, we believe it’s important work and we think this region has to see it, but then at the same time people don’t understand this the first time they engage with the work. We will show these artists next to, physically next to, regional or Australian artists they do understand and

I think you want them (visitors) to understand that these are two great paintings by two great artists. It allows them to see the rest of the booth as high calibre.

**ZP:** The other day when we were both at an event, somebody had mentioned that there is a notion that Australian collectors only buy Australian art, and I probably should have thrown that question over to you, but again an event like Sydney Contemporary is the perfect opportunity to do exactly what you are doing which is educate the market.

**SS:** Absolutely, but you also don't want to lose your regionality, I like the fact that we (Australia) have our own personality. But Australian collectors are so different from the rest of the world. You know the act of collecting in Australia is approached totally differently, we have a different history, it is not as deep as the European collecting history, America has the industrialists, Frick, Mellon, Rockefeller, Carnegie and that whole era of art buying and philanthropy was top down and influenced the rest of the country, but Australia is yet to have those kind of moments. Like you said before, Sydney Contemporary is a monstrous cultural opportunity and it would be great to see more Australians become deep collectors. What do you think about this when you're planning the fair?

**ZP:** Thinking about this, my involvement with the Museum of Contemporary Art comes to mind. MCA Next, which you are also involved in (I've been on the committee for over 10 years now), the underlying tone is all about giving back. I think programs like that are incredibly important to make the younger generation start thinking about being involved in something bigger and connecting with a like-minded community. What you say about the stark differences in the history of collecting and its impact on contemporary habits today is interesting.

**SS:** I have always been curious about how older collectors influence younger collectors in Australia? It feels so prevalent across the globe. As an example a lot of international collectors have very public collecting profiles, and are loud when it comes to their collections.

**ZP:** There are a lot of people in Australia who are a lot more private and not 'shouting it from the rooftops' so to speak.

**SS:** I obviously don't think either approach is bad or good, just interesting as it obviously affects how Australian's collect art. There's a really interesting story around the time of one of the earlier editions of Art Basel Miami, I can't remember the exact year, but the De La Cruz's, I am pretty sure it was, they said to the fair, 'Which galleries performed badly, but that you think are integral to the fair and that you want to stay in the fair? Let us know who those galleries are and we will go and buy artworks from them.'

**ZP:** Oh my goodness.

**SS:** This was so community minded, all these Miami-based collectors realising the importance of the fair, I think this really extrapolated out. And, just quickly, I think there are a number of Australian collectors who could work like this, very active collectors, but they are so quiet.

**ZP:** I hadn't heard that story.

**SS:** It's so great. What fair did you go to last Internationally?

**ZP:** I went to Art Basel Hong Kong and it was great to be there. It is such a large art week and this as a concept could be explored more here.

**SS:** Oh for sure. So, when you say that right, you're looking at other fairs and you are looking at how they are run - do you have a playbook you already had or are you building a lot of things from the ground up?

**ZP:** A little bit of both to be honest. There are foundations regarding running an event, but like I said before Sydney Contemporary is a completely different ball game, it is such an operation. What has been such a pleasure stepping into this role is that everybody that you're talking to knows about Sydney Contemporary, everybody wants to be a part of it, everybody wants to celebrate it, everybody understands the importance of Sydney Contemporary, so it has been a real privilege to step into this role. I know for years Tim (Fair Owner) has been talking about what a Sydney Art Week would look like, and I think there is a real opportunity to engage other industries such as hospitality, fashion, media. We are already working closely with institutions and so many galleries

**SS:** Well I've definitely felt a massive push for external programming, I think it's amazing.

**ZP:** Because the appetite is growing, that is what the fair does so well. It ignites and sparks this interest that makes people want to see more. The benefit then for a gallery showing at Sydney Contemporary is that realisation that there is a market out there that are interested in learning and engaging. Yes, it's about getting people to the fair but then it also provides those wider opportunities and encourages engagement outside of the fair as well.

**SS:** I've always felt that Sydney Contemporary, yes it is such a cultural moment, but there is a large portion of the general public who are not engaged with art who also just naturally, as is with every city, just won't go to the fair. But as its (Sydney Contemporary) web extends around the city, you were talking about having spoken with Tim what a Sydney Art Week could look like, I think this event could be wildly influential. Other cities engage differently with contemporary art. This is a landmark fair that Australians can really benefit from, maybe not even attending all the time, some people won't be an 'art fair attendee' but they will engage with other programming.

**ZP:** Absolutely, and I know I am contradicting what I just said before by saying everyone I speak to knows and engages with Sydney Contemporary, but that's very much within the bubble, there are so many people that don't know about the fair and that's a real opportunity as well.

**SS:** Yes, the sample size we look at is always very funny because we know artists, art world people and people who like art. It's the smallest sample size possible.

**ZP:** I'm always knocked to the ground when someone says to me "I haven't heard of Sydney Contemporary".

**SS:** I completely agree! It is our job to make art appealing, so the public are aware. And this year we have Installation Contemporary, Performance Contemporary, the new paper section. It's 2024 and art fairs actually can't act like trade fairs. The bones are trade fair, but they are built and

presented as cultural experiences. Maybe one last question for you. Fairs have changed in the last decade and Sydney Contemporary, like we've both been saying today, is a great fair and we have loved it for many years, but how are you going to make your mark and how do you want to see it evolve?

**ZP:** If we continue to strive to exceed the expectations of all our stakeholders and continue to expand our audience - I think that's a good starting point. I think it is important to see my first fair before making too many sweeping statements!

**SS:** C'mon, please make a sweeping statement.

**ZP:** I think creating an environment that supports bold ideas and innovation is key, as is fostering a dynamic and inclusive platform that continues to resonate not just with seasoned collectors, but also inspires a new generation of art lovers.

**SS:** It is so important. Do you think the international thing, this could be a whole other conversation, I know you obviously want to add international galleries, but at the same time we need to support the region, and you don't want it to just be this fair that is shipping in the same galleries that show at the same fairs every year. You want a happy medium, is this how you view it?

**ZP:** Absolutely, I think a happy medium is key and that takes us back to education and the importance of showcasing a handful of international galleries in and amongst all of our Australian galleries so that is definitely going to be a continued focus for future years. But striking the right balance is key.

**SS:** Should we leave it at that?

**ZP:** Sure, let's leave it at that!





Renée Estée  
*Poetry Feature*

*There's a storm out on  
the sea tonight, black  
with whirling waves,  
Echoes filled a silent  
night, I heard you call my  
name,  
We pressed up close to  
midnight,  
Above the world, an open  
highway less than 90  
miles away  
Beyond the shore, with  
an ear to the stream,  
Waves roll in, like an  
echo, like a prayer,  
Casting shadows where  
the tide unfolds, palm  
winds blow across the  
sea,  
Sometimes I wonder who  
you've encountered, your  
time away from here,  
Violet eyes and clouds of  
gray, there's ghosts out  
by the docks tonight, I  
hear them call your name*

words by Renée Estée



Following on from her 2023 debut solo show, titled, *Choral Ode*, Estée's new suite of paintings will survey the famed vastness of the New Mexican desert, corresponding with earthly and celestial phenomena.

The paintings will look at mythic deities associated with the desert (such as Set, the god of the desert and master of storms) alongside investigating the spiritual significance of unexpected occurrences encountered when in the desert, emphasising the symbolic bond between artist and place.



“Well there’s lots of things along the road  
I’d surely like to see / I’d like to lean into  
the wind and tell myself I’m free.”

This body of work and presentation looks specifically at folklore and urban legends linking the American landscape with wider Americana themes of hope and despair, desire/awe/worship, gothic blues and literary storytelling. While painting this body of work in her studio.

Estee listens to late American folk blues singer Townes Van Zandt whose country outlaw blues fettered with melancholic lyrics, often wrote about the American landscape as a site of emotional expanse.





Shan Turner-Carroll  
*LungA Residency*

Shan Turner-Carroll (b. 1987) is an Australian artist of Burmese descent. Deeply fascinated with unearthing tacit knowledge, his practice integrating mediums took him to LungA Residency in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland. Seyðisfjörður is a small town on a fjord encircled by mountains giving way to a crack of sea. There is a single road connecting the town to the rest of Iceland, and it can feel like a place set apart from the world. This is where Turner- Carroll's latest body of work *SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA* was conceived.



*SÚDA VÚDA AGGA BA* continues the artist's exploration of relationships to landscape, site-specificity, intimacy of community and transmitting of ideas and messages.





The figures in each work are paused in the here and now, but in motion in the expanded view. They grow taller to reach further. They seek alternative channels: paranormal, ultranatural, other worlds folded into each other, perhaps to read the static of the waterfalls as interference from the edge of the universe.





COMA