

Artist Statement:

Leigh Lynam's practice expands from traditional foundations of drawing and painting into contemporary multi-disciplinary art practice. Based in Meanjin / Brisbane, her work challenges problematic trappings inherent in conventions of non-indigenous landscape art. Framed by decolonisation methodologies, Lynam continually evaluates her relationship with the land on which she lives and creates.

Lynam is currently undertaking a Masters of Visual Arts at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. She also shares art experience to encourage awareness and engagement through her tuition studio and as collaborator on community projects.

Respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the unceded lands on which she lives and creates as well as Elders past, present and emerging. Lynam is committed to ethically growing her understanding of hidden and revealed histories.

Unravel

Leigh Lynam

Queensland College of Art
Webb Gallery

Wednesday 28 April to Saturday 8 May 2021

Open hours: Tuesday to Saturday
10am to 4pm

Exhibition Guide

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You are welcome to traverse the leaf works to enter this installation.

Exhibition Description:

Unravel is an investigation into embracing decolonial methods. This installation adopts a socially responsive approach to disentangling post-colonial conventions of landscape art. Challenging uncomfortable traditions, the work subverts ideas of 'capturing' a landscape embarking instead on a deeper discovery.

This interrogative process explores respectful ways of unknowing and new knowing. The works interwoven layers blurs hierarchies between the foundations of drawing, stature of painting, and tactility of sculpture.

Inspired by phenomena of local bushlands, this reimagined landscape offers an immersive environment for reflection, reverence, and chance.

“Unravelling Assumptions to Reimagine Possibilities”

Leaving Traces, 2021

Various sizes and forms

Earth pigment stains, charcoal, on brown paper.

Unceded Land-scapes, 2021

Series of 5 objects, 80cm diameter.

Erasure techniques, etching, scratching and intuitive mark making.

Unravel – Exhibition Essay

by Bree Di Mattina, Arts Writer / Researcher

Unravel signifies a deeply personal and professional investigation for artist Leigh Lynam. A lifelong affinity for the Australian bush has shaped her landscape art practice, yet a growing awareness of living on unceded Turrbal land has led to a profound awakening in generating this body of work. Lynam creates works reflecting the deep emotional connection she feels for the bush, however after interrogating her practice felt compelled to acknowledge uncomfortable truths. By unravelling language, materials and methods Lynam is striving for a more harmonious practice, making works which honour and celebrate the natural environment in which she lives, while respecting the deep bio-cultural knowledge of the traditional owners and their ways of knowing and being in nature. The works in this exhibition unravel conventions of landscape art and demonstrate the artist's rethinking of her engagement with materials and nature itself.

Lynam began unravelling her methods by confronting problematic concepts inherent in Australian landscape art. Concepts of capturing and ownership pepper the language of colonial settler landscape artists. The desire to seize, harness and replicate the natural environment are ever-present as the colonial eye rakes over the land. Landscape works attempt to capture nature, declaring ownership as forcefully as fences around paddocks. Seeking to subvert the traditional trappings of Australian landscape art, instead this work embarks on a deeper discovery of local bushlands, interacting with reverence and humility.

Further underpinning the unravelling of her practice are the material choices made. Working with humble brown paper and natural pigments, Lynam strips back her methods. Minimising the use of other introduced elements, Lynam consciously chooses those which symbolise her presence within the environment. Splashes of magenta can be seen in the bush, yet the pigment itself is not naturally occurring. The bright magenta represents the artist's incursion into the bush, signifying her femininity and acknowledges blood spilled on unceded lands. Mirrors are also introduced, demonstrating presence and absence, the traditionally silvered mirrors reference Lynam's own German heritage. They also provide visitors fleeting glimpses of themselves amongst a scarred landscape as they move through the display. Appearing and disappearing, the ephemeral images demonstrate chance glimpses and allow for reflection on our impact as we traverse.

Lynam eschews the traditional artistic bases of watercolour paper and canvas in favour of swathes of humble brown paper. The raw, textural surface and earthy tones of the paper immediately conjure the environment she seeks to emulate. By soaking, staining, crumbling, scratching, cutting and sculpting the surface, Lynam produces the elements of the work. Tactility and mindfulness are embraced as each facet is worked entirely by the artist's hand, the labour value of every piece demonstrating her reverence for the bush inspiration. Patiently moulding every leaf, Lynam strives to stimulate imaginations towards a chance for meaningful change and show respect to every element.

Entering *Unravel* visitors are invited to step consciously and respectfully into the environment, observe the changes their presence brings to the constructed landscape, leaving nothing of themselves except a fleeting image and taking nothing except a profound respect for the hundreds of hours expended creating the work, demonstrating reverence for the millions of years which have gone before.