



THE NEW ARCADIA

Danie Mellor, Siri Hayes, Jake Walker, Kit Wise, Amber Wallis, Hobie Porter, Jan Davis, Joan Ross, Kelly Hussey-Smith, Kendal Murray, Fiona Lowry, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Shelagh Morgan, Grant Stevens, Judith Van Heeren, Sam Leach

23 JULY - 3 SEPTEMBER 2011



LISMORE
REGIONAL
GALLERY

front cover:

Grant Stevens

Outcrop 2010

custom cabinet, veneer, lambda print,
speaker components

54 x 160 x 40 cm

THE NEW ARCADIA

Danie Mellor, Siri Hayes, Jake Walker, Kit Wise, Amber Wallis, Hobie Porter, Jan Davis, Joan Ross, Kelly Hussey-Smith, Kendal Murray, Fiona Lowry, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Shelagh Morgan, Grant Stevens, Judith Van Heeren, Sam Leach

Many of us residing in the Northern Rivers have been drawn to this region because of the unflinching beauty of the natural environment. Our immersion in a landscape that on one level seems to be some kind of utopian vision, has correspondingly led to a heightened awareness of the need to protect it. Indeed it was here that Australia's first environmental battle was staged in 1979. It is fitting then that Lismore Regional Gallery brings you, *The New Arcadia*, an exhibition that seeks to bring together work by artists who examine the landscape beyond merely representing the land in all its perfection, they look to how, in a contemporary sense, arcadia can ever be achieved.

This exhibition was conceived by the Gallery's curator, Kezia Geddes, who has brought an adept intelligence to this subject matter. I am grateful for her vision for this project, which so suitably speaks to local concerns.

I am also grateful to all the artists and lenders for supporting this exhibition.

Thanks go to Monash University Art Museum, Melbourne; Utopian Slumps, Melbourne; Gallerysmith, Melbourne; Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne; Murray White Room, Melbourne; Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney; Arthouse Gallery, Sydney; Sullivan Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney; Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane; and Private Collectors including Arthur Roe, Darren Light, Misha Hollenbach and Shauna Toohey, Jayne D'Arcy, Joyce Nissan and Alex Moule.

I trust this exhibition makes an impact on you, and that it leads to a greater appreciation for the land we inhabit.

Brett Adlington
Director, Lismore Regional Gallery

CONSIDERING ARCADIA

Kezia Geddes
Curator
Lismore Regional Gallery

The New Arcadia brings together artists responding to ideas of arcadia and the picturesque. It throws light on an idealised depiction of landscape, but with visible disruption. This is the old world butting up against the new as the artists attempt to locate where arcadia is now.

The idea of arcadia has long been addressed in Western art. The *classical arcadia*, explored by artists such as Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), presented an unspoiled wilderness in which any implied human presence was harmonious. The word arcadia was derived from the mountainous Greek province of the same name, which dates to antiquity. Arcadia is therefore embedded with notions of looking back to a paradise enjoyed but lost through the heavy touch of progress and the human hand. It defines nature as transcendent, and ancient beyond our reckoning.

Although we share feelings of awe for environments primordial and pristine, our attitude towards the bountiful landscape can be explained through the alternative definition of the word: 'to direct, graze, grow, harvest'. These two meanings collide in the *pastoral arcadia* depicted by European artists, notably John Constable (1776-1837) and the painters of the French Barbizon School (1830-1870), who studied a landscape in which there was a history of intensive land use. These artists found untamed nature in the clouds and in the atmosphere. Our present civilisation has achieved unparalleled domination over nature and the 'improved landscape' is now a loaded term. Most arcadias have already been touched and the idea of yet-to-be discovered environs seems a fanciful notion. In an era of competing interests, today's arcadia evokes both beauty and compromise. It is out of this context that

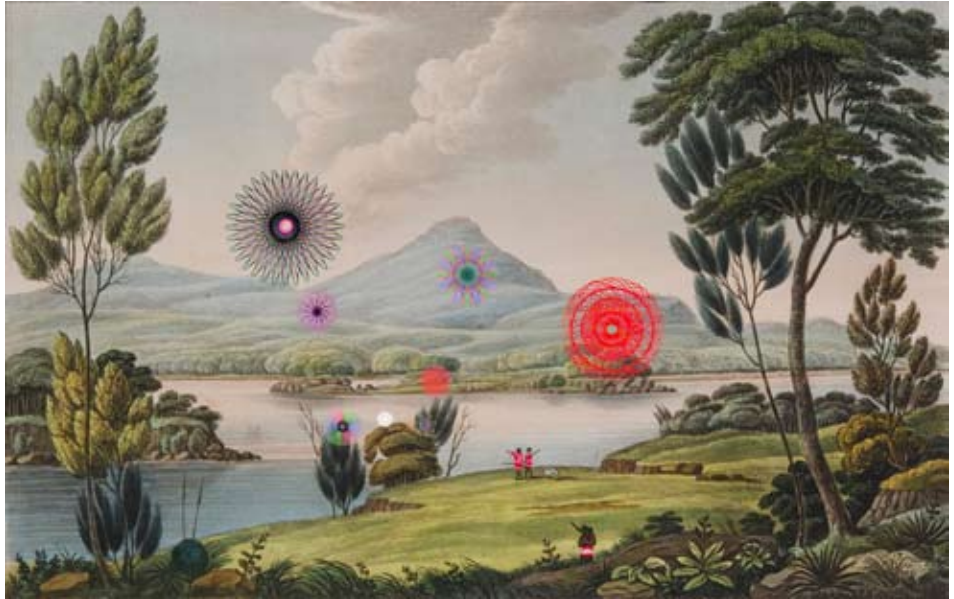


The New Arcadia unravels.

In Australia, where colonial settlement brought rapid change to nature over a short period, implied human impact is amplified and our relationship with the landscape is yet to be reconciled. The early colonial artists glazed their images with fantasies of what they wished Australia would be; more orderly and more like Europe. Their picturesque templates were based on European desires of inhabiting space and they edited and omitted details according to these transplanted values.

In *Once upon a time in Great Parrotland*, the contemporary artist, Joan Ross, has used a print by the convict artist, Joseph Lycett, as a starting point for her own work. *The Sugar Loaf Mountain, near Newcastle, New South Wales 1824*, was conceived and commissioned to indicate the progress of the new settlement in New South Wales. From this early time, Australian identity had already begun to be pinned to the landscape. It shows the colony as an extensive park or garden, in which the unruly vegetation that agitated the early settlers is submissive and ornamental.

Joan Ross
Once upon a time in Great Parrotland (butterfly) 2010
digital print
48 x 76 cm
courtesy the artist and
Gallery Barry Keldoulis



Joan Ross
*Once upon a time in Great
Parrot Land (small spiro)*
2010
digital print
48 x 76 cm
courtesy the artist and
Gallery Barry Keldoulis

It is a poetic construct about the relationship of the land and labour. A European leisure class occupies the site, gesturing to assert its ownership of this place now recognised as a sacred place for the Awabakal people. The traditional owners are also portrayed, living as though in pre-contact, before the genocide that began upon new settlement. Their depiction alludes to a mystical time before those ships sailed in.

We can read the haunted history and discord omitted from Lycett's serene transcript. The fact that Lycett was a convicted forger enhances the irony of his rose-tinted account. In appropriating his image Ross creates a double fiction. In her re-visitation, the colonial scene is slightly changed, with figures and animals rearranged and presented in bright colour to bring them into high visibility. Her alternations encourage a game of spot the difference. The title of the work, *Once upon a time in Great Parrotland*, infers romanticism, but the reference to the bird signals towards history repeating itself.



As much as we cringe at Australia's past, there is much in our present that we cannot see because it is right before our eyes.

Danie Mellor's *Old Macquarie Promised Them Farms, E-I-E-I-O* refers to Governor Macquarie's policy concerning Aboriginal people and the cultivation of land. Macquarie encouraged Aboriginal people to become settled farmers and to educate their children in the ways of the 'civilised' whites. His policy, though sympathetic by comparison to previous and many subsequent administrations, was authoritative and assumed complete superiority. With regard to the land, Macquarie saw that it too would be improved by European ideals of farming. His administration prompted the development and expansion of farming through the selection of holdings in New South Wales and what became southern Queensland.

Mellor references colonial images and uses them to juxtapose Indigenous and European culture. The resulting works reflect history and the differences in how the two cultures have traditionally inhabited space. His work has an air of unapologetic

Danie Mellor
*Old Macquarie
Promised Them Farms,
E-I-E-I-O* 2010
mixed media on paper
88.0 x 118.5 cm
Private Collection
image courtesy Jan Murphy
Gallery



Danie Mellor
Old Macquarie
Promised Them Farms,
E-I-E-I-O 2010
(detail)

artificiality. It is clear that new settlers were enchanted by the idea of undiscovered lands of untapped potential. They settled *terra nullius*, a new land of plenty and a kind of arcadia. But Mellor depicts an arcadia that was unknowingly stolen. Arcadia reflects an investment, by the society that conceives it, in the myths associated with it. These include the myths of a blank slate, of a new world, of primitive nature.

Siri Hayes' works from her series *Lyric Creek Theatre* reference the classical tradition of landscape painting in which the natural world is presented as a place of enrichment, infinite power and sublime beauty. But the site Hayes has depicted falls altogether short of these lofty ideals. Merri Creek is a strip of undeveloped land that runs through Melbourne's inner north. Home to quarries, landfills, and receiving waste runoff from neighbouring factories, the creek saw heavy industrial use throughout much of the 20th century. Merri Creek is not a wilderness or a pastoral haven, it is a landscape left behind.

Siri Hayes
Crossing the Merri 2003
type c photograph
112 x 142 cm
Collection Monash University
Art Museum
image courtesy the artist and
Gallerysmith





Siri Hayes
Scene 3 2003
type c photograph
112 x 142 cm
Collection Monash University
Art Museum
image courtesy the artist and
Gallerysmith

Hayes leverages on our attraction to the picturesque to make us consider our response to this and similar landscapes. If the creek was arcadia once, what we see now is only the remnants of what we have lost. The creek banks are strewn with rubbish, the soil is exposed, and the creek water is poisoned. Ecological diversity is limited and deciduous trees, now defined by environmentalists as weeds, have taken over the soil.

The presence of figures in the landscape raises further questions about our social and cultural relationship to land and locality, and to private and public space. Land ownership versus nomadism and the trauma of displacement are examples. It creates apprehension that the creek could be the site of something untoward. Hayes has photographed what on the surface is an unspectacular place, and finds an evocative stage to infuse the image with an open-ended narrative in which the future is uncertain.



The idea of nature as a tainted place or zone of terror is dealt with more directly by Fiona Lowry. She draws on a cultural anxiety associated with the wilderness, which is ingrained in us from a young age; commencing with fairytales and phobias of the dark, and expanding into real life horror stories. The Australian bush is where outlaws reside; bushrangers, thieves and Ivan Milats. And where mysteries can go unsolved, exemplified by Joan Lindsay's 1967 novel, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and the disappearance of Azaria Chamberlain. This uneasy relationship and mythic treatment of the Australian bush has been a favoured subject of artists, including Frederick McCubbin, Sidney Nolan, Russel Drysdale and Arthur Boyd. The two paintings in *The New Arcadia* were produced at Boyd's property Bundanon where Lowry was an artist in residence. The works reference Boyd's own exploration of the figure in this particular landscape.

In *you cant stop what's coming*, Lowry opens up a space for us to explore the edges of our own imaginations. There is no evidence of anything sinister, but our subconscious

left to right:

Siri Hayes
Scene 3 2003
 (detail)
 type c photograph

Fiona Lowry
you cant stop what's coming 2008
 acrylic on canvas
 214 x 153 cm
 courtesy the artist and
 Gallery Barry Keldoulis



Fiona Lowry
you cant stop what's coming
2008
(detail)

fills the gap. In *I could tell you what I saw in you*, the subject matter is more explicit. A naked man drags a female figure, also naked, out of or into a river. More animal than man, he could be rescuing the girl, or dragging prey. We understand that events that unfold might be traumatic, sexual, revelatory, even fatal. Mystery is potent and we follow him.

The first European immigrants cleared the land to make new use of it but also out of trepidation. In clearing, they blasted light on whatever could have been lurking in the darkness. Akin to these shadows it seems beauty could obscure the real dangers in the wilderness. Lowry's airbrushed application of paint is similarly contradictory. It enables her to work seamlessly with blur and focus, rendering these sites of violence through a removed, aesthetic lens.

Amber Wallis pushes more deeply into what is unseeable in the natural world and acts out a fantasy that she might form a physical relationship with the landscape.



Amber Wallis
Dark Gully Mountain Knee
2010
pencil, charcoal,
collage on paper
117 x 128 cm (each)
Collection of Arthur Roe
image courtesy the artist and
Utopian Slumps



Amber Wallis
Dark Gully Mountain Knee
2010
(detail)
pencil, charcoal,
collage on paper

The idea begins with connection to place and culminates in the sublime. As with the sublime, the works are loaded with excitement and trepidation. Wallis chooses the Australian landscape as her ideal lover. She explores the textures and undulations of its body and its ultimate fecundity. The work is part of an internal struggle to take on the hurdles and longings in her life. The process of making is like a truth serum, an emptying out of frustration and raw emotion in a hopeful search for rapture. She suspends her physical limitations and gives herself over to the landscape's generous embrace to feel spiritual transcendence.

By surrendering herself to a kind of automatic process, mild obsessions and unresolved emotions make themselves apparent. There is a back and forth motion between mountains, the human form, a moniker, a mind, and a lustful artwork that takes control and makes itself visible of its own accord.



Jake Walker's painting is also based in process. He takes found paintings, purchased from op shops and eBay or collected from hard rubbish, using them as grounds for a conversation until he eventually locates his own iconography. The original amateur works embody conventions of landscape painting and of making a scene 'fit for a picture'. They are divided up into what we know the landscape consists of; foreground, midground, and background. The pictures are punctuated with hills and trees placed where they should be, a winding road and some blue sky. Walker undoes all this and inserts his own elements.

The Way 7 retains some of the original artist's intention but without Walker's embellishments it is a static painting. Walker's alterations disregard anything that can be learned from a book of painting landscape. He conveys something more experiential than literal and the landscape folds in as though from the back of his mind. Having spent the majority of his life in New Zealand, Walker remembers the

left to right:

Jake Walker
Otaki Forks 2011
oil on board
38 x 47 cm
collection Jayne D'Arcy

Jake Walker
Long Neck 2011
oil and acrylic on board
36 x 28 cm
Collection Misha Hollenbach
and Shauna Toohey

images courtesy the artist and
Utopian Slumps



Jake Walker
The Way 7 2009
oil on found painting
59.5 x 49.5 cm
Collection of Joyce Nissan

landscape being all around him, always somewhere in his field of vision. With this ingrained memory he can surrender his subject and the landscape is still there. He never initially conceives a finished work but describes his practice as a process of investigation and response. He drives in wedges of 'landscapeness' that pierce the canvas and let the air back in. The resulting paintings are a collision of the original painter's beliefs concerning landscape and painting and those of Walker himself.

There is something about the landscape that we think makes us better. An idea that if we stand and look at one, we might locate some spiritual core by which we can re-centre and become happier people. Nature is uncomfortable, unpredictable, and consumes both time and energy.

In *Outcrop* Grant Stevens provides us with a solution to our quandary. He presents a packaged experience of the landscape so easy it's like home entertainment. A



primordial, rocky outcrop forms part of an improved landscape kit, with speakers on each side playing sounds of nature and an enriching holiday. It removes all inconveniences; dirt, annoying tourists, whingeing children, dangerous animals and sunburn. However, the experience is one we have never known. This is a closed system with no point of exchange.

The sublime can be understood as residing in the spectator, in their feelings of awe at the scene before them. Stevens pinpoints the problem experienced by romantic painters of the sublime. Enlightenment does not exist in a generic experience of the landscape.

Jan Davis' drawing of Terania in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales, depicts a landscape that is personal to her. This is the site of the now-famous blockade of Terania Creek (1979), which led to the establishment of the Nightcap

Grant Stevens
Outcrop 2010
(detail)
custom cabinet, veneer,
lambda print, speaker
components
54 x 160 x 40 cm
courtesy the artist and
Gallery Barry Keldoulis





Jan Davis
Terania January 12 2007
ink on paper, stitching
59 x 150 cm
courtesy the artist



National Park. Living in close vicinity to this beautiful spot, Davis everyday experience is imbued with the essence of this landscape. She places herself within nature, rather than outside and looking in, investigating a kind of ‘presencing’ of nature.

Terania January 12 2007 was made in a wet year after a decade of drought when the atmosphere changed, softened by rainclouds. It is part of a larger series of drawings which are akin to diary entries, creating an impression of this time and place. Davis’ direct treatment of the simple materials of crude paper and ink enables her to express something elemental in the landscape. Ink is soaked into the paper with a varied translucency like sky. It is pushed around as if by wind. The work is made up of multiple sheets, creating an interrupted image. These are stitched together confessing the inadequacy of art to compete with the natural world.

Hobie Porter paints a landscape North of Terania, in the Tweed Valley. His seascapes depict the ocean from Byron Bay to Kingscliff. Porter’s work stems from a sense of



left to right:

Hobie Porter
The seeds we sew 2006
oil on panel
30 x 30 cm
Private Collection

Hobie Porter
Bifurcation 2006
oil on panel
30 x 30 cm
Private Collection

Hobie Porter
In search of arcadia 2011
oil on canvas
43 x 43 cm
Private Collection
courtesy the artist and
Arthouse Gallery

belonging to place; it explores the immensity and fragility of his surrounding environment. His meticulously rendered paintings are like a sample cut from the earth and sky.

By juxtaposing very small manmade objects against a vast landscape, Porter reminds us that so much of our attention is focused on temporary and insignificant diversions. Our key asset is the earth but so much of our behaviour is indifferent to this simple fact. We search for arcadia in counter-productive places and through this folly we find ourselves alienated from our surroundings.

The natural and the artificial confront each other in Porter's paintings. *In search of arcadia* contains a pair of binoculars, suspended weightless above the ocean. They allude to the search for pristine places, a history of exploration. Binoculars have been used to both admire nature and survey it. But barnacles have begun to appropriate this tool for their own habitat, thwarting its intended purpose and engineering a type of reverse-colonisation. We cannot underestimate our immediate impact on the



Shelagh Morgan
Neglected garden 2011
mixed media
83 x 63 cm
courtesy the artist

environment, nor how long our marks will remain, but to the vast extent that we occupy this ancient earth now, we are a small part of its long history.

Beauty is like nature's armour against us and nature has sometimes been set aside as a result of this one characteristic. Weeds, for the most part, do not have this advantage. They are disruptive getaways that remind us of where we have gone wrong. They are defined and have emerged from their relationship with us. Our aversion to weeds and sense of responsibility to control them ignores that they might communicate something deeper surrounding their causation.

Shelagh Morgan's work in *The New Arcadia* is a documentation of the weeds that grow on her property at Eureka near Lismore. The drawings are based on botanical illustrations and this scientific methodology focuses our relationship with them and with our cultural and ecological environments more broadly.



In depicting weeds in her garden, Morgan scrutinises a site which has come into existence as the result of her disinterest. Her studied approach is comparable with the work of botanist/illustrators such as Ferdinand Bauer (1760-1826) and Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896), who supported botanical exploration and collecting throughout the colony. The artist's book, *Modern Habitats*, documents 25 of the approximately 250 weeds growing on her 50 acre property. All the weeds depicted have been collected within a 30 metre radius of her studio. *Neglected Garden* is a study of flowering weeds in winter. In *Disturbed Ground* which accompanies it, a stencil cut-out refers to the space that would be left if the weeds were removed, without any suggestion of what would replace them. The work begs questions of whether an ecosystem can ever be returned to its natural state.

Shelagh Morgan
Modern Habitats
2011
mixed media
19.5 x 59 cm
courtesy the artist

Botanical gardens and zoological environs are public spaces which originate from similar attitudes to ordering nature. They are defined spaces intended as places of

Kelly Hussey-Smith
Little Egret 2010
archival ink jet print
110 x 84 cm
courtesy the artist





from left to right:

Kelly Hussey-Smith
Toucan 2010
archival ink jet print
110 x 84 cm
courtesy the artist

Judith Van Heeren
Magnolia and two birds in black and white 2009
oil on linen
76 x 76 cm

Judith Van Heeren
Birds in black and white
2008 - 2009
oil on linen
76 x 76 cm
courtesy the artist and
Murray White Room



enlightenment. At the zoo our capacity to control nature is taken further into the artificial. Captivity enables us to view the wilderness behind glass. What would cause terror in natural circumstances becomes part of an activity of leisure. We can meet deadly animals peacefully curled up in their enclosures. Flightier animals are relieved of their instinct to keep their comfortable distance and we can see them in minute detail.

Kelly Hussey-Smith's *Caged* series was developed in response to keeping animals in captivity. In her image of a toucan, Hussey-Smith has photographed the bird in a 6 x 4.5 x 6 metre cage. The famously colourful creature is depicted in darkness. An interpretive text displayed with the work tells us that the toucan's natural habitat is the subtropical environments in South and Central America. Its life expectancy in nature is 15 to 20 years and its lifespan in captivity is sadly similar. Hussey-Smith's work is effectively the reverse to that of Judith Van Heeren, who draws from a mixture of taxidermied bird and animal life and dioramas from natural history museums. Using



these elements, Van Heeren presents a paradise which could not exist in the real world. She shows us how distant from nature we have become. These paintings are like a study in the tradition of Dutch still life, *memento mori*. The lack of colour accentuates this stillness and ultimately death.

Van Heeren assembles bird and plant-life for beauty's sake, like an arrangement of flowers or still life. She mimics what we do in the world, releasing species where they do not belong, without regarding the immense complexity of natural ecosystems. It becomes clear that Van Heeren's work is about nature rather than what is really natural.

Reality is difficult to grasp. It is part of something vast and divergent which rests outside us. The fabrication of stories helps to distract us from our anxiety arising from lack of control. We are by nature mythmakers and our constructed view of the world affirms our sense of self.

In childhood we all experience a magical reality in which paradise is found through imagination. Kendal



Murray helps us recall that playful freedom we lose in growing up. She represents a world of whimsy in miniature, an embodiment of adult fantasies that we can hold in our hands. Her open narratives enable us to imbue the works with both social and personalised meaning. We can peer in and engage in the scenarios both as voyeurs and participants. The works are deliciously idyllic, humorous and sometimes disturbing. They are lush park-like spaces, with room for leisure and play, but claustrophobic enough that there is room for misadventure and for the zones of public and private to overlap.

Murray uses found objects such as teapots, purses and make-up compacts to create fantasy worlds. In *Discover, Lover, Undercover* we see a couple exploring each others' bodies on a platform underneath the boughs of a tree. They are unaware of a clothed observer who appears to be watching them from the bushes below. Multiple scenarios could unfold.

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy leverages on our attraction to scenic nature, but her images are more firmly located in the real. *Room with a View* from her *Painting Rubbish* series is based on photographs of littered forests



left to right:

Kendal Murray
Pond, Respond, Abscond 2011
mixed media assemblage
18 x 26 x 16 cm

Kendal Murray
Big Shot, Long Shot, Blind Spot
2011
mixed media assemblage
8.5 x 7.6 x 8.2 cm
courtesy the artist and
Arthouse Gallery

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy
Trade off - Powerplay 2008
acrylic on pulped Australian
forest, imported
renewable source timber, Jovi
clay, shellac, imitation gold
leaf, resin, oil paint, Lithgow
coal
35 x 110 x 26 cm
courtesy the artist and
Sophie Gannon Gallery



taken while on a residency in India. They present a romantic European vision of nature, painted in sepia as though to confess a flattering soft focus. Rubbish rests on the ground like fallen fruit. Treated with the same loving delivery as the rest of the scene, nothing seems amiss, but the plastic is clearly an unnatural addition to this landscape. It is an interruption, an unearthly delight. The work looks at the cost of progress and how the natural world has ended up fighting for space.

Painting within the frame of an ideal landscape, Smuts-Kennedy speaks of the effects of pollution, colonialism, globalisation, over-population and mass consumption. This traditional treatment is a quiet wakeup call, telling us how far we have departed from our picturesque ideals.

Painters of the picturesque have frequently presented a world 'better than nature itself'. The picturesque is traditionally a fabrication whereas real nature offers dirt,



sweat and labour. The idyllic nature is virtual, notional.

Sam Leach's landscape painting is imbued with this legacy. He borrows from the 17th century European tradition providing us with a romanticised version of nature. His painting *Nihil Unbound* is a circular work of 40 cm in diameter. It resonates beyond its modest size. Contained under gleaming resin, it is protected or isolated from the world around it.

Set against a world of daily challenges and complexities, the work whispers to myth, magic and to the past. What is depicted is not nature we know now. Geometric forms that do not belong to this landscape expand into it. If the forms situate the work in the present we interpret their presence as a malady. Today, climate change, resource depletion and pandemics are among the factors in our uncertain future. The title of the work provides a key to the artist's message. *Nihil Unbound* refers

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy
Room with a View 2006
acrylic on linen
98.5 x 198 cm
courtesy the artist and
Sophie Gannon Gallery



Sam Leach
Nihil Unbound 2011
oil and resin on wood
40 cm diametre
courtesy Sullivan Strumpf
Fine Art

to a book by Pat Brassier which sets up the argument that the fabric of matter itself will eventually disintegrate. In regarding extinction as inevitable, he affirms the inconsequence of human existence.

The utopian landscape is a self-consciously fictive space. In recent years technology has provided fantasy narratives around arcadia. James Cameron's *Avatar* offered us an alternate, digitally created world, complete with its own nature and ecologies. The release of the film was followed by reports that fans were becoming depressed because our world was disappointing by comparison to the fabricated one of Pandora. Technology has provided a means to offer utopia as a completely immersive spectacle. Our imaginations can rest and we can really believe.

In *Xanadu*, Kit Wise presents a glittering amalgamation of city and nature constructed artificially from the elements he selects. The virtuosity of nature is refocused in what he calls 'utopia in arcadia', shown in full HD. *Xanadu* is made



from a mash-up of digital animation, incorporating video and photography collected by the artist, together with stock imagery from Getty Images. The work borrows from western medieval narrative painting, the European tradition of the picturesque and science fiction cinema to become a visionary megatropolis that sits within a beautiful landscape. This picture is almost too perfect. The work forms a mirage that provokes interrogation of our relationship to the technological. *Xanadu* seems to offer a new future in which nature is finally compliant. But this reminds us of a commonly-held mistrust of technology.

Although exquisite, we have not chosen this place. It is a bounded space cut off from our world. Our understanding of the local is absent. This is a good space, no place. We do not know the problems of utopia.

Kit Wise
Xanadu 2010
HD single channel video
5 min 50 sec
courtesy the artist
Xanadu was an Experimental
Commission



Fiona Lowry
*I could tell you what I saw in
you* 2010
acrylic on canvas
213 x 167.5 cm
Private Collection
image courtesy the artist and
Gallery Barry Keldoulis

Arcadia is a fluid, fictional space best determined by the individual. Its value lies not in any possibility that it could exist but in its capacity to magnify follies in the way we connect with the world as it is now. An optimistic outcome of this is that this contributes to actions that will support the preservation of the natural world.



LISMORE
REGIONAL
GALLERY

Back cover:

Sam Leach
Nihil Unbound
2011

Published by Lismore Regional Gallery

131 Moleseworth Street, Lismore
NSW Australia 2480
T. 61(2) 6622 2209
E. artgallery@lismore.nsw.gov.au
www.lismoregallery.org

ISBN 978-0-9804400-9-6

All rights reserved. Except under the conditions described in the Australian Copyright Act 1968 and subsequent amendments, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, duplicating or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Contact Lismore Regional Gallery for all permission requests.

Joan Ross, *Once upon a time in Great Parrot Land* is part of a larger installation called *When I grow up I want to be a forger*, originally commissioned as part of the Newcastle Region Gallery exhibition called *Curious Colony*, 2010.

Kit Wise, *Xanadu* was an Experimenta Commission for Experimenta *Utopia Now*, International Biennial of Media Art, 2010-2012.

Lismore Regional Gallery staff

Brett Adlington Director
Kezia Geddes Curator
Amy Miller Administration Officer
Shane Dunian Gallery Assistant
Carli Leimbach Splendid Producer

Catalogue credits:

The artworks and images are courtesy the artists and their galleries

Images and text are copyright of the artist, writer and Lismore Regional Gallery



LRG is assisted by
the NSW
Government
through Arts NSW



Communities
arts nsw

ARMSIGN



