

FOYER & BALLROOM GALLERY EXHIBITION
SALA Festival & FRAN Festival

CARCLEW

WOMEN IN ABSTRACTION

1 Aug 2017 - 24 Sept 2017

Curated | Olivia Kubiak

Artworks | Emma Sullivan & Imogen Porteous

FRAN
FEST

SALA

Curatorial Statement:

We don't often hear about great female abstract artists. Abstraction developed during the modern period and, as Griselda Pollock writes in *Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity*, 'all those canonised as the initiators of modern art [were] men.' (Pollock)

In this exhibition, the artists will deconstruct traditional notions of femininity through abstraction and challenge the hierarchy of this seemingly patriarchal style. The aim is to invert the female gaze so that she looks inwards rather than outwards.

Imogen Porteous and Emma Sullivan are two abstract artists who are determined to disrupt the stereotypes associated with women working in this genre. Historically, abstract artists have generally been middle-class, academic, men who gained power and prestige through their work, and sometimes their personalities. Women abstractionists were around and working during the modernist period, but their work was often overshadowed by the men. In 2017, women are taking the power back.

Imogen is abstract and unashamedly feminine. Through her use of soft colours, she creates works that are beautiful in their fluidity. This organic approach invokes a sense of tranquillity and peace. As Imogen strives to understand her identity through her practice, she explores issues associated with being a woman and expresses these feelings through abstraction. Alternatively, Emma's work focuses on the distortion of the female figure. I would describe her work as playful but confronting, beautiful yet grotesque. The forms and sharpness of these intricate sculptures make me feel uneasy, yet the colours, curves and mini craters in her pieces generate curiosity and surprise.

ARTIST STATEMENT | IMOGEN PORTEOUS

Imogen's creative practice explores contemporary femininity through painting and drawing. Her recent abstract works on canvas explore contemporary feminine identity, intimate bodily experience and personal feminist theory. Through a hand-applied painting process, Imogen aims to explore the influence of language, culture and sensory experience on gender identity. Imogen's work in *Women in Abstraction* is a critical response to conventional notions of femininity. She is investigating her personal feminine identity through the act of making. The painting process is influenced by the Western cultural concept that associates the sense of touch is with femininity,

"In the case of women, their association with the senses of touch, taste and smell reinforced the cultural link between femininity and the body, for their

senses were closely tied to intimate bodily experience. The distance senses of sight and hearing, by contrast, were associated with the perception of the external, masculine world.”¹

Obscure, fluid structures float in soft focus on raw canvas. Their surfaces are layered skins formed by pools and marks of hand-applied paint. The paintings are evocative of conventional feminine characteristics using soft colour, fluidity, texture and organic line. The work playfully portrays the disconnection between the artist’s active and intimate process of painting and the cultural perception of passive, girlish femininity. The work of Women in Abstraction embraces the evolution of diverse feminine identity in our contemporary culture.

Imogen Porteous is an emerging visual artist based in the Adelaide Hills, South Australia. She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Painting) in 2015 and Graduate Diploma in Visual Art and Creative Practice in 2016 at the University of South Australia. Imogen's research and studio practice explores the human experience, psychological portraiture, gender identity and her own contemporary feminine identity. Her painting practice is immersed in the process of making, inspired by a personal connection to methods of gestural and non-traditional material inquiry. Recent abstract paintings investigate the canvas surface as a projected space for the feminine body. A sense of intimacy is created as the paint is applied directly by the artist's hand.

ARTIST STATEMENT | EMMA SULLIVAN

I am inspired by the abstraction of flesh- creating monsters out of the ordinary. Horror and fantasy collide and create imaginary creatures that walk the line between the macabre and whimsical. These creatures are indicative of the human body, both psychologically and physically. My work questions and challenges pre-existing social norms of what femininity means. Through a juxtaposition of materials and techniques, hardware and toxic materials are saturated in baby pink and flesh tones, while traditionally feminine crafts such as decoupage and stitching are turned into monstrous versions of themselves. The work aims to champion femininity and show that it can be multidimensional- femininity is the soft and the hard, the desire and the repulsion, the rose and the thorn.

Find out more about the artists and their work at their websites:

IMOGEN PORTEOUS

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/imogenporteousartist/>
Instagram: [@imogenporteous / www.instagram.com/imogenporteous/](https://www.instagram.com/imogenporteous/)
Website: www.imogenporteous.wix.com/artist

EMMA SULLIVAN

Instagram: [@kitten_limbs / www.instagram.com/Kitten_limbs/](https://www.instagram.com/Kitten_limbs/)
Website: Emmamareesullivan.com

¹ Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*, 75.

Artwork list:

FOYER

- 1) Imogen Porteous, *Flow*, 2017, Oil and aerosol on linen board, 51 x 51 cm, **\$470**
- 2) Emma Sullivan, *Book of Horrors*, 2017, Acrylic paint, aerosol, resin, pen, cardboard, paper, string, glue, 21 x 14.8 cm, **\$185**
- 3) Imogen Porteous, *Sister Pool*, 2017, Oil and oil pastel on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 4) Imogen Porteous, *Pink Peak*, 2017, Oil, acrylic, graphite, glitter and charcoal on canvas, 37 x 37 cm **\$300**
- 5) Imogen Porteous, *In Sensed*, 2017, Acrylic and glitter on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 6) Imogen Porteous, *She Was Ablaze*, 2017, Acrylic, oil, aerosol and graphite on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 7) Emma Sullivan, *Strange Bodies II*, 2017, Expanding Foam, plaster, aerosol, acrylic paint, collage on paper, 24 x 27 cm, **\$90**
- 8) Emma Sullivan, *Strange Bodies I*, 2017, Expanding Foam, plaster, aerosol, acrylic paint, collage on paper, 25.5 x 30 cm, **\$90**
- 9) Emma Sullivan, *Something Wicked I*, 2017, Chicken wire, expanding foam, plaster, PVA glue, aerosol, acrylic paint, paper collage, 50 x 15 cm, **\$145**
- 10) Emma Sullivan, *Something Wicked II*, 2017, Chicken wire, expanding foam, plaster, PVA glue, aerosol, acrylic paint, paper collage, 50 x 15 cm, **\$145**
- 11) Emma Sullivan, *Something Wicked III*, 2017, Chicken wire, expanding foam, plaster, PVA glue, aerosol, acrylic paint, paper collage, 50 x 15 cm, **\$145**
- 12) Imogen Porteous, *Translucent Skin*, 2017, Acrylic and watercolour on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 13) Emma Sullivan, *Nacre I*, 2017, Expanding foam, plaster, aerosol, acrylic paint, resin, polymer clay, 24.5 x 20 x 32.5 cm, **\$125**
- 14) Emma Sullivan, *Nacre II*, 2017, Expanding foam, plaster, aerosol, acrylic paint, resin, polymer clay, 31.5 x 22.5 x 20 cm, **\$105**
- 15) Emma Sullivan, *Nacre III*, 2017, Expanding foam, plaster, aerosol, acrylic paint, resin, polymer clay, 24.5 x 19 x 22 cm, **\$105**

BALLROOM

- 16) Imogen Porteous, *Pink Matter*, 2016, Acrylic, ink, PVA, glitter and graphite on canvas, 80 x 80 cm, **\$500**
- 17) Imogen Porteous, *Fluid Performance*, 2017, Acrylic, oil, oil pastel and graphite on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 18) Imogen Porteous, *Soft Touch*, 2017 Acrylic, glitter and graphite on canvas, 80 x 80 cm, **\$500**
- 19) Imogen Porteous, *Strong Hand*, 2017, Acrylic, oil, oil pastel and graphite on canvas, 80 x 80 cm, **\$500**
- 20) Imogen Porteous, *Transience*, 2017, Acrylic, watercolour and aerosol on canvas, 50 x 50 cm, **\$290**
- 21) Imogen Porteous, *Surge*, 2017, Oil, acrylic and oil pastel on canvas, 50 x 50 cm, **\$290**
- 22) Imogen Porteous, *Internal Questions*, 2016, Acrylic, graphite and PVA on board, 60 x 60 cm, **\$470**
- 23) Imogen Porteous, *Making Waves*, 2016, Acrylic and PVA on board, 60 x 60 cm, **\$470**
- 24) Imogen Porteous, *Peachy Keen*, 2016, Acrylic and PVA on board, 60 x 60 cm, **\$470**
- 25) Emma Sullivan, *The End of All Things I*, 2017, Acrylic paint on paper, 16 x 21 cm, **\$100**
- 26) Emma Sullivan, *The End of All Things II*, 2017, Acrylic paint on paper, 11.5 x 15 cm, **\$80**
- 27) Emma Sullivan, *Ickis*, 2017, Expanding foam, plaster, aerosol, resin, polymer clay, 13 x 18 cm, **\$85**
- 28) Imogen Porteous, *Second Sight*, 2017, Watercolour, acrylic, graphite and oil pastel on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 29) Imogen Porteous, *Girls Like Boys*, 2017, Oil, glitter and graphite on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 30) Imogen Porteous, *You're Growing on Me*, 2017 Acrylic, oil, oil pastel and graphite on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 31) Imogen Porteous, *The Blue*, 2017, Acrylic, oil, oil pastel, aerosol and graphite on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 32) Imogen Porteous, *Mind Reader*, 2017, Acrylic, watercolour, graphite, aerosol and glitter on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, **\$450**
- 33) Imogen Porteous, *Feminine Skin 1*, 2015, Acrylic and PVA on canvas, 120 x 80 cm, **\$500**

- 34) Emma Sullivan, *Lost Boy*, 2017, Acrylic paint, aerosol, resin, expanding foam, clay, 20 x 15 x 70 cm, **\$80**
- 35) Emma Sullivan, *Dark Wonder*, 2017, Acrylic paint, aerosol, resin, expanding foam, clay, 23.5 x 15 x 95 cm, **\$85**
- 36) Emma Sullivan, *Wicked Child*, 2017, Acrylic paint, aerosol, resin, expanding foam, clay, wig, 22 x 20 x 70 cm, **\$70**
- 37) Emma Sullivan, *Soft Wonder*, 2017, Acrylic paint, aerosol, resin, expanding foam, clay, 23 x 10 x 9.5 cm, **\$85**