

# Natasha Bieniek & Victoria Reichelt

## Paintings 2019

12 November - 7 December 2019

While Victoria Reichelt and Natasha Bieniek take very different approaches to this subject, their paintings invoke a compelling urgency in the relationship between people and the environment. Reichelt's realist depictions construct shiny balloons as artificial landscapes. Their bright colours, trees, cloud and happy sun motifs are at odds with the damaging nature of the material from which balloons are made – and signal a sinister undercurrent. Bieniek's practice focuses on the green sanctuaries and gardens that exist within urban spaces. Her use of a coated aluminium product called Dibond as the support for these detailed paintings of gardens and tightly curated vegetation reflects the movement that exists outside these pockets of nature, and conceptually mimics the screen culture through which humans increasingly experience the world.

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Victoria Reichelt uses her chosen medium of realist painting to document endangered artefacts and transitional spaces, technological and temporal, and describes these new balloon-constructed images as "...sarcastic landscapes: if we're not careful they may be the only landscapes we have". She was awarded the Sulman Prize (Art Gallery of New South Wales) in 2013, and is a recent finalist in the Portia Geach Memorial Award 2019, the Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize 2019 and Still: National Still Life Award 2, also 2019. Her work has been exhibited at the Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, and Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art. It is in the collection of Queensland Art Gallery/ Gallery of Modern Art, Deakin University, Artbank, Tweed Regional Gallery and Gold Coast City Art Gallery. Reichelt was awarded a doctorate from Queensland College of Art in 2005.

Natasha Bieniek is best known as a miniature painter. Her 2019 Wynne Prize painting, Reflection (2019), was highly commended and, at 125.0 x 83.0 cm, is her largest for some years. Her paintings invariably demand attention for their care and detail. They invoke the past and the present in their linking of the digital image culture of today with 16th century miniature painting. In 2015, Bieniek won the Wynne Prize and the Portia Geach Memorial Award. She is a six times Archibald Prize finalist and was highly commended in 2016 for her portrait of Wendy Whiteley. In 2012 Bieniek won the Metro Art Award, Melbourne. Bieniek has exhibited throughout Australia in public art galleries including the National Portrait Gallery (Canberra), The Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (Victoria), The Warrnambool Art Gallery (Victoria) and the Gippsland Art Gallery (Victoria). Her work is in the collections of the Gippsland Art Gallery, Tweed Regional Art Gallery and Warrnambool Art Gallery.