

Leith Maguire

Grounding

15 June – 10 July 2021

"2020 was a year of introspection, processing and regathering. Locked down in my Melbourne apartment, I turned to my balcony garden to busy my hands, quiet my mind and temper my heart. Walks to and through the carefully manicured park within the 5km radius of my home became a daily ritual. Closely observing the comings and goings of particular plant and animal life in this park - and in the landscaped front gardens of the residences along my route - was a way of marking time, as well as tracking larger shifts in the environment.

Drawing has always been a way for me to explore my surrounds and understand my place in them. As I've grown older, I've become increasingly interested in challenging traditional, Western, binary representations of women's bodies in nature – representations that describe a quintessential (but passive) "femaleness" that is inherently linked to fertility, beauty and care giving.

These drawings are a response to these observations and ideas. They are a series of self-portraits that depict my body in relationship with place and nature, and include snippets of the urban landscapes I encountered during and after lockdown. The drawings also explore feelings of detachment, anger and vulnerability, as well as shifting personal experiences of gender identity. Monochrome layers of loose ink wash and detailed line work accentuate the tension between positive and negative space - the figure becomes simultaneously present and absent in the composition."

Leith Maguire - 2021

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maguire graduated from Queensland College of Art in 2007, and completed a Masters in Cultural Conservation in 2014. Maguire currently lives in Melbourne and worked at the Australian Tapestry Workshop as a Weaver Intern from 2016 - 2018.

Maguire has been awarded the Hill End Artist Residency (2013) and the Heather Blair Award, Cairns (2010). Their work is represented in several public collections including Cairns Regional Gallery, The University of Queensland Art Collection, Somerville House and the Kedumba Collection of Australian Drawings.