

# Michael Muir

## *Rabbit holes*

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3 – 21 August 2021

Michael Muir's paintings are predominately inspired by his experience of the landscape, particularly places he has travelled to for the first time. Like many of us, his experience of travel in the past few years has changed dramatically and his trips have become closer to home, within hemmed borders. The inspiration for this body of work comes from trips to Bellingen and the Coffs Coast of NSW, areas that are renowned for their mixture of rural, plateau and coastal environments.

Muir spent time painting plein air and developing colour relationships in gouache studies, which then informed large-scale paintings back in the studio. Using only a palette knife to apply the rich oil paint, his flattened surfaces are delineated in the most deliberate way.

Shifting between memory and reality, Muir playfully explores the tension between abstraction and figuration. With a gentle humour, he has introduced peculiar elements to some of these works, in 'Hard days' a person stands on the edge of the road obscured by a letter box, in other paintings cows appear in unexpected places.

"The title 'Rabbit holes' references a present state of mind. It feels like social, family and work scenarios are more unusual than ever, due to circumstances out of our control. In these works I have found an escape, the locations offer a fleeting sense of familiarity and connection. In these rural settings, I was thinking about the choice of isolation, compared to when isolation is thrust upon us." Michael Muir, 2021

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Scotland, Muir's childhood was spent in South East Asia before settling in Sydney. Muir was the winner of the Mosman Art Prize 2014 and has been a finalist in a number of awards over the past decade including the Wynne, Sulman and Fleurieu Art Prizes. His work is represented in Australia's Artbank collection, Parliament House Art Collection and private collections throughout Australia and Internationally.