

Lara Merrett

Lost in nursery

Melbourne Art Fair, Booth #K3

17 – 20 February 2022

Jan Murphy Gallery is pleased to exhibit a new solo presentation by Lara Merrett at the 2022 Melbourne Art Fair.

Lara Merrett's colour-rich abstract paintings reveal an intimate and intuitive approach to painting. Working on a large-scale, Merrett apposes blocks of velvety dark colour with transparent, amorphous pools of acrylic and ink. These delicately layered paintings evoke senses beyond the purely visual, and hint at connections to memory and place.

This latest body of work titled 'Lost in nursery' was created in an empty bush block looking over the sea of the NSW South Coast on Jerrinja land. Taking her cues from nature's daily variations, Merrett's time was marked by the rise and fall of the sun and her palette informed by her surrounds.

"I let things happen slowly dictated by the weather. Leaving the canvases to sit unprotected and exposed. This interference was what I wanted .. another element that made me give up my hand and control in its making. Creating the environment to thrive but letting them take their own course. The wind pushed the ink around and I came out to watch.

No work is ever pre-planned. It's like magic when the unexpected starts to happen. I love it – it's completely intoxicating. From start to completion, a work can take anywhere from three days to six months. Each work has its own personality and therefore takes its own time."

For Merrett, it's the inquiry into the picture plane and surface, balance of ink and acrylic, of depth and opacity, chaos with order and working with and against the elements that forms her practice. The works are realized through the layering and pouring of water-based materials directly onto the canvas whilst being slowly dictated by the weather and natural surroundings. By purposefully exposing the work to the elements Merrett creates an environment where the canvas's reaction to the variations of rain, cloud and sun are equally as important as the artist's hand.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lara Merrett studied painting abroad at the Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain, before completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Arts at the College of Fine Arts, Sydney. In 2018, Merrett was commissioned for the Jackson Bella Room at the MCA Sydney and in 2019, Merrett was commissioned by The University of Queensland Art Museum to produce 'High Stakes' a two-part project beginning with a temporary outdoor studio residency and culminating with a large installation inside the museum. Other recent exhibitions include 'WONDER + DREAD' at Shoalhaven Regional Gallery (2020), Installation Contemporary, curated by Rachel Kent and Megan Robson at Sydney Contemporary (2017) and Superposition of Three Types curated by Alexie Glass-Kantor and Talia Linz at Artspace in Sydney (2017). Her work is held in numerous public collections, including the University of New South Wales, Artbank, Macquarie Bank, Sofitel Hotel and UBS Australia.