

Marina Strocchi

Two Places

02 December – 17 December 2022

Jan Murphy Gallery is delighted to present, *Two Places* an exhibition of new paintings by Marina Strocchi.

In *Two Places*, Strocchi presents a collection of works which further explore her time spent in New York alongside works inspired by rural Victoria, not far from Melbourne, where she now resides. The frenetic and immense built environment of New York contrasts vividly with the rolling hills and brilliant colour of the Victorian agricultural landscape. These works pay homage to place and serve as an ode to a life spent travelling and looking, painted in Strocchi's distinctive and unique style.

"My time in New York was spent between Brooklyn, where I lived and had my studio, and Manhattan. The studio was in Sunset Park, on the East River in Industry City, one in a row of enormous warehouses built in 1920. I was staying in Bed Stuy, which was the seat of the black power movement in the 70s and has the largest collection of intact Victorian brownstones in the United States. There is something about the energy in New York; it's a place where people go to try to do something. It seems like a place of hope. A place where your wildest dreams just may come true. There is also the Shakespearean counterpoint to the hopes; the despair and desperation of being overwhelmed by life. One is reminded daily that New York City is a place where life is lived to the furthest extremes.

I try to capture a sense of life and activity in the cityscapes. The work is an immediate response to the built environment that characterizes New York. This is my usual way of starting a new series and can be tracked in my previous work. The sheer mass and density of the buildings, the repetition of shapes, the walls of windows, sometimes reflecting, sometimes receding, and always towering over the mere mortals who inhabit them.

On the other side of the world, closer to home, I am surrounded by the rolling hills and vineyards of the Yarra Valley and a place not so far away called 'The Farm' which is a place full of life and colour. It is land that has been rehabilitated and rejuvenated. Rows of grape vines are sheltered by Cypress pines that create a windbreak from the gales coming off the Bass Strait. Cattle roam around like family pets and graze in paddocks dotted with oversized sculptures. The hand-hewn post and beam fences delineate the rolling hills and keep everything in its place. The strategic native plantings are helping the land recover, assisting in water retention and creating land for wildlife. It is a place where community is formed. Artists, musicians, vigneron and the local Men's Welsh Choir are all made to feel at home. Food and wine are shared. My paintings pay homage to this wonderful place." - **Marina Strocchi, 2022**

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marina Strocchi studied art in Melbourne (1979-82). She had a two-year sojourn in Europe (mainly Paris), then returned to Melbourne and commenced her social practice which continued in the Northern Territory with First Nations artists. Strocchi has exhibited in the USA, Europe and all over Australia during the last thirty years. Her work is in many major Australian institutional and private collections, and private collections in Europe and the USA. She has undertaken commissions, won awards and is a many time finalist in significant prizes including the Wynne Prize, the Alice Prize, the Fisher's Ghost Art Award, and the National Works on Paper Award (2020, 2022).