

Jacqueline Hennessy

This night, this garden of light

27 June – 15 July 2023

Jacqueline Hennessy's feminine figures offer themselves to our gaze, conditionally: a body, a gesture, the minutiae of fabric or hair — faces are rare. Hennessy builds her images slowly over time, transparent washes of raw umber are gently painted onto linen then disrupted by overbrushing.

“My process involves playing between binary opposites to create a tension between appearance and disappearance, painted and unpainted, detail and blur.” – Jacqueline Hennessy, 2023

There is a quiet, ghostly quality to the rendering - the sepia palette hinting at visions remembered, rather than wholly of this time. In *This night, this garden of light*, Hennessy continues to use her body in a performative way to explore the tension between the private and public self.

“My paintings are self-portraits in the sense that they reference images of my body. However, unlike traditional self-portraiture, they are not concerned with realism in the sense of referencing an autobiographical expression of myself or my life. They do not seek to declare “this is me”. In my practice, the body is the immediate and primary vessel for the expression of feeling and its translation to painting. However, this involves a particular vulnerability, as the body is a contested space, particularly for a woman. It is the site where the inner private world of the self becomes public.

Lace dresses and flowers are symbolic and evocative of a Romantic, pre-Raphaelite femininity. The peony is symbolic of love - and flowers generally, are associated with the celebration of love and the commemoration of loss and grief. Lace dresses and flowers function aesthetically in my work to arouse and express feelings of feminine sensuality, beauty, love, loss, and desire. They also create visual tension in the dance between what of the body is revealed and what is concealed.

Painting, for me, is like poetry. It has the ability to transcend the descriptive, and articulate more complex, personal and enigmatic experiences of being in the world.” – Jacqueline Hennessy, 2023

ABOUT THE ARTIST

This night, this garden of light is Hennessy's second solo exhibition with Jan Murphy Gallery. Hennessy graduated with a Masters of Fine Art (Painting) from Sydney's National Art School in 2019. Before studying art she worked as a lawyer, then completed her Honours degree in Psychology. Hennessy was the inaugural recipient of the Tweed Regional Gallery – National Art School MFA Residency Award in 2019. The award enabled Hennessy to spend time in Gallery's Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio, the resulting body of work 'Still Life' was exhibited at Tweed Regional Gallery in 2021.