

Louise Tate

A change of scenery

29 August – 16 September 2023

In her latest exhibition, Louise Tate plays with the theatrical nature of self-portraiture within the genres of still life and landscape painting. In 2022 Tate was invited to Hôtel Sainte Valière in the South of France as artist in residence, and later travelled through Italy. Though she was experiencing places for the first time, she was struck by how instantly recognisable the landscape was through film and earlier paintings, such as scenes from Arles made famous by Van Gogh.

“These works grew out of an artist residency and creative pilgrimage through southern France and northern Italy last year. Long, languid hours spent in a tiny village on a hill, collecting and arranging the few wildflowers that were not scorched by the summer sun. Slow, hot walks through vineyards. Stepping through time into long-gone artists’ studios, thick with history. I could feel a shifting momentum within European art spaces, as they continue to celebrate more and more women artists.

On returning to the studio, I initially felt a sort of theatricality in attempting to translate what I had seen and felt into a painting. Self-portraits were staged, still lifes arranged, and many of the garden landscapes I drew from were already famed. The terraced gardens of Villa del Balbianello have been used in numerous film sets; the courtyard garden of a former hospital in Arles has been repeatedly captured in paint; and a peony named after French stage actress Sarah Bernhardt became a regular prop in my studio. I thought of the paintings I had seen by Berthe Morisot and Paula Modersohn-Becker, so striking in their bold feminine intimacy. Both artists also painted peonies, and as I worked in the studio it felt as though history layered itself between each coat of paint.

Time spent elsewhere can provide the fertile ground in which creative thinking grows. It is an experience outside of every life that lingers somewhere between history and imagined reality. A change of scenery makes space for musing, and it brushes away the cobwebs that begin to take up space in life.”

– Louise Tate, 2023

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Louise Tate holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (with first class honours) from Melbourne’s RMIT and is currently undertaking a Master of Fine Art (Research) at Monash University. In 2023 she won the Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize, and has previously been a finalist in a number of prizes including the Omnia Art Prize (2023), Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize (2021), McClelland Splash Contemporary Watercolour Award (2021), Hopper Prize (2020) and the Churchie National Emerging Art Prize (2019). She has participated in artist residencies at Hôtel Sainte Valière in France (2022), the NARS Foundation in New York (2019), and Kyneton in regional Victoria (2017), which was supported by the Macfarlane Fund.