

Charlotte Ghaie

Night is as long as a whole day

19 September – 7 October 2023

Jan Murphy Gallery is excited to present our first exhibition with Protégé artist Charlotte Ghaie.

Working gently and intuitively with pastel on paper, Ghaie's works explore fragmented cultural identity and the slipperiness of memory. Through a haze of smudged colour, ambiguous and at times unnerving figures emerge in her work, along with elements of the everyday and family life. Her work is grounded in the practice of drawing and maintains a relationship to her heritage, connecting the threads of the past to the present.

"The title *Night is as long as a whole day*, was taken from one of my child's bedtime protests, an innocent and poetic reckoning with time, darkness, and the many things it can be filled with. Created following six weeks in India, these works explore an inner world, filled with ancestral inheritances, myths, fantasies, and impulses. By making these images, I am gently drawing these shadows out into the physical realm.

A mother's nights are naturally disrupted. Time contracts and stretches, and demands must be met. At once mother, hag, maiden, and muse her desires are tangled up in shadows and milk, in love and frustration, neither wholly malevolent nor benevolent. Through art I navigate this condition and ask questions (of myself and the world). This is a non-linear healing process where the goal isn't to forget but to purge and release so that my eyes can remain open to all the beauty and the chaos in front of me.

One of the questions asked through this process is around the problematic tradition of the artist model of colour. With her 'disengaged gaze' I feel compelled to rescue and reposition her. Reworking paintings produced not so long ago, I also become absorbed, enfolded, enclosed into another body. Inhabiting the role of both artist and model, it is impossible not to become aware and feel insecure around the possibility that I am merely perpetuating this trope and unable to escape my implication in this tradition. The artist chooses the subject no more than the dreamer chooses the dream.

The figures hover on the landscape, connected not to their place but by the less tangible forces of the spiritual and social realms. I sense that my connection to nature is awkward, like a teenage love affair. My attempts to be embodied, layering borrowed practices and rituals, never truly create a sense of belonging. I am interested in what lies beneath the forms, the undercurrent energy and vital force, libidinal energy, shimmering and glowing with life." – Charlotte Ghaie, 2023

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Charlotte Ghaie is an Indian-Australian artist raised in regional Victoria living between Naarm/Melbourne and the Northern Rivers/Bundjalung land in New South Wales. Ghaie completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) at Monash University in 2007 and went on to study both education and art therapy.