

Adam Pyett

Stories of daylight

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We often think of landscapes as fixed places, defined by geography or topography. Yet the places we know best are rarely experienced that way. They are shaped through repetition: the same path walked hundreds of times, the same stand of trees seen beneath changing skies, the same ridgeline transformed by morning, afternoon and rain. Over time, familiarity begins to replace observation. A landscape becomes less something we look at than somewhere we learn to inhabit.

Adam Pyett has spent years painting around the Macedon Ranges, a region whose volcanic landscapes, dense forests and distinctive light have long inspired artists, writers and visitors alike. It is a place where geology, history and imagination sit unusually close together. For tens of thousands of years, the Country has been cared for by the Traditional Owners of the Kulin Nation. Later came the goldfields, pastoral settlements, grand gardens, and generations of painters, each leaving their own mark upon the landscape. It is a place layered with histories, where every return offers another way of seeing. Pyett's paintings quietly enter this ongoing conversation, recording not simply what is seen, but what it feels like to return.

For many years, Pyett has worked from drawings made on site, using them as the foundation for paintings developed later in the studio. Alongside this process, he has regularly produced small gouache paintings, exploring colour, composition and atmosphere before moving into oil. While these works have long remained an unseen part of his practice, *Stories of daylight* marks the first time they have been exhibited. Immediate and assured, they stand not as studies, but as works that reveal another rhythm within the artist's practice.

Working from a drawing rather than directly from the landscape creates a subtle yet significant shift. The painting is no longer tethered to faithfully describing a particular tree or the exact light of a single afternoon. Instead, colour is free to operate on its own terms, shaping rhythm and emotional resonance. As the exhibition's title suggests, light itself becomes a kind of storyteller, moving through clouds, foliage and open space, revealing the landscape anew with each passing instant. What emerges is not a reconstruction of a place, but a painting that has grown from living within it.

In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino describes places that drift between geography and imagination. There is something of that quality in Pyett's paintings. Though anchored to specific locations, they are shaped as much by previous paintings and remembered encounters as by direct observation. Each work grows from the one before it, becoming part of an ongoing conversation with place. There is almost an ethics of attention at the heart of Pyett's practice. Returning repeatedly to the same landscape is an act of faith that it will continue to reveal something new.

Landscapes such as the Macedon Ranges resist being exhausted. They change with season, weather and light, but they are equally transformed by familiarity. Each return reveals something different, not because the landscape has fundamentally changed, but because the act of looking has. Pyett's paintings are less concerned with defining a place than with remaining attentive to it. After decades of painting, he continues to approach the landscape with curiosity rather than certainty, an openness that gives these works their quiet vitality. Stories of daylight reminds us that landscapes are never finished. They are continually reshaped by history, weather and the simple act of returning. Pyett's paintings do not seek to preserve these places so much as participate in them.

- Milena Stojanovska

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pyett has exhibited widely across Australia and has been the subject of a solo survey, Still Life Painting at Geelong Gallery (2017). His work has been included in major institutional exhibitions including Painting. More Painting at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2016), and Romancing the Skull at Art Gallery of Ballarat (2017). He has been a finalist in numerous awards including the Len Fox Painting Prize, John Leslie Art Prize, and the Geelong Contemporary Art Prize. His work is held in major public collections including the National Gallery of Victoria, Monash University Museum of Art, Geelong Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Ballarat, Bendigo Art Gallery, Tweed Regional Gallery, and Artbank, as well as private collections in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.