



PRELUDE TO
**OCEANS
FROM
HERE**

Dean Cross | Julia Davis | Grant Stevens

27 July–15 September

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

This is the first of a two-part exhibition, which explores the aesthetics of water. This simple and abundant compound has the power to define planetary geography, etching the landscape and separating the continents. From mountain glaciers to the vastness of the oceans, water is a vital life force.

Throughout the millennium, water has inspired human creativity and provoked metaphysical thought. The works of Dean Cross, Julia Davis, and Grant Stevens touch on the transitory qualities of water as it tempers our response to the environs and connects us to place.

From visceral and cerebral to sacred and somatic, the second part of *Oceans From Here* further considers our interconnection with water and the environment.

Dean Cross

'My ancestors are Saltwater people, and it is salt water that connects me to them.'

Dean Cross symbolically returns to Country through the act of apply and removing ochre to his half-immersed body. This performative act weaves time, splitting and twisting the chronologies of existence. The artist says of his performance, 'It is me returning to Country – or returning to our Aboriginality. The displacement and disconnection Cross alludes to is intergenerational. His grandfather orphaned from birth, was raised in a White family, and suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder after serving in WWII. He passed long before Dean was born and was rarely spoken about during his childhood. The artist's bathing, and application of ochre, are motivated by a personal desire to heal, reconnect and enact identity.

Julia Davis

'My work explores the effects of the passage of time, as it passes and appears as a past within the present. The process expands my understanding of the physical world, its properties and actions – how I impact and inhabit my environment and in turn, how it influences me.'

Oceanic waters are a powerful force that erode and build continental coastlines. Their daily ebb and flow are entrancing, palliative and shift the human psyche. Undercurrent brings together the metaphysical with innovations in technology to deepen our appreciation of the planet's watery environs. Drone technology captured an aerial view of the tidal movements on the Tasmanian coast. Davis then supports this with the resonance of ice scraping over the Antarctic Ocean floor. Originally designed to detect Soviet submarines during the Cold War, the audio system used for the recording was developed by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In the twenty-first century, this technology monitors the population and migration of marine mammals and underwater seismic activity.

Grant Stevens

'In an era defined by time deficits and information overloads, I am seeking possibilities for self-reflection and contemplation. It's been a really interesting process to walk to these waterfalls – sometimes for minutes, sometimes for hours. Before I go, I search for images of these places online. When I get there, there are often other people taking photographs. We're all on our own quests to take the same photograph.'

Responding to the cultural conditions of the 'attention economy', this series documents popular waterfalls in close proximity to Sydney. Composition, light, perspective and tonality unify these unique and disparate locations conforming them to modes of natural beauty. For the artist, they 'waver between the fantastical and romanticised on the one hand, and the bleakly generic on the other.' These 'Instagram perfect' photographs bear witness to the beauty of gravitational flow of water. Coupled with his contemporary act of pilgrimage is the promise of happiness and existential truths.

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



LIST OF WORKS

Julia Davis

Undercurrent, 2017

Single channel HD video, 11:00 min. loop, stereo sound
Concept and Direction: Julia Davis; Camera: Tom Waugh; Edit: Blue Lucine

Grant Stevens

The Waterfalls I, II, IV-VIII, XI, From The Waterfalls series, 2016
Colour inks on paper

Dean Cross

Untitled (Self-portrait as clay and water), 2015

Single channel video, 4:43 min loop

All works courtesy the artists



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