

DANIE MELLOR

Pleasure and Vexation: the strata and spectacle of history

This is Australian artist Danie Mellor's first major exhibition in New Zealand. Featuring over twenty works in a variety of media by this celebrated contemporary Australian artist, the exhibition contextualises Mellor's recent paintings and digitally-manipulated photographic works within the artist's practice of the last decade.

One of the key elements in Mellor's work is his predominant use of the colour blue, a reference in many of his earlier-career pieces to the engravings of exotic subjects used to decorate mass-produced English bone china of Spode and Wedgwood during the 19th and 20th centuries. More recent works focus on the underlying mood and inherent spirituality of the colour, a quality recognised by artists such as Yves Klein.

The presence of Indigenous Australian people in his work draws attention to the catastrophic and tragic historical implications of colonialism, including the removal of indigenous people from their traditional Country. Mellor, with both indigenous and non-indigenous heritage, stresses the significance of both Indigenous Australian and colonial histories, the need to talk about their interaction and the issues that arise from those two things being parallel.

Mellor is interested in the lingering cultural effects of Australia's colonial past on his country's contemporary culture and geographical space. While the Australian landscape has been mythologised through Western traditions in art, Mellor points out the enduring and equally significant land story of indigenous people and their perspectives of Country. While aspects of his work suggest the romantic notion of the garden, the tamed as opposed to the wild environment, other strands of his practice acknowledge in clear terms the centrality of Indigenous Australian people in Australian history and their management of its ecology.

Much of the historic material Mellor bases his work on is sourced from photographic archives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By meticulously rendering these references in his characteristic blue and white palette, Mellor infuses them with a romanticised nostalgia; drawing the viewers' attention to the special symbiotic relationship between people belonging to the world's longest continuing culture, and their unique environment.

"The central focus of my work and research has been engaged with history, and the way in which environments have changed through the process of cultural interaction generally, and colonial histories in particular."

Danie Mellor

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1971, Mackay, Queensland. Lives and works in Bowral, New South Wales.

Danie Mellor has lived, worked, travelled and studied in Australia, England, Scotland and South Africa. His work is represented in permanent international, national, state, regional, university and important private collections within Australia and overseas. It has been shown in significant exhibitions in Australia and internationally, including *Story Place*, Queensland Art Gallery and *Primavera*, Museum of Contemporary Art, *Culture Warriors* and *unDisclosed* at the National Gallery of Australia, and the National Museum of Australia's exhibition *Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture*. In 2013 Mellor's work was selected by the National Gallery of Canada for their exhibition *Sakahān: International Indigenous Art*.

In 2014, the University of Queensland Art Museum hosted a 10-year retrospective of his practice, and a solo exhibition of his works *Primordial: SuperNaturalBayiMinyirral* was shown at the National Museum of Scotland, as part of the Edinburgh Art and International Festivals. Major works were created for the 8th Asia Pacific Triennial at QAGOMA in 2015, the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art at AGSA and the Samstag Museum in 2016, and the inaugural Yinchuan Biennale *For an Image, Faster Than Light* held at the Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art in Ningxia Province, China.

He has won several major awards, including the 26th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award in 2009, and the National Indigenous Ceramic Art award in the same year. In addition to his art practice, Danie held positions of lecturer and senior lecturer at the National Institute of the Arts, ANU and Sydney College of the Arts, USYD. In 2010 he was appointed to the Visual Arts Board at the Australia Council for the Arts and then served as Chair of Artform until 2015.

Ko te whakaaturanga nui tuatahi tēnei o Danie Mellor ki Aotearoa. Nui atu i te rua tekau ngā mahinga toi kei kōnei, he mea waihanga ki ngā rauemi maha nā tēnei ringatoi rongonui nō Ahitereiria. Kei te nohotahi ngā peita me ngā whakaahua ā-mati hou a Mellor ki ngā mahinga toi kua oti i a ia i roto i tērā tekau tau.

Ko tētahi o ngā tohu nui o ngā mahi a Mellor, ko tana whakamahinga o te tae kahurangi. E whai ana tērā i ngā tānga o ngā āhua mai tawhiti ki runga i ngā okouku haina o Ingarangi. He nui rawa ngā okouku i whakaputaina e Spode rāua ko Wedgwood i te rautau 19 me te rautau 20. I ēnei rā, ka arotahi āna mahi ki ngā kare ā-roto me te wairua o te tae. Nō ngā ringatoi pērā i a Yves Klein hoki taua whakaaro.

Kua tāngia ngā iwi taketake i roto i āna mahi hei tohu whakamahara ki ngā mahi tūkinō me ngā pēhinga i roto i ngā tau nā te mahi hao o tauwiwi, arā, ko te tangohanga o te iwi taketake mai i ōna whenua. He uri a Mellor nō te iwi taketake me tauwiwi. Ko tāna, he whakaitaranga i te hiranga o ngā hitori o ngā iwi e rua, i te hua o te whakawhitiwhiti kōrero me ngā momo take e puta mai ana i te noho ngātahi o ngā iwi e rua.

Kei te aronui a Mellor ki te pānga o te taipūwhenua i Ahiterieria ki te ahurea me te takoto o te whenua ināianei. Ahakoa ngā pōhēhē mō te whenua o Ahitereiria nā ngā mahinga toi o ngā tāngata o te Uru, ko tā Mellor, he whakaatu i te hiranga pūmau o te whenua mai i ngā kōrero me te tirohanga o ngā iwi taketake. He māra taurikura kē te āhua o te whenua i roto i ētahi o āna mahi, arā, e takoto mārire ana te whenua, ehara i te waoku noa. Heoi, he wā anō ko te Iwi Taketake te pūtake o āna mahi toi, arā, ko tō rātou pānga nui ki te hitori o Ahitereiria me tō rātou mōhihi ki te tiaki i te taiao.

Kua ahu mai te whakaaro mō te nuinga o ngā mahi toi a Mellor i ngā whare pupuri whakaahua nō te rautau 19 me te rautau 20. Ka tāhuhuatia ngā whakaahua ki ngā tae kahurangi me te mā, ka rangona te wairua mārire o te ao tawhito; e whakaatu ana ki te kaimātakitaki i te hononga i waenganui i tētahi iwi nō te ao kōhatu rā anō ki tō rātou whenua taketake.

"Ko ngā kōrero tuku iho te aronga nui o taku mahi me aku rangahau kia kitea ai te huringa o te taiao nā ngā whakawhitinga ā-iwi o te ao whānui, waihoki, ka arotahi hoki au ki te pānga o te taipūwhenua i roto i ngā tau."

Danie Mellor

HE HAURONGO

I whānau mai i te tau 1971 ki Mackay, i Queensland. Kei te noho ki Bowral, i Niu Haute Wēra.

Kua noho, kua mahi, kua ako anō a Danie Mellor ki Ahitereiria, ki Ingarangi, ki Kōtirana, ki Awherika ki te Tonga. Kua pūmau āna mahi ki ngā whare wānanga o rāwāhi, o Ahitereiria, o ngā takiwā whānui me ngā rohenga o Ahitereiria. Waihoki, kei ngā kohinga tūmataiti whakahirahira o Ahitereiria me rāwāhi. Kua whakaatuhia āna mahi ki ngā whakaaturanga nunui o Ahitereiria, o te ao anō, arā, i *Story Place*, i te Queensland Art Gallery, i *Primavera* i te museum of Contemporary Art, i *Culture Warriors* me *unDisclosed* ki te National Gallery o Ahitereiria me te whakaaturanga o *Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture* ki te National Museum of Australia. I te tau 2013, i tohua ngā mahi a Mellor e te National Gallery o Kānata mō tō rātou whakaaturanga *Sakahān: International Indigenous Art*.

I te tau 2014, ka whakanuia e te University of Queensland Art Museum āna mahi i ngā tekau tau o mua, ka tū hoki tētahi whakaaturanga motuhake o āna mahinga toi mō *Primordial: SuperNaturalBayiMinyirral* i roto i ngā taioenga toi o Edinburgh. Ka waihanga ia i ētahi toi nui mō te 8th Asia Pacific Triennial ki QAGOMA i te tau 2015, te Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art ki AGSA me te Samstag Museum i te tau 2016, me te Yinchuan Biennale tuatahi, arā, ko *For an Image, Faster Than Light* i tū ki te Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art i Ningxia Province, ki Haina.

He maha hoki ngā tohu whakahōnore kua riro i a ia, arā, ko te 26th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award i te tau 2009, me te tohu a te National Indigenous Ceramic Art i taua tau anō. Hāunga i āna mahi toi, kua tū ia hei pūkena, hei pūkena matua hoki i te National Institute of the Arts, ki ANU me te Sydney College of the Arts, ki USYD. I te tau 2010, i whakatūria ia ki te Visual Arts Board i te Australia Council for the Arts. Ko ia anō te Heamana o Artform tae atu ki te tau 2015.