

Art Collector

SPECIAL EDITION
SYDNEY
CONTEMPORARY
2015



**MAKE
TIME TO
DREAM**

FAIR HIGHLIGHTS + ART UNDER 10K + TONY GARIFALAKIS + NATASHA BIENIEK + KAREN BLACK

KATE BERGIN

Do you still use taxidermy as studio elements for your paintings?

My collection of taxidermy has grown over the years with foxes, peacocks, deer, geese and ducks, among others. Not only has taxidermy been of technical assistance in understanding animals but it's also opened up ideas about our relationship to animals.

Can you talk to me about stillness and what that means in an accelerating world?

The contradiction within the term still life is appealing: the balance between stillness and life. I am attempting to give as much weight to the world life as to still, reflecting a type of still life presented by *Desportes* in the 18th century.

Your new exhibition is called *A Company of Unlikely Travellers* - Is this a reference to circus acts or variety shows?

We are all unlikely travellers ending up in places that seem vaguely absurd. The variety show concept is very much reflected in the paintings in the show. An Indian rhinoceros appears and it is the only one in captivity in Australia at Dubbo Zoo. We drove from Noosa to Dubbo, 12 hours in 45 degree heat with children in the back, so we had become the unlikely and unwilling travellers. This tradition in art dates back to *Dürer's* 1515 etching of a rhinoceros that he never saw but who travelled from India to Portugal and then died en-route to Rome. In the 18th century another Indian rhinoceros, Clara, appeared in Europe for her 17-year grand tour. *Jean-Baptiste Oudry* painted her in Paris in 1749. He is one of my favourite still life painters.

Are your paintings a criticism of the way animals are enclosed as domestic pets or in zoos?

It would be disingenuous of me to take a high moral stand against the captivity of animals in zoos when they offer such a rich abundance of subject matter. The continual upgrading of habitats and breeding programs makes me inclined to think positively about the zoo's care for their animals. I did however have a spark of excitement when I heard of the Tbilisi Zoo escape,

only to be immediately tempered by the horror they must have faced.

Do you consciously give your animals human characteristics?

Though I place the animals in a domestic setting and while they may hold objects, I try to keep this within the bounds of what they might actually do as animals. This retains the sense that they are just visiting and exploring this strange world. They need to retain their own sense of wildness. I hope the paintings exist on the edge of the possible rather than tipping over into surrealism or the purely imaginative.

Prue Gibson

► KATE BERGIN SHOWS WITH MOSSGREEN GALLERY, STAND F10 AT SYDNEY CONTEMPORARY 2015.

1. // Kate Bergin, *The Company of Unlikely Travellers*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 190 x 260cm

2. // Kate Bergin, *Gibbon, This is where you can reach me now*. Oil on canvas, 80 x 110cm.

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MOSSGREEN GALLERY, MELBOURNE



LUDE RAY

“THE CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE TERM STILL LIFE IS APPEALING: THE BALANCE BETWEEN STILLNESS AND LIFE.”

KATE BERGIN

The contradiction within the term still life is appealing: the balance between stillness and life. The still life is a genre of painting that has been around since the 15th century. It is a genre that has been used to explore the boundaries of stillness and life. The still life is a genre that has been used to explore the boundaries of stillness and life. The still life is a genre that has been used to explore the boundaries of stillness and life.

