

Peter Sharp

Sticks and Stones

4 – 30 May 2013



Liverpool Street Gallery is pleased to announce Peter Sharp's solo exhibition of new paintings, drawings and sculptures titled *Sticks and Stones*. The exhibition will be on view from 4 - 30 May 2013, opening on Thursday 9 May 2013, 6-8pm.

Peter Sharp is a Sydney based artist whose work explores nature and its elements; drawing from his surroundings, Sharp examines the micro and macrocosms of life in nature. From the inky depths of the ocean, which yielded subject matter for the exhibitions *Whale* (2004), *Sounding* (2005) and *Close to the Bone* (2006), to the delicate patterns and ephemeral beauty of the spider's web, seen in *Spider* (2007) and *Web* (2008), to the dry lands of the desert, seen in *Shadowbox: The Desert Paintings* (2011), Sharp's work cohesively explores the sublime and transcendental qualities of nature. Drawing from his surroundings, whether the inhabitants of the ocean, the desert, the coastline or the bush, Sharp methodically deconstructs the real world to create an abstract language of line, colour and form.

The new body of work in *Sticks and Stones* has been inspired by Sharp's annual journeys to Fowler's Gap, north of Broken Hill. He states: "I have been travelling to this part of Australia for over 25 years but it is only in the last 3 years that I have found a way to make art that speaks about how I feel and see this spectacular place... Fowlers Gap in far north-western New South Wales was great because I made small sculptures. They were basically stones and twigs and string, almost like ritual sculptures." Sharp created small sculptures of found objects in situ, and afterwards, using charcoal on paper, drew abstractions of their forms, silhouettes and shadows in the landscape. Sharp, upon returning to the studio, used these small drawings and 'still-life sculptures' as a starting point in which to realise the forms and shapes in the larger oil and acrylic paintings that capture the elements of the desert. In conjunction with the paintings, Sharp has created a suite of large-scale hand-sawn and painted wooden sculptures.

In paintings such as *The Dam* (2013) geometric and organic forms overlap; fluid lines and free-flowing shapes counter-balance the constructed, geometric forms. Sharp uses rich ochres, sky blues and bright whites to visually emphasise the earth of the desert, the heat of the sun and the vastness of the sky. Layers of impasto oil and poured acrylic have been built up, sanded back and scraped away to create a certain surface physicality or tension. Sharp's art is sophisticated and elegant, yet the work's surfaces often appear raw, bleak, rough and weathered.

Sharp's relationship with the natural world is inspired by an Indigenous view of the landscape and country; in that nature is part of you, and you are a part of nature. Sharp aims to maintain a dialogue between Indigenous and non-

Indigenous abstract artists who explore the diversity of the Australian landscape.

QUOTE SELECTION

“There’s a certain process that I go through: paper works, drawings, the paintings, then the sculpture. Its really important to start from seeing and then put these processes in the way to abstract what I’m seeing, to do something else to it.” (Peter Sharp, “Freestyle”, *Artist Profile*, Issue 1, Spring 2007, p36)

“I tend to fall in love with a subject, then filter it through different media...My primary media would be drawing, as without that initial interrogation of the landscape I’d be lost! Drawing tends to be less ego-drive, more open...” (Peter Sharp, “Not the Way Home: Desert Paintings from 13 Artists”, *Artist Profile*, Issue 18, 2012, p56-57)

“Although Sharp has been making these trips for many years, this is the first time that he has created a body of work that specifically explores the desert. Rather than drawing and sketching directly from the landscape, Sharp was impelled to make small sculptural works with materials he found on the trip.” (Liz, Nowell, “Introduction”, *Peter Sharp: Will to Form*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, 2012, p6)

“Sharp’s paintings, with their fluid lines and deep colours, worked surfaces and biomorphic forms, are abstractions of landscape. Or, more precisely, they are records of Sharp’s reactions to the landscape.” (Andrew Frost, “Just Enough”, *Peter Sharp: Will to Form*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, 2012, p13)

It would take quite an effort to dislike Sharp’s pictures, which have an enveloping, holistic quality...Sharp’s use of textures and translucencies is rarely anything but seductive.” (John McDonald, “Modern Dilemmas”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Spectrum, 27-28 August 2005, p28-29)

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Sydney in 1964, Sharp completed a Bachelor of Art Education at City Art Institute, Sydney in 1987 before graduating with a Masters of Fine Art at the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts in 1992. From 1989-1999, Sharp held regular solo exhibitions at Coventry Gallery, Sydney. In 1996, he was awarded the Jacaranda Drawing Prize and in the following year was granted a residency at the Cite’ des Arts Internationale, Paris, where he collaborated with French printmakers to make a series of lithographs and etchings. In 1999, he was invited to exhibit at Kunstraum 34 in Stuttgart, Germany. In 2001, Sharp participated in the award winning television documentary *Two-Thirds Sky*, which culminated in an exhibition of the same title held at the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre. His paintings have been exhibited in the Wynne Prize (1996, 2003), the Sulman Prize (1998, 2008) and the Dobell Prize for Drawing (2009) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 2009, Sharp was invited to be part of the Taronga Zoo Artist-in-Residence program which was featured on the ABC. Sharp has exhibited widely in group exhibitions including: *Not the Way Home*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, The National Trust, NERAM, Broken Hill City Art Gallery (2012), *Personal Space: Contemporary Chinese and Australian Prints*, Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Sydney (2011), *Artist Artists*, Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria (2011), *Silk and Sand: Chinese and Australian Prints*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, University of New South Wales, Sydney; The Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China (2008) and *Contemporaneous: Australian Contemporary Painting 1*, Wangaratta Art Gallery, Victoria (2008). In 2012, Sharp held his first survey at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre titled *Peter Sharp: Will to Form*, curated by Liz Nowell and featured works from over a 12 year period. This survey also culminated in the publication *Peter Sharp: Will to Form*, a 120 page fully illustrated hardback catalogue, which includes essays by Andrew Frost and Gillian Serisier. Sharp’s work is held in many significant public and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, The Holmes a Court Collection, Artbank, The Macquarie Group Collection, New England Regional Art Museum and private collections in Australia and overseas.

Image details: (left) *Installation of Sticks and Stones Drawings, 2011-2013*, charcoal on paper, dimensions variable
(right) *Bone Machine, 2013*, cow bone, found chair and 1 piece of hand saw n timber, 92 x 60 x 55 cm
Photography: Michel Brouet

For further information about the artist, exhibition or high resolution images please contact Liverpool Street Gallery on info@liverpoolstgallery.com.au or 02 8353 7799.