

{ Flotsam and Jetsam }

noun

/pronounce/ **flot·sam and jet·sam**

1. Pieces of broken wood and other waste materials found on the beach or floating on the sea: *We wandered along the shore, stepping over the flotsam that had up in the night.*
2. Miscellaneous or unimportant material: *a notebook filled with flotsam and jetsam*

Peter Sharp, or also known to us as, Nature Boy, has come up with a new body of work. His paintings are a meditation on a theme, landscape and the nature around us. Peter is Nature Boy because he simply relies on nature for inspiration. A wonderful, child-like enthusiasm covers his face when he talks about the fragments of wood or leaves that have washed up on the seashore. These shapes, the texture and their relation to the world around the object inform Sharp's perspective on drawing and later painting. After taking a walk Peter draws, he believes that 'drawing is like the thinking that happens before you speak'. It's immediate, it's reactive, it's the quizzical brainstorm that is poured out onto the page without too much hesitation. "Painting is like holding your breath and waiting to see what happens" –the paint wiggles, breathes, jumps and sways to life, evoking the feeling of being in nature.

Sharp has greatly referenced his inspiration and admiration of indigenous depictions of land and nature. That depicting a landscape is not so much a visual replication of the land but rather the experience of it. A nuanced type of language where the artist depicts their own relationship and experience of the land. Sharp sits between the borders of abstraction and realism, whereby the viewer can depict familiar shapes, a leaf, a gumnut, a line tracing on the bark of a tree. Yet the imagination is sparked, we're not served with a landscape that our brain perfectly comprehends, but rather something that can trigger our own memories, our own depiction of land and our experience of it. Sharp walks along the beach, drawing anything that is in the tide line, they're a diagram, a plan, a map to create a painting.

The new series is potentially the most abstract set of paintings that he's created. They're elusive in nature, drawing a tangible thread to reality whilst distorting it at the same time. He draws what he is visually attracted to – but using his intuition and imagination. Sharp states that sometimes he does imagine what an object use to be before he stumbled upon them on the beach, but prefers to not think, to not think too hard about the shape and about the realistic depiction. As an art teacher Sharp also toys with notions of visual form, the idea of how far can he push the boundary of a visual form before it falls apart and no longer is the object it was in the beginning. He believes that it must always have a tangible thread, something to anchor the piece to its original state. But perhaps he might explore this dissonance of objecthood and provenance in another series. In his current show we see familiar shapes and colours, fluid lines and a type of textural depth that depicts the sand and all that washes up on it.

Flotsam and Jetsam is aptly named for the show, it's waste material that Sharp finds which compel his need to paint and draw. They're not waste, they're not useless but rather like fuel, fuelling the creativity within Sharp. He elevates what is considered discarded or unimportant, to a new status, the trigger of his creativity. Reminding us that one man's trash is another man's treasure.

- Althea Kuzman

PETER SHARP

b. 1964, Sydney

EDUCATION

- 1989-1992 Master of Fine Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales
1987 Post Graduate Diploma (Painting), City Art Institute, Sydney
1983-1986 Bachelor of Art Education, City Art Institute, Sydney

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 Flotsam and Jetsam, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2021 Accidental Tourist, Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Manly
2020 Going Somewhere Else, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
2019 *#mrbrancusitoyou*, Wellington St Projects, Sydney
2018 *How To Paint Trees*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
2017 *How to Draw Trees*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2016 *The Shape I'm In*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney.
2015 *Seen and Unseen Monoprints*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2014 *Eucalypt*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2013 *Sticks and Stones*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2012 *Will to Form*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Sydney
2011 *Shadowbox: The Desert Paintings*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2010 *Handle*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2008 *Web*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2007 *Spider*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2006 *Close to the Bone*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2005 *Sounding*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2004 *Whale*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2002 John Miller Galleries, Newcastle
2001 *Blueprint*, Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney
1999 *Elbow Room*, Coventry Gallery, Sydney
Kunstraum 34, Stuttgart, Germany
1997 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
1995 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
Chapman Gallery, Canberra
1994 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
1993 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
1991 Coventry Gallery, Sydney
1989 Coventry Gallery, Sydney