

Liz Coats - *Streaming*

Walking alone one morning whilst on a field research trip at Glenbog State forest in south-east NSW, Liz Coats came upon a flooded creek and the inspiration for her latest series of paintings:

Looking for a place to cross, I followed the creek downstream for a short distance to a rocky ledge where I clambered down to a pool below. Strands of foam and tiny bits of detritus stirred up by the pressure of falling water were circulating in the current with a continuous visible pulse. I watched streaks and tiny whirlpools of bubbles form and reform, break apart around a protruding rock, or cut by a floating leaf into lateral threads, then gather speed before releasing through the narrow gap downstream. I knew then, that I was seeing the basis for a new group of paintings.

The Streaming series builds upon a long interest in light-affected surface patterns and the fabric underlying surface appearances. Like all of Liz's work, the paintings are resolutely abstract; they do not represent pre-existing forms. In this sense, they are not 'of' the pulsing patterns in that mountain stream. Rather, the 'organic' qualities of her work are a product of the flow and deformation of acrylic paint.

Liz sees herself as a facilitator rather than controller of this process. She sets up frameworks within which materials interact - liquid pigments are allowed to move freely, but within the confines of screens that are laid across the canvas. Layer upon layer of paint creates rich, textural surfaces of overlaying forms. In such a way, the process of making (or of allowing to be made), is akin to the forces Liz recognises in the natural environment.

She describes her practice as follows:

In the space between one thing and another, there is a world that exists in imagination - insights waiting to be made tangible. My life is bound up with making paintings. I reach out and function in a world apart from words through painting. Likewise, ways of being in the world contribute to how I go about making these images. To use an analogy, I cohabit with the paintings that I create. The viewer, in turn, is invited to become immersed in the paintings. They may evoke for you the ripples and bubbles of a mountain stream, leaves on a forest floor, the bark of a eucalypt, patches of shifting light, liquid pigment moving across a canvas surface... or something else entirely.

Chloe Watson, February 2014

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