

the nature of being:

an interview with Rebecca McEwan

CCH talks with Adelaide artist Rebecca McEwan about her expanding practice, our complex relationships with the natural world and how her emotive responses are reflected in her artwork.

CCH: Could you tell us a little about your practice?

RM: *I graduated from Adelaide College of the Arts in 2016 with a Bachelor of Visual Art and Design, majoring in drawing. Over the last few years I have expanded my practice to work with a variety of materials including encaustic wax, glass and natural materials to produce 2D and 3D exhibition work, installation and sculpture. I have regularly undertaken residencies and mentorships which have enabled to me grow my practice in new and exciting ways.*

CCH: What themes or ideas are you most driven to explore in your work?

RM: *Through my practice I examine the complex relationship humans hold with the natural world by exploring ancient wisdoms, stories and folklore and making work to re-awaken awe and re-ignite our lost reverence of the natural environment. The materials I use play an important role in the work I make and often the work is led initially by the materials.*

CCH: Could you speak briefly about your works that recently featured in the exhibition *the nature of being*, displayed at Dentons Fisher Jeffries?

RM: *This work has been created as an emotive response to my daily encounters with the Onkaparinga River/Ngangkari pari, which I can see from my kitchen window. I also drive along sections of it most days. It is a tidal river which feeds into the ocean, so it is constantly changing as the water level rises and falls with the tides. The section closest to the ocean is a significant estuary, the plants and wildlife that live along its banks are always changing and adapting to the variations in water height and salinity. Through this work I wanted to capture the human experience of living near a river and the familiarity of the colours, shapes and daily variations.*

CCH: How do you think your works relate to other artworks in the exhibition? Are there any contrasts or interesting conversations?

RM: *I think the strongest links between the artworks in this exhibition are the textures which exist in each work. The wrinkles, veins and lifetime of stories evident in the hands photographed by Cassie Thring I feel speak directly to the river lines in my work which is then also reflected in the textures created in the ceramic work of Sam Gold. The work of Max Callahan and Lee Walter evokes a more visceral and emotive response of what it is to be human and to interact with our environment both natural and artificial and the experiences which we encounter.*

CCH: Is it unique to have your artwork displayed in a space like Dentons Fisher Jeffries? What impact do you think this might have on people's experience of the work?

RM: *It is exciting to have work displayed in a non-traditional gallery space. I think this exhibition, 'the nature of being' works especially well in this space as it provides a delightful contrast to the urban environment of the office space. The juxtaposition of the natural materials, concepts and forms against the clean, white space of the office building brings the natural world inside and provides the viewer with quiet moments on which to reflect on their experience of being human.*

Rebecca McEwan is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice focuses on the intrinsic connections between humans and the natural world. Exploring ancient wisdoms, stories and folklore she works to re-awaken awe and re-ignite our lost reverence of the natural environment.

***the nature of being* was presented by the Centre for Creative Health and Dentons Fisher Jeffries between 27 April – 31 May 2021. Featuring work by local artists Maxwell Callaghan, Sam Gold, Rebecca McEwan, Cassie Thring and Lee Walter the exhibition was co-curated by Fiona Borthwick and Steph Cibich.**



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