

PARADISE FALLS

# KATE MCMILLAN

## KATE MCMILLAN

LIVES AND WORKS IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA

### EDUCATION

- 2011 PHD CANDIDATE, CURTIN UNIVERSITY, PERTH, SUPERVISED BY DR ANNA HAEBICH
- 1999 MASTERS IN CREATIVE ARTS (BY RESEARCH), CURTIN UNIVERSITY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1997 HONOURS (FIRST CLASS) FINE ARTS, CURTIN UNIVERSITY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1994 BACHELOR OF ARTS, FINE ARTS, CURTIN UNIVERSITY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *PARADISE FALLS*, VENN GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2008 *LOST*, JOHN CURTIN GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2005 *BROKEN GROUND*, MARGARET MOORE CONTEMPORARY ART, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2004 *NEW WORK*, FRONTSTORE GALLERY, BASEL, SWITZERLAND  
*DISASTER NARRATIVES*, PRESENTED AS PART OF PERTH INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, PERTH INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS (PICA), PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2001 *UNDERCOVER*, FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE, FREMANTLE, AUSTRALIA  
*SACRIFICIAL ECONOMY*, VERGE GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2000 *HEDGE*, RUBYAYRE GALLERY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
*AMBIGUOUS OBJECTIVES*, PERTH INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS (PICA), PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1999 *NEW WORK*, VERGE GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1998 *NEW WORK*, VERGE GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1997 *NEW WORK*, ARTHOUSE GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *SIXTH SENSE: CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA*, PRESENTED AS PART OF FOTOFREO, GALLERY CENTRAL, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2012 *SPACED: ART OUT OF PLACE*, PRESENTED BY IASKA, FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE, PERTH, AUSTRALIA (CURRENTLY TOURING NATIONALLY)
- 2010 *BIENNALE OF SYDNEY*, CURATED BY DAVID ELLIOTT, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
- 2009/10 *BUILT*, CURATED BY JENEPHER DUNCAN, ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2008 *SILVER: 25 YEARS OF ARTRAGE*, PICA, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2006 *IF YOU LEAVE ME CAN I COME TOO?*, CURATED BY BEC DEAN, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
- 2005 *I HAVE SEEN SOME STRANGE PLACES*, CURATED BY JEFF KHAN, GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
- 2004 *REGIONALE 5*, KUNSTHAUS BASELSTADT, CURATED BY SABINE SCHASCHL, BASEL, SWITZERLAND

- 2003 *MIXTAPE*, CURATED BY DR ROBERT COOK AND JENEPHER DUNCAN, ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, PERTH, AUSTRALIA  
*WILD FRONTIER*, DOWNTOWN, ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA  
*FLUX: UNCERTAIN STATES*, CURATED BY JOHN BARRETT-LENNARD, LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2002 *NEO GEO*, CURATED BY SUELLYN LUCKETT, JOHN CURTIN GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2002 *MOVING COLLECTION*, CURATED BY ROGER MCDONALD, GOVETT BREWSTER GALLERY, NEW ZEALAND & AIT TOKYO, JAPAN  
*URBAN ANXIETY*, ARTRAGE FESTIVAL, PERTH, TOURING TO 1ASPACE, HONG KONG
- 2001 *LOOP*, MOORES BUILDING, CURATED BY MICHELLE SICILLIANO, FREMANTLE, AUSTRALIA  
*DO IT*, CURATED BY HANS ULRICH OBRIST, SOPHIE O'BRIEN AND DR ROBERT COOK, PRESENTED AS PART OF PERTH INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY, PERTH, AUSTRALIA  
*SACRIFICIAL ECONOMY*, FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 2000 *NIGHTSWIMMING*, CURATED BY DR ROBERT COOK, PRESENTED AS PART OF PERTH INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, CRAFTWEST, PERTH, AUSTRALIA
- 1999 *RE:BODY*, FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

### AWARDS/RESIDENCIES

- 2011 ARTSOURCE/CHRISTOPH MERIAN STIFTUNG, SIX-MONTH RESIDENCY, BASEL, SWITZERLAND  
IASKA, SPACED RESIDENCY, LEONORA, AUSTRALIA
- 2010 MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL RESIDENCY, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
- 2003 ONE-MONTH SELF FUNDED RESEARCH, BERLIN, GERMANY  
RED GATE GALLERY STUDIO, BEIJING, CHINA
- 2002 AUSTRALIA COUNCIL STUDIO, TOKYO, JAPAN

### SELECTED GRANTS

- 2010 AUSTRALIAN POSTGRADUATE AWARD WITH STIPENDS (TO UNDERTAKE PHD)
- 2009/2011 ESTABLISHED ARTIST NEW WORK GRANT, AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS
- 2010 PROJECT GRANT, DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS
- 2008 MID-CAREER CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP, DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS
- 1998 AUSTRALIAN POSTGRADUATE AWARD WITH STIPENDS (TO UNDERTAKE MASTERS DEGREE)

### SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- |                                  |                   |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA | CURTIN UNIVERSITY | KPMG              |
| CITY OF PERTH                    | WESFARMERS        | CITY OF JOONDALUP |

## PARADISE FALLS

*Paradise Falls* is the philosophical culmination of the time McMillan spent in Switzerland in 2011 as well as her ongoing PhD project into the forgetting of the history of Wadjemup/Rottnest Island, Western Australia. This significant body of work highlights a shift in her practice, evidenced by a dark and moody palette and the combination of figurative and abstract works that set up an interplay between landscape, memory, forgetting and history. Working across a diverse range of mediums including painting, collage, photography, film and sculpture, this exhibition examines the complex and sustaining residue of these overarching themes.

The works cover a range of specific landscapes including Wadjemup/Rottnest Island, the Black Forest in Germany and the winter landscapes of Switzerland. With a focus on island sites and places that exist in isolation, the works attempt to draw parallels between physical landscapes and the psychological landscapes of the artist's own memories, broader cultural histories and stories.

In more abstract works, including large-scale paintings on Belgian linen, the island becomes a void space, dark and abyss-like. The island is clearly something bigger and deeper than merely a geographical location. These spaces are often things we try to forget, things we carry around inside us; memories and holes for things that are lost. The paper collage works entitled *Holes* further evidence this idea. In fact these works mark a pivotal moment in McMillan's practice whereby the islands become a kind of absence rather than a geographical presence. By demarcating this empty place, the artworks pay homage to a kind of un-forgetting.

The painted works respond psychologically and aesthetically to the photographic series' included in the exhibition. Mountaintops fade away behind heavy fog and forests emerge from the tops of clouds. They are both beautiful and disturbing, and it is often this interplay that makes McMillan's work so compelling. We are seduced by these landscapes, temporarily overlooking what these dark atmospheres might conceal.

The veiled sculptures, mirroring themselves, provide yet another layer through which to view the work. Titled *Shadows*, these works are comprised of a highly complex fabric which is literally used as the undergarment in Nun's habits. The translucency of the material in these poetic sculptures allows the possibility of viewing them together with other works.

The beauty and burden of European history is never far away in McMillan's re-understanding of contemporary Australian culture. In figurative pieces such as the two films entitled *Paradise Falls I* and *Paradise Falls II*, the conceptual references draw from specific histories of place. *Paradise Falls I* traces a ghost-like woman as she appears and disappears around the shoreline of a glacial lake in the Black Forest. The film responds to local mythology of a beautiful but evil siren that lures men into the forest and kills them.



*Floating*, 2012, digital photographs, 29 x 58 cm each



*Paradise Falls I*, 2011/12, film stills, digital photograph, 18 x 26 cm

*Paradise Falls II* follows a man as he rows towards the silhouette of a craggy island off the coast of Wadjemup/Rottnest. He too appears and disappears from sight, finally lost to the inky black of the ocean. These characters are stand-ins for fractured and partial histories that disappear from focus, yet continue in our collective psyche as dark and haunting traumas. The films are like moving paintings, heavily referencing the romantic tradition of Germanic landscape painting. Unsurprisingly then the work of artists such as Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) and Casper David Friedrich (1774-1840) become distant cousins to McMillan's oeuvre. The artist acknowledges and even embraces these quotations but she also holds them in a critical eye as part of an enlightenment ideology that has helped us to forget.

Through engaging with the viewing process we participate in a re-remembering, acknowledging the shady edges of things, but also baring witness to the beauty of sadness that is contrary to the horrors of forgetting history. Whilst the history of Wadjemup/Rottnest Island is a core component of what drives this body of work, it can also be viewed more broadly as a reading on landscape and memory. Together, the work in *Paradise Falls* become part of a *sunny disquiet* that is so central to McMillan's ongoing thesis.



*Paradise Falls I*, 2011/12, film stills, digital photographs, 18 x 26 cm each



*Into the void*, 2012, oil on Belgian linen, 30 x 41 cm each

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The artist would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr Cat Hope, Decibel, KFord, Matthew Hunt, Sohan Ariel Hayes, Tony Nathan, Peter and staff at Art Presentations, Desi Litis, Bayoush Demissie, Alistair Rowe and the staff at Venn, Malcolm, Anne, Peter and Lee Wylie, Paul Green, Trent at Fremantle Sailing Club, Aaron Wyatt, Eveline Boulva, Luc Renaud, Ruth Walther, Christoph Merian Stiftung, Artsource, Australia Council for the Arts, Department for Culture and the Arts, Ted Snell AM, Chris Malcolm, Di and Jeff Hay, Dr Anna Haebich, Dr Ann Schilo, Julian Goddard, Curtin University, Helen Yinnakis, Christian Lyon, Sarah McMillan, Dr Thea Costantino, Georgette, Nolan & Harry McMillan-Hunt.

**Cover:** *Isle of the dead*, 2012, still from the film shoot *Paradise Falls II*, digital photograph, 170 x 120 cm