

Artback NT in association with the
University of Newcastle Gallery presents



Artback NT

A SECULAR VIEW: NERIDAH STOCKLEY

It is through drawing and painting you get to know the bones of a place
Neridah Stockley, 2018





Campground trees 2015
Oil on board
30 x 20cm

Shed with stripes 2015
Oil on board
30 x 20cm

Trees at Ross River 2015
Oil on board
30 x 20cm

St Pauls Hill End 2014
Acrylic and gouache collage
30 x 20cm

SYNOPSIS

A Secular View: Neridah Stockley is an exhibition spanning twenty-five years of sustained practice by Northern Territory based artist Neridah Stockley and is curated by Gillean Shaw, Art Curator, University of Newcastle Art Gallery. Whist Stockley is best known as a painter, this survey reveals the diversity of her practice including drawings, collage, dry point etchings and a growing body of ceramic work.

The idea of a 'survey' plays on the notion of surveying the landscape, whether urban, rural or domestic. Through numerous en plein air encounters Stockley creates a personal record that is later reworked and resolved in the studio. This relationship to space and returning to place was etched in the artist's mind travelling between Dubbo and the Blue Mountains as a child, and later between Central Australia and New South Wales.

Stockley's work is characterised by abstracted compositions that hint at narrative or symbolic content, traversing memory and experience in an ongoing dialogue with visual interpretation. Domestic in scale, she invites the viewer to encounter a section of surveyed and deconstructed landscape, through a process of re-visioning the natural and manufactured world into linear and geometric planes and forms.

The exhibition explores the depth of the artist's oeuvre, presenting Stockley's individual approach to abstraction, gestural mark-making and lyrical style to create a distinctive visual vernacular.



King Island rocks 2009

Oil on board

30 x 10cm

Stokes Point cliffs and rocks 2009

Oil on board

60 x 10cm

CURATORIAL RATIONALE

A Secular View: Neridah Stockley brings together 120 works drawn from private collections and the artist's personal collection spanning more than two decades, from the 1990s to present. This survey exhibition reveals a point-of-view with completed works embodying the connections Stockley has wrangled from initial workings, to accomplished and resolved works that describe the essence and atmosphere of experienced environments.

Stockley's practice is embedded in secularist beginnings: objects, experiences and places and has an ongoing engagement to varied landscapes: urban, rural, outback and coastal. Artistic responses to chosen subject matter become distilled through an intensely physical engagement with the process of mark-making: laying-down paint, constructing drawings or assembling collages. Materiality encounters curiosity which is puzzled and resolved in-situ and in the studio.

Stockley has developed a unique pictorial language that is driven by intuition. This is an approach to painting unshackled from the expectations of technical and academic methodologies. The resulting compositions take up residence somewhere in our subconscious. Each work finds an ongoing resonance; a pleasing and lasting harmony.

— Michael Reid Sydney, 2017

The idea of a 'secularist' exploring time and place is the primary linking theme in **A Secular View** where spatial and temporal boundaries influence composition and the shaping of formal elements. Stockley distills landscapes into deceptively simple compositions allowing her geographically precise works to be topographically anchored yet pictorially ambiguous. There is often a split of the visual plane where the view, initially captured en plein air and reworked in the studio, is projected – distorted and verticalised beyond the grand narrative inherent in the landscapes in which Stockley is known to inhabit – to the graphic, the visceral and the domestic.



Red roof 2014
Oil on board
25 x 20cm



Tanker no. 3 2013
Oil on board
30 x 10cm



Tanker no. 1 2013
Oil on board
30 x 10cm

AUDIENCES

Neridah Stockley's paintings are felt as well as seen – trees cast long shadows over a sun-baked campground or fine telegraph wires stretch across dove grey skies. Looking at one of Stockley's landscapes is like accompanying her on a painting expedition.

— Michael Reid Sydney, 2017

A Secular View: Neridah Stockley includes paintings, drawings, prints, collages, constructions and ceramics drawn from over two decades of Stockley's considered, consistent and committed artistic practice. Stockley is a well-respected mid-career artist, heralded as a 'painter's painter' amongst peers and cognoscenti. Viewers are intrigued and delighted by her works which engage and challenge in equal measure.

Neridah Stockley's oeuvre draws upon the traditions of modernist landscape painting and surrealist collages. Her work and subject matter are highly accessible to general audiences and of particular interest to students studying abstraction and landscape painting.



Newcastle 2015
Oil on board
30 x 20cm



An Alice Springs house 2015
Oil on board
30 x 20cm

My work is about relationship to place and space ... urban, remote, coastal and domestic; these are long standing motifs. I am not interested in thesis about place. I am intensely interested in historical narratives but not bound by them. Everything is up for re-evaluation and deconstruction ... my own ideas included.

My eye likes to travel around and through forms ... tanks, buildings, walls, sheds, parks, corners, hills and clouds. I look for the aesthetic value in plain and prosaic things; the grey sacrament of the mundane. Making 'art' often happens in strange and unexpected places.

The concerns / the subject / the themes remain the same ... but get addressed in new ways of looking and responding. I like the tension between the purity of colour and the 'absence' of colour. 'Raw material' is a term I think about often, the physicality of paint, timber, paper, pencil, pastel and clay ... the way in which materials are handled and resolved.

— Neridah Stockley, 2018



Freemantle Arts Centre 2018
Pastel on paper
40 x 30cm

Whaler's tunnel 2016
Pastel on paper
40 x 30cm



Saint Pauls 2014
Acrylic and gouache on plywood
20 x 25cm

BIOGRAPHIES

Neridah Stockley

Neridah Stockley spent her childhood growing up in Dubbo and Orange, Central NSW and the Blue Mountains, NSW. Stockley studied at the National Arts School in Sydney before moving to the Northern Territory in 1997 living for a year in Darwin and later moving to Alice Springs where she has lived and worked since 2001. Stockley is represented in national and international collections including: Araluen Collection, NT; Newcastle Regional Gallery, NSW; City of Fremantle Collection, WA; Kerry Stokes Collection, WA; Charles Darwin University Collection, NT; and the collection of Parliament House, Canberra, ACT.



The daughter of a civil engineer/draughtsman, Stockley grew up with a curiosity and love for paper and drawing, inspired by her father's studio environment. Recalling her first experience of painting at the age of three, the 'physicality and plasticity' of paint and the ability to 'build' a three-dimensional image on a two-dimensional support captured her imagination. At ten years of age, Stockley learnt the concept and techniques of Renaissance perspective, discovering 'vanishing points' in the landscape. Constructing 'windows into space' through drawing compositions of buildings, bridges, cross-bars and streets was a youthful obsession coupled with an early ambition to become an architect.

Curious about arid landscapes from a young age, Stockley was attracted to 'space' and knew she would live in the desert one day. In 1995 and 1999 Stockley first visited the Central Australian desert on art school road trips and later relocated to Alice Springs in 2001. Initially Stockley worked as a remote area art tutor for Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (Nyrrpi), a studio coordinator at Bindi Arts (Alice Springs) and a field officer for Papunya Tula Artists (Kintore & Kiwirrkurra). In 2003, Stockley refocused her attention to her own painting practice. Stockley's discipline and dedication were acknowledged with her first solo exhibition of paintings and drawings in 2005 at Araluen Galleries, Alice Springs. Institutional acquisitions followed with successful solo shows at commercial galleries in Darwin, Sydney and Alice Springs and preselection for annual national and regional art prizes.

Whilst continually making work of and about Central Australia, from 2008 Stockley has regularly travelled, enabling her practice to respond in-situ to built and natural environments. She has undertaken numerous interstate residencies including Falmouth (2007), King Island (2009) and Wardlaws Point (2011) in Tasmania, The Pilbara (2008) and Fremantle (2013, 2016 & 2018) in Western Australia, Newcastle (2011 and 2016), Hill End (2014) and Hazelhurst (2014) in New South Wales and most recently spent three months in Israel, Palestine and Morocco (2017–18).

House at Hill End 2014
Oil on board
25 x 20cm

Biographical material sourced from "Seeing with the senses: the art of Neridah Stockley", Anita Angel, Curator, Charles Darwin University Collection and Art Gallery, November 2014, pp. 3–8

Gillean Shaw

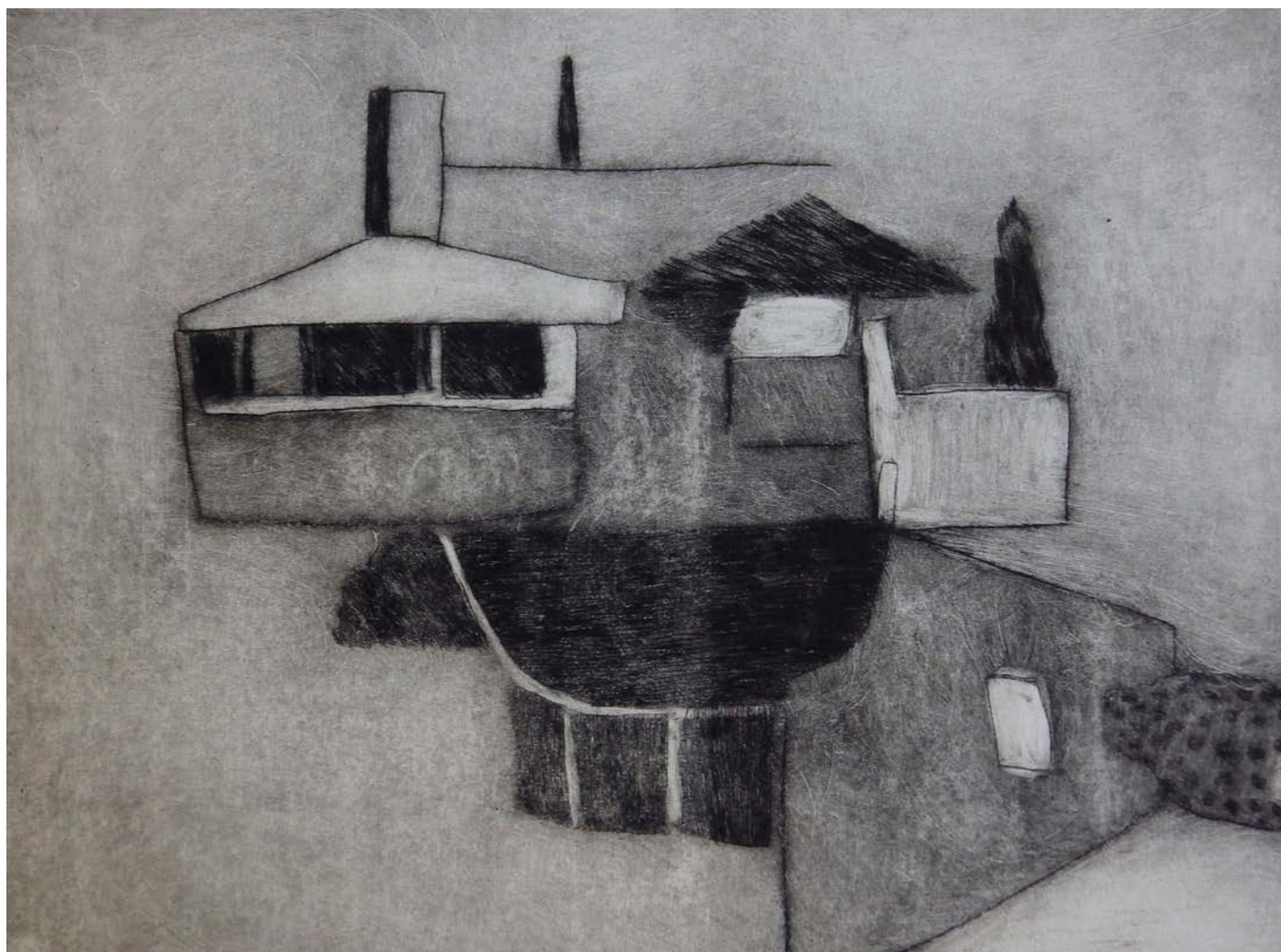
With a history of teaching in photo-media and art theory at Newcastle Art School and the University of Newcastle, Gillean Shaw returned to an earlier career in gallery management, working as an independent art curator and artist. In 2007 she launched a very successful artist run initiative, Podspace.

Shaw was also a Director of Field ARI in Newcastle, and has worked with the Maritime Museum and Newcastle Council for contemporary displays of historic content. She completed an MFA in 2002 on the reinterpretation of material culture in an era of the 'post-museum' and has curated many group exhibitions. She is currently Chair of the Board for the Newcastle Historic Land Managers and was a lead director of a redevelopment for the old gaol, the Lockup, which become a contemporary arts hub ensuring that historic crown properties are used for community purposes.

Currently the Art Curator for the University of Newcastle, Shaw manages the University Gallery on the university's main campus as well as Watt Space Gallery, the university's student gallery in the city. University Art Curator entails management of the university's extensive art collection that includes nearly 600 Indigenous works of art, and a small museum of Indigenous and Oceanic artefacts which she has co-designed and curated.



Desert home 2018
Oil on board
50 x 40cm



Building and hills 2018
Stoneware with underglaze
6.5 x 6.5cm, 7 x 7cm and 6 x 4.5cm

Rooftops 2016
Drypoint etching
40 x 30cm

Prosaic Poetry

One way of getting a crowd to listen is to drop the voice, asking the audience to sharpen their attention. Neridah Stockley's paintings use a similar strategy, if it's fair to call it a strategy: the works are both honest and humble, true products of process and material reckoning – hardly guilty of scheming.

The practice of plein air painting has largely defined Stockley at home in Central Australia, a high-key and richly textured pelt of country. But it is only half the picture. In truth, Stockley is ambivalent about subject matter, but deeply faithful to the moment. Paint is her respected collaborator and advisor, well beyond any ideas yoked to Landscape. Nonetheless, the artist acknowledges the rigours of working outdoors and out bush. In a ruthlessly hot and desiccating climate, the false economy of comfort is ditched to join with the elements, grasp the essentials and cut to the core of the dance, or crawl, with paint. Every day is different, and Stockley is keenly aware of the dangers of complacency.



Hunting new ground is less important than distilling focus, but keeping the eye and the heart fresh demands a certain pragmatism. In May 2011 Stockley was awarded an artist's residency in Newcastle, NSW. Water, sky and a tight rein on vantage points were the artist's self-imposed conditions. Her reductive studies grasp blunt muscular skies and surly littoral stages and industrial markers tag the horizon: ever-hungry coal-carriers, high wires, old brick. At Newcastle Art Gallery, where Stockley's work was acquired, Giorgio Morandi and early Hermannsburg watercolours were showing in a chance alignment between two discreet visual mentors.

Back in the centre, Stockley drew country invigorated by winter rains, tender sweetly-green tips playing sharp against burnt out buffel grass, spring storms casting fleeting beams against smoked skies.

The discord between light and dark energizes some work, inviting metaphor if you are thirsty; others are enigmatic in their sheer simplicity – a spartan grace overriding the bones of composition and the soft skins of tonalism. Under her careful charge, the square format is rendered defenceless, its edges revoked, informal geometry undoing the perfection of balance.

In the past, Stockley has examined the objects of still-life – meat, trout, dog, jug – as quotidian props for pure paintings. In recent works, domestic interiors merge with the forms of landscape, panorama collapsing into a set of lean organic forms. The picture wins by gently pulling the rug.

Walking the line between ease and tension, the artist is obliged to rattle her own cage. Stockley continues to practice, but not to polish, the skills of observation. Squinting into the sun she is ever alert to the risk of her own shadow blocking the light. She leaves out the ramble and honours the footnote.

— **Una Rey, 2011**

Street 2014
Oil on board
25 x 20cm

Excerpt by artist, curator and academic, Una Rey, from her catalogue essay which accompanied an exhibition of Stockley's work held at RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs, 2011.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Touring dates:

A Secular View: Neridah Stockley
is available to tour from 2021

Exhibition specs:

salon hang, 120 works
(paintings, drawings, collage,
etchings and ceramics)

Running metres:

80

Crate sizes:

TBC

Time needed to install exhibition:

TBC

Time needed to bump out exhibition:

TBC

Exhibition inclusions:

Catalogue

Interpretive materials:

Education Sheet and Children's Trail

Neridah Stockley is available for public
programs which need to be negotiated
between the artist and the venue.

Cost:

\$3000 plus GST

CONTACT INFO

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A hill in nameless valley 2008
Oil on board
60 x 20cm

*All works are the collection
of the artist unless otherwise
stated. Images courtesy of
the artist and RAFT Artspace.*



Desert mountain with cloud 2018

Oil on board

40 x 40cm

Private Collection



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