

DAMIEN KURTH

Damien Kurth (b.1972 Stratford, UK) is a contemporary painter based in the Waikato. He holds a Master of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Arts from Otago Polytechnic.

Working predominantly in oils, Kurth's meticulously rendered 'trompe l'oeil' paintings depict groupings of everyday objects, providing an opportunity for the artist to focus on the physical act of painting whilst interrogating philosophical concepts of perception and semiotics.

A bevel cut crystal glass, an old jar, a patterned tin; these objects are often overlooked and considered mundane. However, sitting central in Kurth's compositions and devoid of situational context, the familiarity of these everyday objects dissipates, and they gain an element of mystery and intrigue.

Kurth's commonplace objects possess the 'seemliness of the unfamiliar' or 'Jamais vu' a term used to describe the experience of being unfamiliar with something that is very familiar.

The artist uses a traditional ground gesso, building the painting's surface slowly; each stroke of oil working with the other to create a harmonic whole. Delicately painted sheets of paper and masking tape subtly divide the picture plane, creating a sense of depth, while fluorescent pink post-it notes punctuate his compositions; drawing the viewer's eye across the canvas, achieving an overall sense of balance and harmony.

Kurth's work is held in numerous collections in NZ Aotearoa and worldwide. He is the winner of the Otago Polytechnic Painting Award, the Derivan Painting Award, the Cleveland Art Awards (Highly Commended) and a finalist in the Adam Portraiture Award.

BIOGRAPHY

BORN: 1972, Stratford UK

LIVES: Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

EDUCATION: Master of Fine Arts, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Bachelor of Fine Arts, Otago Polytechnic

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AWARDS: Adam Portraiture Awards - Finalist (2002, 2000); Otago Polytechnic Painting Award (1997); Cleveland Art Awards - Highly Commended, Open Section (1997); Derivan Painting Award, Otago Polytechnic (1996)

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS: Spun, Corban Estate Arts Centre, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2013); About Face: Aspects of portraiture, Papakura Art Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2011); Adam Portraiture Awards, The New Zealand Portrait Gallery, Pōneke Wellington (2002, 2000); Still Life, Arts Post, Kirikiriroa Hamilton (2000); Hoochy Koochy, Arts Post, Kirikiriroa Hamilton (1999); Cleveland Art Awards, Ōtepoti Dunedin Town Hall (1997)

EXHIBITIONS: Coil, Sanderson Contemporary (2024); Thrum, Sanderson Contemporary (2023); Reverb, Sanderson Contemporary (2022); Spacer, Sanderson Contemporary (2021); Sort, Sanderson Contemporary (2020); New Work, Sanderson Contemporary (2019); Tropicana, Sanderson Contemporary (2018); Otherness, Sanderson Contemporary (2017); Drift, Sanderson Contemporary (2017); Here there is no why, Sanderson Contemporary (2016); Wilds, Sanderson Contemporary (2015); New Work, Sanderson Contemporary (2014); Duplex, Sanderson Contemporary (2013); Traverser, Sanderson Contemporary (2012); New Work, Sanderson Contemporary (2012); Dissolution, Sanderson Contemporary (2011)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: 'Still Life Revisited' by Warwick Brown, House and Garden, May 2017, p 163; 'On the long and winding road' by Terry McNamara, The New Zealand Herald, Apr 2015; 'Samples offer easy peek' by Terry McNamara, The New Zealand Herald, Jun 2013; 'The real thing' by Terry McNamara, The New Zealand Herald, Apr 2012

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