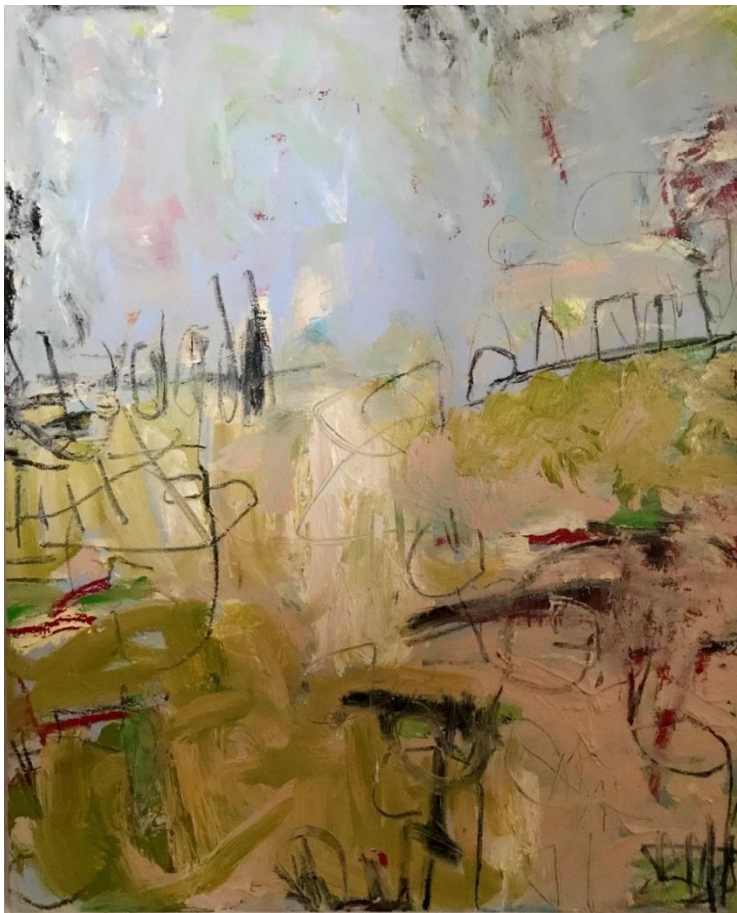


Mary van den Broek & Margaret Delahunty Spencer

The Worth of the Ordinary

7 July – 8 August 2017

Official Opening: Friday 14 July 6.00 – 7.45 pm



Margaret Delahunty Spencer, *Morning Light in Landscape*, Oil pastel, oil paint and acrylic on linen, 70 x 80 cm

Like the intersection of two circles, the marriage of two reveries, or the unexpected conjunction of two complimentary worlds, the mild steel and bronze sculptures of Mary van den Broek and the gently hued oil and acrylic paintings of Margaret Delahunty Spencer come seamlessly together, issuing an open-hearted invitation to enter freely into richly imagined and deeply experienced states of being.

In an exhibition that conceptually recalls the realist movement, which sought to celebrate ordinary life after the excesses of Baroque and Rococo, van den Broek and Delahunty Spenser explore everyday experiences through vastly different artistic lenses, and although their disparate visions are as unique as they are wide ranging, they manage to achieve a striking unity upon a plain of artistic expression that uplifts the spirit, while acknowledging the need for a creative contemplation of deeper truths.

The realist movement of the nineteenth century resulted in paintings such as Millet's 'Gleaners' which depicts three women collecting stems of grain after the cart has passed, and Courbet's 'Bonjour Monsieur Courbet', in which the artist shares a moment of mutual acknowledgement with two manual labourers on the edge of a field. Similarly, in Mary van den Broek and Delahunty Spenser's hands, ordinary contemporary events open into opportunities for playful engagement and ongoing exploration.

Ever mindful of Brancusi's observation that 'the moment you are no longer a child you are already dead', the sometimes boisterous, sometimes solitary, but always curious and playful mood of these works seems to skip happily, like the bronze figure of a girl in 'Hopscotch', over superficial divisions of race, class, age and language, and in doing so they acknowledge the degree to which we all have a vital part to play in the collective human adventure.





Foreground: Mary van den Broek, *Conference of the Birds*, Mild steel, 65 x 60 cm

Background: Margaret Delahunty Spencer, *Sharing with Meg*, Oil pastel, oil paint and acrylic on linen, 70 x 80 cm

From an oblique angle, Delahunty Spencer's work seems at times to be referencing certain colour theories of Paul Klee and moods evoked by landscape artists like John Olsen and Fred Williams, and indeed with Delahunty Spencer as composer and choreographer colours enact an intricate ballet that makes internal experience of ordinary events visible in the most extraordinary ways: each work becoming an artfully created sounding device for the exploration of self.

Delahunty Spencer cannot remember a time when she wasn't 'puddling' in paint. Having taught art for many years, she now enjoys the luxury of practicing full-time, which allows for the creation of 'bigger puddles'! An honest song of connection to people and place, her work for this show was inspired by her family, her domestic surrounds and the landscape beyond.

In deep conversation with Delahunty Spencer's canvasses, the sculptures of van den Broek capture in steel and bronze both the swift moving enthusiasm of children as they pass through a world full of profound riddles and strange transformations, and

more meditative states evoked by works like 'Woman with Rake' referencing Millet's painting of the same name and 'Conference of the Birds' which takes its name from the Persian epic poem by Farid ud-Din Attar.

Following on from a career as an Occupational Therapist, van den Broek completed a Masters of fine Art through RMIT in 2014. Her arts practice, which tends towards sculptural forms and spans seventeen years, is inspired by her family and by her early life on a dairy farm in south western Victoria.

Together Delahunty Spencer and van den Broek have held several successful collaborative exhibitions both in their home town of Ballarat and in Melbourne.



Mary van den Broek, *Conference of the Birds*, Mild steel, 20 x 25 x 15 cm