

Michel Canetti

La Femme Éternelle

9 June – 4 July 2017

Official Opening: Friday 16 June 6.00 – 7.45 pm



Michel Canetti, *Augusta*, acrylic on canvas, 167 x 137 cm

As a world renowned advertising illustrator, Paris born Michel Canetti has created images for publications such as Elle, Vogue and L'Officiel in France, for fashion and cosmetics companies such as Guerlain, Chanel, Estee Lauder and L'Oreal, and for other businesses including Renault, Louis Vuitton, Air France, Lux, Neiman Marcus, Polygram, SAS Airlines, Credit Lyonnais, Waterman, Perrier, Hudson and De Beers.

Although he has been resident in Melbourne since 1997, the influence of the French capital remains strong in his work, as does his love for the complexities and

challenges of depicting the charming and changeable beauty of the female form. In his work as an illustrator, Canetti paints predominantly with gouache. The current show however translates his unique style of Parisian chic onto large format canvases for maximum textural definition and dimensional impact. Working with swift, confident, sweeping lines to depict gentle feminine curves, and employing a controlled mastery of suggestive detail, Canetti captures fleeting moments and sets them within a world apart.

In *La Femme Éternelle*, Canetti's second exhibition at Yering Station Art Gallery, myth and reality combine in a celebration of femininity as seen through a man's eyes. As such it is the female gaze that looms large: sometimes challenging, sometimes appealing, sometimes cultivating detachment. Diverse states intermingle in these works. Some are suffused with a playful lightness, while others are heavy with yearning. Soft and aggressive sides of seduction are explored. Temptation, pride and fragility are all present, beneath which a powerful undercurrent, sometimes latent and sometimes in full flower, either stirs gently or flashes out with maximum brilliance. Canetti loves to paint the shapes of women with an eye always beyond the physical, taking in details with sensitivity in a way that will convey what he calls 'the woman herself'.

Inspired by the playful moments in the rarefied world of high fashion, Canetti strives to both convey and affect powerful emotional responses. He cites as influences fashion illustrator René Gruau, early 20th century society portrait painter John Singer Sargent, and the comic book artist Frank Frazetta, creator of *Conan the Barbarian*.

Canetti graduated from the Sorbonne with a Bachelor of Arts in graphique design and a Masters in painting restoration. He began his career as a set designer for Club Méditerranée, a company that specialises in vacation villages, which involved creating the scenery for shows, designing flyers, writing menus, and making promotional signs for the village. As such he learnt not to waste time on unnecessary details.

After completing mandatory *service militaire* , he began to canvass publications and design disc covers, experimenting with new styles all the while. Upon finding an agent, his career as an advertising illustrator flourished, and since 2009 he has appeared three times in the biannual publication '200 Best Illustrators Worldwide'.



Michel Canetti, *Georgia Blue*, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 153 cm

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