

# Amanda Ruck

The Secrets Shadows Keep

24 November 2018 — 7 January 2019

Yering Station Art Gallery / Main Gallery



*The Cover of Quietness 2018, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 x 4cm*

In 'The Secrets Shadows Keep' local artist Amanda Ruck asks us to incline our heads upward and to participate more fully in the ever shifting element of air.

Surveying paintings that span two decades of creative endeavour, we encounter many works that have apparently emerged from within the realist, landscape tradition. Amanda's line of sight however is forever tempted skyward,

thus diminishing the presence of land and enhancing the lure of the sky, effecting a subtle change of perspective that has a stirring tonic effect on the viewer's imagination; for our thinking shifts from an engagement with the solid certainties and rigid laws of the material world, toward an uplifting sense of the dynamic, responsive and inherently mutable facets of the freer element of air.

Thus seduced into imaginary engagements with the aerial realm, a host of dreams and desires now enter freely into our thinking: dreams of swift movement, dreams of flight and dreams of mutability, and a desire for liberation, for open spaces and for a quickened ability to imagine. As new desires present themselves, we recover a lost ability to move directly towards them, recalling perhaps that the Latin word 'volo' means both 'I want' and 'I fly'.

Something else however strikes us about Ruck's provoking expanses—something paradoxically opposed to swiftness and mutability—and that is their arresting, and altogether pregnant atmosphere of unusual stillness. Art critic John Russell once wrote of Odilon Redon's methodology: 'Redon means us to watch until the image reveals itself, and he's not going to be hurried.' The same could be said of Amanda's works, as their eerie tranquillity invites us to wait, or is it that they invite us to be? In breathing the air of reverie, they challenge us to explore our own vast interior skies, and to take off over open landscapes full of mysterious promise.

In his seminal work on the dynamics of the aerial imagination, Gaston Bachelard observed that 'A stable and completely realised image clips the wings of the imagination', but given that Ruck's images masterfully recreate an unstable element, they remain open, elusive and full of imaginative power.

Amanda Ruck graduated from the Canberra School of Art in 1988 with a Bachelor of Art, Visual, in printmaking and painting, after which she moved to Melbourne, and in 1998 her love of landscapes and skyscapes drew her out to the Yarra Valley. From 2005-2008 she co-coordinated the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition & Awards. She has held eighteen solo exhibitions and been involved in over twenty group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. She currently works out of her studio in Healesville, Victoria, Australia.

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