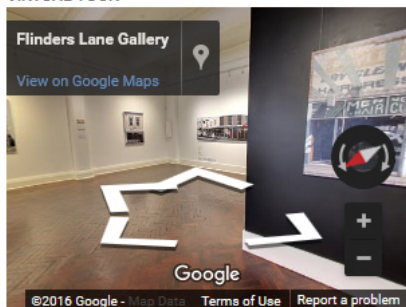


EXHIBITIONS William Breen *Land of Sun-Shine* 11th October 2016 - 5th November 2016

VIRTUAL TOUR



William Breen is an enigma. In the age of photography, smart phones and life accelerated, he pointedly exchanges speeding up with slowing down. Perhaps he was born in the wrong age; if Breen had been painting 400 years ago he would now be regarded as an old master. Indeed, his approach to creating a painting finds more parallels in seventeenth century Dutch art than anything produced in the centuries since. The only clue as to his contemporaneity is the subjects he chooses to work with—street scenes and building facades, but treated with a compositional resolve and dextrous realism that belies his epoch.

The bristling energy that charges these works comes from neither his subject nor treatment alone, but in the friction generated by the two. We are not used to seeing such ordinary scenes of life treated in this way. There are no pixels or LEDs here, it is all pigment, oil and medium. Not that Breen is old fashioned—quite the contrary, he elicits a radiance from his paintings that burns with the urgency of the present moment, not the faded tones of years past. Warming ourselves by this glow we fall under his spell and see life through the eyes of the artist—not tired and filled with noise and debris, but exuberantly glistening in every way. Every element within each chaotic scene is somehow made to belong, the clanging discords fall into alignment, and a serene harmony descends on all.

One of the most compelling features about William Breen's art is its timelessness. In spite of his seemingly spontaneous and fleeting subjects, we feel the presence of a time eternal. Part of this can be attributed to the absence of figures—Breen never paints people into his pictures, which creates an effect of elemental stillness. There should be movement in these busy urban streets but here it is entirely absent. Where the people have gone is anyone's guess, but we are left with a strange and eerie sense of disquiet.

The absence of people highlights one thing about



William Breen  
*2nd Floor Cocktail Bar* 2016  
oil on linen  
122cm x 92cm



William Breen  
*Hooked* 2016  
oil on linen  
122cm x 76cm



William Breen  
*Men Women Haircuts* 2016  
oil on linen  
102cm x 76cm

Breen's art—he doesn't just copy a picture from a photograph or render it as you or I might see it. He constructs his pictures according to an internal pictorial logic. He adds or deletes features as the picture demands it. Breen is no slave to realism, instead he forces it to submit to his will, applying and commanding it according to his needs. In so doing he is able to maintain an level of abstraction. This quality is not always apparent on first viewing but, through these fragments of abstraction, Breen is able to somehow amplify his realism and to remind us that this, first and foremost, is a painting to be taken on its own terms. A benign lull falls over those in the presence of William Breen's pictures. Admired and respected by other artists, he also fires the imagination of the public at large. In his technical virtuosity Breen has few peers, but it is that elusive and charismatic dynamism in his paintings that truly sets this 'new' master apart.

Catalogue essay by Simon Gregg, Curator Gippsland Art Gallery

Flinders Lane Gallery first exhibited William Breen's paintings in our annual emerging artist exhibition Exploration in 2000. He graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1992. Breen has been a Finalist in the Arthur Guy Memorial Prize, the Tattersalls Art Prize, twice selected as a finalist in the Doug Moran Portrait Prize, a finalist in the Brett Whiteley Scholarship, the Redlands Westpac Art Award and the Conrad Jupiter Art Prize. Breen was shortlisted for the prestigious Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, as well as a finalist in the Geelong Art Prize and the Fleurieu Peninsula Biennale Art Prize. He was a finalist in the John Leslie Art Prize and the Nillumbik Art Prize. He is represented in corporate and private art collections in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom including the RACV Collection, Macquarie Bank, Bendigo Art Gallery, Gippsland Art Gallery, Deakin University, Artbank, City of Perth, National Australia Bank, LaTrobe University Melbourne, Loyola College, Melbourne and the City of Whitehorse Collection.

'Land of Sun-Shine' is William Breen's 11th exhibition at FLG.

[WILLIAM BREEN PROFILE](#)  
[DOWNLOAD BIO / CV \(PDF\)](#)

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William Breen  
*Gertrude St* 2016  
 oil on linen  
 87cm x 250cm



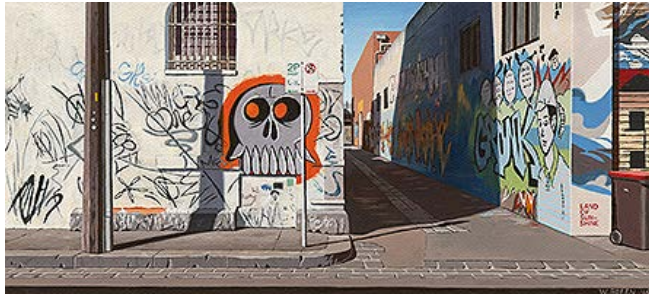
William Breen  
*Scent of a Flower* 2016  
 oil on linen  
 92cm x 153cm



William Breen  
*Spoilt* 2016  
 oil on linen  
 92cm x 153cm



William Breen  
*Sunday Session* 2016  
 gouache on paper  
 40cm x 62cm , framed



William Breen  
*Land of Sun-shine* 2016  
gouache on paper  
25cm x 55cm

137 FLINDERS LANE MELBOURNE 3000 TUES-FRI 11AM TO 6PM, SAT 11AM TO 5PM or 3PM on last weekend for de-install + 61 3 9654 3332 INFO@FLG.COM.AU