

EXHIBITIONS Gina Kalabishis *You & Me* 22nd March 2016 - 16th April 2016

Gina Kalabishis lives and works in Melbourne, she holds a Post Graduate Diploma of Visual Arts, Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne University and a Advanced Diploma of Arts (Electronic Design and Interactive Multimedia) from Victoria University in 2003.

She has featured in solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Spain and America and has been selected for number of significant national art prizes. In 2014 Kalabishis was awarded the prestigious **Rick Amor Drawing Prize** from a field of over 450 submissions, as well as being announced a finalist in the Eutick Still Life Award (2015, 2014), and the Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing. Kalabishis is represented in major collections including the **National Gallery of Australia**.

In August-September 2016 Kalabishis will undertake a residency at the beautiful Bundanon Trust studios, the legacy of Arthur and Yvonne Boyd.

You & Me

'Holding back a branch as one meanders along a scuffed path through the bush, most wouldn't give it a second thought. The Australian wilderness is rough and unruly - as eucalypts grow their bark shreds and falls, tea tree branches arch over boardwalks and native poa grasses spread, lashing at shins exposed in shorts or skirts or bathing suits. But within this touch, of fingertip caressing leaf and twig and seed pod, Gina Kalabishis feels alight at the beauty and celebration of life that surrounds her. Tamed yet also untameable, her work reflects the fact that our relationship with nature is joyous and testing.

Kalabishis often makes a pilgrimage to a closely-kept-secret camping ground, within a National Park on the south east coast of New South Wales. For her it is a restorative process – sometimes peaceful, other times more challenging, for when exposed to the space and silence one can finally process complicated thoughts. Although usually painting at her home nestled in Melbourne's suburbs, where weatherboard terrace houses are often seen with silver princess gums standing like soldiers at their mailboxes, Kalabishis aches for this journey to where she can solely be immersed with nature, away from the ticking of pedestrian crossings.

After years of trying to harness these feelings within her practice, when contemplating this latest body of work the artist discovered the term 'biophilia.' Belonging, intimacy, touch, euphoria. These siblings to love all arise when an individual recognises a physical and emotional response to nature. German psychologist and sociologist Erich Fromm (1900 – 1980) penned the term in reference to being attracted to all that is alive and vital. Bjork, the ethereal Icelandic songstress



Gina Kalabishis
You & Me 2016
oil on linen
123cm x 82cm



Gina Kalabishis
I Wish I Was The Moon 2016
oil on linen
125cm x 87cm



Gina Kalabishis
Storm 2016
oil on linen
125cm x 72cm



Gina Kalabishis
Shine a Light 2016
oil on linen
125cm x 72cm

released an album in 2011 titled Biophilia, exploring the link between nature, music and technology.

To explore this relationship in all of its intricacies Kalabishis juxtaposed elements of her city home and self with the wild and isolated landscape. Foraging for flowers, leaves and branches she tied, hung, and draped ikebana like arrangements, photographing them suspended in her surrounds – whether that be at home or in the wilds. Taking these photos back in to the studio she found herself inspired by Kandinsky and Rothko. Although this may seem an odd marriage – a realist painter finding a likeness within the work and concepts of pioneering abstract artists – it was their deep relationship with colour that inspired Kalabishis. Kandinsky (1866 – 1944) felt that deep blues – pthalo, ultramarine and lapis – were associated with the supernatural, and were calming and contemplative. Mark Rothko (1903 – 1970) also infused his abstract works with careful emotional colour contemplation. Kalabishis, in appreciation of these insights, has limited her palette in her major works to explore this also. Her luscious and smooth application of paint renders eucalypt leaves, lily pilly berries and bound twigs settled within their landscape in shades of only carefully considered hues. Blues as a nod to Kandinsky, pinks and browns as she explores love and intimacy and attempts to infuse her emotions by expressing them with tender colours that match.

With this new body of work Kalabishis also brings the element of flesh into her paintings. As though clothing the bones that once were made so prominent in her earlier works, the flash of flesh through beautiful foliage provides a lovely harmony to the human emotions and desires she is willing into her paintings. Teamed with titles referencing songs of love penned by musicians by the likes of Paul Kelly, Neko Case, Max Richter and Nick Cave, *You & Me*, is exactly that. A love song to the Australian landscape, to the most petite leaves and the grandest of arbours, and the relationship that can be had with nature and within the self.'

Essay by Melanie Caple BArts(FA) MArts 2016

[GINA KALABISHIS PROFILE](#)
[DOWNLOAD BIO / CV \(PDF\)](#)



Gina Kalabishis
Holding the Girl 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm framed size
54x38.5cm



Gina Kalabishis
Such Tenderness 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm framed size
54x38.5cm



Gina Kalabishis
Meet Me in the Middle of the Air 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm framed size
54x38.5cm



Gina Kalabishis
H in New England 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm framed size
54x38.5cm



Gina Kalabishis
Push the Sky Away 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm



Gina Kalabishis
Into My Arms 2016
oil on linen
51cm x 35cm framed size 54x38.5cm

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