



MARGARET ACKLAND

MARGARET ACKLAND

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Reflections

18 AUGUST - 12 SEPTEMBER 2026



OPENING CELEBRATIONS

Meet the artist and celebrate with us at the exhibition opening party on:

Saturday 22 August 1-3pm

Light refreshments provided.

We look forward to seeing you there.

[RSVP appreciated to assistant@flg.com.au](mailto:assistant@flg.com.au)

Contact Claire Harris, Director
with any enquiries or to make a time to view
artworks once they arrive in the gallery.
info@flg.com.au

Reflections

Catalogue Essay by Elli Walsh 2026

Margaret Ackland creates a radiant poetics of the everyday, where representation is less about fidelity than about the volatility of seeing itself. For more than four decades, the Sydney-based artist has worked across still life, landscape, and portraiture, weaving intimate observations into an ongoing meditation on perception.

Ackland's practice sits within an Australian lineage of painterly observation, where the everyday is re-coded through heightened visual intelligence rather than straightforward depiction. In her still lifes, the domestic interior becomes a site of controlled instability, as reflective surfaces, patterned grounds and carefully arranged objects conjure dynamic tensions. Her recent series *Reflections* moves away from the genre's historical function and instead treats the tabletop or interior as a stage of optical negotiation. These works are less concerned with symbolic abundance or domestic intimacy than with the mechanics of looking: how colour, reflection and pattern destabilise the familiar.

"I'm painting what's around me, and what I'm thinking about," Ackland explains, "it's the pleasure of looking". Her works humbly record the artist's love of home and garden, and yet they do far more than this. Ordinary objects – glassware, flowers, ceramics, printed textiles – are orchestrated into charged visual fields where spatial depth is both asserted and undone. In works such as *Mexican Crossroads* and *Narcissus, Observed*, the still life becomes a kind of pictorial pressure system as decorative textiles melt into the florals they ostensibly frame, causing a vivacious collapse of background and foreground.



Colour plays a similarly destabilising role in this series. Working with high-key palettes and jolting chromatic contrasts, Ackland marries mustards with mauves, saturated reds and pale washes. The result is a visual vibration that keeps the eye in motion, producing paintings that behave less like static still lifes than active perceptual events. Importantly, these works retain the immediacy of watercolour while resisting its associations with delicacy or spontaneity. Ackland employs the medium with architectural precision: translucent washes coexist with dense black contouring, and fluidity is counterbalanced by compositional control.

In some works, Ackland's handling of surface and translucency uses reflection as both formal and symbolic anchor. "I love the incidental reflections that reveal the room the work was made in," she notes. Glass vessels, silverware, and glossy textures allow light to become structurally active, often reflecting small, distorted self portraits. Within the polished curve of a silver spoon in *Here & There*, the artist's reflection emerges, phone in hand, capturing the very object she has painted. This quietly self-reflexive gesture folds the act of looking back into the image itself. Here, we also glimpse a tiny portrait of her husband relaxing in their home – a fleeting self-inscription that, in the artist's own words, "invites the viewer to step into my world".

Beneath the optical flourish of Ackland's works lies a more conceptually charged undercurrent. Her Spode plates and vessels subtly depict a world mired in unrest and instability, where figures clipped from newspapers enact scenes of suffering and devastation. Ackland comments, "This series is a visual diary of what's happening inside, but also outside. It's a personal diary, and a political one." In *Commemorative Plate*, victims of war are juxtaposed against a spectral rendering of lungs — a tacit allusion to the artist's own experience of undergoing lung treatment over the past year.

Across these luminous paintings, Ackland traces slippages between observation and construction. Her still lifes extend the inherited language of the genre while moving it closer to contemporary image culture: layered, unstable, saturated, and constantly reorganising itself.



Margaret Ackland
Commemorative Plate, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
120cm x 120cm
\$12,000 AUD





Margaret Ackland
Commemorative Plate, 2026 (detail)



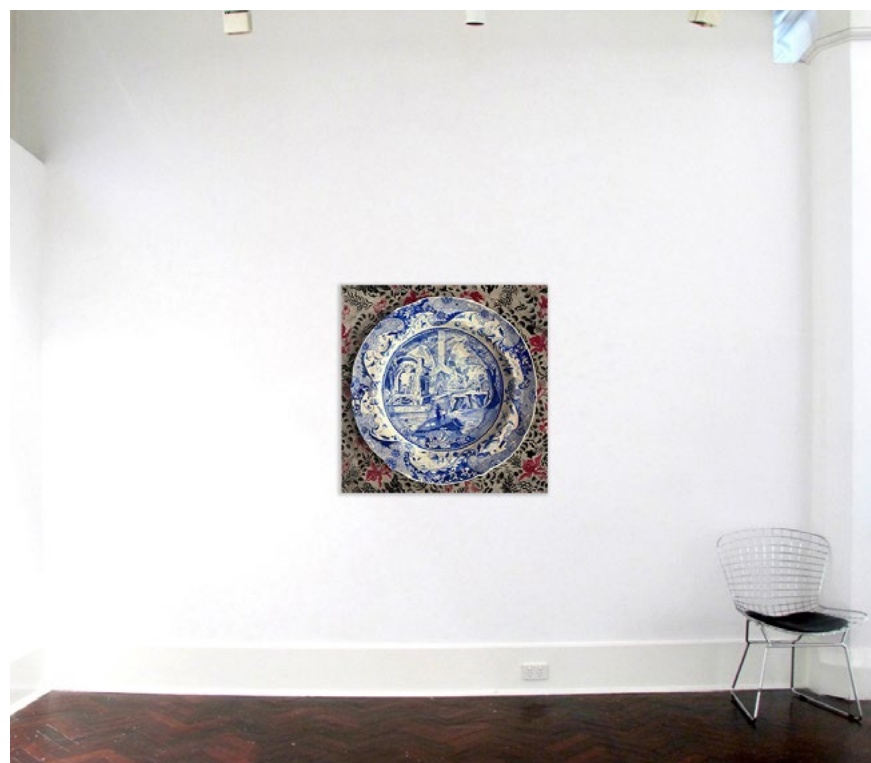
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Commemorative Plate, 2025
Watercolour on paper, framed
100cm x 100cm
\$9,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Commemorative Plate, 2025 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Dahlias, Dancing, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
140cm x 91cm
\$11,500 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Dahlias, Dancing, 2026 (detail)



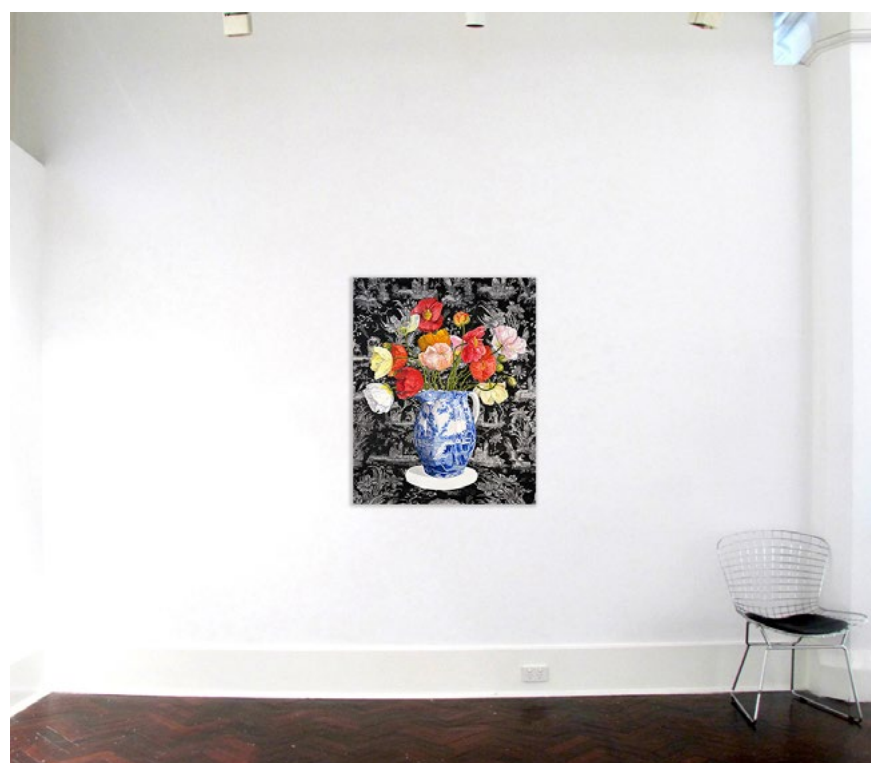
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Poppies with Background Noise, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
109cm x 97cm
\$10,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Poppies with Background Noise, 2026 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



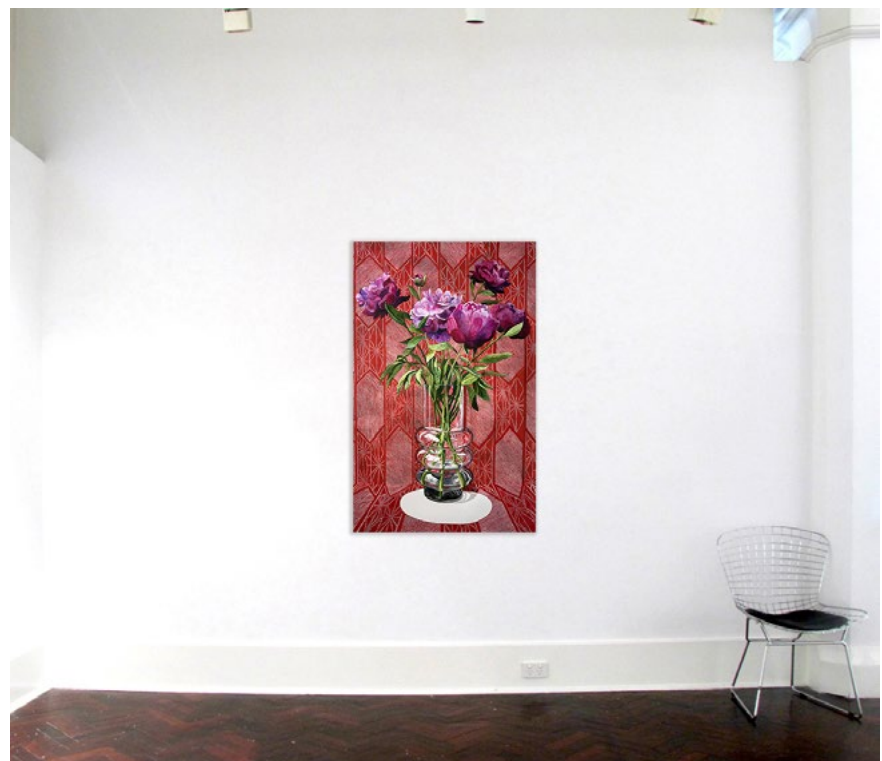
"This series is a visual diary of what's happening inside, but also outside," Ackland says. "It's a personal diary, and a political one."



Margaret Ackland
Peonies and Red Shibori, 2025
Watercolour on paper, framed
140cm x 90cm
\$11,500 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Peonies and Red Shibori, 2025 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Peonies and Old Carpet, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
107cm x 140cm
\$13,500 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Peonies and Old Carpet, 2026 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall

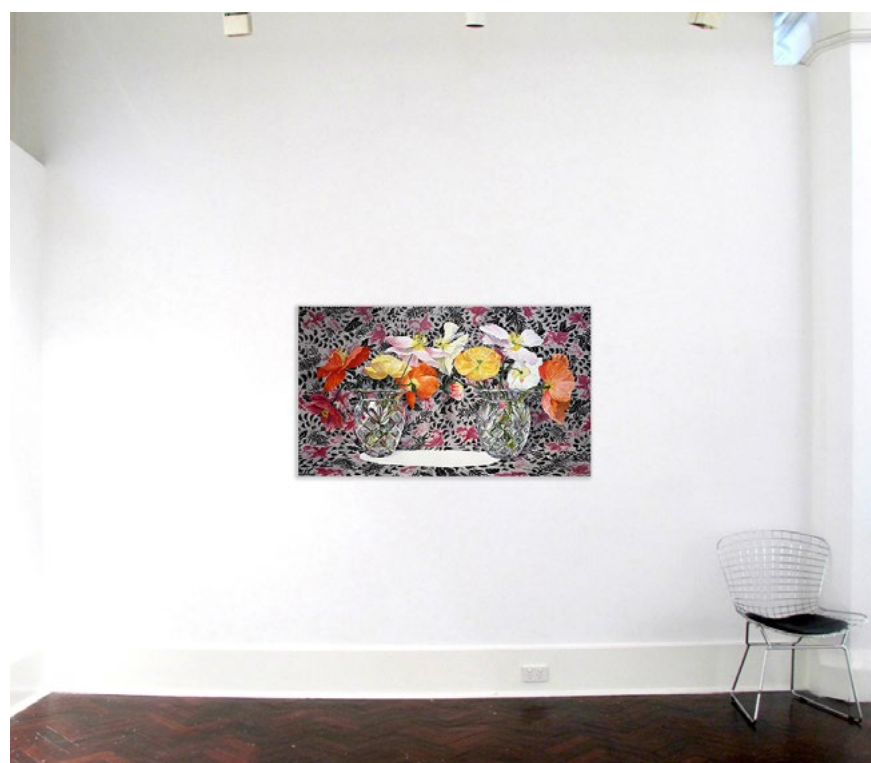




Margaret Ackland
Poppies, Spent, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
82cm x 140cm
\$11,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Poppies, Spent, 2026 (detail)



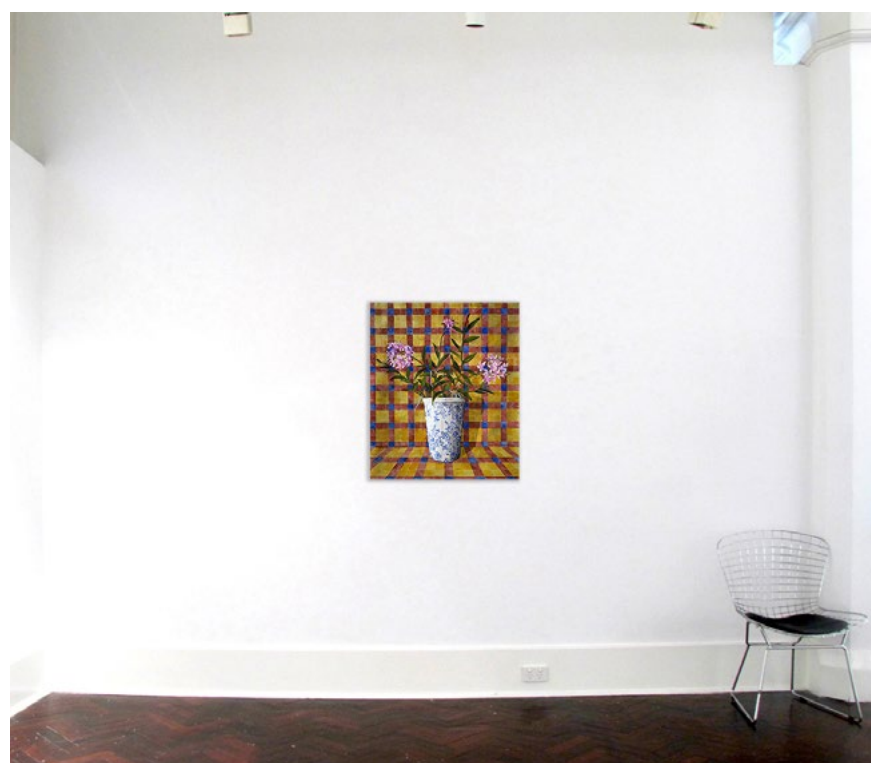
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Mexican Crossroads, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
85cm x 80cm
\$6,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Mexican Crossroads, 2026 (detail)



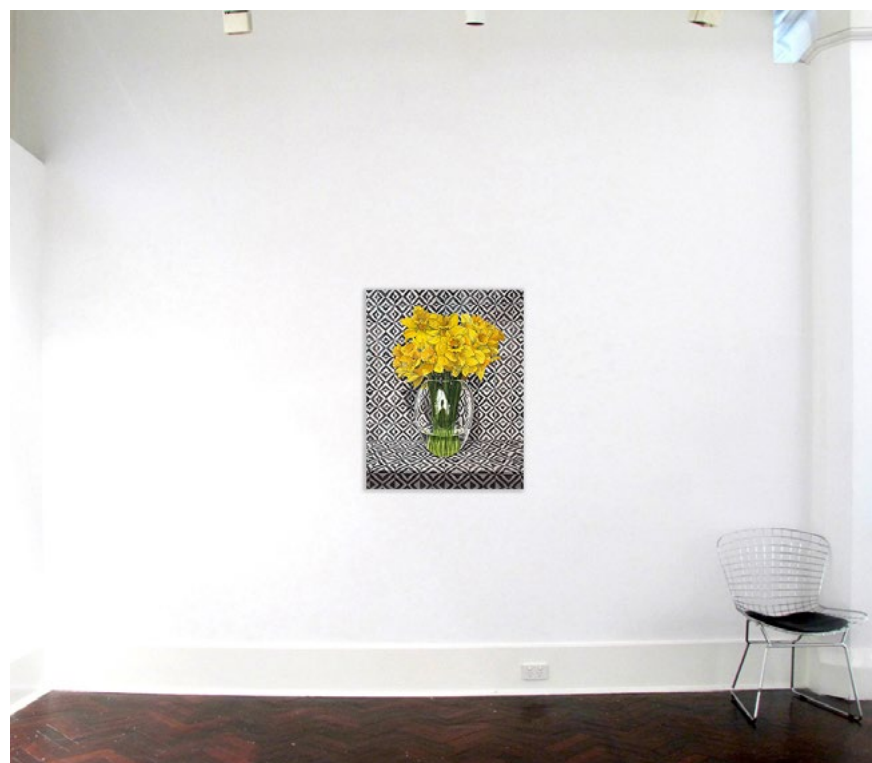
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Narcissus, Observed, 2025
Watercolour on paper, framed
96cm x 76cm
\$6,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Narcissus, Observed, 2025 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall

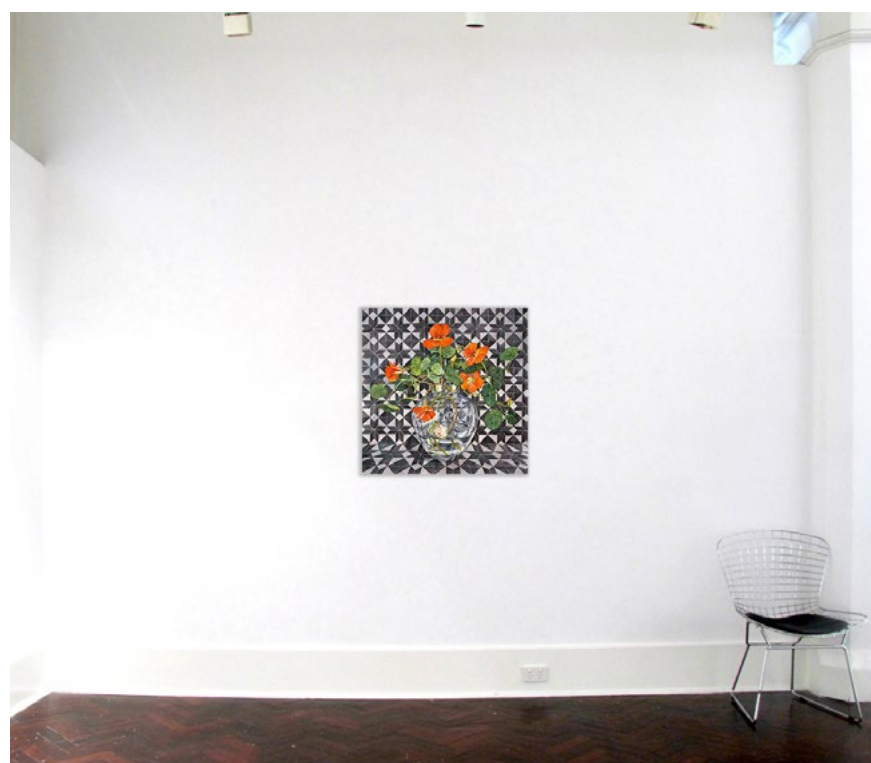




Margaret Ackland
Nasturtiums, Wild, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
80cm x 80cm
\$6,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Nasturtiums, Wild, 2026 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall

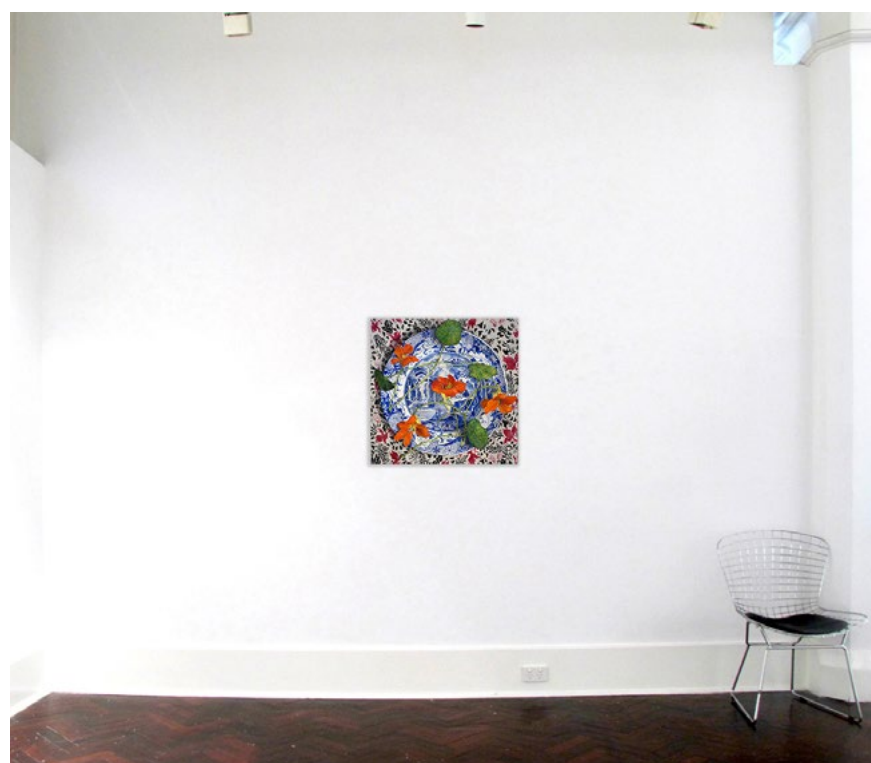




Margaret Ackland
War Plate with Nasturtiums, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
70cm x 70cm
\$5,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
War Plate with Nasturtiums, 2026 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Inheritance, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
56cm x 53cm
\$3,300 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Inheritance, 2026 (detail)



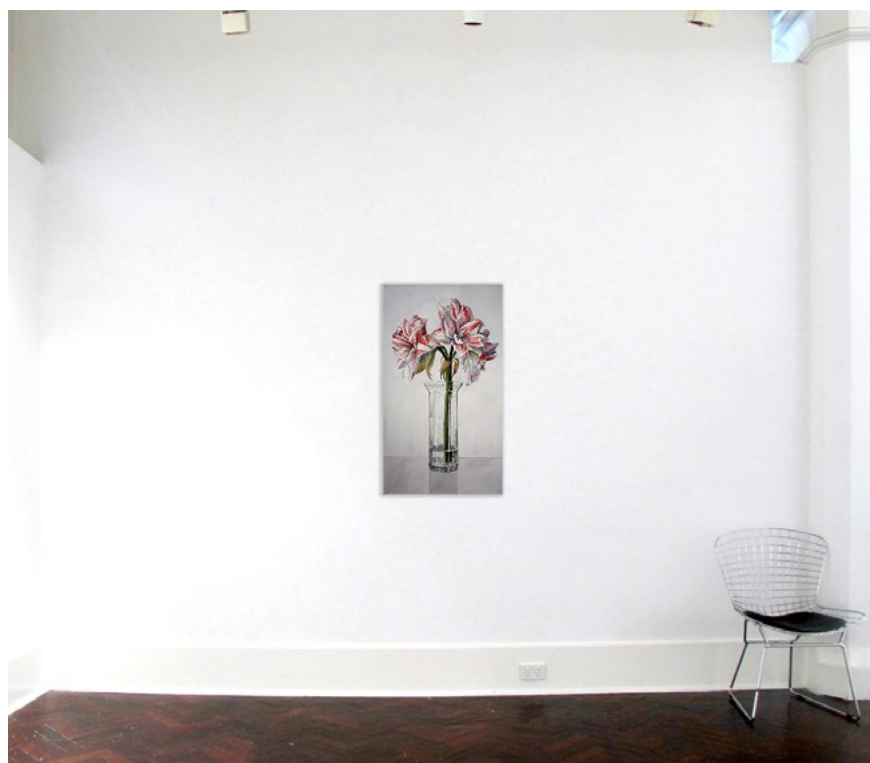
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Hippeastrum, Naked, 2025
Watercolour on paper, framed
101cm x 59cm
\$5,000 AUD



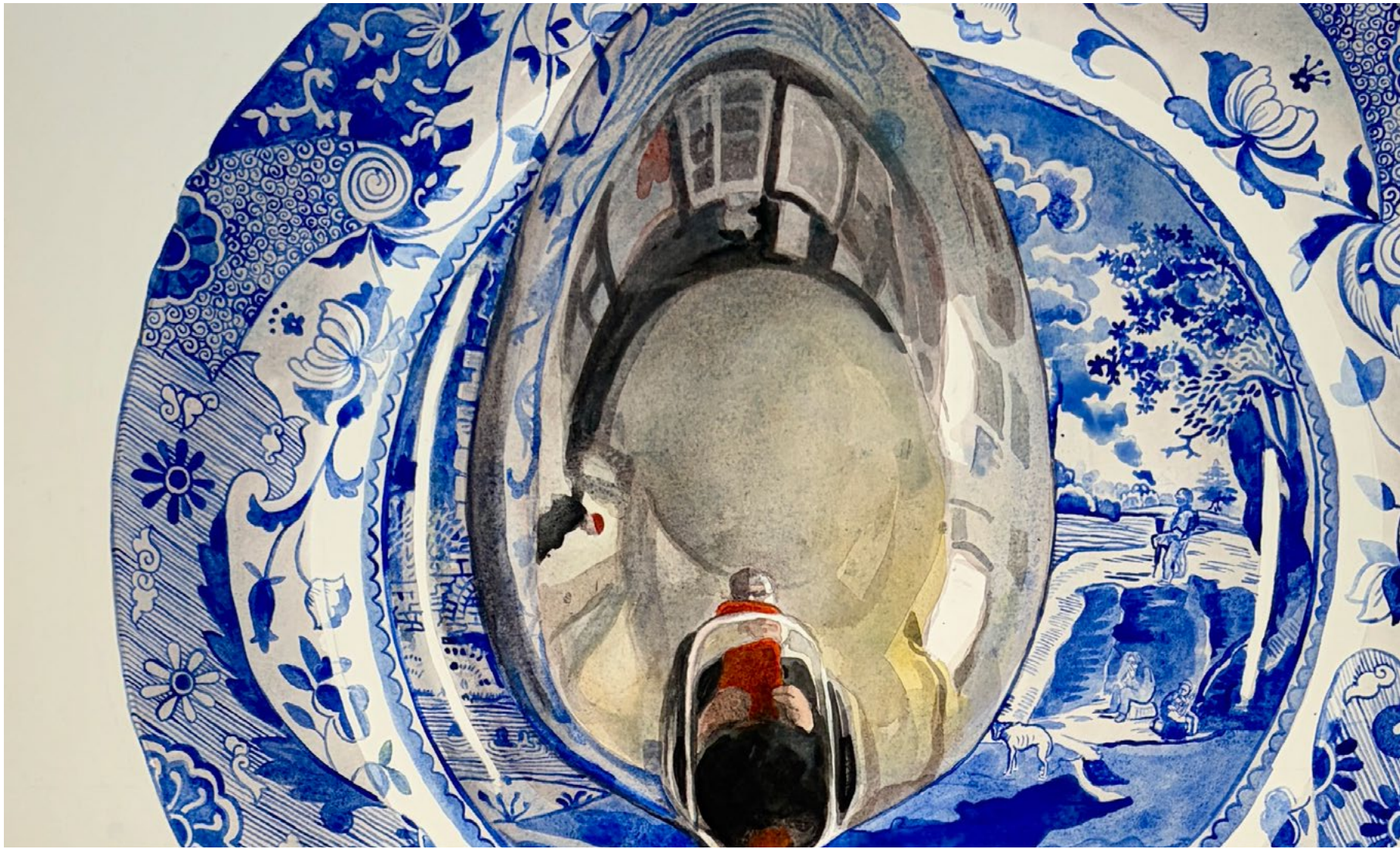
Margaret Ackland
Hippeastrum, Naked, 2025 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Here and There, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
123cm x 70cm
\$8,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Here and There, 2026 (detail)



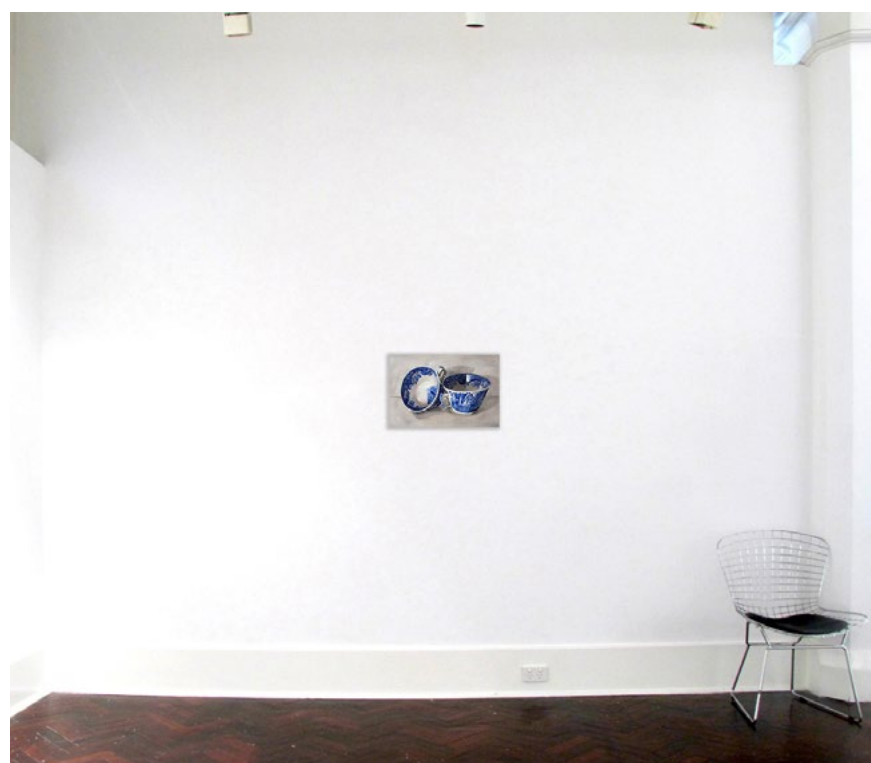
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
First Thoughts, 2026
Watercolour on paper, framed
35cm x 55cm
\$2,000 AUD



Margaret Ackland
First Thoughts, 2026 (detail)



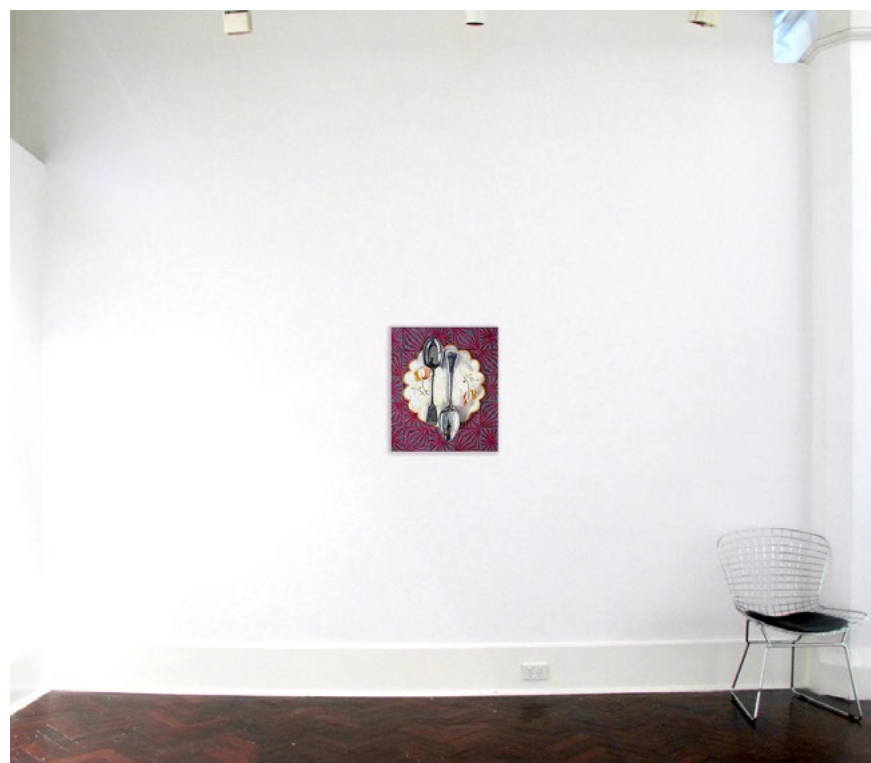
to scale 3.7m wall



Margaret Ackland
Small Spoons, 2025
Watercolour
60cm x 60cm
\$3,500 AUD



Margaret Ackland
Small Spoons, 2025 (detail)



to scale 3.7m wall



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