



JULIE DAVIDSON
Portrait of Light



Davidson has previously been a finalist in the Lester Portrait Prize, the Mandorla Painting Prize, the Eutick Still Life Award, the Warwick Regional Gallery Art Prize (runner up), the Blake Prize for Religious Art and the Mandoorla Art Prize (People's Choice). She has undertaken numerous distinguished commissions and her work is represented in private and corporate collections both in Australia and overseas.

Julie Davidson
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2 - 20 April 2024

Opening event: Saturday 6th April 1 - 3pm



*Art is a microscope which the artist fixes on the secrets of his soul,
and shows to people these secrets which are common to all.*

- Leo Tolstoy

Drawing on the representational styles of both Northern European and Asian painting traditions, Julie Davidson's serene still-life paintings fuse the alter-like stillness of Western painting with the calligraphic fluidity of Taoist depictions to create hyper-real images that are at once deeply romantic and emotionally reflective. The transience evoked by Davidson's graceful images transforms the act of looking into a meditation on light, form and the fleeting quality of time.

"Still-life is a continual search for beauty in the most ordinary of life's moments. The spaces within the work are highly orchestrated. Shadows, reflections, the fall of light on meticulously curated objects create a quiet solemnity. There is a kind of painterly magic that happens when the fruit, flowers and ceramic vessels rendered on a 2D surface feel more vivid than the ones on the table in front of us".

Julie Davidson, 2024

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Portrait of Light

When is the present moment? Now-ness is notoriously elusive: the world is in constant motion, and it is simply not possible for the mind to truly apprehend the here-and-now. Watch a peony's ruffled petal fall, or the fading autumn sunlight, and there is only a series of ungraspable present happenings. Each light-fuelled image is infinitesimally delayed in travelling from object to eye to brain.

In the work of Julie Davidson, there is an arresting stillness that, antithetically, is also vibrant with life. Each painting is an elegant invitation to meditate on the exquisite qualities of time and its relationship with light.

Davidson's series of paintings in *Portrait of Light* venture into seemingly uncomplicated yet highly curated worlds of oil on linen. Brittle poppy seed-heads lean out of a jade-green vase, loquats dangle from a pale enamel jug, and peonies in their prime nestle at the edge of a shallow blue bowl. These are not, however, mere arrangements of gorgeousness intended for relaxed visual pleasure. Nature (flora, atmosphere, light) and culture (vessels, fabric, tables) occupy the world in which this transpires. For all their absence of the human figure, they are deeply concerned with how people experience the passage of time.

Philosopher Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) was fascinated by time. He once remarked that it is the substance from which we are made, and that while time despoils castles, it enriches poetic verses. Had he – this man who went blind in later life – seen *Portrait of Light*, he might have added that painting is a form of poetry also embellished by time.

Davidson has been exhibiting since the early 1990s, following her studies in the late 1970s, and she has spent significant periods travelling abroad to study the masters (Caravaggio, Claude Lorrain and Piero della Francesca to name a few). Because of this, and of her devoting countless hours of assiduous work in the contemplative zone that is her studio, Davidson's work contains philosophical undertones about time's passage. As she notes, her work is an engineered state of tranquillity intended to elicit that same response in the viewer: both painter and beholder embark on discovering a deeper truth.

Davidson points to the *mise-en-scène* of these new works, the staged quality that coaxes the audience into an awareness that these tableaux are constructed to suggest silence, calm, balance. Each arrangement of plant cutting and container is initially captured in a reference photograph and then translated onto canvas with adjustments and augmentation along the way; it is not a slavish copying or a hyper-real duplication. Davidson chooses items for their reflective and sculptural attributes, and for the ways in which they absorb or reflect the natural light she favours, and each fresh painting builds on earlier works.

Yet every foraged bloom or fruit, every ceramic or copper vessel (collected from friends, thrift stores or kerbside skips) has its own self-contained back-story. This layering is as subliminal as time's passing. In the elusive present moment, before these absorbing paintings, everything connects. Still life, in the hands of Davidson, is anything but life stilled.

By Andrew Stephens 2024



[Mise-en-scène I 2023](#)

oil on linen, 122 x 122cm

\$9,900 AUD



[Mise-en-scène II 2023](#)
oil on linen, 107 x 137cm
\$10,000 AUD



[Silent Repose, 2024](#)
oil on linen, 122 x 122cm
\$9,900 AUD



[Autumn an ending 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



"Still life invites us to meditate on beauty, morality and truth. In my work I took to the techniques of the old masters, using the art of the past to inform the present practice. I also use digital photography, a tool of the present, to arrest time and capture it as a precise moment. I use dramatic light to capture the essence of the moment, whether it be the highlighting of a seemingly insignificant object, or the capture of a fleeting gaze or gesture."

Julie Davidson



[Full Bloom 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Light and half light 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Moments into season flew 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Softly and quietly 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Soft Whisperings, 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Spring an ending 2023](#)
oil on linen, 77 x 77cm
\$6,600 AUD



[Secrets, 2024](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD



[Symphony of Light, 2023](#)

oil on linen, 77 x 77cm

\$6,600 AUD

JULIE DAVIDSON CV

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- 2011 Travelled to UK and France to study works of Claude Lorrain
- 2007 Travelled to Venice to study Venetian altarpieces
- 1990 Travelled to Italy to study works of Carravaggio and Pierra della Francesca
- 1979 Travelled to England and Europe
- 1977 Prahran College of Advanced Education

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 Portrait of Light, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2023 Seasons, Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2021 Moments in Time, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2020 Quiet Contemplation, Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2019 Beauty in Transience, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2018 Small Things in Silence, Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2017 Ways of Seeing, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2015 Stillness, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2014 Return to Beauty, Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2013 Offering, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 2013 Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2012 Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2011 Trevor Victor Harvey Gallery, Seaforth, Sydney, NSW
- 2010 Linton and Kay Fine Art Gallery, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2009 Linton and Kay Fine Art gallery, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2008 Trevor Victor Harvey Gallery, Seaforth, Sydney, NSW
- 2007 LK Galleries, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2007 Trevor Victor Harvey Gallery, Seaforth, Sydney, NSW
- 2006 LK Galleries, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2006 Lynne Wilton Gallery, Armadale, VIC
- 2005 LK Galleries, Subiaco, Perth, WA
- 2005 Lynne Wilton Gallery, Armadale, VIC
- 2004 The Gallery, Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn, VIC
- 1995 Riebl Gallery, Hawthorn, Melbourne, VIC
- 1993 Riebl Gallery, Hawthorn, Melbourne, VIC
- 1992 Riebl Gallery, Hawthorn, Melbourne, VIC



SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Lives of Their Own, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2020 Lester Portrait Prize, Salon Des Refuses
2019 30 x 30, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2019 On the Fringe, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2018 Patricia Toohey Painting Prize, New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery, WA
2016 Mandorla Art Prize, New Norcia Museum and Art Gallery, WA
2014 Celebrating 25 Years, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2014 The Portrait Show, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2007 Group Exhibitions, LK Galleries, Subiaco, Perth, WA
2008 Group Exhibitions, LK Galleries, Subiaco, Perth, WA
2007 Melbourne Art Fair, VIC
2006 Melbourne Art Fair, VIC
2003 Feature Artist, Canterbury Art Show
2001 Melbourne Grammar Art Show, VIC
2002 Melbourne Grammar Art Show, VIC
2001 MLC Art Show

PRIZES/AWARDS

2020 Semi-finalist, Lester Portrait Prize
2018 Mandorla Painting Prize
2014 Finalist, Eutick Still Life Award, Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NSW
2014 Finalist, Mandorla Art Prize, WA
2004 Highly commended, Camberwell Rotary Art Show
2000 Runner up, Warwick Regional Gallery Art Prize
1996 Finalist, Mandorla Art Prize
1996 Finalist, Blake Prize for Religious Art

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

'The Big Book of Little Art Essays', Flinders Lane Gallery, 2023

COLLECTIONS

Camberwell Grammar School Collection; Private collections internationally.