

# Judy Millar

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Judy Millar  
*5th Kyiv Biennial: Against the Logic of War*  
2023  
Augarten Contemporary, Vienna  
Photo: eSeL.at - Joanna Pianka



Judy Millar  
*Blow Away Spell*  
2022  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
1800 x 1250mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett

Judy Millar  
*Learning to Eat Fire*  
2022  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
1800 x 1250mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett

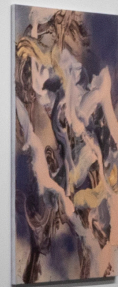
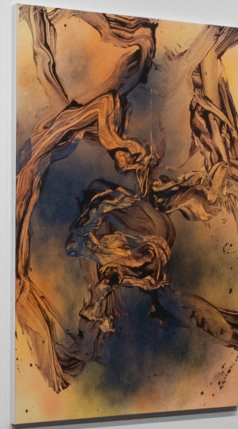




Judy Millar  
*Pink Trap*  
2020  
acrylic on vinyl  
2145 x 6100mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett



Judy Millar  
*Big Skies Tonight*  
2020  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
2100 x 1600mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett



Judy Millar  
*Action Movie*  
2021  
City Gallery Wellington, Aotearoa  
Photo: Cheska Brown



Judy Millar  
*Action Movie*  
2021  
City Gallery Wellington, Aotearoa  
Photo: Cheska Brown



Judy Millar  
Cave  
2019  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
2100 x 1550mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett





Judy Millar  
*Untitled*  
2019  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
1800 x 1250mm  
Photo: Sam Hartnett



Judy Millar  
*The Future and Past Perfect*  
2019  
Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Switzerland  
Photo: Sebastian Stadler



Judy Millar  
*The Future and Past Perfect*  
2019  
Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Switzerland  
Photo: Sebastian Stadler



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Judy Millar  
*The Future and Past Perfect*  
2019  
Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Switzerland  
Photo: Sebastian Stadler



Judy Millar  
*Rock Drop*  
2017  
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Aotearoa  
Photo: Millar Studio





Judy Millar  
*Space Work 7*  
2014

Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, Wellington, Aotearoa  
Photo: Millar Studio



Judy Millar  
*Be Do Be Do Be Do*  
2013  
IMA, Brisbane, Australia  
Photo: Millar Studio



Judy Millar  
*The Rainbow Loop*  
2012

Museum Gegenstandsfreier Kunst, Otterndorf, Germany  
Photo: Alistair Overbruck



Judy Millar  
*A Better Life*  
2010  
Spielhaus Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Photo: Millar Studio



Judy Millar  
*Giraffe, Bottle, Gun*  
2009

Pavilion of New Zealand Aotearoa, 53rd Venice Biennale  
Photo: Harald Richter

Judy Millar  
*Giraffe, Bottle, Gun*  
2009  
Pavilion of New Zealand Aotearoa, 53rd Venice Biennale  
Photo: Harald Richter





Judy Millar  
*Giraffe, Bottle, Gun*  
2009

Pavilion of New Zealand Aotearoa, 53rd Venice Biennale  
Photo: Harald Richter

**Judy Millar**

Lives and works in Aotearoa, New Zealand

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024

Cry Sea, Cry Sky, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

2022

Questions I have Asked Myself, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland  
Whipped Up World, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

2021

Action Movie, City Gallery, Wellington  
Clouds and Fire and Water and Air, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2020

Paintovers, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington  
Eleven, Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru, New Zealand  
2 in 1: Judy Millar and Alberto Garcia Alvarez, Tim Melville Gallery and Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2019

A World Not of Things, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland  
The Future and the Past Perfect, Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Switzerland  
Untitled 2005, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington

2018

The View from Nowhere, Fold Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
Studies in Place, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland  
My Body Pressed, Sullivan and Strumpf, Sydney, Australia  
Welcome to the Fluorescence, Nadene Milne Gallery, Christchurch, New Zealand

2017

Swallowed in Space, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland  
Leave the Doors and Windows Open, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington  
Rock Drop, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland

2016

Turning the World Inside Out, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland  
The Bridegroom's Voice, Bartley and Co, Wellington

2015

Reverse Cinema, Sullivan and Strumpf, Sydney  
The Model World, Te Uru Contemporary Gallery, Titirangi, New Zealand  
Proof of Heaven, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2014

Paintings, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich

2013

Be Do Be Do Be Do. IMA, Brisbane, Australia  
I give you the end of a golden thread. Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney  
Do Be Do. Hamish Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Comic Drop, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2012

The Rainbow Loop. MgK, Otterndorf, Germany  
The Split Ferryman, Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney

2011

Push, Pop, Stack! Mark Mueller Galerie, Zurich  
Lucifer: Bring the Light! Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland  
Into the Belly of the Whale. Bartley and Company Art, Wellington

2010

A Better Life. Hamish Morrison Gallery, Berlin, Germany  
Giraffe-Bottle-Gun. Te Papa Tongarewa, The Museum of New Zealand

2009

Giraffe-Bottle-Gun. New Zealand Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy  
New Work 2008-2009, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2008

Matte Black. Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich  
The Broken Head Drawings, 64zero3, Christchurch, New Zealand

2007

Keeping You, You, Keeping Me.Me. Lopdell House, Auckland  
Butter For the Fish. Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2006

Something, Nothing. 64zero3, Christchurch



2005

I Will, Should, Can, Must, May, Would Like to Express, Auckland Art Gallery  
Her Eyes Are Hell, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich  
Flammpunkt, with Sophia Schama. Spielhaus-Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Viels, Trails and Horses Tails. Bartley Nees Gallery, Wellington

2004

Open Hand. 64zero3, Christchurch  
To the Is-ness. Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich  
The Shooting Gallery. Ramp Gallery, Hamilton, New Zealand  
I'd Like Painting. Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2003

I is She as You to Me. Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand  
The Brush Moves This Way, the Brush Moves That. Bartley Nees Gallery,  
Wellington

2002

Don't Call me Baby, Baby. Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland  
The Shape of a Curve. Gow Langsford Gallery, Sydney, Australia  
The Year I Was Born and the Year I Was Born Again, Blocklands Projects, Auckland

2001

New Paintings. Bartley Nees Gallery, Wellington

2000

Stable Violet, Permanent Sunset, Bartley Nees Gallery, Wellington

1999

Scary Sunsets and other Views, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

1998

Seam, Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch

1997

Solid Body. Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland

1996

Strip, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

1995

Window, Window, collaboration with Vicki Kerr, New Work Studio, Wellington  
Beast, collaboration with Vicki Kerr, Testrip, Auckland

1994

The Past and Future Perfect, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2024

Spotlight, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland  
Huikaau: where currents meet, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin

2023

5th Kyiv Biennial: Against the Logic of War, Augarten Contemporary, Vienna (group)  
ja, fürwahr, ihr zeigt uns Träume, wie die Brust sie kaum begreift, Galerie Mark  
Mueller, Zurich

2022

Expanded Canvas, Town Hall Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

2019

Frozen Gesture, Kunst Museum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland  
Single but Happy, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich  
Enveloping Scales, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

2018

The Waves, Sullivan and Strumpf Gallery, Sydney

2017

Unpainting – Contemporary Abstraction, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

2016

Tango Them Basel, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich

2015

Movements Towards Formation, Kustquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany  
New Intimacies: Scape 8, Christchurch, New Zealand

2014

Cinema and Painting, Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

2013

Farbiges Grau. Mies van der Rohe Haus, Berlin, Germany  
Wiedershen. Museum gegenstandsfreierkunst Otterndorf, Germany  
Tichy for Artists – Artists for Tichy. GASK, Gallery of Central Bohemia, Czech Republic

2012

Partner Dance: Gifts from the Patrons of the Gallery, Auckland Art Gallery  
Contact; Artists from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Frankfurter Kunstverien, Frankfurt  
Like: Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia  
For example: Painting, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland

2011

Abstract Overture, Bochenska Gallery, Warsaw, Poland  
Personal Structures, Time-Space-Existence, La Biennale di Venezia, Palazzo Bembo, Venice, Italy  
Rohkunstbau XVIII. Schloss Marquardt, Potsdam, Berlin, Germany  
Treffpunkt. Hamish Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Pushers, Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand  
Paintings Paintings. Window, The University of Auckland, New Zealand  
Accrochage. Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland

2010

ISCP, Brooklyn, New York, USA

2008

Accrochage. Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich  
Edges of Darkness, Hamish Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany  
Abstrakt. Krammig and Pepper Contemporary, Berlin  
Under the Sky: International Positions in Contemporary Art. White Space Beijing, Beijing, China

2007

Accrochage. Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland  
Telecom Prospect 2007, New Art > New Zealand. City Gallery, Wellington  
The Secret Life of Paint, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand  
PX: A Purposeless Production A Necessary Praxis, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland

2006

Exhibition with Sophia Schama and Uwe Wittwer, Spielhaus-Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany

2005

Devil's Puchbowl, Christopher Grimes Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

2004

IS/NZ, Kunstverien Kreis Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg, Germany  
Sticky, Randolph Street Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand

2003

Fragmente des Paradieses. Kunsthalle Palazzo, Liestal, Switzerland

2002

Resisting Colour, Gow Langsford Gallery, Sydney, Australia  
Past Presents, Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Wellington  
Memos for the Next Millenium, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland  
Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand... Mark Mueller Galerie, Zurich  
Three Auckland Painters. Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch, New Zealand

2001

The Contingency of Vision, Goodman-Suter Contemporary Art project, The Suter, Nelson, New Zealand

1999

Leap of Faith, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand

1998

Achromatic. Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

1997

Skirting Abstraction. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

1996

The Second Asia-Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

1995

A Very Peculiar Practice, Aspects of Recent New Zealand Painting, City Gallery, Wellington  
Review '94. Fisher Gallery, Auckland  
Taking Stock of the 90's, Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, New Zealand

1994

Parallel Lines: Gordon Walters in Context, Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland

1992

Surface Tension: Ten Artists in the 90's. Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2021

Millar, Judy, Questions I Have Asked Myself, 2021, Point Publishing, New Zealand

2019

Bitterli, Konrad, Frozen Gesture: Gestern in der Malerei, 2019, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland

2014

Menzies, Michelle, Cinema and Painting, 2014, Adam Art Gallery, University of Wellington

2012

Schick, Ulrike. Judy Millar, The Rainbow Loop, 2012, MgK, Otterndorf, Germany

2011

Bryant, Jan & Emmerling, Leonhard. PX / Thoughts On Painting, 2011, Clouds, New Zealand

De Jongh, Karlyn & Gold, Sarah. Personal Structures, 2011, Global Art Affairs, Germany

Boellert, Avrid. Macht, 2011, Schiller Verlag, Germany

2009

Gross, Jennifer. Giraffe – Bottle – Gun, 2009 Kerber Verlag, Germany

Emmerling, Leonhard ed. You You, Me Me 2009, Kerber Verlag, Germany

2007

Butler, Brian ed. Speculation, Venice Project, Artspace, 2007

Galbraith, Heather ed. Telecom prospect 2007 New Art > New Zealand, City Gallery, Wellington, 2007

Emmerling, Leonhard. Keeping You You, Keeping Me Me; Judy Millar's Gesture, Lopdell House Gallery, 2007

2006

Thomas, Morgan. Folding, Unfolding: Judy Millar's Something Nothing, 64zero3, 2006

2005

Leonard, Robert. Judy Millar: I Will, Should, Can, Must, May, Would like to Express, Auckland Art Gallery, 2005

Kaeppele, Susan. IS/NZ, Kehrer Heidelberg, 2005

2004

Byrt, Anthony. Sticky, Ramp Press / Whitecliffe, 2004

Lonie, Bridie. 'Child's Play: Judy Millar's I is She, As You to Me', Art New Zealand, August, 2004

2003

Paton, Justin. I is She as You to Me, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2003

Byrt, Anthony. How to Paint Backwards, Gow Langsford Gallery, 2003

McAloon, William. 'Veering Distinctly Towards the Lime', New Zealand Listener, May 3, 2003

2001

Shand, Peter. The Contingency of Vision, The Goodman-Suter Contemporary Art project, 2001

1998

Smith, Allan. Judy Millar: as light as in between, Gow Langsford Gallery, 1998

1997

Shand, Peter. 'If I Were Penelope', Art New Zealand, 82, Autumn, 1997

Smith, Allan. 'Skirting Abstraction – skepticism and sensibility', Art New Zealand, 82, Autumn, 1997

Greenstein, M. A. 'Second Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art', World Art, No. 12, 1997

1996

Turner, Caroline and Rhana Devenport (ed.) The Second Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, 1996

1995

Smith, Allan and Davis, Leigh. A Very Peculiar Practice - aspects of recent New Zealand painting, City Gallery, Wellington, 1995

French, Blair. 'Gordon Walters – Parallel Lines: Gordon Walters in context', World Art, January 1995

Smith, Allan 'The Past and Future Perfect', Art and Text, 50, 1995

1992

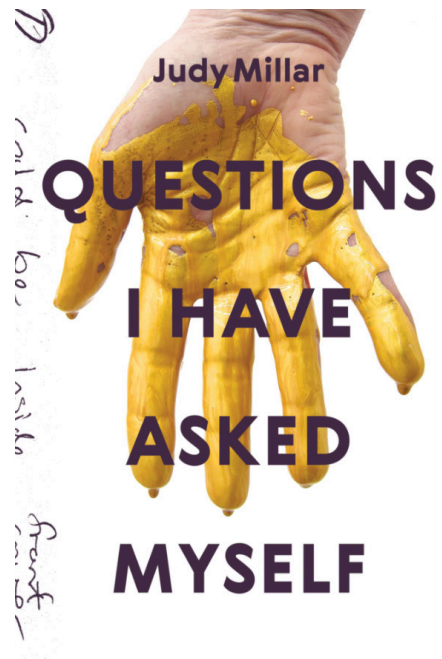
Barton, Christina 'Framing the Real – Post modern discourses in New Zealand art', Headlands catalogue, ed. Mary barr, 1992

Dale, Richard. 'Abstraction Resited', Art New Zealand, 66, 1992

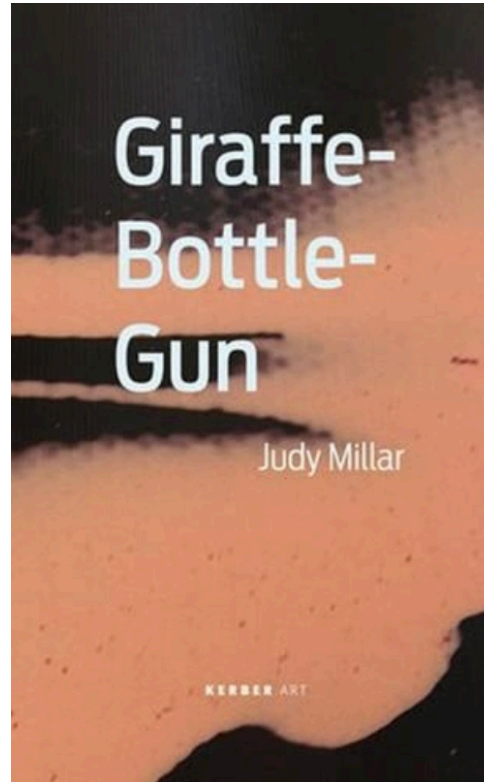
## COLLECTIONS

Works are held in the following institutional collections as well as in numerous private collections in Europe, Aotearoa, The United States and Australia

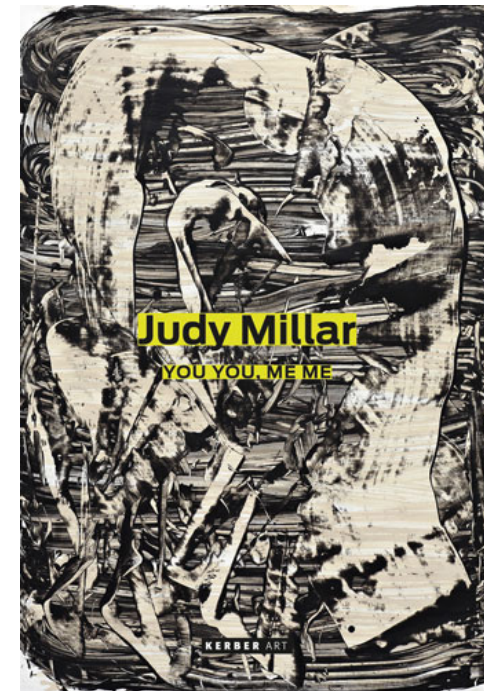
Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Christchurch Art Gallery, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, The University of Auckland, Victoria University Wellington, The University of Waikato, Chartwell Trust, Wallace Collection, Fletcher Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Collection of Credit Suisse, Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst, Tichy Ocean Foundation, Sammlung Helvetia Gruppe, Pérez Collection Miami



Judy Millar  
**Questions I Have Asked Myself**  
 2021  
 Text by Judy Millar  
 300 x 207mm  
 178 pages  
 Judy Millar and Point Publishing Limited  
 Softcover



Judy Millar  
**Giraffe-Bottle-Gun**  
 2009  
 Edited by Leonhard Emmerling  
 240 x 150mm  
 56 pages  
 Kerber Art  
 Softcover



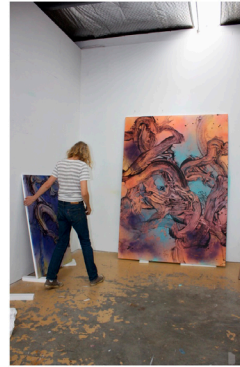
Judy Millar  
**YOU YOU, ME ME**  
 2008  
 Text by Leonhard Emmerling and Justin Paton  
 190 x 290mm  
 184 pages  
 102 colored and 25 b/w illustrations  
 Hardcover

HUM

## Judy Millar: The Sinew of Space

by Jodie Dagleish

Published on 12.02.2018



Judy Millar in her West Auckland Studio, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



Judy Millar, *Swallowed in Space*, Mark Mueller Gallery, Zurich, 2017. Photographs by Conradin Frei.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dagleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dagleish.



West Auckland Coast, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



Studio construction models, 2011-13. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.

*Judy Millar lives in Auckland, New Zealand and Berlin, Germany. She is one of New Zealand's most internationally recognised artists, and her work was exhibited in the national pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale. The Luxembourg-based writer and artist Jodie Dagleish responds to the abstract world within Millar's paintings, exhibited at her representing gallery in Zurich, Mark Mueller, from 26th of October to 23rd December 2017, and to the artist's long-standing*

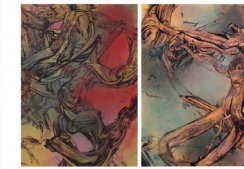
*motivation to activate and engage three-dimensional space through her work.*

It's frustrating to her, Judy Millar tells me from the West Coast of Auckland as we discuss her exhibition in Zurich, *Swallowed in Space*, that people are so rarely asking 'what does painting do to us?'<sup>[01]</sup>. An affective painting, after all, is something we want to go and see, and revisit, and make part of our wider experience. I wholeheartedly agree with her, especially after having just travelled to see her work (from my current home in Luxembourg) and encountering the way it not only activates space but also allows the kind of 'space creation' current in philosophy, cultural geography and advanced architectural research<sup>[02]</sup>.

In Gallery Mark Mueller, *Swallowed in Space* comprises five, large, entire-body, paintings, effectively distributed around a spacious gallery, the side wall of which opens through glass doors onto a courtyard. Each painting is vital in the way it moves itself, directionally, within and beyond its stretcher, circling with the next. And in pairings on the building's axial wall, as well as the gallery's back wall, they activate each other even more closely. The experience is extraordinary, as if they compress and release movement individually and together, to circulate my own movement within them always outwards—not only from the paintings into the gallery but also from the gallery into an always potentially broader discussion, and material experience, of bodily-felt space.



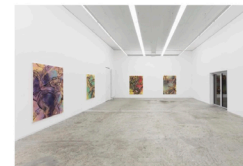
Pair of Untitled paintings on the axial wall. Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic and oil on canvas, 180 x 130 cm & *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic and oil on canvas, 140 x 100 cm. Courtesy of Mark Mueller Gallery.



Pair of Untitled paintings on the back wall. Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic and oil on canvas, 180 x 130 cm & *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic and oil on canvas, 180 x 125 cm. Courtesy of Mark Mueller Gallery.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic and oil on canvas, 180 x 125 cm. Courtesy of Mark Mueller Gallery.



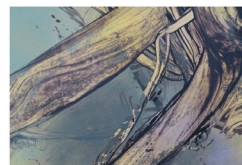
Judy Millar, *Swallowed in Space*, Mark Mueller Gallery, Zurich, 2017. Photographs by Conradin Frei.



Judy Millar, *Swallowed in Space*, Mark Mueller Gallery, Zurich, 2017. Photographs by Conradin Frei.

Engrossed in the exhibition's spatial effect, I begin to realise that I am naturally embodying the paintings' own quest for, and questioning of, modes of movement. Each painting is an intense material object based on movement, while it is also a container that circulates and throws me more broadly into an exploration of the space that emanates from it. 'Space' here, is a body-dwelt 'imaginal' field. It is the field projected from the body into a 'spacious view' of the 'increasing inclusiveness' of its expanding boundaries, as philosopher Edward Casey writes of place that has become more spacious in Western thought. In this kind of space, Casey writes, 'expanding envelopments' are all linked by the organic body and its history in the 'fuller compass' of what is happening, and at stake, in and from a particular place<sup>[03]</sup>.

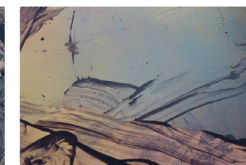
Essential to my experience, is the fact that each painting's sinuous forms continue in striated bands that curve, twist, turn and loop seemingly without end. As I follow them, they always release their coiled directions onwards, even if only through a series of drips, a finger drag or the suggestion of an aspirating colour. They are not brushstrokes, but rather a skilfully indeterminate 'caricature,' or parody, of such a singular gesture. Their banding is almost collographic in nature: a result of the artist's characteristic mark making that accumulates the positive and negative impressions of paint in the push and drag of objects across the painting's surface. 'I was trying to think of something like a very big fingertip,' the artist tells me as she describes the way in which she slid differently-sized bags filled with sand through the paint. They allowed complex forms of movement, she explains, 'and they have this particular feeling.' For me, their form is fibrous, elemental and constant, like bands of tendon, muscle fibres, the phloem tissue of bark, and the cellulose cordage of plants. They seem to hold painting and movement together.<sup>[04]</sup>



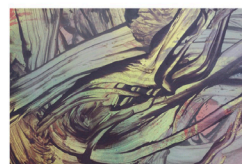
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



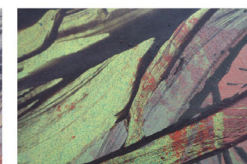
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



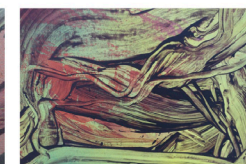
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.

Then, I see that each painting's spatial action comes not only from its curving 'brushstrokes' but also from the possibilities of colour. Framed 'colour focal fields,' as I call them with Millar's approval, become characteristic of the work and precipitate formal interactions that are constantly backgrounded and foregrounded in layers of painterly detail. I am constantly trying to recalibrate what I am seeing—in shifts of scale between what is 'big' and what is 'small,' for example, and in what each colour, or colour melange, is. I am constantly recalibrating my bodily sense of direction in colour too: most notably when, in the largest painting of the axial wall, the 'same' dark, and light, focal colours are able to both advance and recede. Always, there is a surprising space of



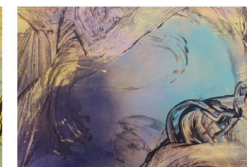
movement being made, not only in the works' material specificities but also as a coalescence in the exhibition's singular spatial effect.

For Millar, the practice of painting is a constant, and, while she takes breaks from a 'toxic' studio, so is the making of small three dimensional paper models of installation-based works (which she calls 'space works'), whether they end up built, or not. They're going on together all the time,' she says, and 'thoughts move between the two.' Small colour studies are a constant too. 'There is just something that happens between a group of colours,' she says, and it is her response to this that drives her painting in the end. 'Every colour demands a new activity,' she explains, and she must find a way to 'open' each one to what it might do. Fortunately, for her, she tells me, there are a lot of colours in the world, and seemingly limitless opportunities to insert one colour, or colour field, into the next, and 'find what happens.'

There is something of the Antipodean in Millar's colours, for me. In them, I find the luminous intensity of the New Zealand landscape, while I also find the subtle and constantly variable colouration of its rhythms: the coming in and going out of light, water and dirt. Painting them all on Auckland's West Coast, the artist tells me, her search for possible colour has been processed through that place. 'These paintings admit to that,' she says. Yet in her colour, I also see a world of experimentation kick-started by the synthetic innovation of pigments and spun out, as an omnipresent kind of preoccupation, in multiple media.



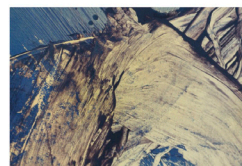
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



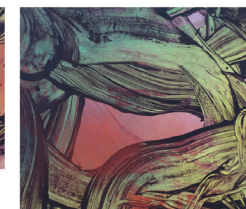
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



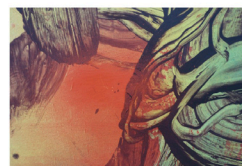
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



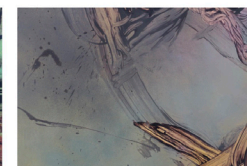
Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



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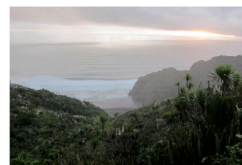


Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail).  
Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.

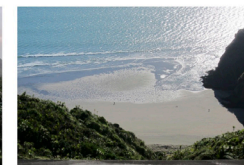
Standing in Millar's exhibition in Zurich, I do see the work of another Antipodean and not someone European. But I also see the way her non-European perspective allows her to reflect on an artistic heritage that is not directly her own and go about her practice in an interesting, if not advantageous, way. Particularly evident to me, is the kind of hyper-attention to Art History that operates in the space of the Antipodean and that seems to somehow compress history, from a certain distance, in the context of Europe. I see her paintings as able to open a view towards multiple spatial possibilities, through a bodily experience of the expansive project of her work.

As a student in her twenties, Millar tells me, painting was so unfashionable and difficult that she had almost given it up. Desperate to leave New Zealand to try and find out what she was going to do, she took an Italian government scholarship to study in Turin, with the work of Spatialist Lucio Fontana as her topic. She always jokes, says Millar, that studying Fontana was an excuse to go to Italy, but she was actually interested in his work and visited a re-presentation of one of his 'spatial environments' at the contemporary art museum Castello di Rivoli near Turin. In discussing this with her, I note Fontana's 'spatial concept' of a work of art as a synthesis of colour, movement and sound in space, which I did find relevant to her work. She also notes her subsequent interest in a 'total work of art,' as it was named by composer Richard Wagner and as she finds it in her belief that paintings can be active as if sound, voice and body is there. As if space is there.

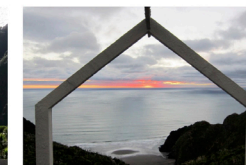
There is a compression of life achieved, Millar says, in the paintings she went to see in Italy, taking the train every weekend and staying in the cheapest hotels. Their 'magic,' she explains to me, is that they take what seems to be a full range of life and compress it into an 'imaginative space' held by something almost non-existent. 'It wasn't just Giotto,' she says, referring to her often-cited visit to see his 28 frescoes of the life of St Francis installed around the Upper Church of the Assisi Chapel. But in our discussion of it, I sense something of what she found: the narrative it opened, particularly to her as a, less familiar, non-European; its own minimal architecture of small caricature-like objects and big skies acting in a broader architectural space; and the intense physicality of its paint. What she also found, was her belief that contemporary, non-figurative, painting must, at least, be able to try and approach the making of such illusionistic yet believable space.



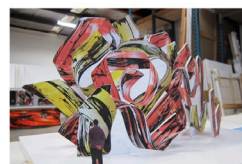
West Auckland Coast, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



West Auckland Coast, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



West Auckland Coast, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



Studio construction models, 2011-13. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



Studio construction models, 2011-13. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



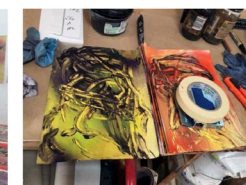
Studio construction models, 2011-13. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



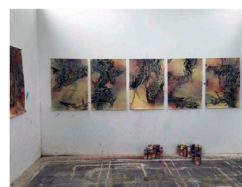
Studio construction models, 2011-13. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



Judy Millar in her West Auckland studio, September 2016. Photo: Jim Barr & Mary Barr.



Judy Millar's West Auckland studio, September 2016. Photo: Jim Barr & Mary Barr.



Judy Millar's West Auckland studio, September 2016. Photo: Jim Barr & Mary Barr.

Millar does not paint in discrete series of works, she tells me, but rather carefully selects from a larger body of work for each

exhibition, with the use of scale-models. Nevertheless, it is notable to me that *Swallowed in Space* is the first exhibition title to explicitly include the word 'space.' In what we might call 'tableaux,' I have the distinct sensation that the artist's consistent concern with the form and complexity of space is reaching a point of culmination, even in terms of her 'space works.' Gathering in the gallery, for me, is not only a glimpse of the spatiality of the likes of Fontana and Giotto but also my imagination of Millar's Venice Biennale installations of 2009 and 2011—their coincident compression and expansion of architectural and personal space.<sup>[05]</sup>

'When I was young,' Millar tells me, 'I used to try to understand if we could actually see space.' For space, she says, is something 'we infer through our understanding of the world as much as we see it; it is automatically an accumulative thing.' Such thoughts on space also occurred to me in the gallery, I tell her, in the words of Humanist Geographer Yi-fu Tuan, whose experiential perspective flows into contemporary cultural geography's discourse on space. Fundamental to Tuan, as it was for me, is his belief that our body, as we move in it, accumulates our lifelong experience of space as sensation, perception and conception. 'We live in space,' Tuan says, 'and space is given by the ability to move.'<sup>[06]</sup> All spatial modes and concepts are based on individual experience and rooted in life's fundamental pact between the moving body and its space.<sup>[07]</sup>

Millar has often talked about her own distinct experience of space while working on a painting that is flat on the ground. In her interview with *Ocula* in 2016, for example, she mentions building a 'dome-like' space above the canvas.<sup>[08]</sup> Although, Millar explains to me that it's not explicitly a 'dome,' but rather a space in which she paints not only the surface of the painting, or laterally beyond the painting's frame, but also the space, or 'air,' above it, in a merging of multiple dimensions at once. As I experience her works in the imaginal field of my body, I tell her, I seem to have a similar sensation of this 'space,' as a kind of body memory and knowledge of space.



Judy Millar, *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun*, Installation view La Maddalena, Venice, NZ pavilion 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. Photo: Millar Studio.

Judy Millar, *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun*, Installation view La Maddalena, Venice, NZ pavilion 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. Photo: Millar Studio.

Judy Millar, *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun*, Installation view La Maddalena, Venice, NZ pavilion 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009. Photo: Millar Studio.



Studio construction models, 2012. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



Studio construction models, 2012. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.



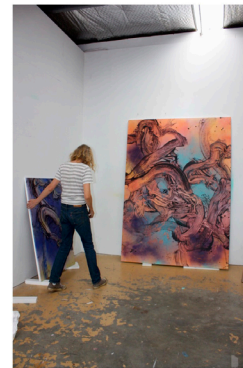
Studio construction models, 2012. Photo: Judy Millar Studio.

'People used to say to me,' says Millar, 'Oh, you're the painter that does this,' while they moved the flat of their hand up and down in the space in front of them. That irritated her at first, but then, she thought instead that 'if people are moving bodily, as if they are remaking the work for themselves, then that is a good thing.' I say that what she is offering the viewer, is painting as a bodily experience of space, and she agrees. What her paintings have

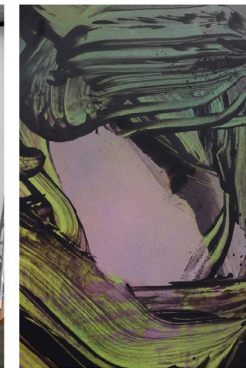
opened to me, is the 'espacement' (to use a term of Casey's) that occurs in a place of space within which, I, as the embodied subject, receive and enact 'the spatial invention of its gestures.'<sup>[09]</sup>

As a result of experimenting with different techniques and finding new ways to move paint, Millar says that her work has changed a lot in the last two or three years. 'I found a way to penetrate the surface somehow and build much more open and complex space,' she tells me. 'It was as if a gust of wind had gone through them and they'd blown open.' This is part of the exhibition's culmination of 'Space' for me as a viewer, even though it is not for Millar who is always making more work. And although Millar tells me that she intends titles to bring in referents that reinforce the exteriority of her painting (in contrast to any inwardly-turned automatic process), she does say that her use of the term 'Space' could indicate that after 'trying to really develop the space in the works' for ten years, this has, to some extent, been achieved.

In my experience of Millar's work, I am gathering dialogues on space similarly concerned with the nature of space and space-making. Building on the bodily centre of Tuan's research, there is also Contemporary Cultural Geographer and poet Tim Cresswell's notion of space as brought into existence by acts that accumulate and configure the essential material of a 'white' space, in the way words bring narratives to life on the page of a poem.<sup>[10]</sup> For Cresswell, as it is for me in my experience of Millar's paintings, the place of space—in movement—is a singular gathering, or assemblage, of object, memory, history, discourse and possible futures.<sup>[11]</sup> Experiencing Millar's paintings, in the way that Cresswell describes a poem, I move with material, which is itself acted upon, to see something of the ways in which space works for the painting, and the painting for space.<sup>[12]</sup>



Judy Millar in her West Auckland Studio, February 2018. Photo: Judy Millar.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.



Judy Millar, *Untitled*, 2017 (detail). Photograph by Jodie Dalgleish.

I become a protagonist of space, both in the gallery with Millar's paintings and as I move around Zurich the following day. Continually, I relate my 'body space' to its description in Fabian Neuhaus's advanced research into the spatio-temporal dimensions of life in a city. In this context, everyday movement in the body is the basis of the enacted narratives of space that create a 'spatial inscription' of the city. Continually, I relate to Neuhaus's idea of

the 'body extension' that we experience as we move in the 'rhythmic constitution of the body in mind' in, even multi-centred, fields of self-and-city space.<sup>[13]</sup> As notably happens, while I am sitting in an exhibition at the Helmhaus Museum, not far from Mark Mueller Gallery, listening to the late Swiss artist Peter Scherri's *Peter plays for Stellar*, in circling motifs held, mostly, in the right piano-hand for 75 minutes. Then, I have the acute sensation that something like Millar's dome is being inscribed, from her exhibition out and across both works in space.

Millar says she has had similar experiences on two notable occasions. The first was on seeing Mondrian's paintings in Amsterdam and coming out of the museum to find her visualisation of space completely changed, as if she was moving in the extended scope of his work and the city from above. The second, was on seeing big Polke paintings for the first time in a gallery in New York and being 'blown away.' Coming out mid-town and finding a squished orange on the footpath, it was as if the entire city was being sucked into it, in one extraordinary sensation.

Common to us through the advent of her exhibition of paintings, it seems there is—for the artist whose movement was part of making space and myself as the protagonist embodying my conception of its spatial field—always the opportunity to make more of space. In and from the paintings of *Swallowed in Space*, there is a continual circulation of modes of movement that extend, through the instinctually familiar, imaginal field of the material body, into an expanded sensation and occupation of the complexity of space. Opening and expanding in Millar's paintings is a practice of space-making as an ongoing search and facility across atmospheres, exposition and events: a search for something of the stuff, the bodily sinew, of space.

Coming up, Millar will be having her first ever survey exhibition, at the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen east of Zurich, in 2019. Bringing together new and past works, the exhibition will occur in that contemporised neo-classical space, possibly alongside other exhibitions drawn from a broad range of collection works. I will want to go and see it, to move in its space.

### Footnotes

01. All quotes from a conversation between the artist and the writer, by Skype, on 16 December 2017, unless stated otherwise.

02. Here I use the term of Fabian Neuhaus (see note xiii), but I will use my own term of 'space-making' to describe, more generally, the same concept as I find it in my referenced texts.

03. Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A philosophical history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 331-332, 335-340. 'Imaginal' is the word Casey attributes to Gaston Bachelard's study in *The Poetics of Space*: p. 295.

04. Millar mentions her 'caricature of the brushstroke,' in her interview with Robert Leonard in 2005: [www.judymillar.com/robert-leonard-talks-to-judy/](http://www.judymillar.com/robert-leonard-talks-to-judy/).

05. *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun* for the NZ Pavilion at La Maddalena in 2009 and *The Path of Luck* in the collateral exhibition *Personal Structures: Time, Space, Existence* at Palazzo Bembo in 2011.

06. Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Eighth Printing, 2001), pp. 3, 8, 12.

07. Yi-fu Tuan, 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective' in *Philosophy in Geography*, eds. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson, (Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), p. 389.

08. Kate Brett Kelly-Chalmers, 'A Conversation with Judy Millar,' Ocula, 13 June 2016, [www.ocula.com/magazine/conversations/judy-millar/](http://www.ocula.com/magazine/conversations/judy-millar/).

09. Here I have co-opted Casey's term with which he explores a person's experience of the expansion of built architecture into spatial events: p. 315.

10. Tim Cresswell, 'Topo-poetics: Poetry and Place' PhD diss., Royal Holloway University of London, 2015, [www.pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/files/25313757/Complete\\_poems\\_2015\\_final\\_signed.pdf](http://www.pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/files/25313757/Complete_poems_2015_final_signed.pdf), pp. 22-42. Note that on page 28, Cresswell, erroneously, I believe, discounts painting as able to work with space in a similar way to a poem because he perceives of it as an all-over covering of white space, or the blank canvas.

11. Tim Cresswell, 'Place,' in *The SAGE Handbook of Human Geography* (London: SAGE, 2014), pp. 6-19.

12. Tim Cresswell, 'Topo-poetics: Poetry and Place,' p. 32.

13. Fabian Neuhaus, *Emergent Spatio-temporal Dimensions of the City: Habitus and urban rhythms*, (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2015), pp. 37-52. Direct quote: p. 40.

### Biographies



Judy Millar is one of New Zealand's most internationally recognised artists. Since 2005 she has shared her time between Auckland and Berlin. Highlights of her career include two exhibitions at the Venice Biennale; representing New Zealand with her solo exhibition *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun* (2009); and in the collateral event *Time, Space, Existence* (2011); inclusion in *Rohkunstbau*, Berlin (2010) and solo exhibitions at the Auckland Art Gallery (2002) and the IMA, Brisbane (2013). Her paintings are held in all major public collections in New Zealand and in several international collections including the Kunstmuseum St Gallen and Tichy Foundation in Prague.

## Judy Millar



In Conversation with  
[Kate Brett Kelly-Chalmers](#)  
Auckland, 13 June 2016

Judy Millar, Courtesy the artist.

New Zealand artist Judy Millar has long been concerned with art's relationship to the phenomenal and sensorial world. Her ambitious works test both the limitations and possibilities of traditional painting and sculpture.

**ARTIST PROFILE**  
Judy Millar  
VIEW BIO, WORKS &  
EXHIBITIONS

More than simply referencing art history, Millar's captivating paintings and 'space works' invite the viewer to consider 'big' aesthetic questions of colour and material, time and space, reality and reproduction.

Working from either her clifftop residence on Auckland's west coast, or a studio in Berlin, Millar is developing a series of projects over the next year. Her work will be included in the Galerie Mark Müller exhibition *Tango Them Basel* (11 June–23 July 2016)—which is part of the city of Zurich's centenary celebrations of the Dada movement.

The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, has also commissioned a site-specific installation for their south atrium to be unveiled in early 2017. Kate Brett Kelly-Chalmers visited Millar in her west Auckland studio where she looked at photographs of previous

works and models of ones to come.

Can you tell us about the work that you are about to show in Zurich?

This year is the centenary celebration of Dada and, of course, it is also the opening of *Manifesta*. So there will be a huge celebration happening in Zurich in June—this is where Cabaret Voltaire opened 100 years ago. I am in a show at Galerie Mark Müller that relates my work to Dada. My three-dimensional works are seen as having some relationship to Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau*. It's an interesting fit.



Judy Millar, *Advancing All Electric* (2016). Exhibition view: Galerie Mark Müller, Zurich. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Millar Studio.

**KBM** I have heard Schwitters' formative installation *Merzbau* [the

'walk-in collage' of different spatial and architectural features. Does this relate in some way to your own work?

**JM** *Merzbau* explored new spatial ideas in art, and my work also relates to new kinds of space, specifically combining elements of architecture, sculpture and painting. I am also interested in the idea of collage that Schwitters was using. Of course, he was collaging everyday material, and I am reassembling digital reproductions of my own painted images.

The worthwhile thing about showing in Europe is that you get these very new takes on the work that you are doing—connections that wouldn't be immediately made here, in New Zealand.



Judy Millar, *Untitled* (2016). Acrylic and oil on paper. 89 x 64 cm (incl frame). Courtesy of Bartley + Company Art.

**KBM** Do you have a name for these sculptural installation works? They still involve painterly elements—more precisely, digital reproductions of your paintings—and I am reluctant to simply refer to them as ‘sculptures’.

**JM** They are called ‘space works’. In the studio we call them ‘props’ rather than sculptures. I would always bristle when the people I work with in the studio called them ‘sculptures’. So we came to the decision that we would call them props—I quite like the word.

**KBM** The space works do seem to be ‘collaged’ in the way that different spatial planes are brought together. To me, they look like massive two-dimensional jigsaw pieces that have been assembled in interesting configurations.

**JM** Yes, they are a spatial collage in this respect, so this does fit quite well with the *Merzbau* concerns. On the surface of the structure, I am placing images of other forms that I’ve made in three-dimensions then photographed and had printed onto sticker paper. So the main space work has images of other spatial works hanging on its surface.

These images really are like big stickers on the surface of the work. Each of these stickers is stuck to a piece of thin aluminium that is then gently curved in different directions. The difference with this new work is that the stickers, instead of being flat on the surface like previous works, curl away, gently lifting away from the form itself.

So it is quite a complex piece that involves both illusionistic curves and physical curves—real shadows and images containing shadows. If anything, these works are lampooning big heavy ‘male’ sculpture. It is a very gentle dig. These are stickers! It is everything that you shouldn’t do with a traditional sculpture: it’s illusionistic, it’s not real, it’s plywood made to look like cardboard, and it carries images on its surface.



Judy Millar, *Advancing All Electric* (2016). Exhibition view: Galerie Mark Müller, Zurich. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Millar Studio.

**KBM** Do you often find yourself pushing back against certain traditions or stereotypes in art, such as the prototypical painting or sculpture?

**JM** I try and undo them because I want to understand them. My way of understanding something is to pull it apart.

A good sculpture is about a form in the round that both alters and is altered by the space that surrounds it. But I am more interested in it existing as an image rather than a form.

This recent spatial work is primarily made up of slotted planes—it is planar in the sense that it is really just an image surface that has become a little more complicated.



Judy Millar, *Untitled* (2016). Acrylic and oil on paper. 115.5 x 86 cm (incl frame). Courtesy of Bartley + Company Art.

**KBM** Can you talk more about this relationship between space and painting in your work?

You are testing the traditional idea of sculpture by introducing the imagistic flatness of painting. But it must be noted that, while we have been speaking about your space works, you also continue to make paintings that explore the basic fluidity of paint as a medium that can be made to sit on a flat surface in different ways.

**JM** Yes, an absolutely central interest of mine is how a painting alters its spatial environment.

On one level, the painted works are a 'finding out' process that includes some really basic stuff about how colours interact and how the very fluid and incredible medium of paint functions. But I am painting these works flat on the floor and when I am doing this, I am trying to build an entire space.

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My work is much more about drawing; it is about looking and seeing, less about 'expressing'.

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It is not that I am just thinking of a two-dimensional planar surface on

the ground. It is as though I am trying to build a dome-like space above the canvas. I am in space; my movements are in space. So the painting is really about creating a form of space. It almost lands on that plane with the hope that, when I put the canvas upright, it is going to then come into the viewer's space—that it is going to determine this space or influence it in some way.

**KBM** While Schwitters might be a useful reference for your space works, I am venturing that some viewers might also think of Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting with respect to the gestural element involved in your paintings. Do you have any thoughts about this?

**JM** The word that always sets my teeth on edge is 'gesture.' Gesture seems like something that comes gushing out from deep inside you. That is not really what I am interested in. My work is much more about drawing; it is about looking and seeing, less about 'expressing'. I'm using gesture only in the sense that a gesture can communicate something.

But Abstract Expressionism did produce some pretty amazing work and it also fell into a very big hole. I think there is something in there that is still worth exploring—that is still worth bringing forward. But like everything that is continually repeated, Action Painting became nothing but a mannerism. And I am very aware that I am referencing this form of painting in a 'gone' way. I am not really parodying it; rather I am referencing a 'gone form'. It is a form that already stands for something. This continues to interest me greatly with painting. —[O]



## Robert Leonard Interview

### Robert Leonard talks to Judy Millar

The interview discusses her work in Personal Structures, Venice 2011



Judy Millar: For this exhibition, I've been given a small room with two beautiful windows, which open out onto a canal. I'm making a twosided painting that forms a big springy strip. The room is about 6m long but the painting is 20m long. Since the painting is too big for the space, there'll be a tussle. The painting will be forced to lift itself up into the air, go out of the window, and come back in. It'll double back on itself and loop around. It'll be delicate but cumbersome, a physical gesture in real space but also a bearer of illusionistic painterly space.

Robert Leonard: You've been blowing up "the brushstroke" for a while now.

JM: It started with Giraffe-Bottle-Gun, my 2009 Venice Biennale show. I made small paintings, then enlarged the imagery to ten times the size. I used a billboard printer—an advertising tool—to do it. I wanted the work to advertise itself. I wanted to amplify everything.

RL: But the new work is painted, right?

JM: The orange bits are painted but the black bits are printed. Both have been up-scaled, but to different degrees and in different ways. I've been developing big brushes with multiple heads so that I can make giant gestures. I'm trying to find a bigger dimension for myself.

RL: With the up-scaling and the use of printing, are you trying to denature or dehumanise the brushstroke?

JM: I'm not trying to dehumanise it, if anything I'm trying to rehumanise it. I'm trying to give it more authority. Despite the absurd scale, you still read the work through your body.

RL: In this work, your painterly marks piggyback on a support that is itself akin to a painterly mark—a flourish.

JM: Exactly, it's gesture in real space that carries other gestures on its surface. The illusionistic surface distorts your sense of the real physical form, and vice versa. By manipulating the support structure itself, I'm dismantling the usual image/support hierarchy.

RL: I'm reminded of the plastic toy-car track that I had as a child. I would bend it into curves and loops and send my cars careering down it. Your support will operate as a track for vision.

JM: The eye is forced to follow the track. I can control the eye; slow it down on the curves and speed it up on the flat. Space will turn into time, and time into space. What was behind will suddenly be in front, edges will become lines and lines will become edges— everything will be turned inside-out.

RL: Because they are so antithetical, I was reminded of Lynda Benglis's paint pours from the late 1960s. She let paint fall from the can onto the floor, whereas your piece is perky, springy, alert. It isn't paintdoing- what-comes-naturally.

JM: I've never been one of those materialists who think paint is more interesting in the can. For me, painting is not about paint, or even about paint on a support. For me, it is about structures: illusionistic structures, logical structures, worldly structures, all sorts of structures. I'm not interested in paint simply as a material.

RL: So why paint?

JM: I stay interested in painting: it's a way of collapsing the separation of the mental and the bodily that I experience in so many other parts of life.

RL: So, you're affirming rather than critiquing painting.

JM: I'm questioning and hopeful. I'm asking what can painting still say, and hopeful that it can still say something.

—

Robert Leonard is Director of the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.