



**ALAN YOUNG** EXTRA SENSORY

**A kaleidoscope is a beautiful thing. It rearranges the world through light and colour. Alan Young's remarkable paintings present the world through some such complicated lens. Extra sensory is his domain. Green light/night vision, infra red spectrums and thermal imaging are systems that are not incompatible with his approach. Bold colours and a rare insight complete the poetry of his work.**

*Gravel footie oval Queenstown, The road from Queenstown to Hobart and Mapping Queenstown are some of the titles of his works made especially for the exhibition at LARQ. These titles, as Glen Barkley speculates in his accompanying essay, develop a portrait of place.*

**I'm reminded of a time as much as a place. I was a first year teaching student in the late 1960s and we were obliged to study Victor Lowenfeld's seminal volume on Childhood development through art entitled 'Creative and Mental Growth'.**

**'Viktor Lowenfeld (1903-1960) gained early fame in Vienna where, as a young art teacher, he began documenting the sculpture activities of visually impaired and blind students... His work there provided the foundational study for his book 'The Nature of Creative Activity' (1939) in which he emphasized that sensory experiences beyond the visual can be a basis for creative expression, and from which he applied the theory of the haptic and visual dichotomy as forms of creative expression.' – Leshnoff, Susan K. 'Studies in Art Education', Vol 54, No 2**

**Alan's paintings in the *Extra Sensory* exhibition tap into this flow of 'sensory experiences beyond the visual' to build colourful and complex 'maps' of place and experience.**

**LARQ has welcomed this opportunity to present an exhibition of paintings by this renowned artist. Born in Scotland in 1980, Alan came to Australia in 1987 and trained in fine art at the University of Tasmania. He won the Bay of Fires Art Prize in 2012 and has been a finalist in the Paddington, Geelong and Hobart City art prizes. Young's work is represented at MONA in Hobart and he has been awarded residencies at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne and at Arts Tasmania. He lives and works in Hobart, Tasmania.**

**Sydney writer Glenn Barkley who was most recently a senior curator at the MCA in Sydney, was commissioned by Alan and myself to write the following piece to accompany Alan's LARQ exhibition.**

Raymond Arnold



The road from Queenstown, 2014 acrylic on canvas, 92 x 184cm

I've never been Queenstown. I wonder if this is important? From what I've read I understand the town has both natural wonders combined with a rich European history of industry and change.

Queenstown seems to be an industrial city where the past is carried around like a weight and when I read about Queenstown I see that it actually celebrates its industrial history in an interesting way – this could have something to do with its location being fairly hermetic in a also fairly hermetic state (sorry about that!) but it turns the industrial into a sideshow – I want to see the famous gravel footy oval, the slag heaps and the Spion Kop!

This last feature interested me as the Spion Kop, named after a mountain in South Africa and the name of which was brought to Tasmania by Boar War veterans, was also the name that fans of Liverpool Football Club gave to the terraced stadium at Anfield.

David Peace in his amazing novel 'Red or Dead' about the legendary Liverpool FC coach Bill Shankly places the Kop as a mythical space within his narrative in which facts are re-cast and re-imagined.

Where a painter might visualise how something looks for the good of the work rather than verisimilitude literature also has this ability to take a perceived truth or fact and bend it to the writers will.

In that spirit I don't think that looking at the paintings Alan Young has produced of Queenstown will give you a true sense of the towns geography. He has said – I am driven to paint by what I observe and experience in my everyday life. In my art practice I have always explored the relationship between people and place and how that intersects with notions around mapping. I take this to mean that he although he paints places, its not in the way we might imagine it, but rather he paints people, and like most good artists he paints himself a lot of the time. This then reflects the landscape that they inhabit back at us.

The features of the place are often depicted in some sort of maelstrom of paint and form. He uses paint in a way that is often jarring, hi-key key colours are contrasted against dark fields and perspective and shape seem to be sucked into an uncertain geography. When I look at his depictions of the environment of Queenstown I see it elements rearranged, as if glimpsed from a car, or a plane.

What is interesting about this new body of work is that they are informed by the artist's engagement with the people of Queenstown, they may not actually appear but are rather implied. Queenie is used in some titles, a colloquial term for the town but in this case it could actually signify a form of portraiture. The work is heraldic and expansive and in Alan's world Queenie is painting and place personified.

Glen Barkley





Front and back: **Gravel footie oval, Queenstown**, 2014 acrylic on canvas, 92 x 184cm

Exhibition dates: 10 May / 21 June 2014

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