
PHILIPPA BLAIR

A SURVEY OF RECENT WORK

MAY 4 — MAY 31 1987

This exhibition brings together a selection of works from several series produced by Philippa Blair over the last few years. The juxtaposition of these displays the various consistencies and divergencies in her painting.

The first impact of the paintings is of their human physical scale, both in their height and their reach and the bravura of their execution. They confront the viewer eye to eye, face to face, body to body. The paint flickers and dances across the surfaces and the surfaces themselves fold and drape, gather, open and close, articulate and flow with their own energy.

These works are not to do with "emotion recollected in tranquility", but are an expression of real events and experiences projected onto canvas. The flow of the paint is given form by the boundaries of line, fold, overlap, slash or edge. The very dynamics of body movement imposes a structure on the paint.

The paintings which run from the tent paintings of 1985 through the "Tree Has Its Heart In Its Roots" the "Heart Books" and the new 1987 "Heart Paintings", contain a variety of dualities: tree — atomic mushroom, tree — lightening, heart — slashed heart. The cloaks encompass a number of themes: life tree — growth or Hiroshima — shelter from destruction. Most of the paintings have an implied symmetry with a central vertical spine while others in a variety of arrangements become asymmetrical and extend outside a rigid conformation.

Philippa Blair is aware of belonging to a cultural continuum which is unfettered by borders and time. She draws on this and her own direct responses to provoke herself to paint.

The poet Ezra Pound said "Dance is to music, as music is to poetry". Of Philippa Blair one might say "Dance is painting, as painting is to vision".

Rodney Kirk Smith

FISHER GALLERY, REEVES ROAD, PAKURANGA, AUCKLAND



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PRESS RELEASE

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A Survey of recent work

May - Sunday 3rd. - Sunday 31st.

The Fisher Gallery in association with Rodney Kirk Smith from RKS Art are curating a survey exhibition of 16 works, paintings, installations, drawings from approximately 1983-1987.

Philippa Blair, like Philip Trusttum, Allen Maddox and Philip Clairmont were nurtured in the expressionist formula by Rudi Gopas at the Canterbury School of Art. In the sixties he had urged his students to choose colour freely and examine its psychological effects, and to abstract from specific natural forms to produce visual statements that evoked the universal.

Blair describes the content of her work in terms of intangible polarities - Shelter/Exposure, Energy/Rest, Night/Day, Personal/Universal, Spirit/Matter. Such metaphysical oppositions have recurred constantly in her work since the seventies. Blair stated in 1984, " I am interested in the idea of metamorphosis literally and symbolically. Changing states as a metaphor of life and as a physical fact, breaking barriers between 2D and 3D work".

Philippa has also been interested in breaking down the traditional barriers of art making, in the sense they are at once painting, sculpture, cloaks, and shelters, unrestrained by the limitations of the frame; eg the construction Snakes and Ladder, or the Tipi Paintings in works like the Journey Cloaks 1983, or the Canberra Kimono, where several canvasses suggested clothes but also incorporating sculptural elements.

A Photograph is available.

For further information please contact Mary Vavasour or Rosemary Igglesden on 569999.