

Visual arts

Andrew Harper



Where all the elements converge

AFTER THE EARTH
 Ash Keating, Eloise Kirk, Naoise Halloran-McKay, Peter Maarseveen, Georgie Vozar and Jake Walker
 Bett Gallery, Hobart
 Until June 23
 Price range: \$750-\$22,000

All the elements come together and even if you cannot see them, they are there.

It's astonishing to see a painting by Ash Keating that is not on the side of a building, not sprayed up in a great unfurling arc of colour by a repurposed fire extinguisher. It's astonishing to see Keating paint a waterfall, with that explosive fluid energy he coloured urban spaces with. This might be the best painting of a waterfall I've seen: the rushing motion, the bright white motion, even the roaring sound is invoked. It's completely surprising and makes absolute sense.

Everything in this compelling exhibition works like this – it's filled with refreshing, energetic art which is surprising, whilst coherent – and there are many links and parallels of form and idea rippling around the very varied works. Keating's work has common aspects with Georgie Vozar's large ceramics. Her series titled 'Vessel' features energetic and expressive glazing that interpret and invoke meaningful places.

Eloise Kirk, Jake Walker and Peter Maarseveen, whilst wildly different, share certain elements of approach – crucial elements are found or gathered. Kirk, a marvellously singular artist, has developed a technique that uses oil, acrylic and collage to realise her strangely erotic abstractions that always seem to have grown rather than be made. While Maarseveen has created a method where the natural chemistry of his subject location is used. He uses myrtle leaves to develop his myth-dark photographs of a myrtle forest, framing them with myrtle wood the forest collaborates with him. Walker, like Kirk, makes personal abstractions, while sharing Maarseveen's DIY-informed aesthetic,



Mackay starlings by Naoise Halloran, above; and Tides of the New Moon by Eloise Kirk, left. Pictures: Supplied



making his own ceramic frames and using found material to paint on. Walker's ceramic frames and sculptures sport weird pipes or chimneys, as if he's creating a personal vision of space and structure.

Singular vision defines the work of Naoise Halloran-McKay. I cannot think of when I saw marquetry in a contemporary gallery. This technique of using wood veneer to create image and pattern is impossibly antique – sophisticated examples were unearthed in Pompei. Halloran-

McKay found the technique whilst interning as a carpenter, gathering off-cuts that he later utilised in his works. Profoundly tactile, the artist's hand, effort and time are strongly present, whilst his imagery is beautifully strange – odd rooms that birds and stars drift through – passages that take us deep into another world. Halloran-McKay gives us fragments of story and hints of fables, and everything, including the material, is part of a narrative he doesn't so much define, as gesture toward.

After The Earth is a feast. Individually, the works seem disparate, but forms keep reoccurring and that approach of using found materials is crucial. There are small worlds, art that is completed by how it is created just as much as it is by what it seems to be; lateral approaches that are derived from the history and character of artists who have refined their complex methods to produce work that reflects the complexity of the earth they are all indebted to.

All the elements come together, and there is so much here.

CULTURAL THREADS

TASTE OF INSPIRATION
 Curated by Anna Mykhalchuk and Yuliia Hubarieva
 Moonah Art Centre
 Until June 13

Taste of Inspiration emerged from a much larger project, Rising Swallow. Begun in 2025, Ukrainian artist Anna Mykhalchuk and psychologist Yuliia Hubarieva collaborated to realise a deck of cards that suggested mindfulness activities that sought to alleviate stress, bolster resilience and support the expression of emotion. Each card featured work from a vast diaspora of Ukrainian artists, some still in Ukraine, others in communities spread out over the world. These images make up much of this genuinely appealing exhibition, making for a strong statement of cultural identity and connection. The art is all in the Samchykivka style, a folk-informed painting style that emerged in the early 1960s. Samchykivka is really distinct – utilising vibrant colours, formal strategies influenced by plant forms and a playful mixture of decoration and story. Samchykivka images feel like you're seeing something that's an illustration for a traditional folk tale where a little magic occurs, and it always seems to have an element of the fantastic infused into it.

I've seen Anna Mykhalchuk's take on Samchykivka art before and her work here is certainly excellent, but what makes this show fascinating is the sheer variety. While Samchykivka is distinct, there's all kinds of room for variation and interpretation. Differing subject matters, approaches and ideas make this a revealing glance at a fascinating assertion of cultural expression – specific art, like a national cuisine or unique music holds people together across great geographical distance and even when far from home, something is still carried within.

