

Hannah Lees

Smoke

14 April - 12 May
ReadingRoom

37 Swanston Street, Room 4,
Level 6, The Nicholas Building,
Melbourne, 3000, Australia

Hannah Lees

Hannah Lees' work investigates the sense that things come to an end and the potential for new beginnings; ideas of cycles, constancy and mortality. This constancy, be it in religion, science, history or in organic matter, is visible in her practice through her attempts to make sense of, and recognise traces of life. Through appreciating this, her work is focused towards an understanding of the essential nature of the materials she uses as well as allowing space for shifts in context in order to disrupt interpretation and allow for new meaning. Her practice encompasses painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, textiles, ceramics, internet art, performance, writing, sound and video.

Hannah Lees (b. 1983, Kent, UK) completed a Post-Graduate Diploma at Chelsea College of Art, London, UK (2011) and a Foundry Residency at the Royal College of Art, London, UK (2012). Hannah lives and works in London, and Margate, UK.

Previous exhibitions include:

Mantel, Copperfield, London, UK (group); *The Sleeping Procession*, CASS Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood, UK (group); *When branches emerge undivided*, Slugtown, Newcastle, UK (solo); *The Turning of Existence into its Opposite*, Kingsgate Project Space, London, UK (solo); *Vital Materiality*, Assembly Point, London, UK (group). *Turner Contemporary & the British Museum Commission: Hannah Lees*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (solo); *The Oldest Thing You Can Hold In Your Hand*, Workbench, Milan, IT (solo); *Overview*, SAMUEL Gallery, Chicago, IL, US. (group).

Current & Forthcoming exhibitions include:

Always The Real Thing, White Crypt, London, UK (group); *British Council UK/ID Exchange Residency*, Bakudapan, ID; *Smoke*, ReadingRoom, Melbourne, AUS (solo); *The Trees That Yield*, Whitstable Biennale, UK (solo); *Kupfer*, London, UK (group); *Barnie's Gallery*, London, UK (solo)

With thanks to:
Sandy Barnard, Matlok Griffiths,
Trent Walter, Rooftop Honey
and Jack Lavender

Room One

1.

Tablet LIX, 2018
plaster, bats wing ink, amber
powder, mixed media
57.5 × 40 × 2 cm

2.

Tablet LV, 2018
plaster, beehive frame,
bats wing Ink, mixed media
23 × 47 × 4 cm

3.

Tablet LVI, 2018
plaster, beehive frame,
bats wing ink, mixed media
23.5 × 48 × 4 cm

4.

Tablet LVII 2018
plaster, beehive frame, amber
powder, mixed media
24.5 × 48 × 4.5 cm

5.

Tablet LVIII, 2018
plaster, beehive frame, amber
powder, mixed media
23 × 48.5 × 4.5 cm

7.

Smoke I, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

11.

Smoke V, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

6.

*To accept what exists once I have
recognised that I cannot change
it, Parts III-X 2015*
sterling silver-cast green
olive stones

8.

Smoke II, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

12.

Smoke VI, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

9.

Smoke III, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

13.

Smoke VII, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

10.

Smoke IV, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

14.

Smoke VIII, 2018
silver halide chromogenic print
42 × 24.7 cm (image size),
62.5 × 45.2 cm (paper size)
edition 1/1 + AP

Smoke

The series of photographic prints, entitled Smoke began in 2012 when I discovered my first grey hair. I was so excited by the idea that I had crossed-over into a new part of my existence and also the feeling of being suddenly wiser and more mature. I initially made three photographic prints from scanning the single hair, using a plain book back cover as a background. I tried to laminate the hair but accidentally burnt it into the plastic laminating sheet and ruined it.

I never looked for grey hairs and forgot about the work until an old friend reminded me of the original prints. In early 2017 I asked a friend to look for grey hairs on my head, she found a lot more than one and I filled a clear ziplock bag with about twenty. I managed to remember which plain book back cover I had used before and produced fourteen scanned images of the grey hairs. I had chosen the title Smoke because of the grey of the hairs, the fluid lines they created when dropped onto the flatbed scanner glass and the ephemeral nature they evoked. This feeling of finiteness, ageing and decaying.

A few years ago, I had a meeting in a bar and had arrived early. I ordered a glass of wine and a dish of olives. When the olives arrived, they were absolutely massive and as I started to eat the olive meat off of the stones, I was struck at how massive the stones were as well. I took my napkin and wrapped the olive stones (about eight) into the napkin and put them in my pocket. I found the olive stones a few days later and decided to cast them in silver, they were such an impressive size I felt I wanted to keep them, to last forever as they were.

I've been collecting olive stones for quite a few years now and made an artwork of a vegetable-dyed dress with olive stones in the pockets. I developed a performance with a dancer which was performed in 2017 where the olive stones fell-out of the pockets and onto the floor as the performer moved. The morning after the performance, the olive stones were still left, dispersed on the floor and it struck me how they seemed to have a relationship to the grey hairs I had been collecting and scanning.

-Hannah Lees