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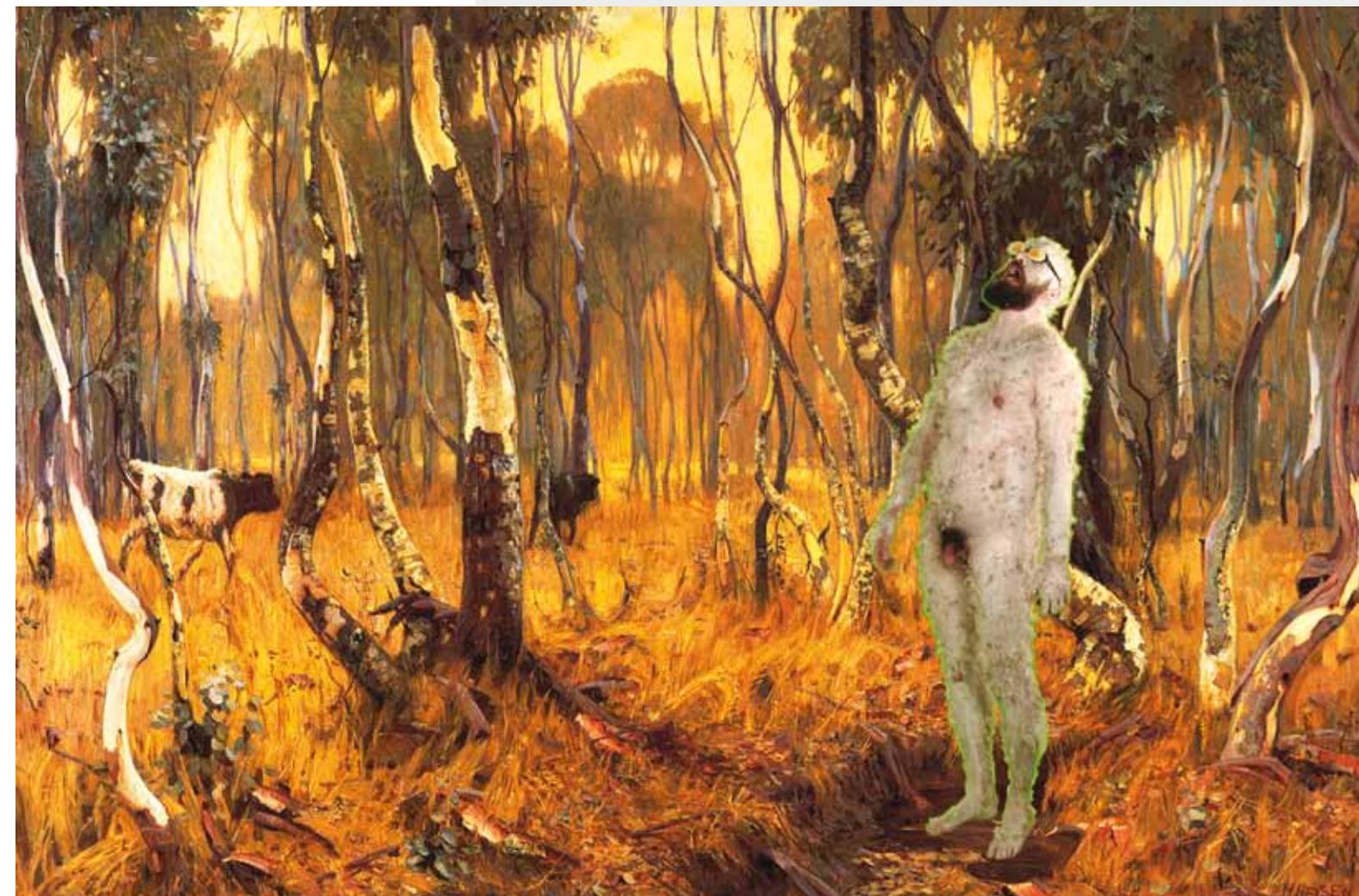
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**Re-extended painting**  
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# Re-extended Painting



# UNBECOMING PAINTING

**Andrè Brodyk, Sean Lowry,  
Tom Loveday, Mark Shorter,  
Mark Titmarsh**

What is painting? Why is it meaningful to claim that an artwork is still a painting within the interdisciplinary and pluralist cultural landscapes of the early 21st century? What can the idea of painting offer us in a time dominated by post-conceptual, dematerialised, digital, and performative tendencies in contemporary art practice? Unlike the stylistic permutations that defined the evolution of painting within modernism, more recent art histories have increasingly traded discipline specific categorisation for critically or conceptually defined genealogies.

As Costello and Vickery note, 'the medium or material constitution of the work of art has tended to become increasingly relative to the means, location and context of utterance; and the 'visual' aspect of that act and that context need not be dominant or explicit, and in some cases is not even apparent'.

However painting was never simply mute matter since it emerged from a negotiation of autopoietic material or matter as an event in time. The dimension of time quite simply allows things that are, to be other than they are, to change or become. So becoming underpins the material and ideological basis of what we nominate as 're-extended painting'. It suggests an anticipatory quality, where something might yet be gained from painting in all of its guises, in its traditional sense, and how it is yet to be understood.

This exhibition argues that painting, which is to say the idea of painting, is a valuable and effective mode of framing for various media in relation

to the presence and absence of paint applied to canvas. This idea of painting is now potentially instantiated as a structural place, a performative action, or a remediated form containing no independent essence. Is there any space in this idea of painting for the traditional wall-hung pigment on flat canvas?



In the preface to *The Tradition of the New*, Harold Rosenberg responded to a criticism of his writing that claimed that he had only considered wall-hung paintings in his schema. Rosenberg argued that he had not thereby excluded 'events', for modernist painting, especially Abstract Expressionism, also constituted an event. While not specifically explained by him, this means that the event of painting was in some way independent of its medium and the idea of painting is furthermore released from its adherence to traditional easel based conventions.

The idea of painting does not rest within any medium specific location or stylistic permutation. Once the cultural legacy of Greenbergian 'purity' was discarded, painting was free to mutate into heterogeneous and individually developed multiplicities. Strategic repetition is arguably easier to transpose to new cultural and technological contexts than material or stylistic nostalgia. As critic Jan Verwoert recently asked: 'Why are conceptual artists painting again? Because they think it's a good idea.'<sup>1</sup>

This exhibition pursues painting's extension into other media contexts in order to demonstrate how painting can become something other than itself. Underlying this extension is a fundamental recognition that painters do 'think-work' through the performance of painting and the agency of thoughtful making. So we might say that the 'death' of painting was never pathological since it continues to work as a homeopathic prescription for the serialised rebirth of painting in ever varying monstrations.

<sup>1</sup> Jan Verwoert. 'Why are Conceptual Artists Painting Again? Because They think It's a Good Idea', *Afterall* 12, Winter 2005, <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.12/why.are.conceptual.artists.painting.again.because>.

**Images:** Front cover: Mark Shorter, *Song for Heysen*, still from digital video, 2012  
Inside fold: Mark Titmarsh, *Music*, acrylic paint on paper (dustjackets), Photo by Arthur Georgeson 2011, 120 x 80.5 cm. Inside panel: (Top) Andrè Brodyk, *Peripatetic Painting, Genetically modified (gene silenced), emergent painting (dimensions emergent & temporal)*, 2012 (Middle) Tom Loveday, *The Eyes of Yayoi Kusama #15*, acrylic on canvas, 2012, 60 x 45 cm (Bottom) Sean Lowry, *Silent Republic, design for overpainted wall painting (dimensions variable)*, 2012