

Susan Schmidt – Art Practice

Belief in the connectedness of all life, responsibility for the natural environment and concern for sustainable living is the underpinning of my work.

My works are Contemporary Realism punctuated with subtle abstract elements and surprises that allow the underlying to emerge, achieving an organic quality echoing transience, loss and memory.

I paint what I know and where I live and feel compelled to transmute an appreciation and awareness through my art of the value and need to conserve the often taken for granted.

‘Seaburbia’ is a series that was born from this ethos and has been a major part of my practice since first exhibited by selection in ‘The Studio’ Art Sydney 2009.

It was witnessing the gradual disappearance of the original beach houses on the Sunshine Coast where I live that was the motivator to create these works. The continuing series is an exploration of the cultural memory and heritage of the quintessential Australian beach house and the value of a more simple way of life. I paint in acrylic and oil, pattern, layer and rub back the works to achieve a weatherworn texture recalling the erosion of matter over time and the residues of nostalgia and decay. Composed from my own photographs, referencing memories and reminiscing retro colour I am documenting the essence of coastal living lost to time and development.

Works from my ‘Seaburbia’ series are represented in the University of the Sunshine Coast Art Collection, the Sunshine Coast Council Art Collection and the Sunshine Coast University Hospital as well as corporate and private collections nationally and internationally.

I have been exhibiting in selected and solo exhibitions since 1998 and since 2012 internationally in the New York Chelsea International Art Competition, in Hong Kong, Istanbul, San Diego and Singapore and in 2016 by invitation artist-in-residence at One & Only - Reethi Rah, Maldives.

Most recently I was one of 25 finalists selected out of 16,000 artists in the Rise Art Prize ‘Global Artist of the Year’ award, a global competition to uncover the world’s most exciting contemporary artists demonstrating creative excellence, original ideas and exceptional technical skill.

<https://www.riseartprize.com/finalists/>

A global panel of judges including Gavin Turk, David Bailey, Harland Miller and Fiona Banner reviewed the finalist’s works in person and winners were announced at an Awards Ceremony on the 8th February at the House of VANS, London. My finalist work has since sold to a London collector.

Following is a comment/review I’d like to share with you by one of the Rise Art Curators:

“I love Susan Schmidt’s use of colour, form, line and pattern in these works. The combination of precision, depth and richness of these elements to create images that visually verge on abstraction, but simultaneously tap into a shared emotional nostalgia for all the summers past conflated with hope for all of those to come.” Alice Russotti – Rise Art Curator