

MUNDARING ARTS CENTRE PRESENTS

REMEMBERING TOMORROW

STUDIO PAYOKA

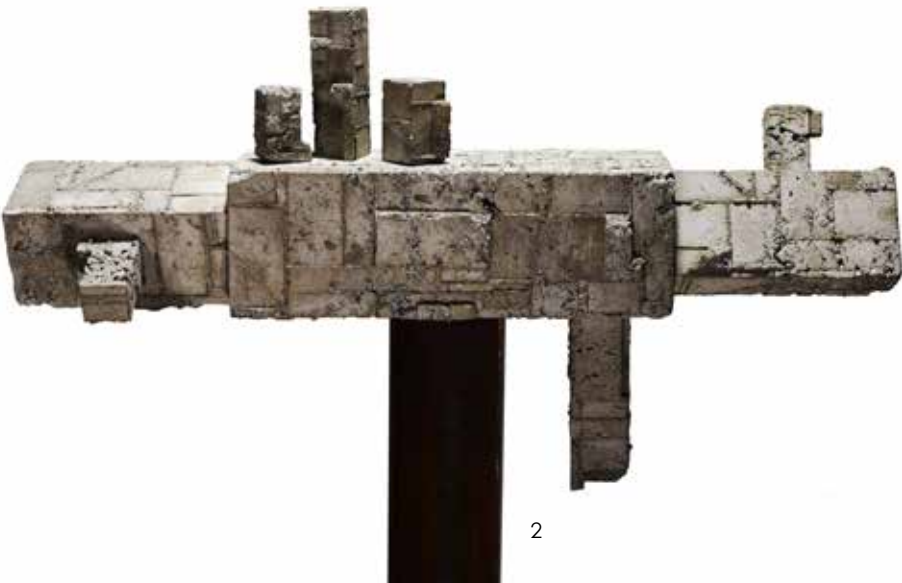
7 OCTOBER – 16 NOVEMBER 2018

MIDLAND JUNCTION ARTS CENTRE



ADAM ISMAIL

1. *The Karklakens*, 2018, Mixed media. Photo Studio Payoka
2. *Where Floridians Retire*, 2018, Mixed media. Photo Studio Payoka
3. *I Have Seen a Forest of Myself*, 2018, Mixed media. Photo Studio Payoka



WILLIAM LEGGETT

1. *Transient Form 2*, 2018, Plywood. Photo Studio Payoka
2. *Monument 2*, 2018, Concrete and steel. Photo Studio Payoka
3. *Monument 3*, 2018, Concrete and steel. Photo Studio Payoka

RORY DAX PATON

1. *Tonne, above*, 2017, Monoprint on Washi paper. Photo Courtney Lopez Edzer
2. *Sakura, sprawl*, 2014, Ink on Xuan paper. Photo Courtney Lopez Edzer



Remembering Tomorrow is an exhibition of the three artists behind Studio Payoka. This flexible and productive working space was purpose built by the artists to create an environment that would match the fluid conceptual space that exists between art and design, and between concept and material. Adam Ismail, William Leggett and Rory Dax Paton all have independent practices, but inside Payoka they share a work environment and conversation. It is inevitable in such circumstances that there is some sort of arms-length synergy between their creative interests. This exhibition formally brings the individual artists' own engagement with their individual projects into one frame, connecting a set of seemingly disparate images and objects together to create a fresh dialogue amongst the works themselves.

The key to understanding the relationships in the show lie in its seemingly contradictory title, for meaning and order often rests in what appears at first glance to be irreconcilably opposed. The contradictory French phrase *belle laide* (beautiful ugly), used to describe the attractiveness of those who don't fit the banal conventions of fashionable beauty, taps deep into our need to weave a narrative that explains the contrariness of the world, often in a way that runs counter to the expectations of mainstream ideas and systems. Contradictions, as any philosopher knows, are the hammer and anvil between which sparks fly. The strength and subtlety of the maker transforms what was once simply inert metal into a malleable material that has a new use and meaning.

What all three artists share is what hovers between the meanings of the words of the title, a moving backwards and forwards between states of mind, representation and abstraction, context and meaning and the nature of materiality itself. In this way *Remembering Tomorrow* isn't a fanciful notion, but a practical way to engage with memory and expectation, a way of engaging with the creative consequences of our thoughts and actions, and the meanings they engender.

Adam Ismail's work moves in-between the representation of the identifiable parts of the world as they stand, and how they are then transformed by circumstance and context into objects that are quite other than they appear. His personal view of the world and how art operates in it has emerged through an engagement with artists like the film makers David Lynch and Jan Svankmajer. Their narratives contradict those of the real world, but contribute profoundly to our understanding of it using complex allegorical imagery, usually that of decay and weariness, to create a storytelling space.

Ismail's most recent works draw together stories and imagery in the same way that a trawler's nets drag the ocean, bringing together in its mesh all kinds of creatures that outside of the net never meet. He refers to his works as 'tales of ordinary madness', stories and images brought together from incongruous sources. His works sit in a physical space that appears half crafted, half scavenged, where machines and tools interbreed, and they demand the audience weave their own experience into this world where the myths and values of an ancient world long past squats in the detritus of our contemporary world.

William Leggett's work moves between the awful, relentless certainty of machine based technology and the fragility of human society that spawned it and which stands by watching as technology creates a new environment for us, part horrifying, part inspirational. The industrial world we have made to serve us has become, in a handful of generations, the monument to both our achievement in controlling nature and a dreadful marker of our failures. Leggett's reference points for the imagery he uses are the monumental concrete structures found across the formerly socialist states of Eastern Europe; especially Yugoslavia. These often gigantic structures

exploited the expressive qualities of concrete construction, and created abstract forms that used the technological mastery of industrial construction to create symbols of social progress. Now, they mostly lie abandoned, unmaintained and falling apart.

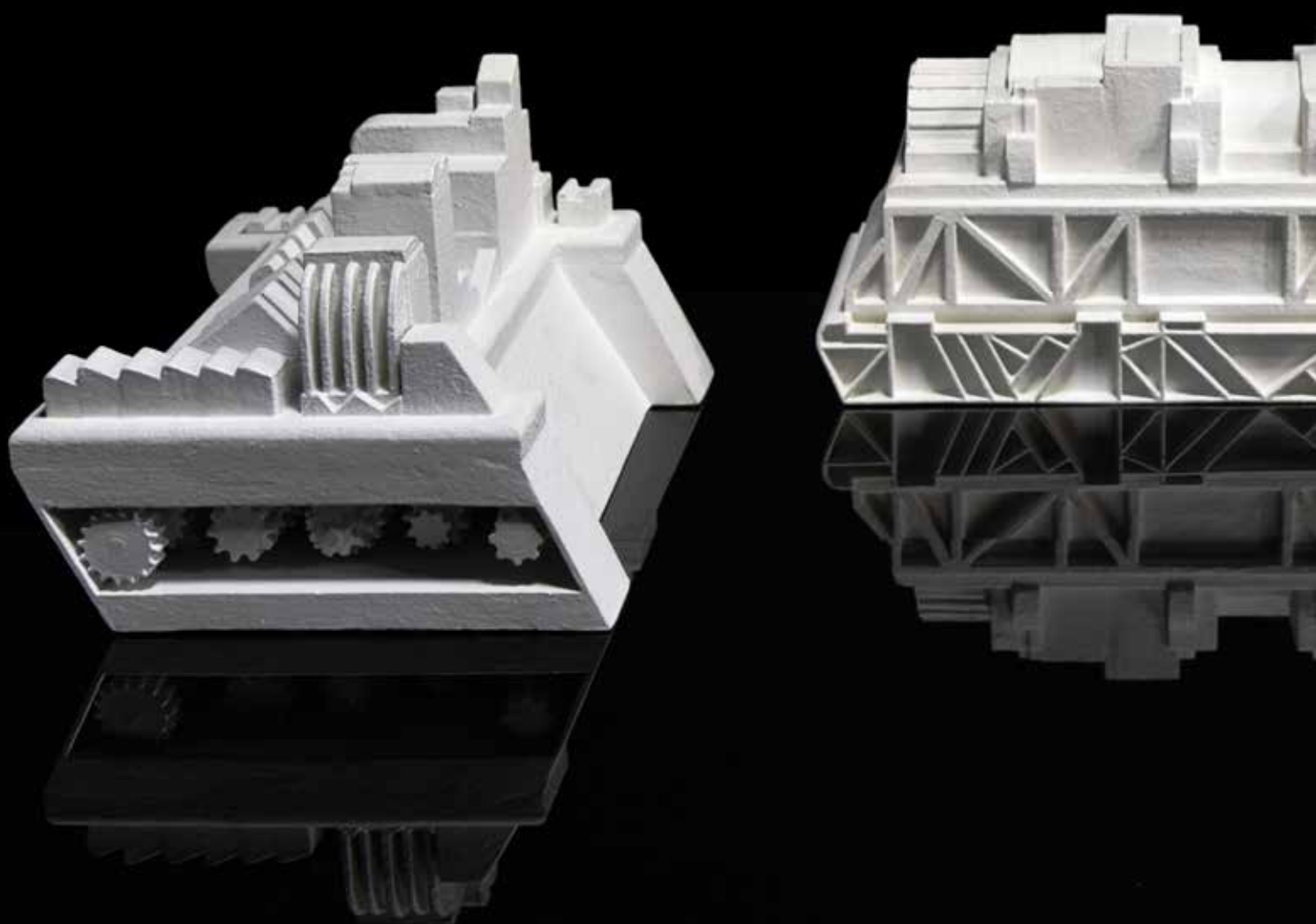
Leggett's own sculptures exist in the middle of a relationship between the idea of revealing the authentic aesthetic quality of the material used, and the desire to use it to express his own conceptual and emotional concerns. In the process of making his works, he breaks the rules of industrial concrete construction and finish, creating a new vocabulary of form. Moving between what we expect concrete to look like and how it can transcend those expectations, Leggett makes works that allow the viewer to impose their own readings of the legacy of Industrialisation.

Rory Dax Paton works in both two and three dimensions. He is an accomplished printmaker, painter and industrial designer. The works he is exhibiting draw from the traditions and contemporary approach of Chinese brush and ink painting, and from Japanese Sho painting. Technically they rely on a sophisticated understanding of the qualities of brush, paint and paper. Important though the physicality of the works is, their meaning lies in the dialogue between the artist and his environment, which has stimulated their creation. Paton moves between the expression of feeling – a response to landscape in this case – and the aesthetic qualities of marks and the materiality of paint. He is continuing the tradition of the Chinese scholar painters who struggled with the question of landscape painting: at what point did their representation of the landscape before them turn into the celebration of each autonomous brush mark?

Paton's work rests on the endless dialogue between what is there in front of him, how it was experienced, how it was represented and how the audience might then respond to the work. He has spent a great deal of time in the Pilbara, and while the region's representation in these works has its roots in an East Asian conception of mark making, the experiences that the artist is recording are rooted in the particular nature of the landscape itself. The paintings are imbued with a sense of the often harsh and scorched beauty of the region, as well as the moments of delicate and exquisite beauty that can be found briefly in it. As the artist has said of these paintings, "...there are wildflowers present, other flora amongst flames and haze, an occasional wisp of smoke, but no recognisable domestic setting. The mines do not dominate but they are there".

At the heart of this exhibition is dialogue, the trace of the engagement of minds with the material world, and a trace of how that engagement is transformed into forms that an audience can then, in turn, draw into their own intellectual and emotional experience. In remembering tomorrow, we acknowledge that the present is fleeting, and that how we manage the future is rooted in our ability to record that fleeting moment and draw from it what we can. In remembering tomorrow, we move backwards and forwards between the boundlessness of our aspiration and the limits of our own physical reality. In *Remembering Tomorrow*, we the audience become partners in forging a shared meaning from individual expression.

Dr Christopher Crouch, 2018



Adam Ismail, *Ghosts on the Shore*, 2018, Mixed media. Photo Studio Payoka

Midland **Junction** Arts Centre

OPEN WED TO FRI 10AM - 5PM

276 GREAT EASTERN HWY MIDLAND WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6056 | T: 08 9250 8062

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