

# pompom

## *Diadikasia*

Belle Blau, Nancy Constandelia, Danica Firulovic, Louise Gresswell, Graziela Guardino, Suzie Idiens, Rebecca Waterstone  
Curated by Nancy Constandelia  
Galerie pompom, Sydney  
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A quick look at Google Translate will tell you that in Greek, *Diadikasia* means 'process'. In this era of information overload, it's increasingly easy to look, 'understand', and swiftly move on. But do we really process what is before us? And what happens if there are no shortcuts to understanding?

Art is a space for conversations built on questions, not answers. The paintings in *Diadikasia* serve as a reminder of this, pushing the viewer into sometimes uncomfortably unfamiliar territory as we search for something to anchor ourselves to in the picture plane. In this space, colours, textures, gradations, and finishes take on new power and resonance, obliging the viewer to slow down and consider how and where meaning is found.

The emotional response to certain colours, or lack of colour, are heightened. We might be confronted by our own reflection, be drawn into the surface through temporal layers, or lose ourselves completely in velvety pigment. We may recall a particular landscape or be transported to a state of mind beyond the worldly. Material and memory are fused; the painting is an interface. The artist's meditation becomes the viewer's, the work a mirror or a mandala. The surface is pleated, poked, caressed, divided, built up and scraped away. The more time is applied to the work, the more penetrable it becomes. The process is the panacea for two-dimensionality. In taking the time to stand before these paintings and experience them, we allow our senses to guide us to a state of connection – with the materials, with our own emotions and perhaps even those of the artist. These works might leave the viewer at sea or plonk them firmly somewhere unexpected.

While occupied by shared concerns, *Diadikasia* also highlights the significant differences between these artists' practices. Their influences, approaches to materials and processes are far from singular, simplistic, or straightforward. Here, seen side by side, we are encouraged to seek out the subtleties and variations in approach.

Several of the artists in the exhibition take two-dimensionality as a challenge, conjuring seemingly impossible depth from the flatness, while others treat the painting as a sculptural relief, playing with the tactility of the surface. In some works, the process is premeditated and meditative, while in others the materials lead the artist's hand in unplanned, unexpected directions. Perfection might be built up patiently through layers, or failed paintings and studio detritus might be repurposed and given new life.

Psychological exploration, the poetics of relationships, the impact of place, the mindfulness of practice, allowing the process and materials to speak. While each artist's motivations are different, all come from a space of deep consideration of the conditions within the artist's mind and within her studio. *Diadikasia* breaks apart stereotypes, revealing the great variety of insights that contemporary artists working in this shared mode can generate.

Many viewers will come to these works with a Western, male, conceptualist legacy in mind. Regardless of the art-historical frames of reference we might call upon when viewing non-objective, monochromatic abstract paintings, in the end these paintings will give the most when we honour the time that was taken to create them, by giving our own time in turn. In a world of the quick glance, the scrolling feed, and the instant answer, it could be more important than ever to allow ourselves to be drawn into the unknown – and to take our time there.

Chloé Wolifson