

BRENDAN HUNTLEY*Sky Light Mind*

10 November – 15 December 2018

Tolarno Galleries presents *Sky Light Mind*, the latest exhibition from Brendan Huntley, one of the most distinctive artists to have emerged in Australia in the last decade.

Huntley's new series of work sees a shift in his vision. The artworks have the same warm, sensual and rambunctious physical sense of earlier works, now realised on a grander scale. They speak of chaos and balance, land and water, the playful and the disciplined, capturing the contrasts of the organic handmade and the assertively efficient machine-made. They beg for hands to touch them, and seem to invite you to climb them and feel their embrace.

"I wanted them to reflect a place of sanctuary, somewhere to escape, swim, wonder and wander through," Huntley says. "I wanted to be as much a part of the sculpture and the paintings as I possibly could. To be enveloped by them, to be owned by them, to get lost in them, and then to chop, dig, brush, push and weave my way back out. To capture that feeling of elation when looking down from a mountain at the pools sparkling under the sunlight and the valleys steeped in shadow."

Sky Light Mind is strongly influenced by, as Huntley puts it, "the natural light and crazy vibrant colours of the west coast of California". In 2016 Huntley received an Australia Council research and mentorship residency with American artist Barry McGee in San Francisco.

While there, he created an extensive series of small paintings that were exhibited in 2017 at Adobe Books, an institution and staple of the San Francisco art scene. These works became a source of inspiration for the larger artworks of *Sky Light Mind*.

"I see these new works as a meditational expedition," he says. "A journey, a trek... with paint, clay, glaze, glass, burlap and whatever other materials get sucked into the creative vortex."

"At some point along the way I noticed the pieces started taking on a life of their own, calling to be larger, wilder and more physical in size. I realised I was craving something that would take hold of me, something that would pull me into a void, envelop me, physically exhaust me in their creation," Huntley says.

Submitting to this calling, he completely remodelled his Frankston studio. A larger kiln was installed to handle the size and physicality of the new sculptures. He built and welded new dollies and carts to move the artworks around in the space. "The works became like a solar system or a cluster of islands, taking ideas from the paintings and applying them to the sculptures... and vice versa, dancing between the two dimensions."

Sky Light Mind is Huntley's first solo exhibition in Melbourne since 2015. He has had numerous solo and group shows in Australia and internationally, including: the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, *Dark Heart* at the Art Gallery of South Australia (2014), *Primavera* 2013, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, *Melbourne Now* at the National Gallery of Victoria (2013), and *Future Primitive* curated by Linda Michael at the Heide Museum of Modern Art (2013).