



Left Behind

Karla Marchesi

There is an overwhelming sense of beauty when entering Karla Marchesi's studio. The senses are alerted to the perfectly positioned pigments, brushes, reference books and personal items systematically housed and surrounded by large-scale canvases gently leaning against the walls. This methodical yet instant survey of the artist's domain invites the visitor to inquisitively enter into the landscapes and interiors that line the walls of her studio.

There is a sense of discovery within the studio as Marchesi describes her work. Within each stage of the painting process there is change. The temporary nature of working with oil paints easily erases the previous narrative. Gradually, the laborious process of layering paint allows the composition to strengthen within the velvety shadows and cool light of day.

Left Behind is a recent body of work by Karla Marchesi that positions her practice within a tradition of Australian landscape painters. From Arthur Boyd, Jeffrey Smart to Clarice Beckett, these artists possess an ability to capture a sense of loneliness within everyday landscapes and unadorned suburban vistas.

Marchesi's realist paintings offer a still and silent interpretation of contemporary consumer culture. The brightly coloured and shiny packaging of once precious possessions and desired objects lay discarded, soiled and vulnerable to the elements. There is an eerie quality to these panoramic interiors and suburbs that accentuate the universal feelings of loss, love and longing.

The compositions of Marchesi's paintings are often derived from contemporary sources: an image from a blog or real estate agents website is carefully curated within a meticulously painted work. The images are

filled with a stream of detritus, engulfed within a forest of vines and long weedy grasses. Personal objects are set in industrial and suburban landscapes or suffocated within the walls of a house where the occupant has fled. The haunted scenery reminds us of a dispute, the aftermath of private war zone where things are left in suspended animation.

Karla sights the US sub-prime mortgage crisis and other recent and historical man-made and natural disasters as influences in this exhibition. Like German artist Frank Thiel and American installation artist Phoebe Washburn, Marchesi's pursuit for the aesthetics of temporality and change reflects upon the extravagance and waste of consumer culture. She comments on the desensitisation of excess and decay in social and cultural environments.

The paintings evoke strong feelings of outrage, confusion, intrigue and compassion. They provide a thread of a narrative and invite the viewer to establish scenarios and reconstruct the situation that has been documented and recollected.

There is a strong desire to possess these provocative and contemplative contemporary still life works that house a sea of discarded objects. The familiar settings, displaced and discordant, are easily identifiable in our contemporary world and place the viewer in a contradictory role of voyeur and possessor.

Left Behind offers a deeper reality than the one found on the pages of our screens. The act of enlarging these images, the process of painting them and then displaying them in a gallery context strengthens the absurdity with our fascination with the lives of others.

Renai Grace

Renai Grace is a freelance curator



Trackside Oil on board 120 x 103cm 2010



Undergrowth Oil on board 103 x 120cm 2010



As good as gone Oil on board 113 x 120cm 2010



Left Behind Oil on board 58 x 244cm 2010

This catalogue has been published on the occasion of the exhibition **Left Behind**,
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Karla would like to thank Renai Grace, Bruce Heiser, Judith Vink, Jasmin Coleman,
Matthew Malone and her parents, Franco and Clare, for their support.

Cover

I suppose it had to come to this (detail) Oil on board 113 x 120cm 2010

Images - Carl Warner

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