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# **Fossil Light**

works of  
Dr Donal Fitzpatrick

# **“Fossil Light”**

## **works of Donal Fitzpatick -**

### **notes on a parallel universe**

The moons to come, and those of evenings gone.  
Everything is: the shadows in the glass  
Which, in between the day's two twilights, you  
Have scattered by the thousands, or shall strew  
Henceforward in the mirrors that you pass.  
And everything is part of that diverse  
Crystalline memory, the universe  
Whoever through its endless mazes wanders...

The writer and poet Jorge Luis Borges wrote *Everness*, a poem that speaks of the moon, the shadows, the universe. The poem eloquently expresses a wandering between day and night and the crystalline memory that is the universe—one's being.

Everything is the universe, days, nights, even the haze you find as you travel through the invisible space that is memory. The universe is more than stars and planets; it is the position of the observer, who meanders between day and night, light and dark. To the observer, whose position at any given moment alters that which is being observed, and everything becomes significant depending on the position the observer is perceiving from.

Then there is the strange concept of a parallel universe—where did this notion stem from? Is not the universe infinite, timeless; no beginning, no end? Just as the ancient Greeks or the Polish Renaissance astronomer, Copernicus, I look up to see the same stars, illuminating, and I wonder if I am observing the same sky and stars today. I begin to think of the classic Primo Levi story, *The Tranquil Star* that focuses on a lonely astronomer who is worried that a dominant and bright star may explode in the universe, reducing the Earth to vapor.

In Geometry parallel refers to straight lines lying in the same plane but never meeting no matter how far the lines extend. In Geography parallel refers to a circle on the earth's surface formed by an intersection of a plane parallel to the plane of the equator. Is it even conceivable that one universe can be parallel to another, corresponding to, or running in the same direction?

The works that make up *Fossil Light* are about looking, observing, seeing beyond the surface and alchemy of the meticulously finished surfaces of pigment, ink, alcohols and shellac. These works are significant as matter, and the properties surrounding matter—infinite formulas that the artist has concocted, all forming their own universe. The works define their own place

of the infinite, the void, a space that one desires to immerse themselves in, even falling or rising, depending on one's idea of the universe. There is no universe being imitated here—these works are orbiting on their own—moving quietly, steadily, simultaneously suspended and grounded in their own definition of time.

How does one see tangible images in the works of *Fossil Light* when at first glance the works appear to be 'void' of images? Easy: through the translation from the artists' eye and skill to the viewer's imagination. Here there is a parallel universe between the imagination of the artist and that of the viewer. The paintings appear to quietly, yet purposefully, translate what the definition of the void may be, questioning what one is observing. Is that an object, a section of earth's matter or is it the constellations above I am falling into? The works are about 'seeing', watching, and the works require 'time'. Time also becomes a universe, a focus on the space of the picture, inviting the emergence of an image or a hint of light or even the sensation of falling into the earth's centre. These are universes that cannot be defined, only experienced.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to orbit around questions and answers— where are we going? What can we do to save the planet, what is good, what is evil, how we can better control this or that...*Fossil Light* is not about answers or questions; this exhibition invites us to ponder the unknown, to search for knowledge, perhaps 'being', but not truths. I can't help but imagine that Copernicus, the astronomer, too would see parallel universes in these works.

Imagination is infinite; can it be that imagination is the parallel universe? What is reality; where does the universe begin or end? The paintings of Donal Fitzpatrick entice me to dive into the void — the unknown. The infinite space that has been created in these works make me want to get lost in the universe, any universe. Perhaps one needs to get lost in the universe of imagination and forget about finding answers.

Jorge Luis Borges' words are revolving in my head:

the moons to come...Everything is...  
Henceforth in the mirrors that you pass.

Dr. Debra Porch  
Fine Art, Queensland College of Art

**Notes:**

*Everness*, from *Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Poems 1923-1967*,  
Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1985.

## **Artist Statement**

A reconsideration of light has led me to think about the relation of vision to duration. The compression of space and the fossilisation of light within materiality played out against the recurring chance procedures of existence have been my principal concerns. I have sought through painting to build models of these experiences, fictional worlds that evolve from my engagement with the real. These encounters have helped disorient and tilt my vision, bringing the ground beneath my feet into a different view of land not as scape but as mass and continent, a geologic experience of time as an island of gravity.

## **Biography**

Dr Donal Timothy Fitzpatrick  
BA (Vis Art), PG Dip (Prof Art Studies), B Litt (Hons), MFA, PhD.  
Associate Professor  
Head of the School of Design and Art, Curtin University, Perth  
Born in Brisbane 1955

## **Exhibited**

Institute of Modern Art Brisbane  
Artspace, Sydney  
Performance Space, Sydney  
Biennale of Sydney  
Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Sydney  
Woolloomooloo Gallery, Sydney  
Peter Rae Gallery, New Zealand  
Nyisztor Studio Gallery, Perth  
Moores Building, Fremantle  
Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane

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details: 'Void' (front),  
Acrylic, shellac, alcohol, ink, graphite and pigment on canvas, 170 x 198cm

Woolloongabba Art Gallery ~ 613 Stanley Street Woolloongabba Q 4102  
Wednesday to Saturday 10am - 5pm  
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