

MAUREEN HANSEN



Fruit Party for One

FRUIT PARTY FOR ONE

Recent paintings by Maureen Hansen

Love, hope, light, joy and youth. These are the ideas I have about making my current exhibition of 26 gouaches and 23 oil paintings at Woolloongabba Art Gallery.

Usually ideas for the next show come from the tail end of the previous exhibition. *'From Life: Brisbane Light'* (June 2019), featured landscapes observing the changing light from the view of my house in Everton Park. The city shimmered gold sliver then pink from 4:30pm – 5:30pm. Playing with the idea of miniature paintings and the power of natural human observation over long distance, I produced postcard sized Brisbane landscapes.

Now I wanted to focus on the colour of the light hitting the city and even at 8.2 kms, there is a lot of information to absorb. So I began painting close-ups of the city. I wanted to get close to organize natural colour and when COVID-19 lockdown began I noticed that fruit and flowers are nature's most stunning display of colour and life inside our domestic environment.

Like most people I badgered like a badger into my past collections and revisited the theme of painting fruit still life, that I painted in *'Unreal'*, exhibited at Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney 1996. Bright Queensland colour and light was explored with the flat background and pattern of Matisse or Cézanne; the Eastern saying, "a blossom is only beautiful because it is temporary". And the centuries old Western tradition of Dutch still-life painting points to the fact that we all share an acute sense of mortality. "Nature Morte" reminds us of the brevity of life and how we need to celebrate and appreciate it while in the here and now.

The one permissible excursion during COVID-19 is a trip to the grocery store. Suddenly a golden yellow melon and a suite of red pears leaped out at me and begged to be painted. The variety of colours and shapes observed for hours under the Queensland light has resulted in many trips to the Ateliers to buy the best earth cadmiums of red, yellow and orange. The show is pumped full of the exotic and costly rose madder to paint dragon fruit crimson. The science of colour and it's psychological effects is well researched. Most fast food restaurants use red and yellow because it increases appetite. Hospitals and chapels are beige, pale green or lavender to calm the soul.

The lockdown for love to socially distance made me think of what we as a community need to see to bring joy, hope, light, youth and love into our homes. Harmony of colour, a composition that leads the eye around the picture. With these goals in mind, I began arranging and observing still life and my *Fruit Party for One* was born. The cool green cut avocados or the kiwi fruit seduce the eye. We know avocado is the Royal Jelly of affluence. I felt there had to be a generosity in the paint as the Buddhists say "you cannot offer abundance from emptiness" – so I painted a cornucopia.

The youth portraits are about listening and observing young people in our society and encouraging their fresh new perspective. Portraits usually belong to the hallowed halls of private schools and senior politicians – I wanted to capture the defiance and zeal of the young.

These are changing times and we are wise to appreciate how close to nature we still are, even inside our own homes.

MAUREEN HANSEN



Max, my son
Gouache on paper
83 × 59 cm



Kiwi and Coconut Fruit Party
Oil on canvas
41 × 51 cm



Dragonfruit, Chestnuts and Avo
Oil on canvas
41 × 51 cm



Degas Mangoes
Oil on canvas
60.5 × 51 cm



Dragonfruit meets Sugarplum
Oil on canvas
51 × 41 cm



Fruit Party for One (Red Pear)
Oil on canvas
46 × 61 cm



Mangoes and Bird Bath
Gouache on paper
41 × 29 cm



Moonee Ponds Race Track, Gouache on paper, 25 × 35 cm



City Dusk, Oil on canvas, 51 × 41 cm



Chrysanthemum, Lavender Royal, Oil on canvas, 91 × 61 cm

Front image: Banana and Kettle Fruit Party, Oil on canvas, 41 × 51 cm

Exhibition dates
15 May – 20 June 2020

Woolloongabba Art Gallery

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