



résidence

nic mason

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A·K
BELLINGER
· GALLERY ·

Foreword

I am delighted to present Nic Mason's solo exhibition, *Résidence*.

Nic Mason's works in this exhibition were painted as a response to her time whilst she was in France in 2017 and upon her return home to Australia in 2018. In France she was welcomed into the studios of Amis des Arts d'Albi in the south of France and at the Centre de Art Marnay Art Centre (camac) near Paris as part of an international artist residency.

I would like to thank Dr Gareth Jenkins for his insightful essay in response to Nic Mason's work. Finally, I would like to thank Nic Mason for sharing her vision through these works with the viewer, the collector and the world beyond.

Allison Bellinger

Essay for *Résidence*

Nic Mason's present exhibition of paintings open up spaces to imagine yourself into. Much of the work was created while on residency in Marny-sur-Seine at Camac about an hour out of Paris - these works capture the strangeness of new places, wonderings about their unknown, but suggested stories.

A branch laid up against the wall - not decorative but mysteriously functional - a talisman for warding off evil spirits perhaps. Inevitably the eye slides into the dark opening that without revealing its secrets convinces you it has some.

This painting, like many in the exhibition, creates intrigue through narrative suggestion and a multiple focal point composition which, together, gives the works a deeply persuasive charisma.



A chair suggests past occupants. In the tangle of visible brush strokes you can almost see the wizened fingers of its long term owner clutching the armrests as she raises herself. The blue is also the blue of her dress, velvet maybe - something that records the trace of fingers trailing across it or the paws of the shadow dog that walks playfully through the absence of light.

Images left to right: Antlers, 2017, oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm;
Petit chien (small dog), 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 cm;;
Chien (dog), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm.



Here now a chair prepared for a momentary traveler passing through a corridor or waiting room. The dark corner suggests a future or past, a hint of light flaring or dying. Again a dog materialises from the shadows in a surreal move that complicates the realism of the scene.



Essay for Résidence (continued)

You will lean in to see how it is done. You will lean back and forget the minutia as the whole takes you over. The off-centre symmetry just right because of the almost imperceptible recurrence of brown in the case's shadow or the hint of primed canvas surfacing as if a scattering of glancing light.

And for all the intrigue here on the surface you are drawn deeper as the suitcase suggests its stories, narratives in its scarred leather, the many openings and closings of its worn latches rendered with a deft fusion of strokes that deconstruct on close inspection.

The case's body extends outside the frame as if caught in the act of coming, going. And the twisted branch, resting on the case like a sculptural artwork in its own right, gives life to its shadow on the wall, echoed again in the image above. And what is that dark shape in the top right corner and how can such an unassuming mark work so well to balance the whole?

Nic Mason's paintings simultaneously intrigue the eye and the mind generating a compelling charisma that draws the viewer into their intimately detailed scenes, so singular in character as to span the gap towards universal story making. There is a playfulness here, and the passage towards the unknown, there is the emptiness that is a waiting to be filled and there is that very human tendency we possess of imbuing the most ordinary of objects with a talismanic presence.

Ultimately Nic's paintings ask open ended questions, leaving space for the viewer to weave their own stories into these richly layered scenes.

Dr Gareth Jenkins



List of works

Branch down, 2017, oil on linen, 25 x 30 cm

Petit chien (small dog), 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 cm

Petit ombre (little shadow), 2018, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 cm

Light in Albi, France, 2017, oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm

Toulon, France, 2017, oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm

Wandering Albi, France, 2017, oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm

Antlers, 2017, oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm

Homage to red shoes, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 25 cm

Wild boar, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 25 cm

The cat, the trunk and the mistletoe, 2017, oil on linen, 32 x 40 cm

Ici et là (here and there), 2018, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 cm

The Atelier sink, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 40 cm

No entrance, Albi, France, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 40 cm

Bois de gui (mistletoe antlers), 2018, oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm

Rue à Albi, France (street in Albi, France), 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm

Cerfs et tabourets II (deer and stools), 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm

Cerfs et tabourets (deer and stool), 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm

Chaise (chair), 2018, oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm

Chien (dog), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Autour du coin (around the corner), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

Lapin (rabbit), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm

Lapins (rabbits), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm

Image: The cat the trunk and the mistletoe, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 32 cm

Biography

Nic Mason is an emerging artist in regional Australia.

Her artworks have been selected as a finalist in numerous national awards including the Macquarie Group Emerging Artist Prize 2018; The Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize 2018; Fleurieu Biennale 2018; Hurford Hardwood Portrait Prize 2018; Calleen Art Award 2018, 2017 and 2016; Waverley Art Prize 2018 and 2017; Footscray (Tertiary) Art Prize 2017; Brisbane Art Prize 2017 and 2016; and the Korea Australia Arts Foundation Art Award 2016.

Nic Mason has been awarded several awards including the 2015 Central West Regional Art Award through Cowra Regional Art Gallery. This award led to her first solo art exhibition, *WILD* in Cowra Regional Art Gallery in 2016.

Her art practice is richly informed by her background in science and conservation management. After attaining a Science degree from Macquarie University in 1996, she relished a twenty-year career in the conservation and land management sector. In the middle of 2016 she resigned from her employment position in this sector to focus on her art practice in a full-time capacity and to commence post graduate studies in painting at the Australian National University.

In 2017 she received a Graduate Certificate in Art through the Australian National University.

In 2017 she also travelled to France to participate in an international art residency at Centre de Art Marnay Art Centre (camac), Marnay-sur-Seine with the assistance from the camac Fondation Ténot and an NSW Artist Grant through Create NSW and the National Association for the Visual Arts.

She has been selected with a group of artists and science specialists in NSW to work in collaboration with Orana Arts and the Office of Environment and Heritage on the Art of Threatened Species project.

Résidence is Nic Mason's fourth solo exhibition in three years and her first solo exhibition in A K Bellinger Gallery.

Acknowledgements

Catalogue Essay © Dr Gareth Jenkins; images: © Nic Mason

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Cover image: *Lapins* (rabbits), 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm; This page top to bottom: Nic Mason in the studio, Marnay-sur-Seine, France 2017; *Homage to red shoes*, 2017, oil on linen, 40 x 25 cm; and *Branch down*, 2017, oil on linen, 25 x 30 cm.



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