

KEZ HUGHES



TIMELAPSE

NICHOLAS
THOMPSON
GALLERY

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN 2025

9 TO 26 JULY 2025

KEZ HUGHES – TIMELAPSE

Vesuvius still emits the irregular beat of an impending catastrophe — irregular both because we cannot understand its structure and perhaps because there is no structure at all.^[1]

Excavated from the depths of myth and time, Kez Hughes' new body of work reveals sublime landscapes and fragmented narratives. Entitled *Timelapse*, this series of paintings conjures a world caught between reverence and decay through muted palette and uncanny compositions. Hughes' hyperrealistic paintings evoke a profound stillness, yet beneath their surface lies a tension, the moment before eruption, the calm before a storm. Each of her paintings carries this eerie silence, the stillness before collapse.

Long interested in the act of replication and mimicry, Hughes' previous works have historically acted as a homage to the masters, both contemporary and ancient. This new body of work shifts that focus. Her canvases no longer reveal an entire duplication of an object, but a fragmented part of one, a new lens, duplicated into a new time, surrounded by objects also pulled from their origins.

A recent trip to Naples seeded the works of *Timelapse*, with its baroque excess, buried ghosts and proximity to the volcano Vesuvius. The ruins of Pompeii haunt these paintings. Not in literal form, but in their mood, their temporality. The act of excavation, of digging up, surfacing, touching what was hidden, is central here. Each painting holds a multitude of broken parts, held together not by cohesion but by care.

In Hughes' paintings, a cat is never just a cat. It's a fragment from another moment, another hand. A mimic, a time traveller. A trace caught mid-gesture. Her sources are scattered, eclectic. The hand in *Golden* is lifted from a classical sculpture in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. A mask from a Christie's catalogue floats beside the rocky spire of Ball's Pyramid in *Alchemy*. A Roman wall texture. A Pompeian vase. An AI-generated iceberg. She steals freely. Everything is relevant. Gathered like seeds, these images resist decoding. Hughes invites confusion.

Narrative here isn't linear but circular. The work accumulates rather than progresses. Meaning is layered, not resolved. A story not of conquest, but of accumulation, of lingering, revisiting, and unearthing. A quiet politics underpins this, a refusal of the neat arc. Her paintings participate in "unsettling the promise of a tidy, linear story."^[2] Like memory, they resist chronology. No clear beginning, no clean end.

This methodology is perhaps most felt in Hughes' landscapes, where the natural world is imbued with psychic resonance. Drawing from the Romantic tradition, particularly the brooding skies and devotional vastness of Caspar David Friedrich, her scenes invoke both awe and unease. Mountains push through cloud, icebergs drift with no anchor. These are not just scenes, but states of being. The world holds its breath. Volcanoes hum beneath the crust.

In 18th century Naples, volcano painting was its own genre, epitomised by Volaire and De Nittis. Artists even held volcano parties to observe eruptions. A place to "go to lose themselves... an opportunity for a visceral, exhilarating experience". *Timelapse* channels this same obsessive fascination with the sublime and the catastrophic.

Religious imagery pulses throughout the work. Italian Catholic sculptures (porcelain, wooden, plastered in folds) are flattened into Hughes' surfaces. Their devotional stillness, eerily perfect, becomes uncannily static. Faith, here, is estranged from itself.

The sacred becomes decorative. The holy, distant. Hughes does not reject these symbols, but reframes them, lifting them from context, cutting them out, and pressing them into new compositions like icons in a devotional scrapbook.

Yet, the tension remains, between preservation and collapse, imitation and invention, memory and forgetting. Between the sacred and the strange. Between fear and what breaks through it. As stated in the film *Fire of Love*, “Curiosity is stronger than fear.”^[3] And perhaps, in Hughes’ paintings, understanding is too. After all, “Understanding is love’s other name.”^[4]

Kathryne Genevieve Honey, 2025

[1] Noam Andrews, “Volcanic Rhythms: Sir William Hamilton’s Love Affair with Vesuvius,” *AA Files*, no. 60 (2010): 14, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41378488>.

[2] Pınar Üner Yılmaz, “Collective Consciousness in the Age of Crisis,” *Art Journal* 82, no. 1 (2023): 97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2023.2180283>.

[3] *Fire of Love*, directed by Sara Dosa (New York: National Geographic Documentary Films, 2022), film.

[4] *Fire of Love*, directed by Dosa.

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KEZ HUGHES

Congress

2025

oil on linen

112 x 87 cm

\$7,900



KEZ HUGHES

Revolution of capital

2025

oil on linen

112 x 87 cm

\$7,900

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CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN 2025



KEZ HUGHES

The volcano

2025

oil on linen

112 x 87 cm

\$7,900

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KEZ HUGHES

Refuge

2025

oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900



KEZ HUGHES

Sentinel

2025

oil on linen

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900



KEZ HUGHES

Superstition

2025

oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900

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KEZ HUGHES

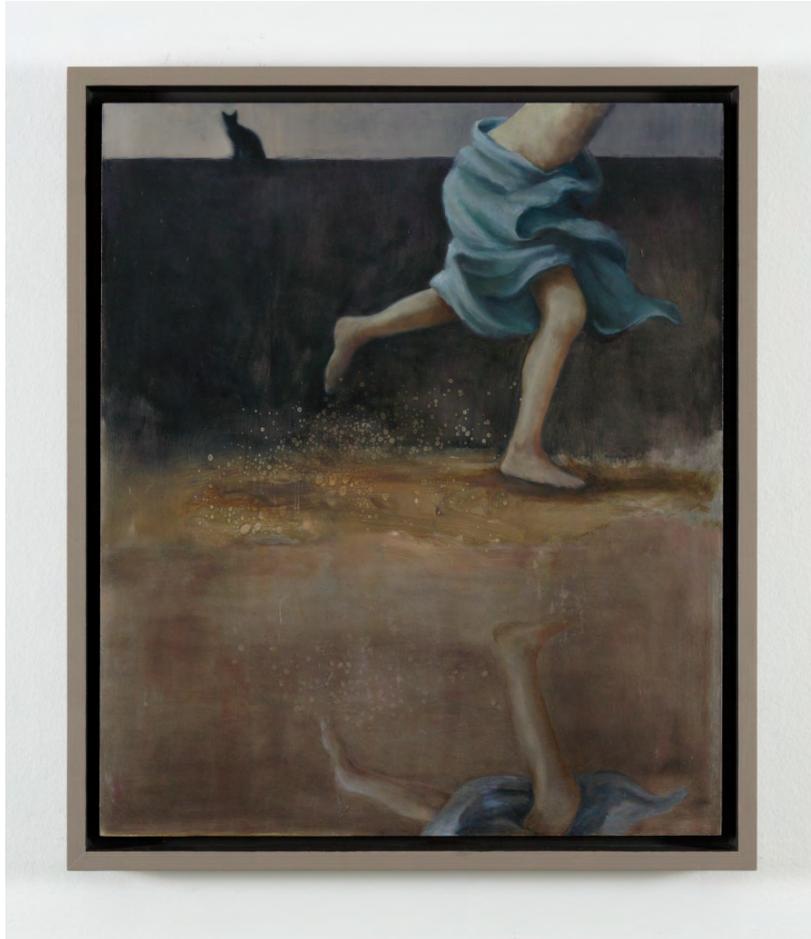
The colossus

2025

oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900



KEZ HUGHES

The information

2025

oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900



KEZ HUGHES

The understudy

2025

oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$3,900

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KEZ HUGHES

E.S.P.

2025

oil on board

50.5 x 40.5 cm

\$2,900



KEZ HUGHES

Endymion

2025

oil on board

50.5 x 40.5 cm

\$2,900



KEZ HUGHES

The grand master

2025

oil on board

50.5 x 40.5 cm

\$2,900



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Timelapse

2025

oil on board

40.5 x 30.5 cm

\$2,500



KEZ HUGHES

Night

2025

oil on board

35.5 x 28 cm

\$2,200



KEZ HUGHES

Outlaw

2025

oil on board

35.5 x 28 cm

\$2,200



KEZ HUGHES

Alchemy

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Beauty from other places

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Coverage

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Daphne

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Golden

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Hypnos

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Lingua franca after Francis Sartorius

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Long moment

2024

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Poem

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

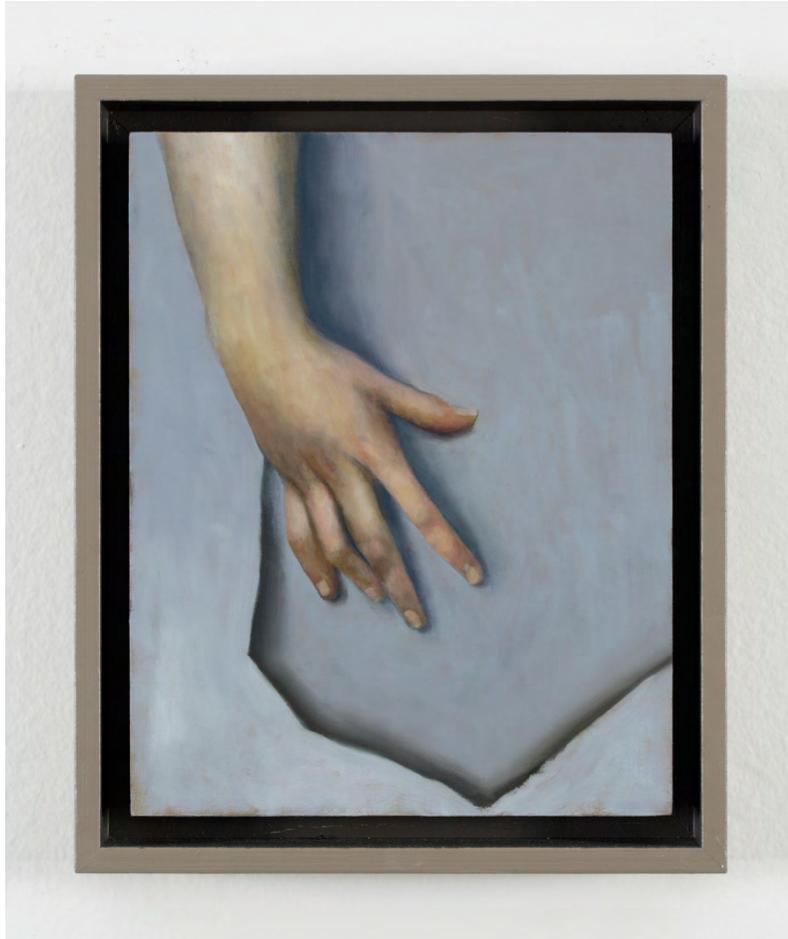
Prediction

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Remnants

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Subjective territory after J. A. Bond

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

Virtuoso

2025

oil on board

25 x 20 cm

\$1,900



KEZ HUGHES

The ancients

2025

oil on board

20 x 20 cm

\$1,700















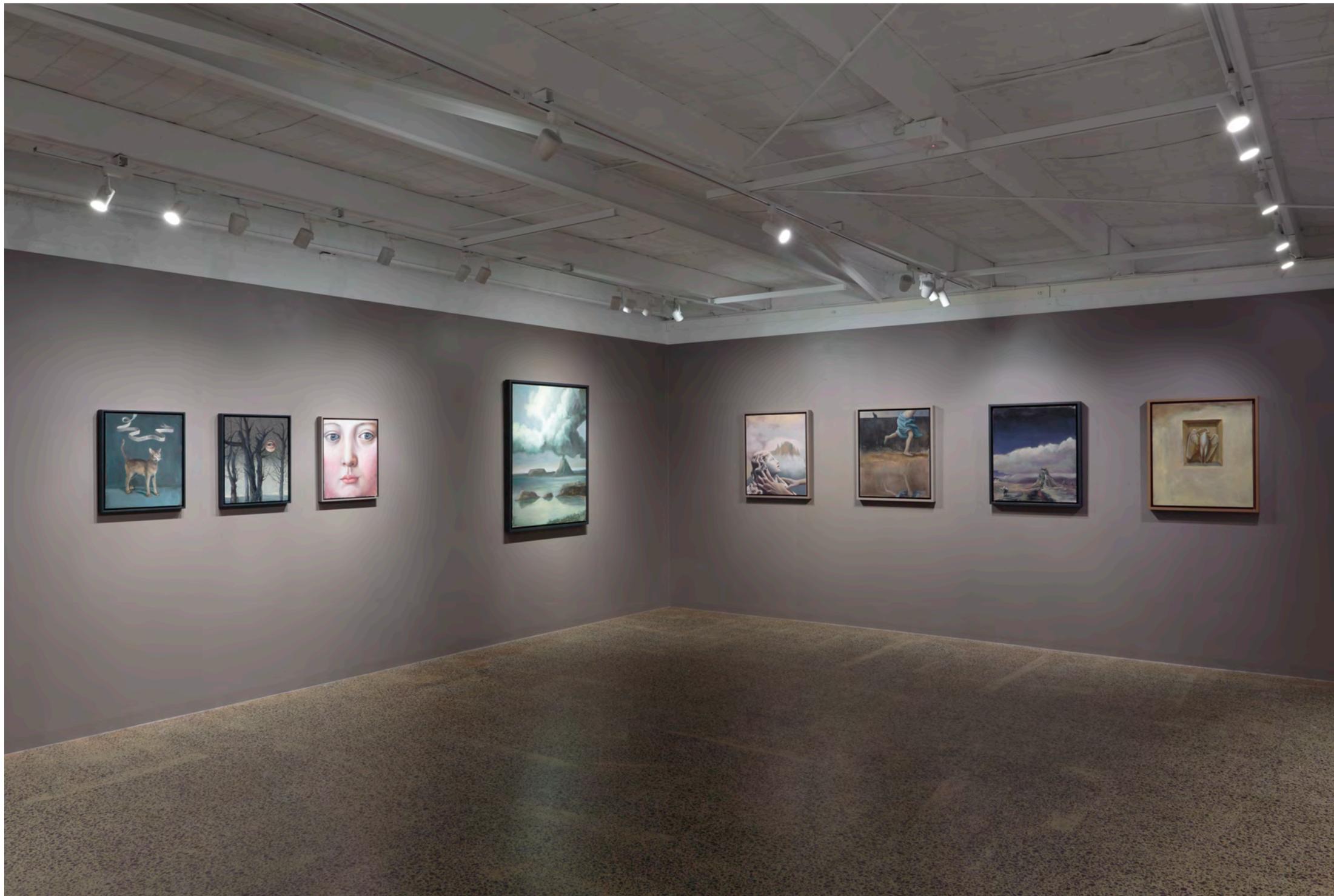














Melbourne based painter Kez Hughes has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from the Victorian College of the Arts, and has held solo exhibitions since 2006 in Melbourne. She has been exhibited in group exhibitions since 2004 in Melbourne, Brisbane, Ballarat and Gippsland and internationally in Sri Lanka at art spaces including Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the Victorian College of the Arts, the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Ballarat Art Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery, Federation University, RMIT School of Art, West Space, TCB and BUS Projects.

Kez Hughes is a recipient of the 2006 Roger Kemp Memorial Award at the Victorian College of the Arts and the 2016 APEX Art Fellowship, New York. She has been a finalist in the 2023 Sir John Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the 2019 and 2017 Arthur Guy Memorial Prize at Bendigo Art Gallery, the 2024 and 2019 Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize at Bayside Art Gallery and the 2009 Williamstown Art Prize.

KEZ HUGHES

EDUCATION

- 2005 Bachelor of Fine Art, Honours, Victorian College of the Arts
2004 Bachelor of Fine Art, Painting, Victorian College of the Arts

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Timelapse*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
2024 *Translations*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
2023 *You Never Got Me Right*, Stockroom Kyneton, Victoria.
2019 *Portraits*, LON Gallery, Collingwood.
2017 *Spaghetti Western*, C3 Abbotsford Convent
2013 *The Full Picture*, Chapter House Lane, Melbourne.
2012 *Best Of*, Westspace Melbourne.
2010 *The Critic Smiles* with David Coles, Rearview, Melbourne.
2009 *Love the way you make art*, BUS Projects Melbourne.
Don't Let Go, Third Drawer Down, Melbourne.
2008 *World Tokenism*, TCB Inc. Melbourne.
2007 *Cover Versions*, Westspace, Melbourne.
2006 *Paintings of Exhibitions I went to*, TCB Inc. Melbourne.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *A Summer Selection*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
Quarantine Art Fair with Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Portsea
2024 *Review 2024*, Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne
Bayside Art Prize, Bayside Gallery, Brighton (finalist)
2023 *Renditions*, Project 8 Gallery, Melbourne.
Sir John Sulman Prize (finalist), Art Gallery of New South Wales
2019 *Collision Drive 3*, Curated by Dr Steven Rendall, Project Space, RMIT School of Art, Carlton
Arthur Guy Memorial Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery
Fidelities, with David Jolly and Sienna van Rossum, Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.
Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize, Bayside Gallery, Sandringham.
Snake Charmer, with Matthew Dettmer and Annika Koops, LON Gallery, Collingwood.
2018 *Still Life Part 1*, Curated by Adam Stone. Irene Rose Gallery Brunswick
2017 *Mirrors II*, with John R Neeson, Glasshouse Lane, Collingwood
Arthur Guy Memorial Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery
On Hubris, Irony and Schadenfreude, LON Gallery, Collingwood.
2016 *Double Agent*, Schoolhouse Studios, Melbourne.
Mirrors 1, with John R Neeson, BUS Projects, Melbourne.

- Caves Offsite*, Switchback Gallery, Federation University, Churchill, Gippsland.
- 2013 *The Knock Off Show*, SLOPES, Fitzroy.
- 2012 *Objectives*, Curated by John R Neeson, Techno Park Studios, Williamstown
- 2011 *Metro Art Award*, Metro Art Gallery, Malvern.
- 2010 *Network*, Ballarat Art Gallery, Victoria.
Club house, DAMP, 6th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery.
- 2009 *Williamstown Art Prize*, The Substation, Newport.
- 2008 *Techno Park*, Opening Exhibition, Williamstown.
- 2006 *Curry Side of the Moon*, Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- 2004 *The Wallara Travelling Scholarship*, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, VCA, Melbourne.

AWARDS

- 2016 APEX ART Fellowship, New York.
- 2006 Roger Kemp Memorial Award. VCA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAHY

- 2025 Josephine Mead 'Kez Hughes: Studio' *Art Guide*, May/June 2024, 76 to 81

Artwork Photographs Tim Gresham
Artist Portrait Jesse Marlow