



Mason Kimber *Oltre la Vista*

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A visit to Mason Kimber's studio is a great experience, full of interesting contrasts and contradictions. The impact of his recent residency in Rome is evident in the work, especially that his time was spent not only with other artists, but architects, archeologists and other academics.

The fresco (as studied in Rome, Naples, and Pompeii) is one of the bridges between architecture and art. Mason Kimber questions the idea of authenticity and what really makes something authentic in these fresco works. Using the layering of objects, colours, frames and shafts of light to draw the viewer into the scene, he leaves the question of whether one has been placed inside or outside. Is one the viewer or being viewed? Although abstract they evoke a spatial quality, one where the architecture is not clearly seen but certainly felt.

Memory is also an important part of these works, not only due to the obvious reference of time, and the physical erosion of the pigments and plaster, but also through information that has been lost as a result. It is interesting to think about how we retain some memories yet forget others, only to remember them again, however not always in exactly the same way they happened. Filling in the gaps becomes a very personal experience and one could argue a creative process – this process certainly helps to take the viewer back in time.

Kimber's drive to discover the past is found both in his exploration of subject and also through his dedication to past techniques. The technical research and testing to achieve the fresco textures using plaster and pigments has been extensive.

In contrast, the works on canvas offer a multi-layer, multi-framed experience. Although they make reference to the frescos and other classical elements, they are clearly contemporary, using blocks of colour in various shapes and textures with great painterly confidence, taking the viewer into the depths of the work. The idea of missing information, evident in the frescos, appears again but this time in the form of entirely missing figurative elements, figures in relief, elements in shadow.

When we last met I questioned Mason on the purpose of art and he told me it was to explore. One could argue this is one of the central purposes of life itself. The title of the show is *Oltre la Vista* (Beyond the View) and it is here that the real exploration of life and art takes place.

Nick Tobias
Founding Principal, Tobias Partners Architects

Mason Kimber's new body of work stems from a fascination with the various styles of spatial illusion depicted in Pompeian fresco paintings during a recent studio residency in Rome. Drawing from architectural schemes and motifs that aimed to suggest an imaginary scene 'oltre la vista' (beyond the view), these works flicker between perspective and surface, interior and exterior space. Using a mixture of fresco panels made from high-calcium lime plaster and pigments, works on canvas and wall-based installation, Kimber's paintings conjure a facade-like entryway to a stage where fragments of half-remembered objects act as visual whispers of a déjà vu.

Mason Kimber received a Masters of Fine Art (Painting) from the National Arts School, Sydney, in 2013. In 2014 he was awarded the National Art School - British School at Rome Residency. In the same year Kimber was a finalist in The Substation Contemporary Art Prize, the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, and the Macquarie Group Emerging Artist Prize, and he received an ArtStart Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts. Kimber has recently been awarded a year-long residency at Parramatta Artist Studios. Past solo exhibitions have been presented at Sydney artist run initiatives Archive and MOP Projects. Oltre la Vista is Kimber's first solo exhibition with Galerie pompom.