



Nana Ohnesorge
MAGICAL MYSTERY
Galerie pompom, Sydney
22 August - 16 September 2018

MAGICAL MYSTERY is a response to two of my favourite Australian movies, *Jedda* (1955) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975). The series of paintings, created over a period of one and a half years, reflects the influence that both of these trail-blazing movies have had on my understanding of Australia.

I was 21 when I saw *Picnic at Hanging Rock* on German television and I was deeply affected by it, not knowing then that I would end up living in Australia. The lasting memory of this film was not of the missing schoolgirls, but of the power, spirituality and mystery of country and its ancestors. Peter Weir's film, and Joan Lindsay's 1967 novel (on which the film was based), both provided inspiration for the series, while research added important insights, such as the Aboriginal significance of the site as a male initiation ground for the local tribes of the Wurundjeri Nation, and the Aboriginal name for the location, Ngannelong.

I first saw *Jedda* a few years ago on NITV, and I was mesmerised by the beauty of the Indigenous lead characters, their sizzling on-screen chemistry and their dramatic and haunting story. Written and directed by Elsa and Charles Chauvel, *Jedda* was the first ever Australian feature film in colour, showcasing for the first time Indigenous lead characters played by (untrained) Indigenous actors Ngarla Kunoth (now known as Rosalie Kunoth-Monks) and Robert Tudawali, who shine bright as world class movie stars with their beauty, natural grace and powerful performances. While the movie is correctly criticised for racist overtones in its marketing and sloppy dubbing of Indigenous language, the lasting impression is the powerful stand against assimilation, which was government policy in 1955. *Jedda's* suffering as a result of being kept away from her own culture and people, and the haunting and ultimately fatal love story between *Jedda* and *Marbuck*, were the inspiration behind these paintings.

Nana Ohnesorge completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours (First Class) from the National Art School, Sydney, in 2006, and was awarded a Paris Studio Residency and the Reg Richardson Travel Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement. Ohnesorge has been the recipient of major art prizes and residencies, and has been a finalist in the Blake Prize, the Jacaranda Drawing Award, the Kedumba Drawing Prize, Portia Geach Memorial Award and the Sulman Prize (four-time finalist). In 2014 Ohnesorge presented a solo exhibition at Griffith Regional Gallery, following an extensive portraiture project she conducted with the Aboriginal community in Griffith, in south-western New South Wales. Past group exhibitions include *Romancing the Skull*, at Art Gallery of Ballarat; *Interiors/ Exteriors*, at Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, Sydney; and *Revealed 1*, curated by Erica Green, Samstag Museum Adelaide. Ohnesorge's works are held in the collections of Artbank, Sydney Town Hall and Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council. *MAGICAL MYSTERY* is her fourth solo exhibition at Galerie pompom.