



Paul Maher, *Beam, span and truss*, 2017, digital print on paper, 119 x 84 cm

INTRODUCTION

CONSALVO | LANKAS | MAHER builds on the 2016 exhibition of the same name at the Depot Gallery in Sydney, which profiled the work of Newcastle-based artists, Dino Consalvo, Peter Lankas and Paul Maher. Recontextualized for the University Gallery, this exhibition includes new works from the artists' studios, highlighting the evolving nature of practice. This has been a unique opportunity for Consalvo, Lankas and Maher to delve deeper into their subject matter, and build on the processes and material developments that emerged from exhibiting together. While the landscape features in all the artists' work, their unique approaches have strengthened over time, clearly differentiating the focus of each body-of-work.

After the Sydney exhibition, **Dino Consalvo** returned to painting 'en plein air' at Merewether Ocean Baths. This time, summer had arrived, filling the once empty pool with dark muddy waters. Consalvo pushed harder with these paintings, stripping down compositional elements and reducing the colour palette. **Peter Lankas** has long applied his mastery of colour and form to his painterly explorations of the suburban landscape. A prolific image-maker, some of the new works in this exhibition are older compositions that have been revisited and enlarged – like photographs of favourite moments unearthed and reconsidered. For **Paul Maher**, the Newcastle coastline is a sustained source of inspiration. He is fascinated by its topography, its public spaces and its people. For this exhibition, Maher has revisited the Bar Beach viewpoint, applying his idiosyncratic flattened perspective to the landscape – and this approach allows his works to fully exploit the graphic elements of the urban landscape.

Ahn Wells, Gallery 139, 2017



Peter Lankas, *Orica Tree*, 2013, oil, pigment, egg white on linen, 36 x



GALLERY
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Photographic portraits by James Murphy



Dino Consalvo, *Full Pool #1*, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 140 cm

CONSALVO | LANKAS | MAHER

Dino Consalvo

Dino Consalvo is known for his figurative *'en plein air'* paintings of landscapes, cityscapes and people. He creates evocative, sweeping images that depict well-known Newcastle vistas such as Merewether beach, as well as more intimate images of suburban life. Consalvo's most recent body-of-work has taken a more abstract turn, with paintings that depict cropped views of the Merewether Ocean Baths. These new images are highly-focused, investigating line, form and surface texture. Rendered in a reduced colour palette, they play with monochromality and subtle contrasts in light and shadow. Consalvo was drawn to the starkness of the pool edges and knew that this intriguing subject matter required a new approach, 'Faced with the affect of artificial light on close, wet and dry surfaces, I began to explore the possibilities within the subject. Zooming in and focussing on sections of the pool highlighted compositional elements, surface treatment and reduced my colour palette.' Consalvo began this project in winter, when the pool was empty or near empty. Now the pool is full and he has found himself absorbed in the reflections of the water and its transparency against the hard surface of the pool wall. Together, these works create a dialogue around a single subject, across a variety of extremes.



Dino Consalvo, Empty Pool #1, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 140 cm



Dino Consalvo has been an exhibiting artist since the early 1970s. He studied Fine Art at Alexander Mackie in Sydney, and received a Diploma of Fine Art from Caulfield Institute of Technology in 1981. In 2014 he was included in the Salon des Refusés - NSW Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize. He was a finalist in both the Gosford Prize and the Mosman Art Prize in 2015. Consalvo's work is held in the Artbank Collection as well as private collections in Australia, USA, Italy, Germany and Thailand.



Peter Lankas, Skateboard Romance, 2016, pigment, oil, egg white on board, 40 x 50 cm

Peter Lankas' practice focusses on life's 'fleeting moments'. His impressionistic paintings encapsulate the mood of an instant, the movement in a scene, or the unique quality of light. Lankas has developed a consistent *'en plein air'* practice and he mostly works in one session - *'alla prima'*. This approach to painting allows his compositions to stay as close to the original impression as possible, and shifts the focus towards feeling rather than detail.

For the last five years, Lankas has been preoccupied with the medium of paint. He has researched and experimented with chemical-free and solvent-free oil paints, glazes and varnishes. All the materials used on his canvasses are produced in the studio, allowing Lankas to be fully in charge of the alchemical nature of painting.

The works in this exhibition are illustrative of Lankas' mutable approach to composition. Each painting is treated as a new entity, as he draws on forty years of practice when selecting a stylistic approach, 'I revisit periods of creative and stylistic exploration and apply it to new work. I do not stay within a designated area for too long.' In this group of works, there are heavily impressionistic scenes of local nightlife, as well as more stark images depicting street scenes mapped out with abstract blocks of colour. What remains consistent is the subject matter – a celebration of suburban milieu, the ordinary, everyday events of life.

Peter Lankas



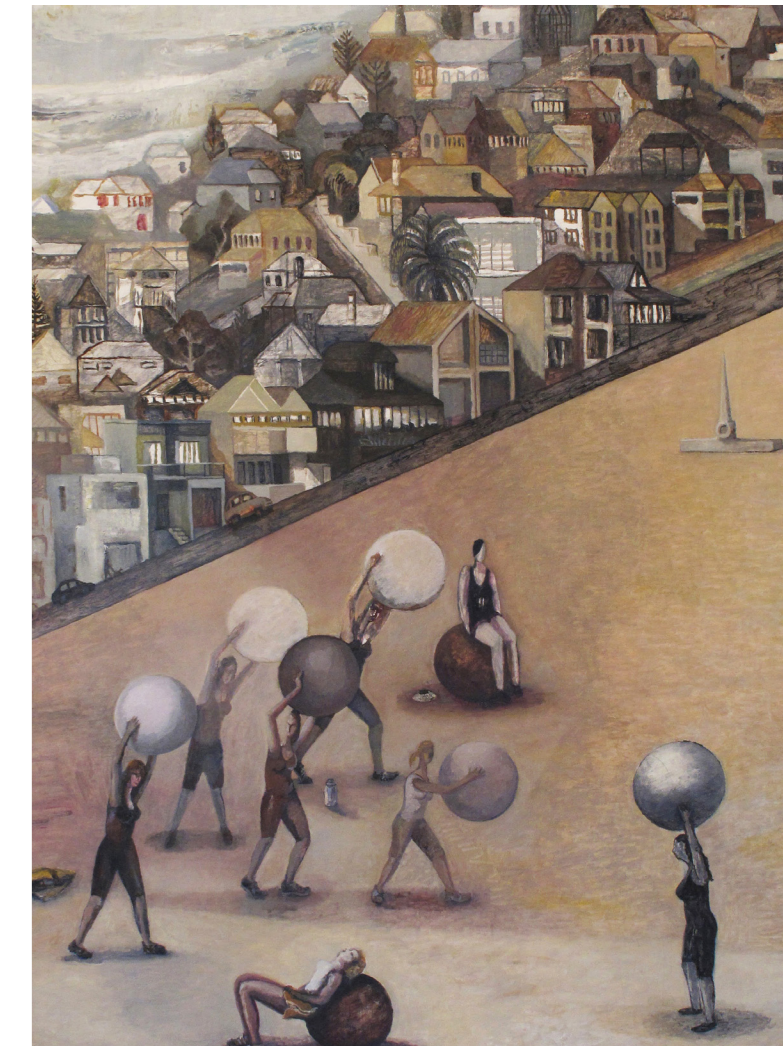
Peter Lankas is a Newcastle-based artist and painting teacher. He received a Diploma in Visual Art from Alexander Mackie CAE in 1980 and a Masters in Fine Art (Painting) from the University of Newcastle in 2005. He has been a dedicated teacher of painting and drawing for over 20 years, and currently teaches at Newcastle Art School, Hunter TAFE, and runs private classes at Newcastle Community Arts Centre. Lankas began exhibiting in 1982, and has been a finalist in numerous art prizes, including the 2016 Calleen Art Award for painting.

Paul Maher's practice gravitates towards the edges – where the built environment meets open space. He is known for richly detailed compositions that depict suburban Newcastle – often from an elevated, or flattened perspective. Street pattern, underlying geology and evolving architectural form are recurring features in Maher's imagery. His works respond to Newcastle's coastal setting, yet the ocean and coastline are rarely depicted. Rather, Maher is conceptually engaged in how public space is used within the coastal suburban environment.

Maher responds to the local suburban environment through the immediacy of drawing, bringing a sketchbook or iPad to the street and responding 'in-situ'. Returning to the studio, the drawings are pieced together and carefully mapped onto canvas. The process allows for a great deal of freedom as factual detail gives way to narrative, 'the process of translating my in-situ drawings into paintings leads me to invent, speculate and investigate, compositional scenarios. Colour palettes are not constrained by representation, but instead are built up in passages and grouped for harmony and discord. The paint surface is the liminal skin holding it all together, rubbing up against the viewer's scrutiny.'



Paul Maher is a Newcastle-based artist and urban designer. He graduated from the University of Newcastle with a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) in 1984 and Post-Graduate Diploma in Painting in 1985. Maher has exhibited regularly since the late 1980s, including a solo exhibition in Paris in 1999. He has completed several large-scale public commissions in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie that commemorated the 1989 Newcastle Earthquake. In 2015 Maher was a finalist in the Kilgour Art Prize and in 2016 he was finalist in the Redland Art Awards.



Paul Maher, Swiss ball class, 2016, oil on canvas, 170 x 129 cm