



ERASURE

MAZIE KAREN TURNER | DAN NELSON | ANNEMARIE MURLAND | KATRINA HOLDEN

MAZIE KAREN TURNER

In Mazie Turner's compelling abstract paintings the process of overlaying paint through the application of numerous veils of translucent pigment can also be seen as a form of erasure. Paint appears to be wiped across the surface of the paintings or rubbed away, emphasising the energy and vibration between colours. This process gives the paintings an otherworldly quality that underlines her concern with the visual perception of colour and her "lifelong spiritual search for the unknowable". In her explorations of the alchemy of paint and the painted surface, Turner questions what is physically see-able in terms of movement and

light, and explores the capacity of the human mind to capture and feel what is not.

Mazie Turner was a Newcastle based artist whose later works were principally concerned with colour, light and expressing spiritual dimensions of experience. She completed undergraduate studies at the South Australian School of Art and gained a Masters of Art from Western Sydney University (1998) and a PhD in Fine Art from the University of Newcastle (2008), and also studied at the Charlie Shead Studio School in Sydney. Her works are held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery

of NSW, the National Gallery of Victoria, and Newcastle Art Gallery, among others. Her art practice across forty five years was celebrated in a major retrospective at Newcastle Regional Gallery in 2017 titled *Between Dream and Earth* (catalogue published). She also held solo exhibitions with Sarah Roney Gallery, Sydney (2008) and with Damien Minton Gallery, Newcastle (2004) and Sydney (2013); and was included in many group exhibitions across three decades in Australia as well as in Poland, France and England. After moving to Newcastle with her family in 1989, Turner taught art at both Newcastle Art School and at the University of Newcastle.



Mazie Karen Turner, *Out of Darkness - Violet Cloud* 2009, oil on linen, 152.5 x 183 cm

Donated by the artist to the University of Newcastle Collection through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

DAN NELSON

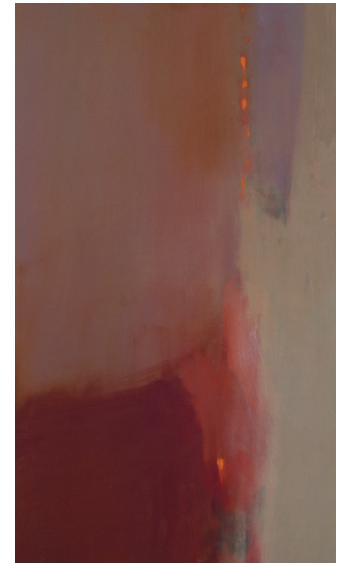
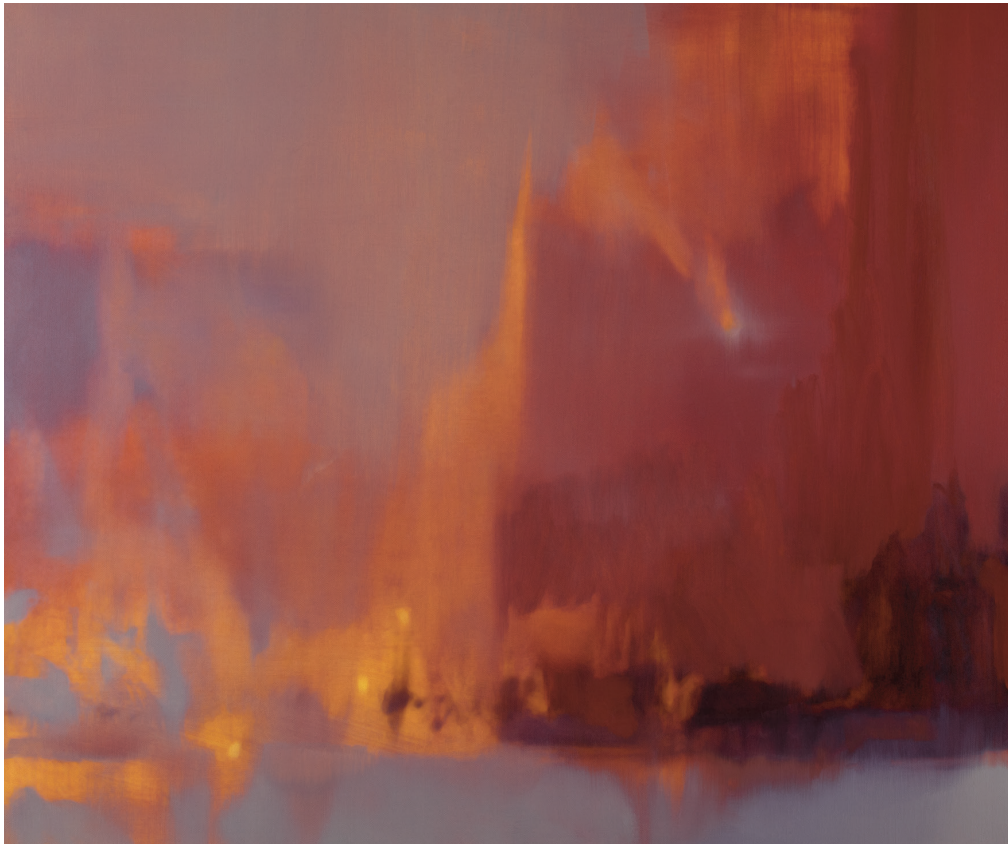
Dan Nelson's dramatic and luminous paintings use erasure to draw our attention to the destructive impacts of climate change. Although the works are abstracted through mutative processes that draw on her experience as a printmaker, a number of them evoke bushfires and the extremes of temperature.

Pieced together in cinematic sequences, the paintings bear subtractive marks made with a cloth or finger dragged across the canvas. The trail of a fire and human gesture of wiping out a line in paint become one. Her brush sweeps the surface like an erosive

wind, reminiscent of Richter's squeegee, while rubbed back areas create dreamy ambiguities, evoking landforms that dissolve into sunlight and water, or hazy maps, suggesting shifting and uncharted territories.

Dan Nelson is a painter who works between a rural property at the foothills of the Barrington World Heritage Area and her home in Newcastle. Her abstract paintings draw on the Australian landscape. She has a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Printmaking) from the University of Newcastle (1994) and has studied painting under Paul Milburn, Mazie Turner and Peter Lankas. Her recent

exhibitions include, *Land*, Project Gallery 90, Sydney (2018); *Resident Creatives*, Newcastle Art Space (2018); *Another Skin*, ASW, Newcastle (2018); *Three*, Gallery 139, Newcastle (2017) and *Feeling the Moon*, ASW, Newcastle (2016).



Dan Nelson, (left)
Temperature, 2019, oil
on linen

(above) panel from *Fire
path* series, 2019, oil
on linen

(cover) *impermanence*,
2019, oil on linen

ANNEMARIE MURLAND

Approaching erasure as a productive form of destruction, Annemarie Murland's works take the idea as a cue for engaging with the tactile properties of materials. Crossing the boundaries between drawing, painting and sculpture, a number of her works look like scrunched up pieces of paper. This conjures the idea of erasure in terms of thoughts jotted down on paper only to be later discarded. Everyday matter, such as beeswax and fabric are explored alongside traditional art materials, including chalk, pigment and paint, expanding the limits of what painting and sculpture can be. The immersive scale of some of the works underlines Murland's interest in physical experience as a way

of understanding the world around us. These works are simultaneously fragile and monumental. In her practice, the process of making is pushed to the fore, an intimate conversation that Murland conducts with her materials.

Annemarie Murland is an artist who works across a range of mediums to investigate the tactile properties of materials and our relationship to the sensory world. She has a BA (2005) and PhD (2009) in Fine Art which she completed at The University of Newcastle. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Her recent exhibitions include, *Herland: In Search of a*

Female Utopia, at Sydney Women's Library, Sydney (2019); *Sydney Contemporary: Paper Contemporary*, at Carriageworks, Sydney (2018); *Stories of Origin*, at Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow (2016); and *Just Paper: The Piano Has Been Drinking [Not Me]*, at Maitland Regional Gallery, NSW (2015). She has undertaken residencies at Box Hill Art Centre, Melbourne, Rankin Park Hospital, Newcastle and Mater Hospice, Newcastle. She was a finalist in the Muswellbrook Art Prize for Painting, 2019. She currently coordinates the Visual Arts, Foundation Studies course at the University of Newcastle.



Annemarie Murland, (left)
Erasure I, 2019, Mixed Media,
including, Beeswax and
Graphite on Khozo Paper &
Muslin, 60 x 60cm

(above) *Erasure II*, 2019, Mixed
Media, including, Beeswax and
Graphite on Khozo Paper &
Muslin, 60 x 60cm

KATRINA HOLDEN

From the Hunter Valley, NSW, Katrina Holden finds the local landscape informs her work in the context of mnemonic references archived throughout her childhood and now translated onto canvas. She is particularly interested in the application of paint and expressive mark making for its ability to capture the feeling of the landscape rather than creating an exact representation of it, and is currently working on her honours thesis *Expanded Thinking: Painting through displacement*.

Her expressive landscape paintings engage with erasure through their process. She rubs back and wipes away elements of the works until they are finally resolved. Paint

is wiped across the surface of the canvas in broad swathes and also left to dribble down the canvas in thin furrows. This wiping away creates a soft, muted atmospheric effect which links the individual works. Another thread that runs through her work, as well as in the broader exhibition, is one through which erasure is related to the landscape and broader environmental issues.

Katrina Holden completed her Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) at the University of Newcastle in 2017 after spending a month in Rome at the Institute of European Design.



Katrina Holden (left)
Kinship, 2019, acrylic on
canvas, 40 x 51cm

(above) *Fault lines*,
2019, Acrylic, pencil and
graphite on Tyvek

The artistic device of erasure and effacement has long been used as a tool not only to explore the language of art and words, but also to question the status of the art object, and shed light on the social and political meanings of erasure. Arguably, the inaugural and perhaps most famous work of erasure in art is Robert Rauschenberg's 1953 work, *Erased De Kooning Drawing*. Rauschenberg persuaded the acclaimed artist Willem de Kooning to give him one of his drawings for the purpose of creating a new work by erasing it. He then set out to create a work entirely through erasure. It supposedly took a month and about forty erasers to get the original sheet relatively clear. Initially, Rauschenberg had tried erasing one of his own drawings but had decided that in order for the work to be successful, he would have to start with an artwork that was undeniably significant. The finished work, a cream coloured piece of paper with only a few residual marks, was famously described by Jasper Johns as 'additive subtraction'. While conceptual in its approach, it undeniably attests to the power of absence – of what has been removed, lost, unmade.

Since Rauschenberg's influential work, many artists, writers and musicians have adopted erasure to achieve a range of effects. In the 1960s in New York, Doris Cross began painting over dictionary pages. In London at around the same time, Tom Phillips started a work called *A Humument*, in which he partially obliterated and altered every page of the obscure Victorian novel, *A Human Document*. The Austrian artist, composer and concrete poet Gerhard Rühm also

began to rework texts taken from books, brochures and newspapers by crossing out parts of sentences, so that only certain terms remained visible. Since the 1960s the German painter Gerhard Richter has repeatedly used a combination of mark making and erasure in his abstract works, simultaneously revealing and obscuring his subjects. American artist Christopher Wool began wiping away his compositions in the early 2000s, alternating the act of drawing and erasing, acting as a constant interplay or argument with himself.

In contemporary art practice, erasure is still the language of disruptions and destructions, and a powerful tool in the process of abstraction. *Erasure* at the University Gallery in Newcastle brings together four female artists whose abstractions engage erasure as both a concept, and as a physical act in the making of their works: Katrina Holden, Annemarie Murland, Dan Nelson and Mazie Turner.

In order for so many of these acts of erasure to take place, there must be something first to erase. Whether it is a question of excision, rubbing out, writing-over or crossing out, there must always be some pre-existing mark for the artist/eraser to engage with. One consequence of this is that works that employ erasure as a technique or method also frequently create a dialogue between the present and the past, whether this is a dialogue with a work of art or another form of cultural artefact. In many artworks, the object that is being erased is often not created by the person doing the

erasing. And when it is, it is often an act of questioning, of reconsidering what can be created, and a disruption of the meanings that pertain to objects while also creating new meanings.

For all its kinship with iconoclasm, destruction and critique, erasure is not simply an act of negation; to erase something doesn't make it disappear. Even the most radical form of erasure is in the end a form of re-writing. The obliterated content of the original piece leaves a remainder that can never be entirely wiped out. Fragments of meaning inevitably leak through, in a more or less explicit manner. As Brian Dillon states in his text, *The Revelation of Erasure*:

"Erasure is never merely a matter of making things disappear: there is always some detritus strewn about in the aftermath, some bruising to the surface from which word or image has been removed, some reminder of the violence done to make the world look new again. Whether rubbed away, crossed out or reinscribed, the rejected entity has a habit of returning, ghostlike: if only in the marks that usurp its place and attest to its passing."

Brian Dillon, *The Revelation of Erasure*, Tate Etc., accessed June 22, 2019
<https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/revelation-erasure>