



*Return* 2011 mixed media on board 36 x 56cm



*A small gathering* 2011 mixed media on board 92 x 183cm



*Slip* 2011 mixed media on board 61 x 92cm

*Cover: Deeper the blue* 2011 mixed media on board 92 x 183cm

BELINDA FOX

Deeper the Blue

30 August—1 October 2011

Please join the artist for opening drinks on  
Tuesday 6 September from 6pm.

Director: William Nuttall



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BELINDA FOX  
Deeper the Blue





*You are not a tree  
nor a you a plant.  
Who let you shoot up so straight?  
What makes you empty within?  
You are green in all seasons  
welcome, my friend  
(Songs of five friends Yun Sondo 1587 – 1671 )'*

The last work I saw of Belinda Fox's was amongst a group of works which, if you wanted to put things into 'silos', could be considered 'the decorative arts'.

I could see the reasoning behind this. The most obvious is Fox's nature, her bowerbird way of making images by picking things up from a variety of sources. From textiles, in particular the 'war rugs' or cloths picked up through her travels in China and Tibet, there is a crosshatched semaphore way of creating patterns, mark by mark, as akin to stitching as to drawing. Also to the way she uses what sometimes looks like simple primitive metal work – trees, tanks and helicopters – looking like shapes cut from tin.

Recent works in ceramic turn the medium-based approach back in on itself. It doesn't just borrow from a craft tradition but instead uses that tradition in a direct way. Intuitively Fox understood that the ceramics could be suited to the direction she wanted to go and the kind of work she wanted to make. It's important to listen to those hunches. They are instinctive records of reaction to the processes of making itself.

*Bamboo stick, the sight of you  
Fills me with trust and delight.  
Ah, boyhood days when you were my horse!  
Stand there now  
behind the window, and when we go out,  
let me stand behind you.  
(Kim Kwanguk 1850 – 1656)*

Belinda Fox is an artist who we have come to know through her printmaking and it is through understanding printmaking processes that we can gain a better understanding of her current works. Printmaking most importantly is technique driven. This is both its strength and its failing – for an artist like Fox the challenge is always to break down its predictability whilst heightening its potentiality. To paradoxically fall back on printmaking's discipline whilst loosening it up.

Fox's new works change tack again dodging into another area. Watercolour is unforgiving, drying fast it is a delicate medium that can expose the artists abilities. It impregnates the surface support, usually paper, literally inviting error. But by using watercolour on board, images hovers above the picture plane rather than settling into it, setting in motion a conversation about the resistance between the fluidity of the medium and its rigid support.

<sup>1</sup> Peter H. Lee The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Korean Poetry Columbia University Press New York 2002  
The poems in this essay are Korean poems in the Sijo manner. Sijo is a three line lyric poem that when translated into English becomes 6 lines. It is part of an oral tradition and was only put into written form in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The poems when performed could be changed depending on context creating variations within a theme.

Hiatus III 2011 mixed media on board 140 x 120cm



Hiatus IV 2011 mixed media on board 140 x 120cm

Fox works within this space – between the hard and soft. The mad scramble between losing control and keeping it, realism and abstraction. The uncomfortable air between one form and another, moving to a new process and not being sure of what it can do. These problems, which come out of the difficulty of mastering new mediums, are strengths not weaknesses. It keeps the studio as experimental site. This interest in process, in discovering new things, in following a hunch, lie at the heart of Fox's practice.

*Do not grieve, little birds,  
over the falling blossoms:  
They're not to blame, it's the wind  
who loosens and scatters the petals.  
Spring persists in leaving you,  
don't hold it against her.  
(Song Sun – 1493 -1583)*

The alchemical nature of mixing motif, images and form is mirrored by the nature of the materials itself – watercolour, encaustic and ceramic are nothing if not alchemical. They use base materials to create objects of beauty and permanency as if by magic. They are also things that respond to the senses, that need to be touched and smelt.

This sense of alchemy could explain why many of the images that Fox uses are of things in a state of transformation – a budding lotus, a flowering branch, birds in flight. Or images of moving – paper planes, boats or people seeming to be dreaming themselves into being. The web motif that Fox has used in the work in this exhibition relates to an earlier body of work that Fox had undertaken as a student, and the image itself is based upon a drawing of a motor bike – again a transformation, again a motif of travelling.

*The men of old never saw me  
I never saw the men of old.  
Though I never saw the men of old,  
The paths they trod still stretch ahead.  
If the paths they trod still stretch ahead,  
Should I not tread on them too?  
(No. 9 from the Twelve Songs of Tosan Yi Hwang 1501 - 1571)*

If you are interested in putting art in to silos there are a few that matter. Most have nothing to do with what something is made of. They are more about the artist's intent, their honesty, their ambition for their work and their discipline. Making beautiful, challenging and interesting work flows from these things.

And add to this the most important aspect of all – ceaseless investigation.

If you let these qualities speak, like Fox has, everything else should follow.

Glenn Barkley  
Sydney, 2011



Transit 2011 mixed media on board 36 x 56cm



Flow 2011 watercolour on board 31 x 45cm