

The Golden Mile

Dale Harding

5 April - 18 May 2019



Dale Harding (with Jordan Upkett), *The Golden Mile*, 2019, dry pigments, gravila robusta gum, acrylic on linen, installation view at Gertrude Contemporary.

The Golden Mile is Dale Harding's first solo exhibition in Melbourne, and expands upon a central mode of practice developed over recent years by the artist, working with members of family and connecting to and embedding an ancestral lineage in his storytelling. Working within a reductionist palette of yellow ochre colours using dry pigments mixed with natural binders, Harding and familial collaborators have worked on a series of canvases in Brisbane where the artist is based. In this form the works have been transported to Melbourne and sequentially installed upon the gallery walls. Thereafter, all discernible images are obliterated, culminating in the eradication of the works utilising the white paint of the gallery. Through this, the paintings remain merely as a trace of the performative enactment of their erasure, as if to be residual rectangular stencils of an act unseen. Repositioned in the gallery as now whitewashed paintings, these erased works remain as echoes of an act that is not one of violence or censor, but rather, a respectful acknowledgement of the artist presenting work in a place, on country, that he does not have direct connection to.



Dale Harding (with Jordan Upkett), *The Golden Mile* (detail), 2019, dry pigments, gravila robusta gum, acrylic on linen.

Dale Harding (Bidjara, Ghungalu and Garingbal peoples, Central Queensland) lives and works in Brisbane. Selected recent solo exhibitions include *Current Iterations*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2019); *The Drive Home*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2018); *To cast a bright shadow*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2017); *I refuse you my death*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2016); *White Collared*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2015); and *Colour by Number*, Metro Arts, Brisbane (2012). Selected recent group exhibitions include *Soon enough: art in action*, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2018); *Beautiful world, where are you?*, 2018 Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, Liverpool; *From Will to Form: 2018 TarraWarra Biennial*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville; *Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2017); *dOCUMENTA (14)*, Athens and Kassel (2017); *The National: New Australian Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2017); *11th Gwangju Biennale*, Republic of Korea (2016); and *Ua numi le fau*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne (2016).

Dale Harding is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

VISUAL ARTS 7 - 10

Explore and Express

Levels 7 - 8 (VCAVAE034)

Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in art works

Levels 9 - 10 (VCAVAE041)

Explore how artists manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and express their intentions in art works

Respond and Interpret

Levels 7 - 8 (VCAVAR038)

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in art works and how they are viewed by audiences

Levels 7 - 8 (VCAVAR039)

Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Levels 9 - 10 (VCAVAR045)

Analyse and interpret artworks to explore the different forms of expression, intentions and viewpoints of artists and how they are viewed by audiences

Levels 9 - 10 (VCAVAR046)

Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints

VISUAL ARTS 7 - 10

Question

What do you see? Describe it.

Why has the artist erased his work?

What remnants of the artworks previous manifestations can you see?

Suggestion

As you move around the exhibition think about and discuss how Harding has used specific materials, techniques and processes to visually express his ideas. Also think about and discuss the historical and cultural context in which the artist is working.

Activity

An exercise in looking and describing

Your teacher or art gallery facilitator has a stop watch and is going to time out three minutes. In this time your task is to simply look at Dale Harding's artwork. As you look think about what words you would use to describe what you see.

At the end of the three minutes write or draw at least ten words or images that you thought of during this time. Share what you have written with a partner or a group.

Back at school choose one of these words or images and use it to create a journal entry, poem, mind map or drawing.

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VCE STUDIO ARTS

VCE Studio Art

Unit 3.3 Artists and Studio Practices:

In this area of study students focus on professional studio practices in relation to particular art forms. Students investigate the ways in which artists have interpreted subject matter, influences, historical and cultural contexts, and communicated ideas and meaning in their artworks.

VCE Art

Unit 2.1 Contemporary Artworks and Culture:

In this area of study students focus on the ways in which art reflects and communicates the values, beliefs and traditions of the societies for and in which it was created. Particular emphasis is placed on the influence of contemporary materials, techniques, ideas and approaches to making and presenting artworks.

VCE STUDIO ARTS

Question

Describe what you see, thinking about how the artist has altered, manipulated and transformed materials and the exhibition space.

What has Harding erased in his work?

How has he erased the work? What is the significance of this act?

Why do you think he has done this?

Suggestion

As you wander around the exhibition, consider the evolution of the artworks you are encountering. Develop a narrative (story) that details the artist's acts of erasure. Use the exhibition space and the artworks as visual cues, and think about how the works were made, where they came from, how they got to the gallery, how they changed in the gallery space and what the marks on the wall might represent.

Activity

Central to Harding's practice is his deep connection with the experiences and histories of his family and culture. One perceptible expression of this, is his understanding of the 'embodiment of these histories as contained within the materials and gestures he incorporates into his artmaking.'

In this activity you are going to consider how connections to people, places and times manifest in your own life and art making practices. Also consider how and why artists use materials as a kind of language within which to communicate with those encountering their work.

Choose a material (it can be any material) that holds some personal significance to you. How does this material connect you to a time, place or person? How does this material create meaning for you? How does this material embody your thoughts? Once you have considered these questions use this material to create a small artwork. Share your work with your classmates and discuss the significance of the material.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Entropy – A state of disorder or randomness

Rejuvenation – Energising, bringing renewed life

Embodiment – To represent or express something in a visible form

Country – Here refers to the land of a particular Indigenous nation, which has distinct cultural relevance

Landscape – The visible features of an area of land

Reductionist – Considering complex subject matter in a simplified way by breaking it down into its most basic parts

Discernible – Recognisable, visible

Obliterated – Destroyed completely, with no traces remaining

Culminating – Reaching a final or decisive point

Eradication – To remove or destroy completely

RESOURCES

Gertrude Contemporary: <http://www.gertrude.org.au/exhibitions/>

Milani Gallery: <http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/dale-harding?do=cv>

Institute of Modern Art: <https://ima.org.au/exhibitions/dale-harding-current-iterations/>

Museum of Contemporary Art: <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/artists/dale-harding/>

Art Guide: <https://artguide.com.au/dale-harding-discusses-his-incredible-year>

Queensland Art Gallery Of Modern Art: <https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/tag/dale-harding/>