

iconic Mountains

PHIL RYAN

“Iconic Mountains” A new exhibition of paintings by Phil Ryan at Sawmill Gallery, Canberra

An exhibition of new work from landscape artist Phil Ryan exploring the living elements of three mountains of south-eastern Australia is opening at Sawmill Gallery, Canberra, on Saturday 27 August. The exhibition, “Iconic Mountains” presents the viewer with an intimate perspective of the three mountains, Gulaga, Mumbulla and Macedon.

All three mountains are iconic to their area. Gulaga and Mumbulla of southern NSW are both notable sacred sites for the Yuin people and are distinctive features of the southern coastal landscape. Mount Macedon in Victoria, an idyllic retreat for Melbourne's wealthy folk, is also the site of a war memorial and shares the literary mystique of the nearby Hanging Rock.

Discarding the traditional panoramic approach to landscape painting, Phil Ryan has chosen to focus on specific aspects of these mountain environments the rocks and the trees.

“The rocks form the skeleton of any mountain,” says Phil. “If you understand the rocks, you understand the mountain's distinctive landscape, the things that make it unique. In a similar way, the trees become the mountain's major life form, its living skin.”

“While traditional panoramic representations of mountains can be spectacular, they lack the intimacy, the interactivity that I wanted to portray with this series.”

Phil uses acrylic paints in a distinctive colourful, thick, textured style. Successive layers applied by palette knife produce an uneven, rough surface of various colours. The roughness of each layer affects where the next layer will adhere, producing a final seemingly chaotic strata of partial colour layers that recombine to produce an arresting effect.

This is Phil's first exhibition since leaving Canberra earlier this year to establish a studio at Kunama, south of Batlow, NSW. From this base, Phil plans to concentrate on the subalpine landscapes of NSW and Victoria for future work.

“Iconic Mountains” runs from Saturday 27 August to Saturday 24 September at Sawmill Gallery, Geelong Street, Fyshwick, Canberra.
