

JACKSON FARLEY

February 2022



Jackson Farley, 2022

I guess this feeling was the inspo for the show – after a few years of editing and re-jigging concepts/finished works, it was a nice feeling to just draw a fuckin hill and call it a day. So, I went and got a studio (the first time ever) to pursue this newfound form of artistry. I decided I would become a painter + I went to the art store (somewhere where I never go) and stocked up on Canvas' + paints. I entered my studio wide eyed and ready to accept this new fate. But there was only one problem. I'm a fuckin shit painter omg they were so bad. Lockdown blues came back, and it was all a bit cooked... I was in the studio staring at my shit paintings (one was actually not so bad and is above my bed now) and I felt my lil self-care pencils calling out to me - jackson... redefine the art cannon with subversive self-care pencil paintings made with your subversive self-care pencil pack. Obviously, this was too big of a burden to accept so instead I just decided to draw some very nice drawings.

Jackson Farley is a multidisciplinary artist living and working on unceded Gadigal land. His practice intertwines narrative and humour to point out the absurdities and pointlessness of fine art definitions and power structures. Using digital media, biro pens and 'self-care' pencils, Farley's work is as sentimental as it is a parody, pondering naively on categories of art, material, and painting process.

Jackson completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts with First Class Honours at the Sydney College of the Arts in 2017 and was awarded the University Awards for Drawing and Printmedia. He has also studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, USA and was awarded the China Cultural Centre residency in Chengdu, China in 2017. In 2019, he was selected as a finalist in the Fauvette Loureiro Memorial Artists Travel Scholarship Exhibition and in 2018, was selected for the Blake Prize, The Churchie and for Hatched.

Stanley Street gallery

Jackson Farley

my very first painting show ever

9 March – 9 April 2022

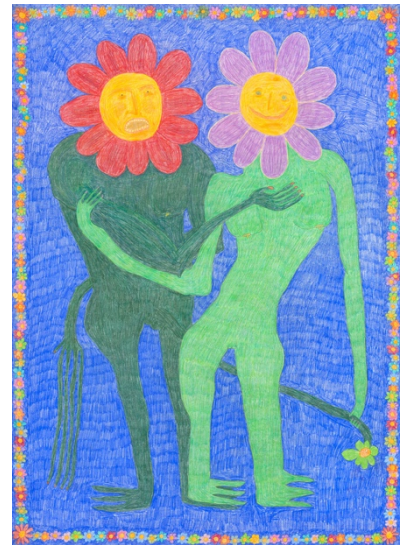


I

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who wanted to change the art cannon forever with his conceptually driven disruptive works calling into question absurd social hierarchies + other annoying shit. That turned out to be quite the task and maybe too much of an effort, so the little boy made the very difficult decision to put down his concept pocketbook and instead become... a painter (sorry @everyone).

II

Twice down on a clock, this newfound mode of working caused many blisses and of course much euphoria for the little boy. A separation from the weight of weighted art things, a departure from the separation of said weighted art things, a bye bye now! see you! from the other tough things related but not directly pertaining to artist(ry). Finally... a full Carte Blanche-tte over creativity, a retaking of discretionary autonomy - the little boy will no longer make critical penis art. Say it with me. The little boy will no longer make critical penis art - the mantra the world has been craving.



III

3's! 3's! 3's! next to the timeline, the little boy finally had found art nirvana. Art heaven, with the likes of [famous painters name] and of course world famous [famous painters name] by his side. Complete autonomy to pick up a paint brush and join the league of world changers who change the world via the flick o' they wrist. He stared at his blank canvas, endless opportunities to make our world a better place. He could already see the title of the 7 Australian Story's they would do on him (1 for each time he decided to paint a different world changing thing)

Stanley Street gallery

IV

Fourplay Fantasy, he lifted his weighted brush (with paint, not history) to his Canvas. A mark made; a problem solved. A problem solved, another Australian Story producer on the line. He stepped back to admire his masterbat... sorry masterstroke (can take the critical penis art of the little boy but not the little boy out of the critical penis art) and turns out he is quite a shit, awful painter. It was very bad - not in a nice, koo-koo-2021-kaa-kaa i'm a bad painter on a porpoise (purpose) way but in a very bad, oh that boy isn't very good at painting and is clearly going through something... maybe he didn't fair too well during lockdown kinda way.



V

Five big bums in a gingerbread house, he soul searched for at least 30 minutes after this realisation. The little boy will no longer be making critical penis art nor paintings; he is a very, very bad painter. Once more... The little boy will no longer be making critical penis art nor paintings; he is a very, very bad painter. Now what? The title of the show had already been agreed upon by the team at Stanley Street Gallery and the little boy didn't have the can-do-cbf-attitude to change it... Where do we go from here?

VI

Six self-care pencils in the sunset, what if there was a way to maintain your need to be a world changing practice-based painter but not have to paint because it turns out painting is actually quite very difficult, and you are especially shit at it? The age-old question... the little boy went to Officeworks and saw there was a 40% off special on Prismacolor 1800059 Premier Coloured Pencils Set - 150 Colored Pencils. He purchased these pencils and of course said 'I will use these self-care pencils to create impactful pencil paintings that will change my world'.



VII

Seven this story is draggin on, with this newfound outlook the little boy was able bring purpose (porpoise) and enjoyment back to practice. New modalities of storytelling. A love letter to self. A final fantasy. 1 cloud-cock. 2 flowers with marital issues. 3-legged horse trying to work it out. 4 [dunno yet]. 5 devils trying to cut down. 6 long aliens hanging out together. 7 [dunno yet]

Cheers

Jackson Farley - my very first painting show ever

9 March – 9 April 2022

Exhibition Essay

In her talk 'Drawing in the Continuous Present' artist Amy Sillman argued, *"drawing is something everyone can do, literary everyone doodles [...] drawing is anti-'masterpiece' thinking, it is grassroots thinking, where you are building something [...] it's democratic, it's the underdog"*. Painting on the other hand (especially in western art institutions) tends to carry a weight, grandeur, and majesty. It carries baggage. I'm thinking Turner, Matisse, Pollock, Warhol, Basquiat. It's funny because at this point, it's like what else is there to say or do with the 'baggage' or the personalities behind them?

Isn't painting dead; *sigh*; do we care? Well, I couldn't help myself, and in a quick google search I find the most expensive art sale in the world at US \$450.3 million is Leonardo da Vinci's 'Salvator Mundi' (paid for by Mohammed bin Salman!! Yes, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia!!). Clearly not that dead in the Auctioneer houses.

For Jackson Farley, sarcasm and irony have always been devices for entertainment and critique. In 'my very first painting show ever' he offers agitated scenes of absurdity in a lop-sided dreamscape; of monarchs, devil children, and a screaming cloud-cock. This body of work presents critical paintings like never before. It's giving fantasy, anxiety, crayons, and devilish icing that will make your teeth fall out.

A theatre of the artist's life working towards a show during the pandemic, the exhibition comes to you in seven 'pts', arrested two dimensionally, flat, and static on the gallery wall, but not too far from the world that we come from (it all started at an Officeworks discount sale). Half the show is large Prismacolored scenes of alien figures, horny flowers and a 'legged horse trying to work it out' - in other words, the show is serving a big piece of Jackson's pandemic heart. Sincerely.

Jackson often returns to the devices of theatre and performance in his practice, reminding us of the significance of joy to a proper sense of sanity. We see this in 'my very first painting ever pt. V', where we are presented with a scene of devils dancing around a fire upon a hill in the recognisable arrangement of Matisse's 'la danse' painting. Stylistically, the colouring-book amateurism operates with a knowing ludicrousness that renders transparent the absurdity of masterpiece ideals. In reassembling the art 'canon' and performing the painter, Jackson reminds us of the value of joy and freedom.

In the other half of the pencil-paintings, which are actually more like, pen-paintings, text functions importantly to weave the chaos and narrative of the show together. The individual captions in each frame, when read collectively begin to build a critique of the masterpiece and genius thinking. In 'pt. II', 'I am the hand that feeds you' is scratched into a sad penis flag held by a creepy hand face-figure. The naïve simplicity of the black biro dresses the sincerity and cruelty of the statement, making you laugh and cry at the same time. In another scene, 'pt. VII', a drawer, draws a reclining nude out the front of 'Sad Castle', 51% of which is also owned by the nude model. The blurbs in the work, intentionally wild and obscene evocatively ground the ideas behind, 'my very first painting show ever'. Jackson's painter-performativity plays with the myth of the painter, the absurdity of the genre and the ideas of 'genius' behind it.

Idiosyncratic and a hopscotch of art process, category and material, this body of work is not interested in over conceptually rationalising a reason for making art. Instead with self-care pencils and schoolboy humour, Jackson spins the narrative of paint fluidity and institutionalised grandeur. Playing with reality, expectation, and the pressure of being an 'artist' in Sydney, Jackson's 'pencil-paintings' point to the uneasiness and 'baggage' within painting histories.

It's direct, it's drawing, it's pencil-painting, 'my very first painting show ever', is as innocent as it is cynical. Jackson shows us that picking up a paint brush and joining the league of world changers who change the world with a flick o' their wrist has never been so fun. In turning things on their head and parodying the process, with a pinch of existentialism, Jackson's pencil-paintings are evocative of 'anti-masterpiece' thinking. Allow yourself to be entertained, smile, and let Jackson Farley save the world with his pencils.

Claire de Carteret

writer & curator

¹ Amy Sillman, 'Drawing in the Continuous Present', 2017, The Menil Collection. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL0gc466nRk>

¹ The Most Expensive Old Masters Artworks Ever Sold at Auction by Angelica Villa, 2021; <https://www.artnews.com/list/art-news/artists/most-expensive-old-masters-works-1234581432/rembrandt-van-rijn-pendant-portraits/>

I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land upon which this text was researched and written. I pay respect to the Elders past, present and future. Sovereignty never ceded.