



**SOPHIE
GANNON
GALLERY**

MONICA ROHAN BACKDROPS

14 JUNE – 2 JULY 2022

SOPHIE GANNON GALLERY
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The dream-like universe which Monica Rohan builds in her exhibition *Backdrops* is set against blue skies and Australian gum-trees. Brightly patterned fabrics billow poetically in the wind, but among them hands and feet often reveal themselves to be floating or untethered.

Evoking a more familiar reality, a few paintings in the exhibition depict moments like curling up in the loungeroom under a blanket, hanging out wet sheets to dry, jumping on a bed in new blue shoes. It's precisely this feeling of the intimate and domestic that renders the uncanny moments more jolting. You are lulled into a sense of security by the Missoni-esque blanket on the turquoise couch in *Guarded*, 2022, before realising that the obstructed body hanging up the washing in *Way forward*, 2022, has hands but not feet, defying gravity. In *If I can help it*, 2022, the draped fabric pulled back by a concealed figure bizarrely meets the leafy Australian bush as though the two have been collaged onto one another, signalling a portal or a glitch. The collision of separate interfaces creates slippage between the real and surreal.

Rohan's title concept of *Backdrops* conjures the staged and theatrical, moving these playful paintings further towards the imaginary. The pattern on pattern of tablecloths, picnic rugs, op-shop dresses and doona covers clash in colourful crescendos. Hovering between the genres of landscape, portraiture, and abstraction, the series holds a kinetic energy, stirred by rising wind, the jostling of colours, a gesturing hand or dancing foot. In *Drag it out*, 2022, the autumn leaves on the ground and the vibrant yellow swathes falling from above bleed together, becoming a seamless study of difference and repetition. An orange sleeved arm curls through the centre of the fabric, as if to break the fourth wall.

The overwhelming nature of the fabric, so engulfing and excessive is reminiscent of tangled sheets during a fever dream or a head stuck in worry. Sometimes bodiless, always faceless, the figure in the series seems to coax or invite the viewer into the painting's ambiguous atmosphere, which hints at our collective anxieties. The complexity of the human presence which is revealed and concealed in the stark landscape triggers ideas of the climate crisis and uncertainty around our shared futures, questioning our place within nature. Across the exhibition, the figures' arms continuously try to grasp something that appears just out of reach, mirroring the unsettling emptiness of something you can't quite catch.

—Emma Nixon



Monica Rohan
Backdrops 2021
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Divider 2021
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Drag it out 2021
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Everything changes 2021
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Fallback 2022
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Guarded 2022
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Standing still 2021
oil on board
90 x 60 cm
\$8,800 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
If I can help it 2022
oil on board
122 x 92 cm
\$13,500 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Pinned down 2022
oil on board
122 x 92 cm
\$13,500 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Pre-empt 2022
oil on board
122 x 92 cm
\$13,500 incl. GST



Monica Rohan
Hold this for now 2021
oil on board
92 x 122 cm
\$13,500 incl. GST



Monica Rohan

Left a part of me there 2022

oil on board

120 x 183 cm

\$24,000 incl. GST



Monica Rohan

Way forward 2022

oil on board

120 x 183 cm

\$24,000 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN

EDUCATION

2011 Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours (First Class), Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Backdrops*, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2021 *Mind How You Go*, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2020 *Hesitate*, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2019 *Wobble*, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2018 *Nowhere Near*, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2017 *Look Down at the World*, Jan Murphy Gallery
2016 *Funny Peculiar*, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2015 *Topsy-Turvy*, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
In the Detail, Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, NSW
2014 *Predicament*, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2012 *Inside Out*, Spiro Grace Art Rooms, Brisbane
2011 *Get a Grip*, Diagram ARI, Ryan Renshaw Window Space, Brisbane

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
Brisbane Portrait Prize, Powerhouse Museum, Brisbane
Sunshine Coast Art Prize, Caloundra Regional Gallery, QLD
2020 *Sunny Side Up*, Brisbane City Outdoor Gallery, Brisbane
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Inspired: Margaret Olley in the Margaret Olley Art Centre, Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW
Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize, Grey Street Gallery Queensland College of Art, Brisbane
Redland Art Awards: Works Acquired 2006–2018, Redland Art Gallery, QLD
2019 Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Jan Murphy Gallery, Sydney
New Woman, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane
Dobell Drawing Prize 2019, National Art School, Sydney
The Gold Award, Rockhampton Art Gallery, QLD
Three Decades, Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW
2018 *A Painter's House*, Tweed Regional Gallery, QLD
2017 Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Sydney
Dog Days, Jan Murphy Gallery
Imagine, Gippsland Regional Art Gallery, Sale, VIC
Go Figure: Works from the Collection, Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, NSW
2016 Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Gold Award, Rockhampton Art Gallery, Rockhampton, QLD
Spring 1883, Jan Murphy Gallery, Melbourne
2015 *GOMA Q: Contemporary Queensland Art*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane
Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Sydney
2014 Melbourne Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
15 Artists, Redcliffe City Art Gallery, Redcliffe, QLD
2013 *Field*, The Hold Artspace, Brisbane
Figuration, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2012 *Rift*, White Canvas Gallery, Brisbane
Churchie National Emerging Art Exhibition, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
rgbcmyk, Bleeding Heart Gallery, Brisbane
James Kiwi Watercolour Prize, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong, NSW
Addition 1, Addition Gallery, Brisbane

- 2011** *GAS Graduate Art Show*, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
With Bated Breath, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane (Queensland College of Art Honours Graduate Exhibition)
Pinkification, The Tidy Gallery, Brisbane
On Short Notice, White Box, Brisbane
Rotary Art Spectacular, Riverside Centre, Brisbane
Honours Work in Progress, Project Gallery, Brisbane
Colour and Form, SGAR, Brisbane
- 2010** *Wake up with Your Head*, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane (Queensland College of Art Graduate Exhibition)
- 2008** Minister of Education Awards for Excellence in Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2021** Sunshine Coast Art Prize (finalist)
Brisbane Portrait Prize (finalist)
- 2020** Archibald Prize (finalist)
Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize (finalist)
- 2019** Dobell Drawing Prize (finalist)
- 2018** Glover Prize (finalist)
Sunshine Coast Art Prize (finalist)
Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship (highly commended)
- 2017** Sulman Prize (finalist)
- 2016** Archibald Prize (finalist)
Gold Award (finalist)
Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize (finalist)
- 2014** Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio, Tweed Regional Gallery
Redland Art Prize (finalist)
Moreton Bay Art Prize (finalist)
- 2012** Churchie National Emerging Art Prize (finalist)
James Kiwi Watercolour Prize (finalist)

COLLECTIONS

Griffith University Art Collection, Brisbane
Mater Children's Hospital, Brisbane
Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane
University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane
Private collections in Australia

