

PAUL DAVIES | AGAINST LIGHT

18.10.22 — 5.11.22



SOPHIE GANNON GALLERY
2 Albert Street Richmond VIC 3121 Australia T +613 9421 0857
info@sophiegannongallery.com.au www.sophiegannongallery.com.au

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PAUL DAVIES: AGAINST LIGHT

While the covetable buildings that have appeared in Paul Davies' paintings may seem recognisable, they are in fact imaginative amalgamations, created from the artist's vast archive of photographs of iconic modernist architecture. The protagonist of the artist's new series, however, is a real-life structure – the Walsh Street House – a light- and air-filled abode designed by Australian architect Robin Boyd in 1957.

Davies first visited Walsh Street (in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra) close to a decade ago, but returned to the house as a subject in 2021 following his relocation to Australia after living in LA. The House served as a way for him to reconnect with home, but its structure – particularly its elegant blurring of the division between indoor and outdoor space through the building's orientation towards its large central courtyard – equally seemed to reflect the pandemic's reshaping of our home environments, demanding that they fulfil the multiple and often competing roles of the domestic, work, family and leisure. (1) This sense of the fluidity of priorities and physical space also takes place in Davies' paintings, as the artist's photographic stencils are collaged and then painted; their overlapping planes literally bringing the outdoors in as foliage sits alongside Featherstone sofas and overhangs the clean lines of the House's interior staircase.

The pastel hued palette of the works in *Against Light* are drawn from the colour ways of old printed maps, where country borders and territories are delineated by areas of block colour. However, unlike the crisp lines that appear on maps, the edges of Davies' surfaces are often softly blurred. The halo of different colours that can appear around forms within the works are due in part to the layering of their paint surfaces and the role of chance introduced by using the stencil. But they are also inspired by the "contre-jour" works (meaning, against the light) of modernist Australian photographer Mark Strizic (who was the first to document Walsh Street). Contre-jour results in a silhouette of the subject, strong backlighting, and dramatic high contrast, and produces images that can sometimes seem more dreamscape than factual.

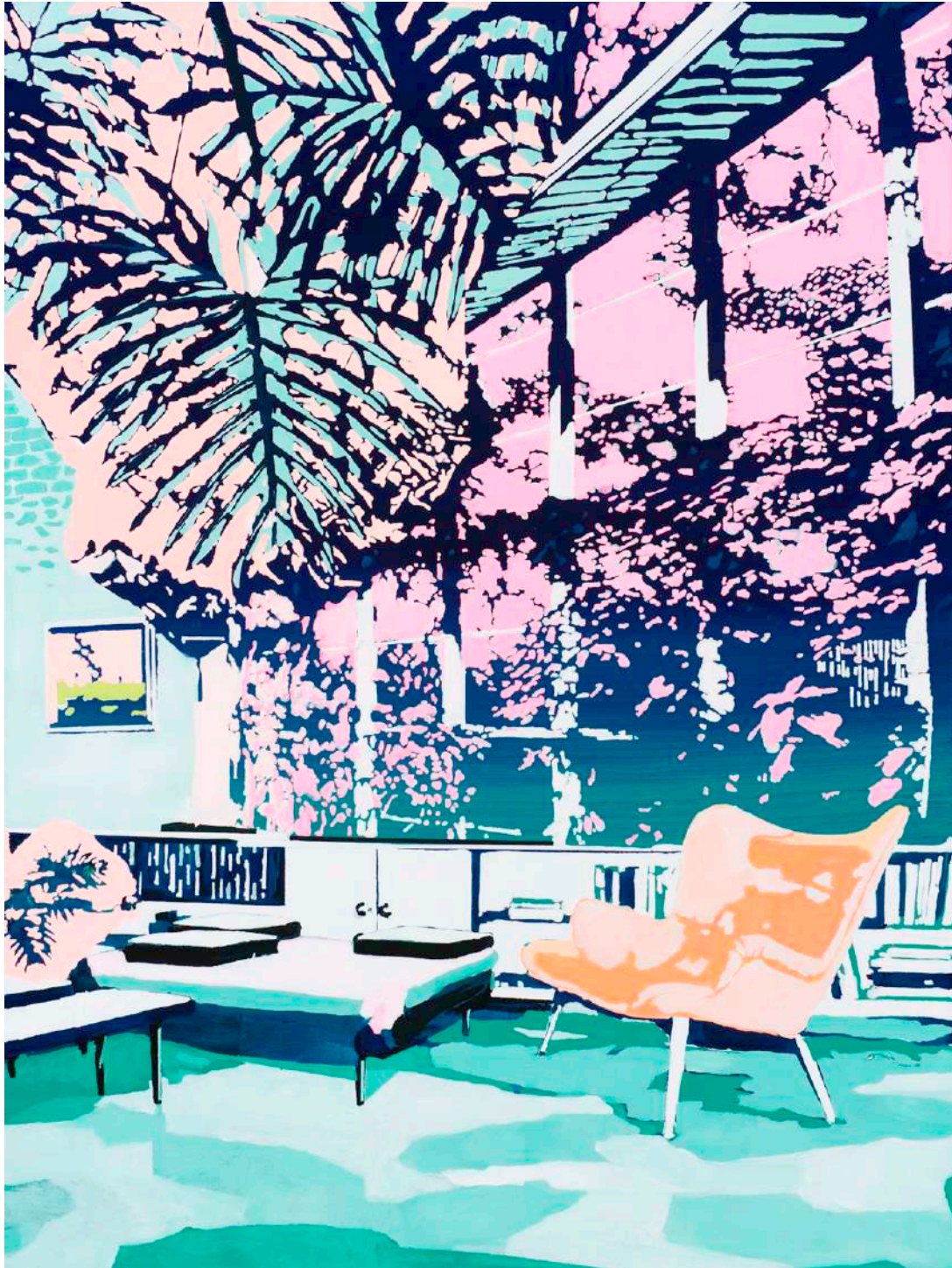
Photography is also central to the two sculptures in the exhibition, whose interlocking pieces are made from the photographed sections of negative space between the architecture of the Walsh Street House. These outlines were then traced onto balsa wood before being cast in bronze. Exploring similar ideas in three-dimensions, the sculptures poetically convey the feeling of space – in Davies' words, 'the shape of a space, what it feels and looks like' (2), rather than the specific location from which they were drawn. Their components arrive flat-packed, ready to be constructed, re-oriented and changed at their owners' will. Just as we desire and imaginatively occupy Davies' dreamhouse locations, these works encourage a physical and conceptual engagement with space and its absence and invite us to fill the gaps with our own thoughts.

- Kelly Gellatly, 2022

Kelly Gellatly is a curator, writer and arts advocate and is the founding director of Agency Untitled.

(1) Email correspondence with the author, 13 September 2022

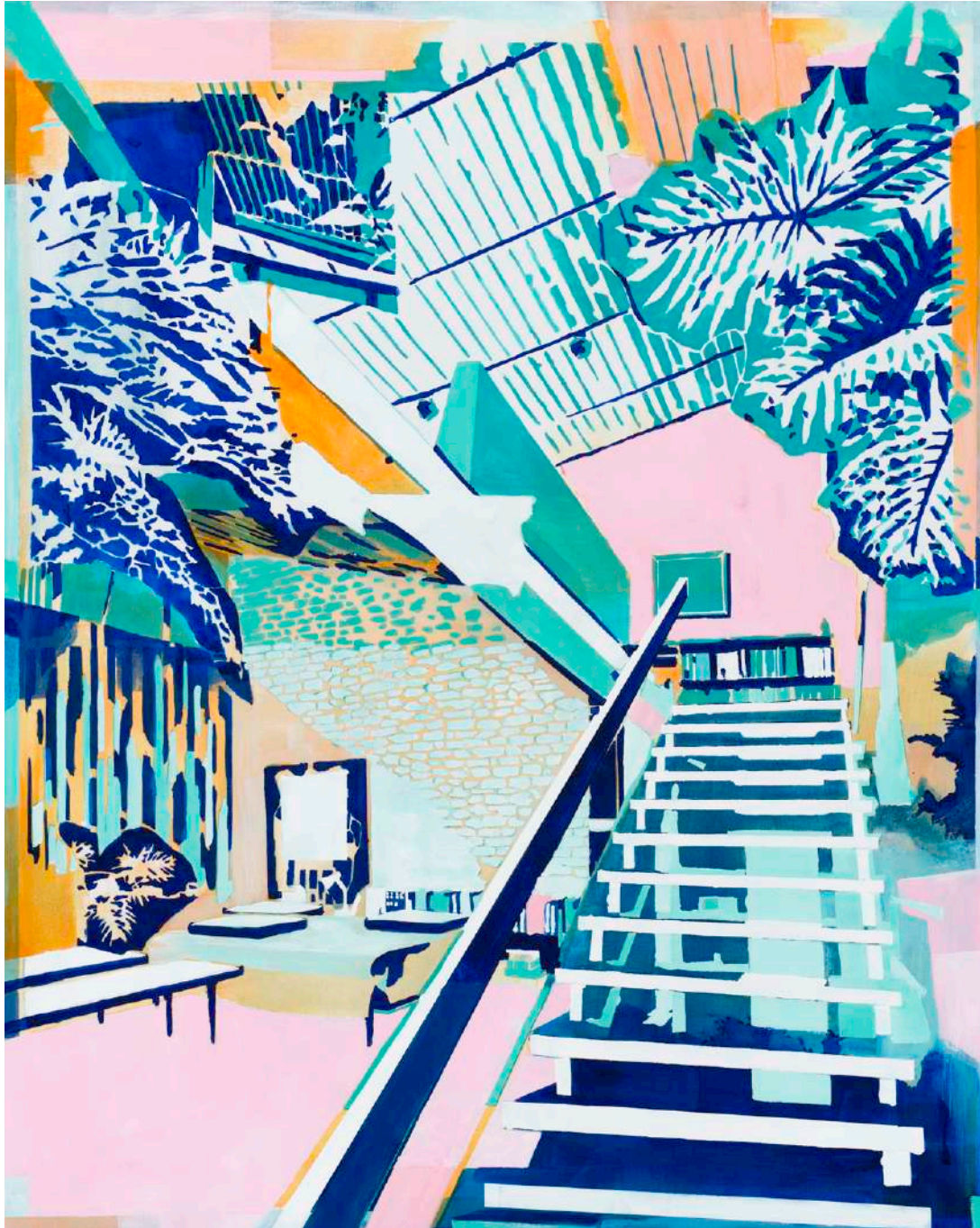
(2) Conversation with the author, 14 September 2022



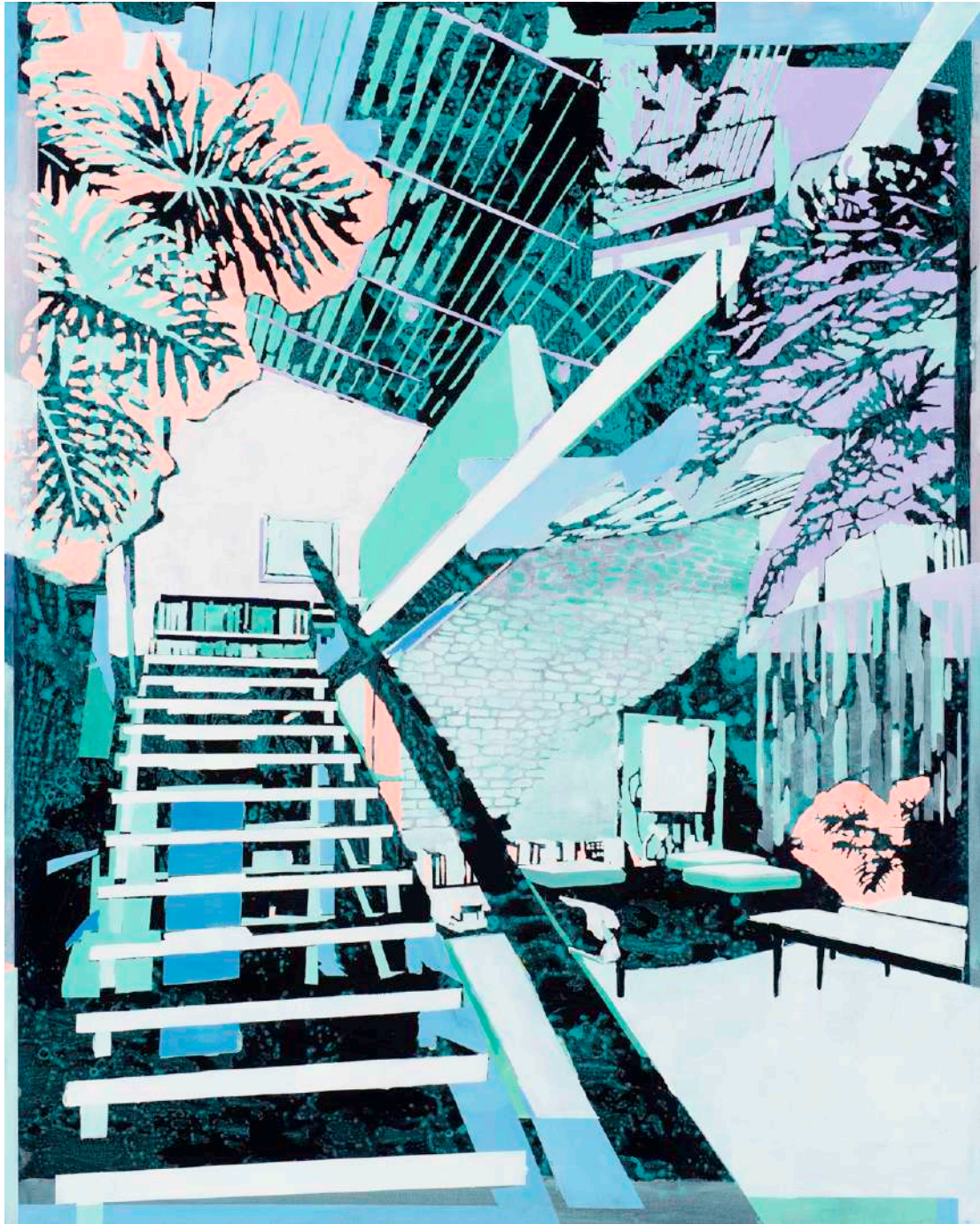
Paul Davies
Walsh 6
2022
acrylic on linen
122 x 92 cm
\$17,000 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Walsh 5
2022
acrylic on linen
92 x 122 cm
\$17,000 incl. GST



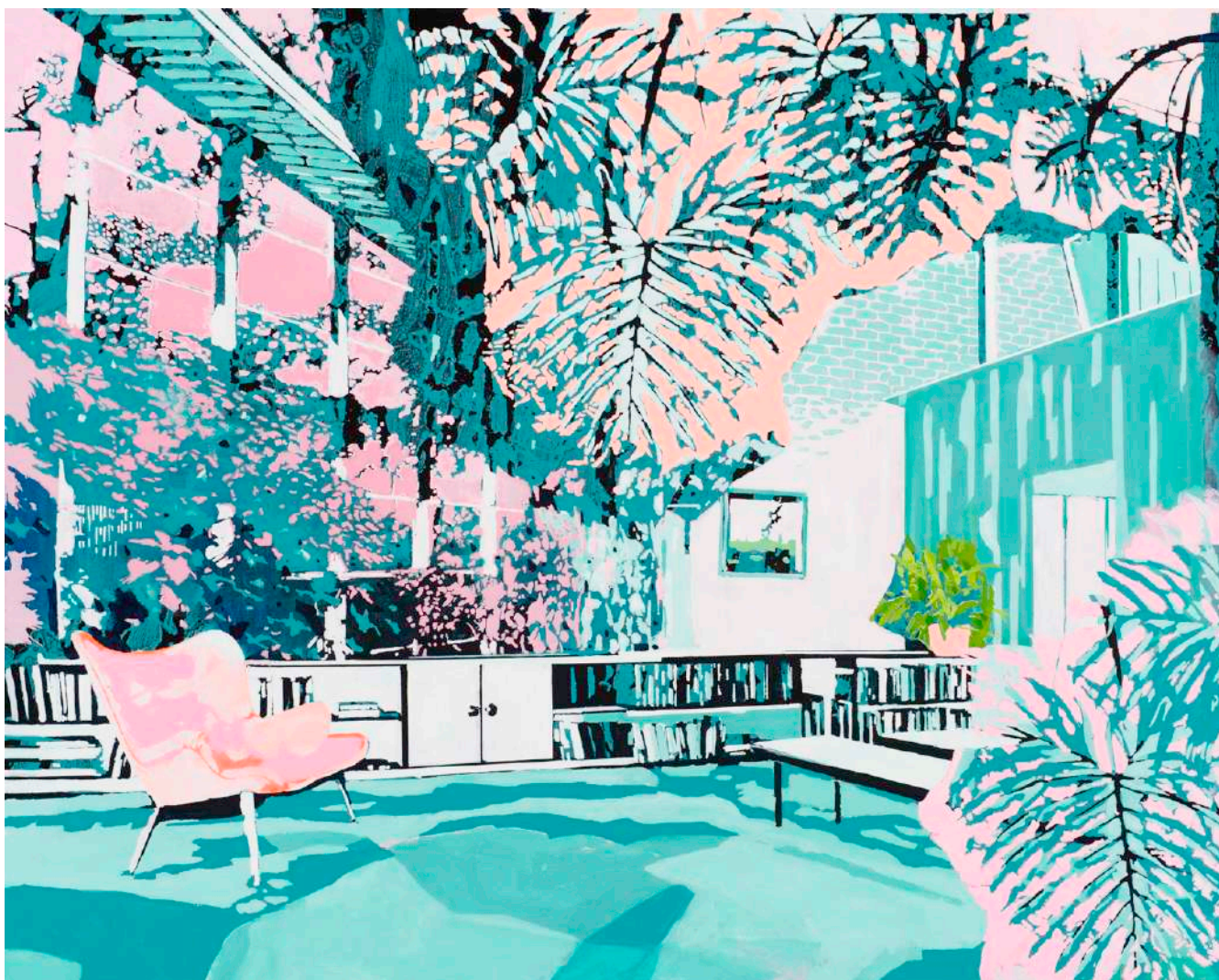
Paul Davies
Walsh 1
2022
acrylic on linen
153 x 122 cm
\$25,000 incl. GST



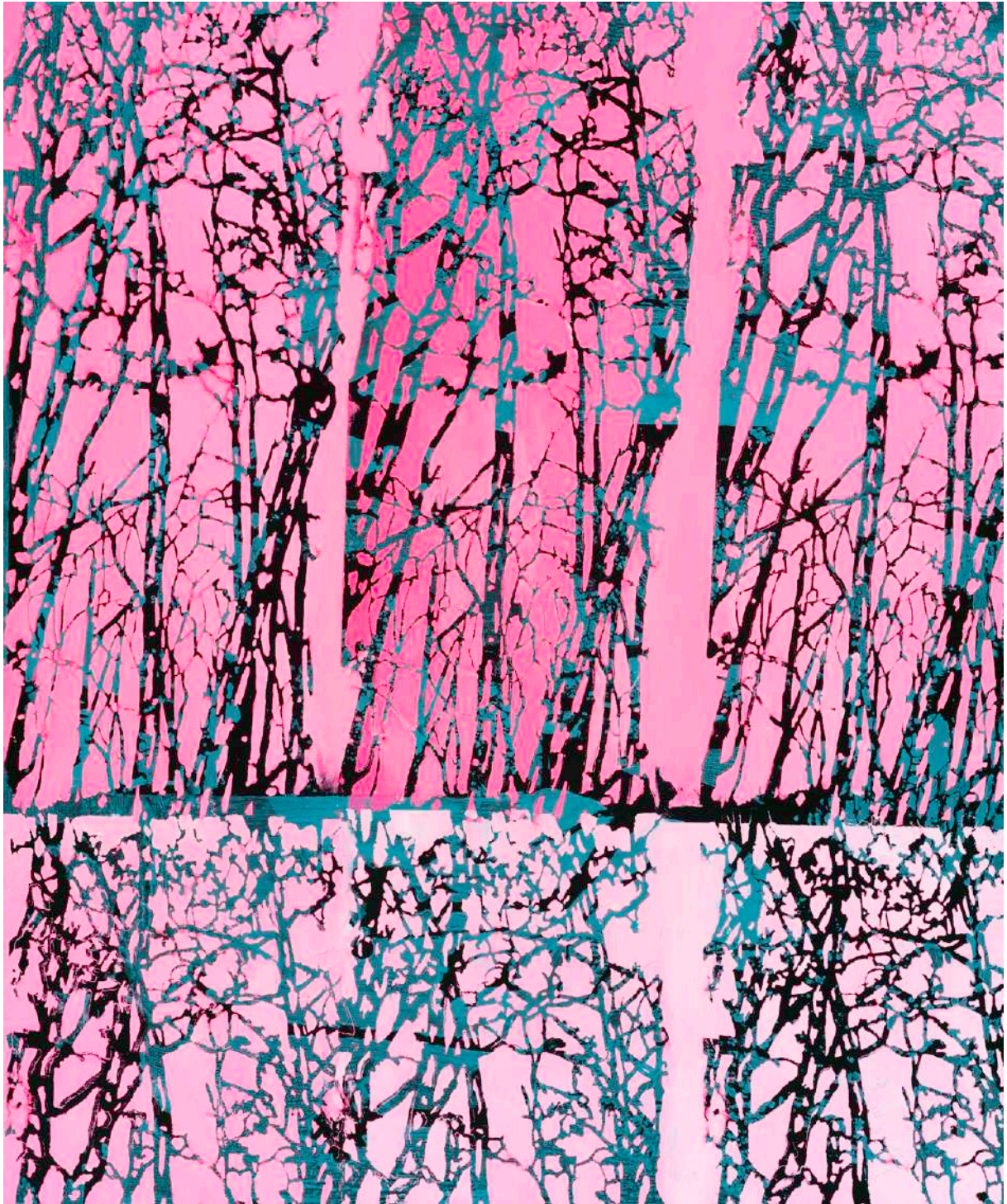
Paul Davies
Walsh 2
2022
acrylic on linen
153 x 122 cm
\$25,000 incl. GST



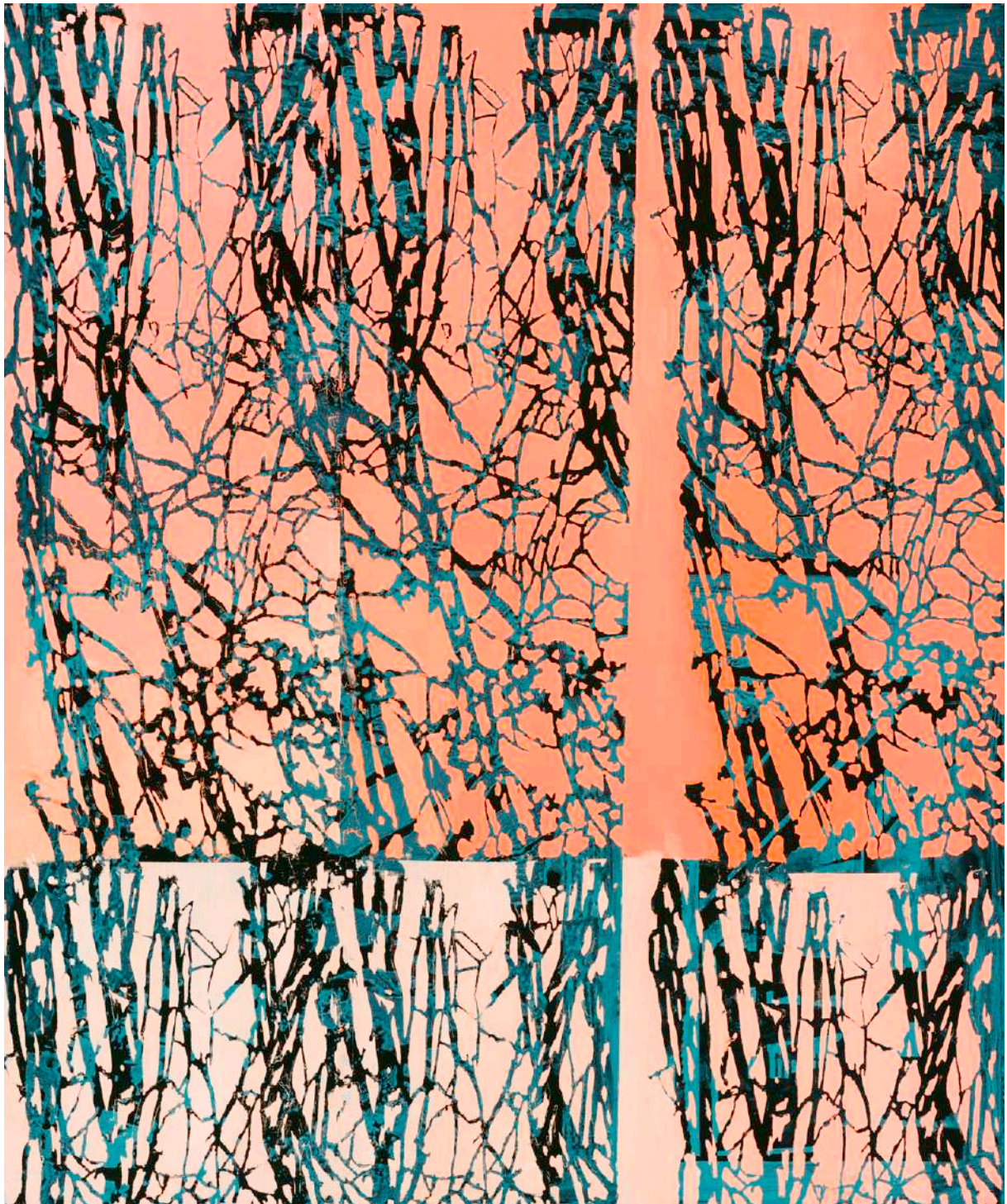
Paul Davies
Walsh 3
2022
acrylic on linen
153 x 122 cm
\$25,000 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Walsh 4
2022
acrylic on linen
122 x 153 cm
\$25,000 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Untitled 1
2022
acrylic on linen
185 x 153 cm
\$35,000 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Untitled 2
2022
acrylic on linen
185 x 153 cm
\$35,000 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Untitled 1
2022
bronze
30 x 30 x 20 cm
\$4,500 incl. GST



Paul Davies
Untitled 2
2022
bronze
30 x 30 x 20 cm
\$4,500 incl. GST

PAUL DAVIES

SOPHIE
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EDUCATION

- 2014 Master of Fine Arts (Research), College of Fine Arts, University of NSW, Sydney
2006 Painting Masterclass, National Art School, Sydney
2000 Bachelor of Fine Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 12 Frames, Hugo Michell Gallery
Against Light, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
- 2021 Belvedere Loop, Olsen Gallery Sydney
- 2020 In a Limbo Landscape, Peter Mendenhall Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
Space Displaced, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
The Golden Days, Bathurst Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2019 The Roaring Daze, Olsen Gruin, New York, USA
West Site Stories, Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2018 After the Gold Rush, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
- 2017 Fitzpatrick-Leland House, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, USA
Paintings and Photographs, Soho House West Hollywood, Los Angeles, USA
Everything Loose Will Land in LA, Olsen Gallery, Sydney
We Tell Ourselves Stories, Art District 13 Gallery, Delhi, India
- 2016 Life Stills, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
24 Photograms, Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, Phoenix, AZ, USA
Hollywood Stills, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Paul Davies, Art16, The Cat Street Gallery, London, UK
Southern Exposure, Art District 13, Delhi, India
- 2015 Devoid of Sensation, Heather James Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
Other Desert Spaces, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney
- 2014 Built in Translation, The Fine Art Society, London, UK
Built in Translation II, Art District 13 Gallery, Delhi, India
Pastiche: A lens through which to view the present, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney
Other Desert Spaces: Paul Davies and George Byrne, The Standard, Los Angeles, USA
Switching Utopia, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
- 2013 Flattening Sublime, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
Flattening Sublime, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney
- 2012 Pentimento, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2011 Void, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Portraits, Tim Olsen Gallery at Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Portraits, Gold Coast City Regional Art Gallery, Gold Coast, QLD

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 Making Place; 100 Views of Brisbane, Museum of Brisbane
- 2021 Summer Group Show Peter Mendenhall Gallery, Los Angeles
Going Home, Hugo Michell Gallery, Australia
Incognito Art Show, Sydney, Australia
- 2020 India Art Fair Art District 13 Gallery Delhi
California Cool Laguna Art Museum Annual Auction
A shining light - recent acquisitions 2019-20, Geelong Gallery
COLLECTIVUS Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Group Exhibition Sophie Gannon Gallery
- 2019 Creatures, Olsen Gruin, New York, USA
Centennial Gifts: Recent Additions to the Permanent Collection, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna, CA, USA
Collective Metamorphosis, Art District 13, Dehli, India
On the Edge: Landscapes from the Collection, Macquarie University Art Gallery, Macquarie, NSW
- 2018 80 @ 80, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA, USA
India Art Fair, Art District 13 Gallery, New Dehli, India (curated by Veer Munshi)
New Acquisitions, Dumbo House, New York, USA
- 2017 Desert Stories, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA, USA
Framing Nature, McClelland Sculpture Park and Garden, Langwarrin, VIC
The Kindness of Strangers: Recent Acquisitions and Conservation Projects, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ, USA
- 2016 Condition Report (curated by Ranjit Hoskote), Art District 13, India Art Fair, Dehli, India
Public Trust: It's About What We Do, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ, USA
McClelland Collection, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Melbourne
Fair Go, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
- 2015 Oberoi Collection (curated by Kapil Chopra), Delhi
Summer Season, Heather James Fine Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA
Winter Season (curated by Chip Tom), Heather James Fine Art, Palm Desert, USA
Works on Paper, China Heights Gallery, Sydney
- 2014 Melbourne Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
Summer Season, Heather James Fine Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA
Winter Season, Heather James Fine Art, Palm Desert, USA
- 2013 Signal 8: Salon Show, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Natural Selection, The Fine Art Society Contemporary, London, UK
Reflections - The M Collection, Exhibition Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
Signal 8: Salon Show, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Sydney Contemporary, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney
Pulse Art Fair Miami, Fine Art Society Contemporary, London, UK
- 2012 Wild Australia, Yen Reis Gallery, Singapore
Melbourne Art Fair, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Hampton's Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
Pat Corrigan: Art Collector, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Maitland, NSW
Signal 8: Salon Show, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
Wattle, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong

- 2011 Evocatecture, Heather James Fine Art Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
 Heat, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
 Self Portraits (curated by Paul Davies), China Heights Gallery, Sydney
 Hamptons Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 Art London, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 Hong Kong International Art Fair, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong
 Toronto International Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 A Summer Survey, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2010 Miscellanea, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
 Art Chicago, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 Hamptons Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 Structural Through-Line (Coherence), Lawrence Asher Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
 San Francisco Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 LA Art Show, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 London Art Fair, Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, UK
 Melbourne Art Fair, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
 Dragon Garden, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong

RESIDENCIES, AWARDS AND SELECTED ARTIST TALKS AND LECTURES

- 2021 Getty Patrons Program - Creative Point of View conversation with R. Steiner, Palm Springs Art Museum
- 2020 Art Talks BMW Culture Soho House: Paul Davies and Kate Bryan, Global Head of Collections at Soho House
- 2019 Artspace Artist Residency, Sydney
- 2018 NG Art Creative Residency, Eygalieres, France
 Guest Speaker Modernism Week at the Palm Springs Art Museum
- 2017 Chippendale World Art Residency, Provence, France
 Pool of Thought - In conversation with Aaron Betsky at the MAK Centre for Art and Architecture LA
- 2016 Taliesin Artist Residency Program, Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 Chippendale New World Art Prize (Highly Commended)
- 2013 Art Gallery of New South Wales, Cite des Arts Studio Residency, Paris, France
 Fleurieu Art Prize (finalist)
 Yering Station Art Prize (finalist)
 Arnold Bloch Leibler Art Prize (finalist)
 Albany Art Prize (finalist)
- 2012 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Sydney (finalist)
 Guest Speaker Semi-Permanent Conference Brisbane
- 2011 NSW Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize (finalist)
- 2010 The King's School Art Prize (finalist)
- 2009 Royal Bank of Scotland Australian Emerging Artist Award (finalist)
- 2008 ABN-AMRO Emerging Artist Award (finalist)
- 2001 Photography Prize, TNT Magazine, London (winner)

COMMISSIONS

2019

Soho House DTLA

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Palm Springs Art Museum, USA

Crocker Art Museum, USA

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, USA

University of California, Irvine Institute and Museum for California Art USA

Laguna Art Museum, USA

Geelong Gallery, Australia

Macquarie University, Australia

McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Australia

Museum of Brisbane, Australia

Bond University, Australia

Artbank, Australia

Maitland Regional Gallery, Australia

Sydney Living Museums, Australia

HOTA, Home of the Arts, Australia

University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery, Australia



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PHOTOGRAPHER OF STUDIO IMAGES: PAUL DAVIES

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