

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forested **23 January – 20 February 2021**

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery presents works by three Sydney based artists, **Jan Handel, Melinda Marshman** and **Lisa Woolfe**. The works created for this exhibition are a response to the practice of Shinrin-yoku or Forest Bathing. Originating in Japan in the 1980s, Shinrin-yoku refers to the practice of being in nature and connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

Each artist brings their unique approach to present an engaging exhibition that includes large scale oil paintings, installation and drawings in space.

Jan Handel: This installation bathes the viewer in gentle forest hues as they walk through translucent coloured film stretched through the exhibition space. Handel's interpretation of the theme offers a reminder of the fragility of our natural world.

Working within geometric abstraction across painting, drawing and installation, Jan Handel's practice gives physical form to circumstances and situations inherent in the human experience. Jan Handel graduated from the National Art School in 2013. She has exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions including her most recent exhibition *Inside a Painting Gently* at Factory 49 Paris. Jan's work is held in the National Art School and the Sydney Gallery School, Meadowbank TAFE archives, Sydney, and in private collections in Australia, U.S.A and France. <https://www.janhandel.net/>

Melinda Marshman: Quoting naturalist John Muir, "Between every two pine trees is a doorway leading to another life," Marshman considers that our life force is sustained by nature. Her ambitious large scale, multi-paneled painting draws the viewer close. The gentle muted tones illuminate the subtle energies embodied in the vivid sensory and meditative experience and feelings derived from being in nature.

Melinda is an oil painter whose interest in using pure colour distils her subject down to their simplest forms to reveal their essence. Since graduating from the National Art School in 2014 (BFA HONS) Melinda has held five solo exhibitions, and been included in several group exhibitions and been a finalist in numerous art prizes including the Ravenswood Art Prize (2018, 2017) and Doug Moran National Portrait Prize (semi-finalist) (2014). <http://melindamarshman.com/>

Lisa Woolfe: Taking her cue from Henry D. Thoreau's "*We need the tonic of wildness.*" and her ongoing interest in the philosophy of the Deep Ecology movement, Lisa Woolfe's spatial drawing asks the viewer to pause reality for a moment, engage with our animal senses and imagine walking amongst the tree tops and its messy tangle of wildness.

Woolfe's work is situated within the field of contemporary drawing practice. She makes two dimensional drawings on paper as well as three dimensional drawings she refers to as drawings in space. She has completed residencies internationally at Vermont Studio Center USA and in Australia including the Hill End Artist Residency and Grafton Regional Art Gallery Artist in Residence program. Her work has been included as a finalist in awards including Kedumba Drawing Award, Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing, Burnie Print Prize and Mosman Art Prize among others. <https://www.lisawoolfe.com/>

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Short statement (43 words)

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Melinda Marshman *Forest Panorama*, Oil on polyester, 61 x 132 cm

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High resolution images are available.

Visitors to the gallery are asked to abide by social distancing recommendations.

The **Grace Cossington Smith Gallery** is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and a changing exhibition program. The gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am-5 pm. Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga.