



Ryan Presley

Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio
The Friends Gallery

Friday 3 August – Sunday 25 November 2018

Brisbane-based artist Ryan Presley spent one month working in the Gallery's Artist-in-Residence Studio to create new work for his solo exhibition in the Friends Gallery.

I am interested in customs and edifices associated with religion, economics, and conquest that are evident in many facets of our everyday lives. During my residency I wanted to learn more about the rise of the sugar cane industry that is a prominent part of the landscape and beautiful landscape vistas around Wollumbin.

Over the past few years I have sought to highlight the deeply embedded links between religion, economics, and power that have existed for centuries in colonial, and later postcolonial, societies of the 'West'. I then focus on how these connections have manifested in Australian society, highlighting how they have negatively affected the lives of Aboriginal Australians.

As I was not familiar with the Northern Rivers region, I was keen to learn more about the colonial histories there to better understand the dispossession scenarios that took place in the area.

I have been using the vehicle of icon painting for its beauty and familiarity. I thought of their usage – to convert illiterates by using simple but elegantly rendered dramatic imagery – to be a particularly effective strategy of the church. For this show, I will continue to explore this form.

Ryan Presley, 2018

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Photo by Alethea Beetson