

LOUISE TATE

Highly Commended: Contemporary Art Awards 2019

A Fiction of Others

By Di Erlichman

Melbourne painter and writer, Louise Tate's (b.1992) latest work in oils explores the historical imagining of family members who have passed on, are missing or absent. *A Fiction of Others* (2018) draws upon faded family photographs and state archives of early settler life in Victoria. The combination of imagery forms a fictionalised narrative of people that linger on in memory; of women, Louise may have known deeply, briefly or never known.

The pastel coloured painting shows three human forms truncated at chest-height—two women and one child—and seated on what appears to be a three-seater cane chair. The perspective is set at an unusual focal point—at floor level—and forces the viewer

to imagine the faces that exist outside the painting's frame. The image is tightly cropped and appears to float without a foreground or background, leaving the viewer to visualise the subjects' environment.

Initially, Louise used original black and white photographs as a reference point. She removed some of the peripheral areas by placing paper borders over the images to determine the composition. Louise's painting application uses thin washes of transparent colour and a patchwork of texture and mark-making to compose the garments and surfaces creating an indistinct, grainy and faded effect. Louise explains these colours, layers and marks help "create a luminosity in the image that hovers in the warm recess of memory".

Louise's artistic narrative encompasses the passing of time, history, intimacy and memory. The cropped

figures highlight to the viewer that these people are either unknown, have been forgotten or faded out of living memory. The painting pays homage to her family and provides a sense of overlapping relationships and stories. For Louise, the work not only reconnects with her ancestors who have lived before, but it counters the disconnect that occurs in modern living.



A Fiction of Others (2018) revitalises historical images by re-imagining the lives of others. The work creates a space for the viewer to consider their own ancestral lineage and to remind us that we are just one link in a continuing family story.

Louise grew up in Byron Bay and believes her early years at the

local Steiner School helped to influence her 'dreamlike thinking'. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Art with 1st Class Honours from RMIT University. She has been shortlisted for several awards; including the SEVENTH 2017 Emerging Writers Program, the Protégé Program at Jan Murphy Gallery Qld, and the 2018 Artist Residency (Macfarlane Fund) Kyneton VIC. This year Louise will be developing a new body of work at an artist residency at the NARS Foundation in New York.

On this page, *A Fiction of Others* (2018), oil on canvas, 122 x 97cm.

Image courtesy of the artist

Louise Tate's artwork can be viewed at:

<http://www.contemporaryartawards/finalist-exhibition-2019.com>