

About the artist

Leigh Schoenheimer is a multi-disciplinary, contemporary artist based in Brisbane Australia. A painter and sculptor, she is best known for her expanded still-life works. In these multi-panelled paintings, Schoenheimer overlays conversations between perception, representation and interpretation with a broad range of themes and ideas.

Complemented by idiosyncratic sculptures that reference the same visual vocabulary as her paintings, Schoenheimer brings wit, humour and a bowerbird curiosity to hybrid works that engage simultaneously with the aesthetic and intellectual realms.

Schoenheimer's work is held in public and private collections throughout Australia and is the subject of an extensive case study in the current Senior Visual Art textbook for QLD. ('Creative Inquiry' - Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Regularly short listed in national art prizes for both painting and sculpture, she has been the recipient of a number of art prizes and commendations. In 2020 / 21 an exhibition of her work travelled throughout QLD's regional galleries courtesy of Flying Arts Alliance and Onespace Gallery and in 2022, Schoenheimer undertook an artist's residency at the Nancy Fairfax Studio, Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW.



Leigh Schoenheimer An Unnatural History

21 Nov - 2 Dec 2023

Woolloongabba Art Gallery - (Gallery 2)

www.leighdesigns.com.au

An Unnatural History draws together Leigh Schoenheimer's artistic and broader environmental concerns about the future, with two separate but linked bodies of work titled *'The Meaning of (Still) Life: An Unnatural History'* and *'Still-Scapes'*. Schoenheimer is best known for her intellectual explorations of painting and its histories via a series titled *'Perceive / Conceive'*. In these works she uses a three-panelled format to explore modes of seeing and knowing in still life iterations using realism, abstraction and text. Their optical qualities are sophisticated, with their shifting stylistic modes of representation used to accelerate understanding.

In an Unnatural History she uses this expanded still life format to link together ideas about visual perception and environmental science. Within each of the works in *'The Meaning of (Still) Life'*, she presents a narrative around a local endangered species. In *'Still-Scapes'* the paintings trace a parallel loss of biodiversity as a result of invasive flora. The stylistic shifts in these works employ wit and colour alongside signs and symbols capable of engaging a broad audience to appreciate 'the impact of urban life on the planet'.¹



Still-Scapes: Tweed Weeds #11 - Save As 2023. 40 x 92 cm



The Meaning of (Still) Life: An Unnatural History - The Far Eastern Curlew 2022. 137 x 61 cm

The Far Eastern Curlew (from *'The Meaning of (Still) Life'*) refers, in three stages, to the vast distances that this shore bird travels each year (from Russia, often stopping in Asia en route to Australia and back again), with the red and white target that travels through each panel denoting the threat that urban development on coastal wetlands currently poses. Dogs and hunters are also implicated, with the final panel a phonetic and textual exploration of the curlew, poetically enshrined with translucent bird poo that washes down the blue background.

From *'Still-Scapes'*, *Tweed Weeds #11 - Save As* explores the northern New South Wales environment, focussing on the weeds that have impacted its biodiversity, with terms borrowed from the computer keyboard speaking to the ecological changes imposed on this continent since colonisation. The crimson and purple background sits like a bruise behind the vase of weeds in the first panel and segues through the evocative warning contained within the text to the final panel which uses shades of green, blue and yellow to evoke the local cultivated landscape.

These new bodies of work take the viewer on a journey to greater understanding through vibrant, visual explorations of ideas and concepts. They nail Schoenheimer's artistic colours to uncomfortable scientific truths in a plea for environmental action. Arousing curiosity, their lively aesthetic lures our attention toward one of the most compelling issues of our time.

Louise Martin - Chew