

OPEN STUDIO MADELEINE KELLY

Madeleine Kelly (Australia b.1977) is a Sydney-based artist and art educator. Her practice-led research is based in the vibrant field of painting, with a focus on human entanglements with animals, plants and energy. Kelly's paintings reflect on our troubled connection to the natural world and draw viewers into their comparative logic.

My work is like an ecosystem; it is very much alive — the relationship between me and my work is sympoietic, and the audience is activated by the affinities at play.

— Madeleine Kelly



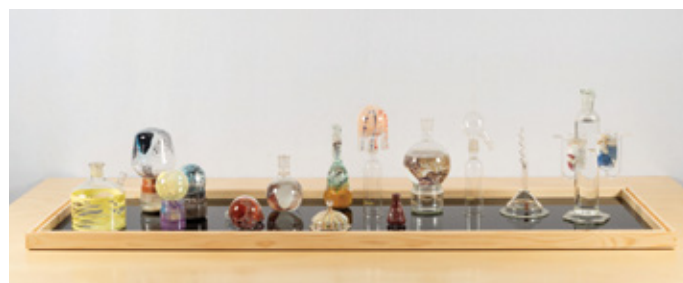
Lie in Wait 2020 / Oil on board / 44 x 66cm / Photograph: Natasha Harth (QAGOMA)

In *Lie in Wait* 2020, forms are caught in a state of becoming, evolving from the ground. When is a painting finished? To work with paint is also to imply what is happening underground, beneath in the subterranean world. These spiral forms denote still-life painting, entropy and immanent extractive processes.



Structural affinities 2020 / Assorted objects and shells, gesso, varnish, pigment powder and dowel on ply / 159 x 37.5cm x 45cm (irreg.) / Photograph: Chloë Callistemon (QAGOMA)

In *Structural affinities* 2020, sea sponges are coloured with pigment to further activate the vitalistic potential of their forms. Indeed, they are a unique form of life, being the only animals that, if broken down to the level of their cells, can reassemble themselves into an entirely different configuration. Their capacity to rearrange themselves and their communities encourages us to contemplate how this might extend to human societies. Incredible projective potential is found in their globular, tubular, hole-encrusted, fanned, arborescent, planar and spherical formations.



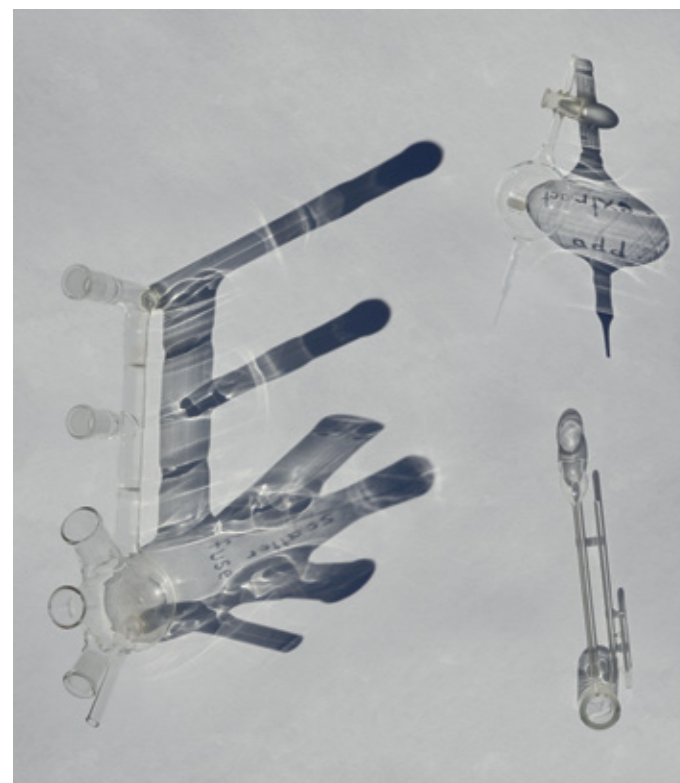
Elective affinities 2020 / 27 vessels: wax, resin and pigment / Installed dimensions variable / Photograph: Chloë Callistemon (QAGOMA)

In *Elective affinities* 2020, laboratory vessels make explicit the relationship between matter, experimentation and painting. Some are monochromatic; some display techniques of dripping, pouring, or even blowing. They embody gesture and the passage of time. Figurative paintings immersed in water are anamorphic and become a site to navigate and shift around, to contemplate seeing itself. Together, they point to the fact that paintings are not hermetically sealed objects — they are part of a network and their agency is distorted and magnified by their visibility. In his 1807 romance novel *Elective Affinities*, after which my work is named, the poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe notes how materials seek out one another — attract, seize, destroy, devour, consume one another and emerge.



Net casting (still) 2020 / High-definition video, colour, mono, 6:30 minutes (approx.)

In my animation *Net casting* 2020, liveliness unfolds through many logics and layers. An ecology of art, affinities and matter entangles boundaries between human beings and other species. Bird, frog and insect calls, as well as everyday acoustic noises, accompany the accumulation of shapes into patterns; signifiers of two perceptual worlds are superimposed and interlaced into spatial-temporal affinities. The relationship between the transformation of matter, ecology and painting is made explicit. The animation is named after a net casting spider that I observed as she patiently sat and watched the woven scroll/empty canvas/blank screen before her — a casting net to catch prey, like an artist waiting to problem find, not just problem solve.



Flow chart of affinities (details) 2020 / Digital prints / Installed dimensions variable

My photographic work *Flow chart of affinities* 2020 covers the walls of the studio. Composed of shadows of laboratory vessels, words on their surfaces relate to processes, materials or outcomes that art and science have in common. Just as liquidity mediates the material inside a vessel, the vessels mediate dialectics, inspiring contemplation of the degree to which concepts or words tend to combine.

10 OCT 2020 – 31 JAN 2021



Food Shrine 2020 / Oil on unstretched canvas, encaustic on brick / 66 x 73 x 10cm

The studio is a site of experimentation where fragments of one work may unite with the rubble of another, of another.

All statements are by Madeleine Kelly.

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