

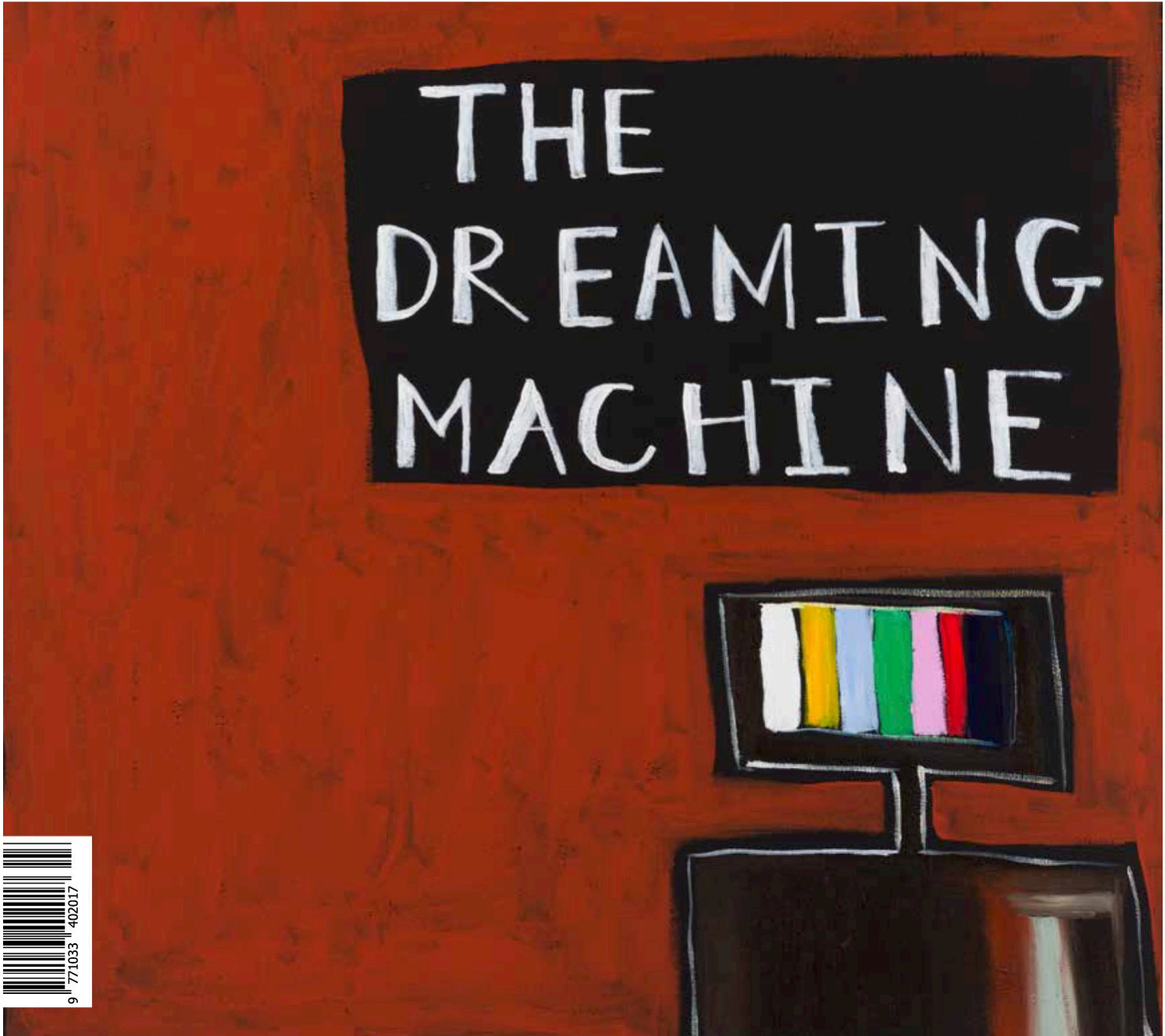
*Painting a Picture, Art Monthly Australasia, Quarterly Issue 341, Summer 2024-25*

# ART MONTHLY AUSTRALASIA

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## OPINION

## PAINTING A PICTURE

In a world where you can work with any technology or material, why do you choose to work with paint? This was the question posed to nine artists from around Australia, who discuss the medium's enduring relevance



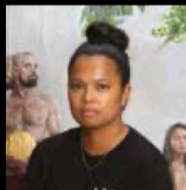

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**Louise Zhang**

"In this age of technological advancement, there's even more reason to paint. We can't lose that tactility, the art of the handmade. Digital methods can add to or simplify the process of artmaking, but this can overshadow the practice of experimenting and imagining—to me, technology remains just a tool.

Painting endures because it fulfills an innate human desire to work with our hands. Cooking, crafting, building houses; the act of making is deeply rooted in our humanity. Painting contrasts sharply with the fast-paced demands of modern life, making it more important than ever. The way paint dries, the way it's applied, the varnishes—it all requires patience, time and risk. Artists can spend hours in the studio applying paint, sitting back, reflecting, approaching it again. Unlike digital mediums, there's no undo button in painting; once applied, paint alters the canvas irrevocably. The decision-making process—and the accidents and 'mistakes' that might occur—create a depth that you can't manufacture through digital means.

My passion for painting is also driven by history and culture. My grandfather's calligraphy table where he studied and practiced remains in his home in China. His brushwork, the act of him applying ink with a brush, is evidence of the tactile. It connects me to him, and this human element defines the art of painting."




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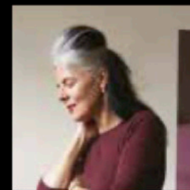
**Marikit Santiago**

"I think the simple answer to why I choose paint is because, frankly, I'm good at it. I have full control over the image I can produce if I work with paint. Working with oil allows me to flex my full range of skill over colour, technique and composition. It allows me to fully realise the images I visualise. I also think that audiences will always be impressed by what we can create with our hands.

It's also an accessible medium for my children to work with and, when I was a child myself, working with paint always felt like a serious undertaking, a medium that required time and consideration. So in my early experiences of art making, working with paint felt like a privilege.

I have always admired the paintings from the Western classical canon and my work continues to be influenced by this period of art history. I still aspire to create an image with the skill of the Renaissance artists.

But really, I think painting chose me. I have tried creating work with different media without success—I've even tried not being an artist at all. But I always end up painting. I just can't help it."




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**Prudence Flint**

"Painting has limits and specific conditions and because of this it offers up freedom. It has proven to be an unmatched portal into other worlds. Surprisingly robust, it survives beyond the millennium. It is intimately connected to the hand and the reflexes. It smears, blends and shines; it is slick, rough and bumpy; the consistency of food and bodily excretions. It demands a million unconscious decisions, all of which have inexplicable effects. Painting has served institutions of power, representing status and wealth, but is simultaneously defined by its intrinsic generosity and endurance."