



Lucy Culliton
The Residents of Bibbenluke Lodge





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King Street Gallery
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday
177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia
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Front Cover: *Sixteen Weeners* 2017 oil on canvas 183 x 243cm
Opposite: Lucy Culliton Studio Bibbenluke NSW

Lucy Culliton

Referring to the work he saw exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1802, the young John Constable decided: “There is room enough for a natural painter”.

Constable had been staring at rooms full of melodramatic history paintings, dull portraits and formulaic Claudean landscapes. All the affectations of art were on display as painters vied to attract the attention of wealthy collectors. It was the antithesis of his own blunt approach, by which he hoped to keep edging a little closer to a truthful depiction of nature.

What Constable hated more than anything was bravura – “an attempt to do something beyond the truth”. Today, the love of spectacle and gimmickry has advanced so far that some aficionados view painting itself as a quaint, old-fashioned activity. The need for a “natural painter” is no less urgent than it was in 1802 – which may be the reason Lucy Culliton’s work has so many admirers.

Culliton paints with tremendous fluency but a complete lack of pretension. Like Constable she applies herself to the world around her, finding subjects in the landscape of the Monaro, where she lives; the objects she collects; the faces of friends, and an ever-growing host of animals with whom she shares her property and her house.

Culliton has painted her menagerie as if it were an extended family album. These are not mere “animal paintings”, they are portraits. Few artists have ever discerned such depths of personality in a sheep, but

all of Culliton’s animals have names and characters. Soon we begin to feel that we know them. Edna looks like a good-natured motherly type, while François, with his unkempt locks, is a real Bohemian. Scott seems a lively fellow, while Blacky has a grumpy demeanour. Mona Lisa wears an enigmatic smile. One almost pities the poor Unnamed fat tail sheep, who remains anchored in the animal world until the mistress decides on an appropriate moniker.

The personalisations are not limited to sheep. Clive and Ursula are a pair of middle-class emus out for a Sunday stroll, Brocky is the embodiment of bovine stoicism. It may be harder to impute an inner life to a chicken, but Culliton brings every named creature to life, even weatherbeaten Cuddles, who appears as mildly deranged.

In one of his most celebrated essays, *Why Look at Animals?* (1980), John Berger comes up with a profound explanation of our attraction to the animal world. “With their parallel lives,” he writes, “animals offer man a companionship which is different from any offered by human exchange. Different because it is a companionship offered to the loneliness of man as a species”.

Although the idea of man’s “loneliness” feels like a throwback to the glory days of French existentialism, Berger is suggesting that the silent gaze of an animal allows us to discover something of ourselves in their eyes. They may be judging us but they’re not going



Lacey 2017 graphite on paper 27x29cm

to criticise. We feel the simplicity of their needs, and wonder if our own desires have grown too complex.

For Culliton the companionship of animals has become a deep-seated need. In the relationships she enjoys with beast and bird she finds a constant reminder that one can make a great painting from the simplest subjects, (without a hint of bravura). Animals

don't lie but art can be nothing but skilful distortions of reality, intended to impress. In these pictures Culliton is sticking as closely as she can to the truth.

John McDonald is art critic for the Sydney Morning Herald

johnmcdonald.net.au



Nelson 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Madeleine 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Rose Black 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Edna 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Little Fella 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Michele 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Horacio 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



James Black 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Cuddles 2017 oil on canvas 60 x 60cm



Joey 2017 oil on canvas 60 x 60cm



Francois 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Charlotte 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Little John 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Lauren 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Neopolitan 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Maybell 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Scott 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Map 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Milky 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Jacky Black 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Blacky II 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Lucy feeding the sheep



Bison 2016 oil on board 60x60cm



Pushy 2017 oil on board 80x80cm



Champion 2017 oil on canvas 60x60cm



Tarzan 2017 oil on canvas 60x60cm



Tristan Honey 2017 oil on canvas 120x150cm





Henry 2017 oil on canvas 95x110cm



CJ 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Neopolitan, CJ and Marble Cake 2017 oil on canvas 95x120cm



Ed and Ed 2017 oil on canvas 126x126cm



Icey 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Hartsy 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Blacky I 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Mona Lisa 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Margot 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Blaze Foley 2017 oil on board 40x40cm



Fat Tail Sheep 2017 oil on canvas 126x126cm



Clive and Ursula 2017 oil on canvas 130x130cm



Brocky 2017 oil on board 80x80cm



Johnny Green 2016 oil on board 40x40cm



Unnamed Hen 2016 oil on board 40x40cm

Lucy Culliton

Born

1966 Sydney, Australia

Studies

1996 National Art School, Sydney

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2017** *Residents of Bibbenluke Lodge* King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
Our Animals Lucy and Anna Culliton Tamworth Regional Art Gallery, NSW
- 2016** Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2014 *Weeds of the Monaro & Others*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Eye of the Beholder: The Art of Lucy Culliton, Mosman Art Gallery
- 2012 *Bibbenluke Flowers*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2011 *Home*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2009 *Bibbenluke*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2008 *Stuff*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2007 *The Show (domestic science)*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2016 - 2017 *Archibald Prize*, Art Gallery of Ballarat, VIC; Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, NSW; Cowra Regional Art Gallery, NSW; Bega Valley Regional Gallery, NSW; Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, NSW; Western Plains Cultural Centre, NSW.
- 2016 *Archibald Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Popular Pet Show, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
- 2014 *Efflorescent*, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, NSW
Lucy Land, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
So much more than a big sheep, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, NSW
- 2013 *Three Australian Landscapes*, The Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Life's a Beach, The Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2010 *Sulman Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
- 2009 *Wynne Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Three Australian Landscapes, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
- 2008 *On the Heyden Trail*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Salon de Refuses, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney

2007	<i>Cuisine and Country</i> , Touring Exhibition, Orange Regional Gallery <i>Archibald Prize</i> , Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney <i>Sulman Prize</i> , Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
2006	<i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
2005	<i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
2004	<i>Kedumba Drawing Prize</i> , Blue Mountains NSW
2003	<i>Dobell Prize</i> , Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney <i>Archibald Prize</i> , Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
2002	<i>Australian Women Artists 1920-2000</i> , Vanessa Wood Fine Art, Mosman <i>Gallery Artists</i> , Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney <i>Drawn Together</i> , Bathurst Regional Gallery
2001	<i>Sulman Prize</i> , Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney <i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney <i>Mosman Art Prize</i> , Mosman Regional Art Gallery, Sydney <i>Redlands Art Prize</i> , Mosman Regional Art Gallery, Sydney
2000	<i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney <i>Australian Landscape</i> , Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney <i>Thinking Aloud...A drawing show</i> , Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1999	<i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

Awards & Prizes

2006	Dubbo Lexis Mortima Prize Nowa Nowa Nudes Art Show <i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
2004	<i>Kedumba Drawing Prize</i> , First Prize (Acquisitive)
2001	Rydal Show
2000	<i>Mosman Art Prize</i> , First Prize (Acquisitive)
1999	<i>Conrad Jupiters Art Prize</i> , Gold Coast Centre (Acquisitive) Highly Commended, <i>Portia Geach Memorial Award</i> , S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

Collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Queensland University Art Museum, Brisbane
Australian Parliament House, Canberra
Macquarie Bank
Gold Coast Arts Centre
Mosman Art Gallery
Tamworth Regional Gallery, New South Wales

Selected Bibliography

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- 2013 Crawford, Kate, *Lucy Culliton to judge Mosman Art Prize*, Local NSW News, 17 May
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 McDonald, John, *World without end*, Sydney Morning Herald, 24 Aug
 Nicol, Lucy, illustrated by Lucy Culliton, *The Ballad of Dexi Lee*, Jane Curry Publishing, 1 Sep
 Saxby, John, *Hughes Gallery brings sun, sand and surf to inner city Surry Hills*, Sydney Morning Herald, 22 Nov
- 2012 Barrowclough, Nikki, *A blooming career*, Sydney Morning Herald, 14 April
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- 2011 Fortescue, Elizabeth, *At Home in Bibbenluke with Lucy Culliton*, ArtWriter, 10 May
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 McDonald, John, *Portrait of an artist shines in the year of the big head*, Sydney Morning Herald, 9 April

Full CV available on kingstreetgallery.com.au



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May Day 2017 graphite on paper 27x29cm



Reddy 2017 graphite on paper 27x29cm



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