JOHN BOKOR

Everyday World
8 November – 3 December 2016

Front: Just like a chocolate milkshake 2016 oil on board 61x47cm
Still life with milk carton 2016 graphite & gesso 65x50cm

The red oil can 2016 oil on linen & board 25x30cm
Irrepressible vitality, ebullience even, is what characterises John Bokor’s work as painter and draughtsman. He approaches each with the same energy and upbeat enthusiasm. And he manipulates a fully loaded brush, broad palette knife, stick of charcoal or bold graphite stick with uncommon speed and bold economy. Drawing and painting are a joy to him, he cannot have enough of either, nor of what his eyes feast upon – the seeming turmoil of city and suburban streets, cluttered kitchen, dining table or workbench at breakfast or dinner-time, his wife Kirstin, reading or tapping at her laptop, the interior spaces of his own or friends’ houses, studios of fellow artists, or landscapes from the boot of his car.

John is good company, cheerful in adversity, ever hungry for experience. Though at times he expresses doubt, his temperament is otherwise. I first met him in passing 20 years ago, a young man sharing an inner city studio space with another. A few years later I bought a small etching of the railway tracks at Central Station and the Dental Hospital on Elizabeth Street, from a solo exhibition at a Liverpool Street gallery long gone, and have kept an eye out for his work ever since. Like his friends and contemporaries, Joe Frost and Evan Salmon, John Bokor is stirred by what surrounds him, where he lives, by the art of his time and the past, friends, modern masters, unknowns. He is alert, intelligent, enterprising.

Keen to draw inside the NSW State Library, John soon won over the authorities and gained access to draw there as ‘artist-in-residence’ in 2015. He revelled in the cavernous space of the old reading room and its public users, various offices and working-spaces behind-the-scenes, met and drew busy conservators and other staff, filling several sketchbooks and full-sized sheets of good drawing paper with lively confident drawings. Some now belong to the Library. Clearly the State Library has been too rarely sought out as a subject by artists! Apart from its architectural grandeur externally and internally, it has encyclopedic collections, is a centre for all manner of research (including art) and stages many remarkable exhibitions.

Since winning the NSW Parliament Pleinair Art Prize in 2012, John has exhibited more widely than ever, most especially in regional NSW. He has taken part in summer schools, given art classes, various talks about his work and won yet more art prizes. From a ‘relative unknown’ he has acquired an enviable reputation for his unmistakably vivid paintings and drawings, gaining him ever growing numbers of admirers and collectors. Son of a Hungarian-born father and an Australian-born mother, he, like many other Australians of mixed western-European background, can channel the spirit of what he carries within and recast it as part of our national vernacular. The attraction of Europe and England may be strong – art and artists, cities and people – but where he was born and currently lives (Bulli on the south coast) is what fires his imagination and captivates his audience.
Hydrangeas 2016  oil on linen on board  70x60cm

Hot chocolate 2016  oil on canvas  61x51cm
Scandinavia interior 2016 oil on canvas 51x61cm

Still life with wine 2016 oil on linen 80x60cm
The source 2016 oil on canvas 122x107cm

Milk 2016 oil on canvas 61x51cm
Bouquet and lemons  2016  oil on linen on board  35x40cm

The green tablecloth  2016  oil on board  17x13cm

Vase and crackers  2016  oil on linen on board  26x30cm

The yellow plate  2016  oil on linen on board  21x27cm

Purple still life  2016  oil on linen on board  17x13cm

Side table  2016  oil on linen on board  13x17cm

Blue plate still life  2016  oil on linen on board  27x30cm
A good book 2016 oil on canvas 61x51cm
Winter sky 2016  oil on canvas  51x61cm

The centre of town 2016  oil on linen  50x60cm
This page: Crackers 2016 oil on canvas 61x51cm
Opposite page: Temptation 2016 oil on linen on board 61x46cm
The Back Road to Goulburn 2016  oil on canvas  51x61cm

Corner House 2016  oil on canvas  60x76cm

Afternoon Walk 2016  oil on canvas  107x122cm
The more you look at something familiar the stranger it seems.

In this exhibition I paint the things of day to day family life. A cluster of objects on a table, the groceries in the fridge. I am attracted to these things because I see them everyday, they are part of my life.

I don’t go searching for subjects, for me subjects are always close at hand. Painting and drawing my everyday world is a way of trying to understand it, to see past what’s on the surface. I like to leave an element of mystery in my work because in truth, the main subject of any painting is the artist anyway.

BOKOR 2016
The wrong lid 2016  oil on linen on board  61x46cm

Still life with mineral water 2016  oil on canvas  137x112cm
Choc chip muesli bars 2016 oil on canvas 61x47cm
Still life with pen jar 2016 oil on canvas 76x60cm

Turpentine and medium 2016 oil on board 61x51cm
Milk powder 2016 oil on canvas 61x51cm

Jiff and oil can 2016 oil on board 26x20cm
Vanessa’s vase  2016  graphite and gesso  50x65cm

The kitchen sink  2016  charcoal, wash and collage  76x56cm
Recent Solo Exhibitions

2016  
*Everyday Life*  
King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

2015  
*Close to Home*  
King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NSW

2013  
*The Still Life*  
King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

Union Club Sydney NSW [Courtesy of King Street Gallery]

Recent Group Exhibitions

2016  
*Just Draw*  
Newcastle Regional Gallery, NSW

*Tattersalls Landscape Prize*  
Brisbane

*Planting Dreams: Shaping Australian Gardens*  
State Library NSW

*Kedumba Drawing Award, Orange*  
Regional Art Gallery, NSW

2015  
*Drawings from Artist in Residence*  
Amaze The Michael Crouch Gallery, Mitchell Library State Library NSW

*Kings School Art Prize*  
The Kings School, Sydney [winner]

*Mosman Art Prize*  
Mosman Art Gallery and Museum, Sydney

*Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing*  
PLC Sydney

*Just Paper*  
Maitland Regional Art Gallery, NSW

Collections

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria

New South Wales Parliament Art Collection

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NSW

Charles Sturt University Collection, NSW

The Macquarie Group Collection

Maitland Regional Gallery

State Library, NSW

Trinity Grammar School Lismore, NSW

UBS Warburg, Australia

University of Sydney, NSW

University of Wollongong, NSW

Full CV available on kingstreetgallery.com.au

Photo: Julianna Kolenberg
Snap crackle and pop 2016  oil on board  61x47cm

Up the garden path 2016  oil on canvas  61x51cm