

Jill Lewis

Everything Is Connected

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Art has been considered a mirror where glimpses of life's meaning may be experienced. The intricate depictions in Jill Lewis' paintings reflect her deeply philosophical musings. Imbued with a rich texture of otherness, symbolism and imagination, the works defy convention and category. Interior and exterior, visible and invisible, ancient and new, meld together in a lyricism that evokes the power of possibility. Everything is connected!

Melbourne-based Lewis describes the work, *Pegasus Has Landed*, as "about the connections between stories, reality and mythology". The imagery rendered within is also analogous to her creative process. It concerns a fabled winged horse that was credited with the ability to bring forth springs of water wherever its hoof struck the ground. "In my painting, Pegasus has returned from soaring flights of freedom and fantasy," Jill imparts. "He has landed but there are two concurrent results issuing from his striking of terra firma. One is the idea of releasing a spring of inspiration, the other is a 'come back down to earth' reality check." She tells that the various beings, objects and patterns surrounding the mythic creature move in a clockwise direction. "Starting with the artist portrayal at lower right, my thoughts are moving towards the teapot I use as symbol of practical reality, however, it could also be a receptacle patiently waiting to be filled with inspiration. Similar connotations are attributed to the bowl hovering above. Attention is then directed upward by way of the pointed fish to the little man sitting in contemplation. Creative stimulus is often achieved in just quietly observing the world about oneself. Markings emerging from previous paint layers characterise how fragments of the past can still influence the present."



A tranquil atmosphere imbues the *Friends of the Floating Moon* painting. "People who long for a bit of serenity in the world may find each other here and gather as friends amidst this moonlit place," conveys Jill. Head tilted and hair falling, a woman's countenance beckons the viewer. The dusky beige and blue palette contributes to the calm ambience. Afloat within a patch of sea, the mellow full moon shines. Adjacent is a lion's face, symbol of solar power. There is a long-held tradition that celestial bodies affect planet Earth's cycles of tides and seasons, as well as human emotions... everything is connected. The seated figure is a "wise, matronly person" ensconced in peaceful reminiscence. "All patterns and plant forms are reaching towards light and freedom," Jill reveals. "I've also curved them around the canvas in an enveloping, comforting way - like a big hug from Mother Nature. The notion of the moon floating in watery realms is mysterious. I feel it's the start of a new myth waiting to be developed."

Along with allegorical implications that in some cases extend to environmental concerns, each of Jill's canvases share a compositional connectivity in figure, shape and colour placement. She explains that the narrative outcomes rarely begin with a preconceived intent. "They arise intuitively by allowing initial gestural strokes and markings across the surface to stimulate imaginative possibilities. It's rather like looking at cloud formations in the sky or a Rorschach ink blot." Liberated from perspective considerations, her pictorial elements conjoin in a spatial ambiguity that elevates us beyond temporal concerns. We are drawn into imagery synchronously alive in past, present and future realms and recognise that all life is fundamentally connected.

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