

dale rhodes

Small Stories

October 18 – November 1, 2025

Small Stories is Dale Rhodes' inaugural exhibition with Anthea Polson Art. He imparts that its title is somewhat contradictory as his paintings are specifically non-narrative. *Small Stories* relates to the notion of small, seemingly insignificant things having something to say – not in any sense of meaning or message but in providing a visual experience.

The Mullumbimby-based artist says that still life renditions are the perfect genre for him to explore and convey moments of heightened perception. Dale avoids “lavish arrangements and overtly beautiful objects”, preferring to cogitate on everyday items. “Fruit is just a very accessible, convenient, varied and interesting subject. When I see a piece that lights me up I paint it,” he declares. Dale explains that plastic bags, wrapping and labels are all part of the visual world we inhabit and therefore part of his subject matter. “I’m looking for the poetic, the visually transporting things that we are surrounded by and normally pay little attention to.”



In explaining the cloth portrayals in his works he tells, “Drapery has been a central subject in art since before the Renaissance. As with all my images, I choose to depict it simply because of an urge. One day I literally saw a pile of studio cloths and just had to paint them. From a formal point of view, drapery is a wonderful subject. It has almost the same potential for exploring three-dimensional form as does the human figure.”

Centrally placed, Dale’s subjects are surrounded by darkness which he doesn’t consider as merely a backdrop. For him every part of a painting is equally important. “The variegated darkness can lend an intensity, an iconic feel, a stillness,” he relays. “I love very simple, matter of fact compositions.” Dale opines that his painting style is defined less by genre and more by an approach to the media used. “I see very little difference between a still life and a portrait. For me the subject is just a stepping off point for creating shapes, tones, colours and edges on a canvas. I feel I have a lot more in common with some abstract painters than with strict realists.”

“I don’t have a set process and really try to avoid getting one,” Dale continues. “Although drawing is a major part of my practice I never use detailed sketching when beginning an artwork. I enjoy the sense of exploring and prefer pushing the oils around as soon as possible to discover forms. I would like these paintings to serve as windows out of the busy analytical mind and for the viewer to experience moments of heightened perception.”

JACQUELINE HOUGHTON

Dale Rhodes’ paintings have featured in a number of prestigious art prizes including: 2018 Portrait Society of America’s select fifty from over 3,000 international entries; 2017 Archibald Salon de Refuses; 2017 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize Semi-Finalist; 2016 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize; 2016 Lester (Black Swan) Portrait Prize, Art Gallery of Western Australia; 2016 Border Art Prize, Tweed Regional Gallery; 2015 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize Semi-Finalist; 2014 Border Art Prize, Tweed Regional Gallery; 2013 Northern Rivers Portrait Prize, Lismore Regional Gallery. He is represented in private collections overseas and in Australia. His work is in the Tweed Regional Gallery’s permanent collection.

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