

# Lani Westerman

## *The Space Between*

May 2 to May 16, 2026

The paintings in Lani Westerman's second exhibition with Anthea Polson Art are again abstracted, non-figurative depictions of various Sydney locations. This time she has generally focused on sports venues. Westerman relays that the show's title, *The Space Between*, metaphorically refers the interval between an inclination to participate in an activity and its accomplishment. "It is about the transitional state that occurs on the edge of a threshold when the air compresses and time stands still. The void is filled with anticipation, excitement and the unknown. I wanted my paintings to emit these qualities."

"The spaces where the natural and the man-made environment intersect create interesting juxtapositions," Westerman continues. "I strive to capture the essence of a place." Transcending classical landscape traditions, notions of perspective and depth are in flux. The imagery is broken down to serve structural design elements - the emphasis is on geometric purity. Formal considerations and visual relationships are vitally important. Westerman's extraordinary design acumen has doubtlessly been enhanced by her training and practice as an architect for over a decade.



"I am trying to find a balance between the various constituents in my painting, particularly with regard to detailed areas verses flat planes of colour," Westerman imparts. "I think those juxtapositions are key to capturing the notion of the 'space between'. For this exhibition I was also drawn to the use of lines or boundaries to define space." The *Dawn Fraser Baths* work is a prime example of such aspirations. Being the oldest baths in Australia, this swimming pool in Balmain is heritage listed. Geometric white lines in the foreground and those under the timber structure visually relate to those of the yacht masts out in the harbour beyond, unifying the composition.

A more conceptual approach in depicting a venue is witnessed in the *Inner-city B-ball* painting. Set in Prince Alfred Park, another heritage listed locale, the Surry Hills parkland hosts a multitude of outdoor recreational possibilities. Westerman's very abstracted night-time rendition presents a basketball court, tennis courts, bike tracks, abundant green foliage and an incongruously placed glowing street lamp. The abstraction is made all the more evocative by the variations in perspective and divergent size of the components. As with all her works, positioning of the shapes and their colours is paramount.

In the *Prince Alfred Park Pool 3* work similar pictorial devices are apparent. An incongruously large sunshade dominates a composition that is occupied with essentially vertical delineations. The painting's size is in utter contrast to Westerman's usual preference for extremely small artworks on timber board. She tells that she was "encouraged to scale up" and found it quite challenging, given such a size was not conducive to her home studio space. The outcome is rewarding indeed. This rendition of the heated outdoor pool - the first of its kind in Sydney - exemplifies the 'space between' time, visual configurations and imaginings.

JACQUELINE HOUGHTON

Lani Westerman has three of her current exhibition paintings collected by the NSW Parliament. In 2026 she was selected as one of only 12 Finalists in the Malamegi Lab Art Prize, Venice Italy. Other achievements include: 2025 Finalist, Salon des Refuses; 2023 Finalist, S H Ervin Gallery, Sydney; 2023 Finalist, Paddington Art Prize, Sydney; 2023 Winner, Anthea Polson Art Award, Paddington Art Prize; 2009 chosen for the Noel Chettle Memorial Art Prize.

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