

Julie Sundberg & Zorica Purlija

Solace

21 October - 13 November 2021

For many years Julie Sundberg and Zorica Purlija have worked on long term portrait series of their daughters. Without having collaborated or exhibited together, their previous work reveals an uncanny synchronicity. In their latest exhibition, 'Solace' they have both turned from the portrait to landscape, creating layered reactions to place as if in a secret conversation. Without knowledge of the other's work they have used different techniques to show the "virtual space that opens up behind the surface". Both artists have found solace in this process.

Julie Sundberg's 'The River' series was created entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic on her walks by the Cooks River (Goolay'yari). Experimenting with in-camera multiple exposure she constructed imaginary landscapes with different focus and viewpoints within the frame. Metaphors for her failing vision and the fragmented nature of her life which simultaneously became physically smaller and intellectually larger. There is surrender to the chance and randomness of her technique, as a joyful counterpoint to the grim daily news and social controls imposed by lockdown.



Zorica Purlija, Fade Into You, 2021, Archival pigment photo print, 63.5 x 90 cm



Julie Sundberg, Another alphabet, 2020, Photograph, Archival Digital Print, 95 x 70 cm

Parallel to Sundberg's series, Zorica Purlija's 'Fade Into You' reclaims the wholeness we are born with in nature, a connection that has faded with the progress of Western modernisation. The landscape here is of a place imbued with body, memory and life itself. Photographed at Crescent Head, a regular yearly holiday destination for her family, the works are constructed by digitally layering landscape images with portraits of her daughter Yumi. The series shows a symbiotic relationship with nature and reflects this aspect of being both whole and at one with nature - a feeling of connection and belonging in returning to a place of joy.

"Zorica Purlija is a photo artist with a strong personal style. Her images are uniquely her own. Over the years she has embraced landscape, portraiture and abstraction. She has manifested a beautiful colour palette, surrealism and a touch of erotica or, more accurately, it is an expression of being female.

There is a lightness of touch in these rather fragile images. The figure and landscape merge into one as if this declares the natural order of things. They are a kind of a kind of meditation. They pose the idea that as humans we are a part of nature and that we need to embrace and tend nature more carefully. In 'Straight to your Heart' Yumi's presence is large and strong like the tree and sky she is striding forwards through."

- Sandy Edwards, Curator Arthere.



Zorica Purlija, Straight to your heart, 2021, Archival pigment photo print, 90 x 63.5 cm



Julie Sundberg, When I fall into the river of my head, 2020, Photograph, Archival Digital Print, 95 x 70 cm

"Layered and entangled, Julie Sundberg's poetic evocations grow from the sense of wellbeing she found during regular walks by the Cooks River...The River draws on a remedial sense of the eternal that, like the waterway's banks, contains the constant flow of change."

- Alasdair Foster

"Julie Sundberg's work succinctly shows us an antidote for the anxiety and uncertainty of our times. With a career spent exploring the human condition, this series envelops the viewer with the calm that can be found in nature, and the power of grief to move one to a place of serenity."

- Patricia Casey

"Julie Sundberg delves deeply into spaces where time and 'self' are at once elusive, ever-present and timeless. Her images sit in a space that challenge us, lure us in and yet evade our full knowing."

- Looking Glass Zine #21, March 2018.

Julie Sundberg is a Sydney-based photographic artist, with an academic background in art history and literature. Julie has decades of experience in education, stills photography, arts management and community work with a longstanding interest in social justice and storytelling. Her professional life has seen her work with vulnerable people and communities: inmates, the unemployed, the homeless and others relegated to the margins of society.

Insight into the human condition takes visual shape in a broad art practice. In recent years Julie has concentrated on long-term projects related to time, memory and gender. Empathy for those on the margins runs through Julie's art practice and in 'The River' it is directed toward the landscape itself.

Julie regularly exhibits her work, and has been a finalist in Australia's most prestigious photography prizes including the Olive Cotton Award, the Moran Prize, HeadOn Portrait Prize, the Ulrick Award, the National Photographic Portrait Prize, and the Ravenswood Women's Art Prize. Julie's work has been published in PhotoWorld, Black and White Magazine, Doingbird, Looking Glass Zine and FotoNostrum Magazine. Her work is held at HOTA and in private collections in Australia and internationally.



Julie Sundberg. Photograph by Stelios Papadakis.

Zorica Purlija has spent the past twenty years practising as a fine art photographer and raising her family. She is currently based in Sydney. Of Montenegrin heritage, she migrated from Serbia to Australia in 1972 at age 8. Immersed in an unfamiliar culture and language, she learned that the nuances of human interaction were often more revealing than words.

After graduating with distinction in graphic design and photography she travelled to Europe, where she devoted several years to the experience of life and art. In 2020 she completed her Masters of Art in PhotoMedia at the UNSW School of Art and Design.

Zorica's practice is focused on attachments; the psychology and space around our primary relationships and how it impacts the future self. Her work incorporates ethereal elements of landscape and everyday objects seen in new ways. Zorica's art is informed by her feminist values.

Zorica exhibits widely with recent exhibitions in Manhattan, Zurich and Venice. She has been a finalist in the National Photographic Portrait Prize, HeadOn Portrait Prize, the Bowness Award, the Kuala Lumpur Photographic Portrait Award, the Ulrick Award and the Olive Cotton Award.



Zorica Purlija. Photograph by Julie Sundberg.