



'til death
Margaret Ambridge

Margaret Ambridge's exhibition *'til death* is her artistic response to working in palliative care. It is a reflection on the process of dying and endeavours to 'give permission' to all who are affected by it to share their stories.

Working primarily with charcoal Margaret has been a finalist in many major Australian Art prizes including the *Waterhouse* and the *Kedumba Drawing Award*. *'til death* marks her return as a confident voice in Australian drawing, following a decade punctuated by the birth of her children and the death of her parents.

Imbued with the temporal, the arc of life is seen metaphorically not only in the obvious aging of companion flowers, but in the very 'skin' of their petals; translucent, withering, their aging beauty demands acknowledgement. Meaning and reality are fluid, for the giver and the receiver these last vestiges of what we own impinge on us differently. The silk room, an immersive imaginarium built of visions; infused with medication strong enough to contain 'breakthrough pain', but not strong enough to suppress the pain of regret, or the mourning of a life reduced to an intimate unavoidable 'now'. But it's not all pain, the celebration of lives remembered flows in these images, like an old black and white newspaper photograph, somehow the more real for the absence of colour.



Breakthrough | 2017 | pigment ink on silk | ~350cm (diam.) x 160cm

Cover *Hospice—last visit* | 2017 | charcoal on film | 105cm x 105cm

Centre *Bed of roses* | 2017 | charcoal on poly-cotton bed sheet | 180cm x 255cm





What remains #1 | 2017 | charcoal on film | 111cm x 87cm

What remains #2 | 2017 | charcoal on film | 111cm x 87cm

Charcoal, this simple stick, burnt black, provided some of the earliest records of life lived on earth. Its capacity to communicate is, in these works, expanded through thousands of applications and erasures into images dense with emotion, but emotion must come from somewhere. *Under the radar* through the voices of friends and colleagues, in the most simple and direct way opens a door to conversations we all need, but so rarely have. A simple bunch of flowers at the heart of the video begins as blank paper, and over a thousand images later has bloomed and died on that same sheet. Time is everywhere in this work.



'til death | 2016 | charcoal on paper | 105cm x 125cm

Buried under all these layers of charcoal are the moments, the infinite variety of experiences that defined the life of the work, the flowers and their companion owner.

Fallen hair, the fold of a sheet, the way light catches a crushed pillow when your companion of a life time lifts their head; these stains of life are our record.



Helena day 7 tryptich | 2014–2017 | charcoal on film | 111cm x 95cm



What remains provides each of us with an opportunity to contemplate and celebrate those who leave before us, to sleep with the majority.

As with charcoal, the corollary is black and white.



Under the radar | 2017 | stills from single channel video | 15:25 min:sec

Supported by



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