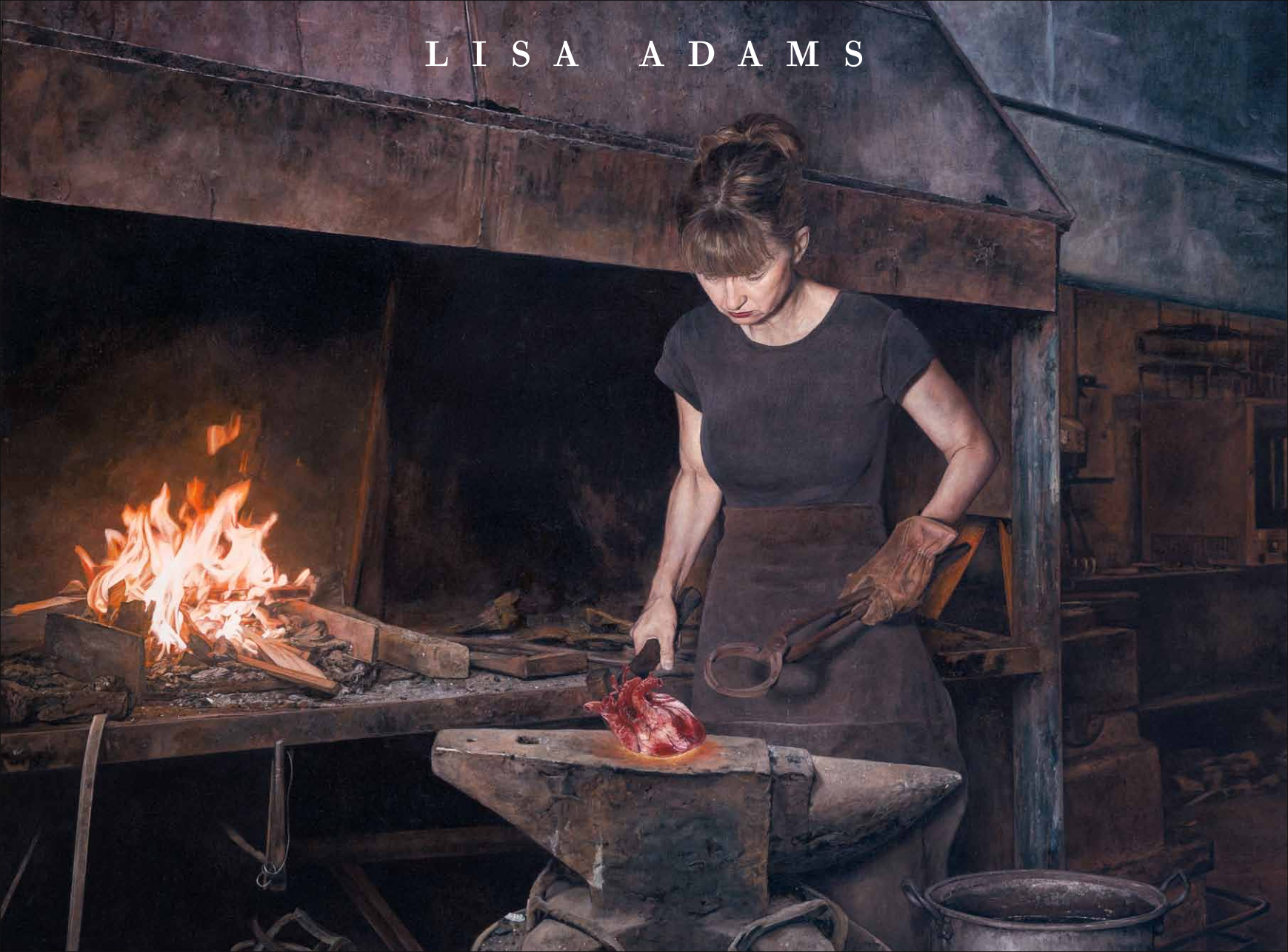


L I S A A D A M S



Art is a lie that tells the truth.

PABLO PICASSO, 1923

IN EACH OF LISA ADAMS' PAINTINGS a cinematic narrative draws the viewer close and holds our attention. Her scenes open to the imagination, directed but never constrained. In these epics, the world looks naturalistic, yet an apocryphal fable unfolds. There is a difficult truth represented in each of these realist paintings that simmers with an emotional intensity magnified by their forensically-detailed construction. In this exhibition, Adams' narratives seem even bigger and more epic than previously, although my perception may be skewed by the endurance test that COVID-19 is proving (even for those of us in Queensland). The frustration in the events of this year only continues to build, with uncertainty taut.

The painting in this exhibition which reaches toward the pandemic conceptually is the most recent, *Deluge*. In this darkening scene, black swans approach. Their lake could be anywhere in the south-east Queensland bush and, in the foreground, the water shows small areas of turbulence, as though the frontrunner vanishes as it nears the edge. The swans refer to a 'black swan event', a low probability/high impact occurrence, evoking the way that the pandemic, no matter how 'expected', takes us by surprise, changing perceptions absolutely, blindsiding belief. The scene is tranquil as swans keep coming, lemming-like, oblivious to what their future may be.

In *Blizzard* we peer over the shoulder of the surgeon in an operating theatre into the X-ray of a female patient. The cavity of her chest contains a snowstorm, in a landscape that

is dark, windy, and cold, taking us into the unknown and unknowable. The biting chaos of human love, a mesmerising inability to predict our emotional, physical or spiritual futures, is evoked here. Like the surgeon, we can't look away from this catastrophic event.

Sacred Heart is a self-portrait that is an expression of vulnerability, yet reaches into art history, Christianity and the Western canon. While it is titled after a Catholic devotion (the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus), it describes the artist's process, "forging the glowing beating heart of a new idea from the furnace of honesty and authenticity ... a quest for archetypal truth". The portrait reflects her single-minded processes, working alone in her home studio/sanctuary, to develop the ideas that carry these canvases during the months of their making. The vulnerability inherent in releasing them to be viewed by others, their ruthless necessity, with barriers erected to be pulled away, are an intriguing insight into this artist's remarkably consistent working life over more than three decades.

Since her last commercial exhibition in 2014, Adams has won the *Glencore Percival Portrait Painting Prize* (2016) and been included in *'Divided Worlds'*, the *Adelaide Biennial of Contemporary Art* (2018). This level of recognition notes her ability to take us on journeys that no one else could conduct. Adams has a sense of urgency and need to communicate, crystallised within her chosen medium, "the slowest and most physically demanding" means of delivery. The truths that emerge from the lie of her art (and its artifice) endure.

LOUISE MARTIN-CHEW, 2020



cover: 5. *Sacred Heart* 2019
OIL ON CANVAS 61.5 × 80 CM

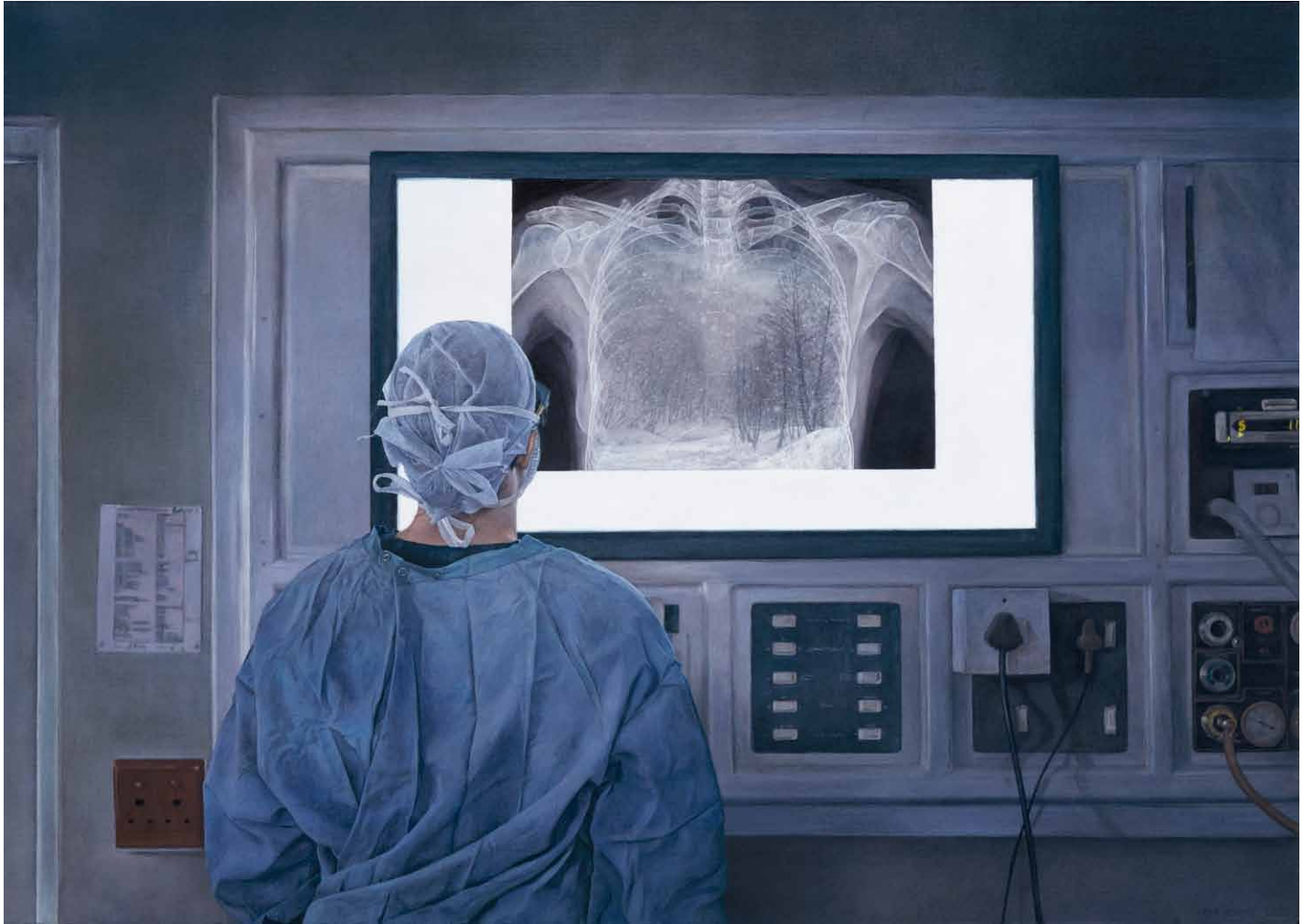
4. *Deluge* 2020
OIL ON CANVAS 66 × 100 CM



8. *Albatross* 2019
OIL ON CANVAS 52.5 × 80.5 cm



7. *Cupid and Psyche* 2019
OIL ON CANVAS 53 × 80.5 cm



9. *Blizzard 2020*
OIL ON CANVAS 53.5 × 75.5 cm

opposite: 2. *Urgent message* 2018
OIL ON CANVAS 75 × 110 cm





3. *The beekeepers* 2017
OIL ON CANVAS 70.5 × 97 cm

opposite: 1. *Storm damage (kintsugi)* 2018
OIL ON CANVAS 83 × 110 cm





10. *Revelation* 2015 OIL ON CANVAS 47 × 70 CM
COLLECTION: Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville

LISA ADAMS
b. 1969

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020, 2014, 2009, 2004
Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane
2000 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1998, 1994 Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *The Shirley Hannan National Portrait Award*,
(finalist), Bega Valley Regional Gallery, NSW
2018 *Divided Worlds: 2018 Adelaide Biennial of
Australian Art*, Art Gallery of South Australia,
Adelaide
2018 *Australian Women Artists*, Philip Bacon
Galleries, Brisbane
2017 *Creatures: Great And Small*, Philip Bacon
Galleries, Brisbane

- 2016 *Wildthing: Animals In Contemporary
Australian Art*, Mosman Art Gallery, NSW
2016 *Glencore Percival Portrait Painting Prize*,
(winner) Perc Tucker Regional Gallery,
Townsville, Qld
2016 *Tattersall's Club Landscape Art Prize* touring
exhibition throughout regional Queensland
2016 *The Landscape 1804-2015*, Philip Bacon
Galleries, Brisbane
2013 *The Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize*
(finalist), SA Museum, Adelaide
2012 *Animal/Human*, UQ Art Museum, Brisbane
2010 *NEW 2010 Selected Recent Acquisitions*, UQ Art
Museum, Brisbane
2008 *Contemporary Australia: Optimism*, Gallery
of Modern Art, Brisbane *Tattersall's Club
Landscape Art Prize*, (winner), Brisbane

- 2004 *Flesh, works from the Alex Mackay Collection
of Erotic Art* toured by Noosa Regional
Gallery, Qld
2003 *People and Places*, Redland Art Gallery, Qld
Central Queensland Art Purchase,
Rockhampton Art Gallery, Qld
Sex & Sexuality, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
Heat, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
2001 *Ready, set ... go!* Global Arts Link, Qld
Conrad Jupiters Art Prize, (finalist), Gold
Coast City Art Gallery, Qld
2000 *Skin Deep*, Pataka Poiriroa Arts and Culture
Centre, Wellington, New Zealand
Cooloolo Shire Public Gallery, Qld
Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
Sunshine Coast University Gallery, Qld
1998 *Conrad Jupiters Art Prize*, (finalist), Gold
Coast City Art Gallery, Qld
Luscious, Cooloolo Shire Public Gallery, Qld
1995 *Direct Sun*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
1994 Breton's Beach, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
1991 *One*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, Vic
10th Anniversary, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
The Surreal Mind, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld
1989 *Selected Survey*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Qld

AWARDS / GRANTS

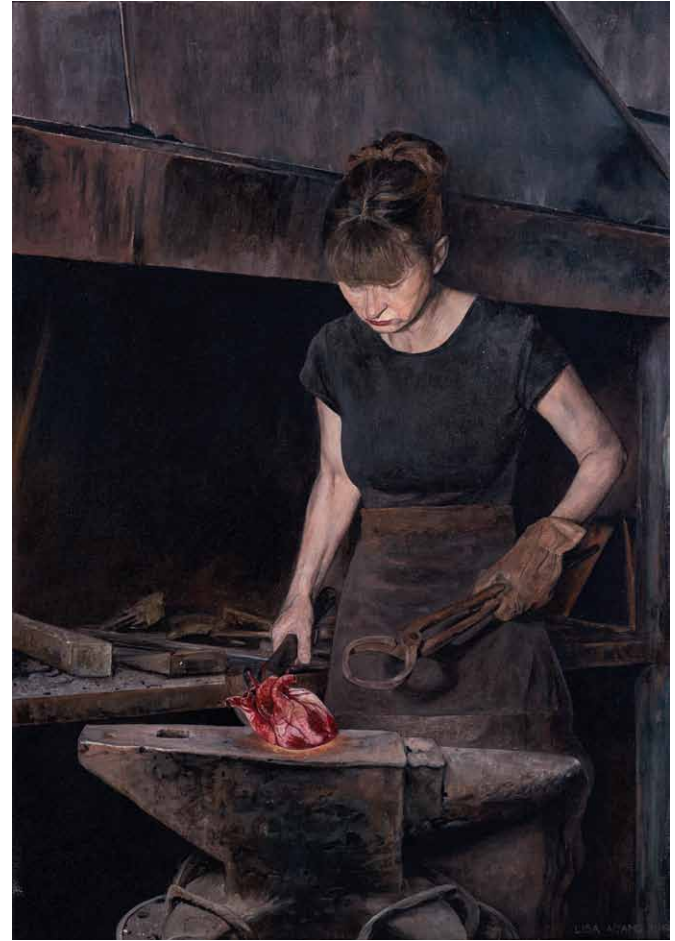
- 2016 *Glencore Percival Portrait Painting Prize*,
(winner) Perc Tucker Regional Gallery,
Townsville, Qld
2008 *Tattersall's Club Landscape Art Prize*, (winner)
2006 "RIPE" *Art and Australia and ANZ Bank
Contemporary Art Award* (finalist)
1997 Regional Arts Development Fund Project
Grant

COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art,
Brisbane
Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville Qld
University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane
QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
Tattersall's Club, Brisbane
Jeffrey Archer Collection, London
Rockhampton Art Gallery, Qld
Noosa Council



11. *Study for 'The beekeepers'* 2017
OIL ON CANVAS 54 × 39 cm



12. *Study for 'Sacred Heart'* 2019
OIL ON CANVAS 50 × 35.5 cm



6. *Inquisition* 2016 OIL ON CANVAS 54.5 × 80.5 cm
COLLECTION: Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide



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EXHIBITION: 13 OCTOBER – 7 NOVEMBER 2020