over and over
Sebastian Di Mauro

Sebastian Di Mauro's work has in the past concerned itself with sculpture and installation through the artist's investigation of three-dimensional space. His trademark use of carpet underlay fashioned into anthropomorphic forms and evocative installations that employ vast quantities of sugar and olive oil to considerable visual and olfactory effect, engage with the sculptural tradition in a unique manner.

Di Mauro's practice has long been dominated by an interest in the metaphysical world. His choice of materials reflects a fascination for their inherent trans-formative powers and capacity to become something other. This new body of work revisits briefly the two-dimensional realm in the context of Di Mauro's oeuvre, through a marriage of painting and photography.

In 2001, the artist was resident at a Parks Victoria studio in rural Victoria for three months. Located on the banks of the Yarra, the wooden house enjoyed an expansive and untamed backyard of natural bush out of which old roses and agapanthus sprung, vestiges of the weight of the human presence.

The artist found it a meditative experience, a challenge to the senses and exhortation to look more closely to the natural world. Di Mauro's work has always eloquently articulated the nature/culture dialogue, through subtle manipulations of natural elements and forms that engage with the artist's own rich cultural heritage and universal concepts.

over and over is made up of three suites that explore recurrent themes for the artist. The photographs, all taken by Di Mauro and delicately painted over with the artist's favourite luminous blue paint (an homage to Yves Klein), are richly layered with meanings and multiple narratives. The juxtaposition of text and simple shapes draws a line between past and present practice.

Di Mauro sourced the material for this new work from his temporary Victorian backyard, lovingly collecting the deciduous bark from the towering gums, soaking it in water and then painstakingly fashioning the yielding timber into folded blankets and pillows which became the subject for the photographs that make up *Home Suite*. Blankets with their allusion to warmth and comfort have appeared before in Di Mauro's work, and they return here as a motif. Here he has used the bark as a reminder that Nature offers we hapless humans food, shelter and clothing alongside many other things, yet we deny her our respect consistently.

Pillows, with their invitation to rest and contemplate, to dream and temporarily leave this world, are a metaphor for transformation and travel, a theme echoed through imagery of weathered luggage stuck high in a tree, or rocking in a tethered boat. These images form *Baggage Suite* with their implication of the artist's own emotional journey. The pillows are both literal, woven from softened bark, and illusory, a floating shape layered upon a photograph of the Parkes dish. *Sky Suite* alludes to the overreaching metaphorical big blue, the unfathomable universe that on some level we all contemplate. In these conflations of raw imagery and poetic text, Di Mauro gently draws attention to our own constant state of flux and the journey we are embarked on by offering us a glimpse of the big picture through small gestures, gentle words and personal imagery.

Alison Kubler

List of works

1. *conduit to the void*

2. *vibration travelled from my feet*

3. *temporal distance*

4. *closed mouths slowly opening*

5. *past the boundary waters*

6. *look into the blur*

7. *drawing in breath*

8. *averting the eyes*

9. *sense of déjà vu*

10. *landscapes become memories*

11. *without communication*

12. *closes over without a scar*

All works
photographs taken by Sebastian Di Mauro
2002, Acrylic paint, giclée print on Somerset rag paper, 100 x 67 cm, edition of 3

$2,750 each

Sebastian Di Mauro is a lecturer at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. His paintings, sculptures, artist books and installations are featured in the collections of many of Australia's key art institutions, including the Queensland Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Brisbane City Gallery and Artbank, Sydney. He was awarded the Aberdere Art Prize from Ipswich Regional Gallery (1991) and the Logan Art Award for painting (1990) and was the Queensland Symphony Orchestra's 'Artist of the Year' in 1989. In September 1998 he launched the monograph, Between Material, an account of his work to date. Since 1987 he has had 28 solo exhibitions and has exhibited in Australia and overseas. In 1998 his work was included in the exhibition Enjoin which was exhibited in Manilla. In 1999 he received a grant – New Work from the Australia Council to develop an installation of sculpture for Brisbane City Gallery in 2000. He won the Inaugural Woollahra Sculpture Prize and his work was selected for the National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition in 2001. He has been asked to develop many public art submissions. 175 Eagle Street is the most significant artwork he has developed for a public space.

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