

MEDIA RELEASE

Esther Stewart: How to Decorate a Dump

Opening 4 June in the Heide Project Gallery, *Esther Stewart: How to Decorate a Dump* presents a colourful, three-dimensional diorama that explores the aesthetics and ethos of DIY home improvements.



Esther Stewart, *Form is Not Fixed* 2016, hand-knotted, pure wool carpet, organic dyes, 194 x 153 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, © the artist, Photograph: Ashley Barber

Esther Stewart's recent paintings and sculptures use geometric designs that while deriving from modernist abstraction also reference the ornamental trappings of architecture and domestic interiors such as awnings, balustrades, lattices and tiles; marble veneers; patterns on carpets, rugs or wood panelling. Often blurring boundaries between art, architecture and design, many of these works also toy with being functional, like her recent sculptures that double as display screens for paintings, and her patterned carpets that can be displayed on the floor or on the wall like paintings.

The exhibition title is borrowed from a 1983 home-renovation book written by New York decorator Philip Almeida. Stewart's interest in 1970s and 1980s DIY home-renovation manuals stems from her fascination with what she calls 'the utopian idea of domesticity'—the desire to create a personalised haven, even when resources are limited and reality falls short of our dreams. Idealised models for living embodied in flat-pack-kit or display homes, dolls houses, pop-up books and theatre sets also inspires Stewart's work. Drawing on these ideas and uniting her sculptural and painting practices, *How to Decorate a Dump* explores decorative vocabularies and the nostalgic fetishising of olden-day styles.

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Esther Stewart, *Grand Gesture* 2016, acrylic on board, 181 x 261 cm (framed size), Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, © The artist, Photograph: Ashley Barber

Located in Heide III, The Kerry Gardner & Andrew Myer Project Gallery displays exhibitions that expose audiences to new and innovative art practice. Such exhibitions foster contemporary art and support an artist by assisting them to make new work and to extend their practice at a formative stage in their career.

Artist Esther Stewart and curator Sue Cramer are available for interview.
High-res images are available upon request.

EXHIBITION

Esther Stewart: How to Decorate a Dump
Kerry Gardner & Andrew Myer Project Gallery
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Saturday 4 June – Sunday 11 September 2016

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Museum Opening Hours:
Tuesday – Sunday, 10am-5pm
Closed Mondays, except public holidays