



## Foreword

### Jessica Bridgfoot

In September 2019 at Bendigo Art Gallery I had the great pleasure of presenting Jahnne Pasco-White with Australia's richest open painting prize. The youngest artist to win the Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize, Pasco-White's work *messmates #1* entered one of the oldest public collections in Australia.

The Prize is run biennially and presents a rich and varied in-depth survey of some of the most exciting, new contemporary painting from a wide cross-section of emerging and established Australian artists. Alumni include Stieg Piersson, Dale Frank, Tim Johnson, Chris Bond, Jan Nelson and Margaret Loy Pula. Presenting the award on the night former chair of the Australia Council for the Arts, Rupert Myer AO, commented that as an acquisitive competition, the Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize is unique in that it 'gives encouragement to artistic endeavour, creativity, contemporary expression and adds to the [Bendigo Art Gallery's] excellent collection.'

Indeed, as the panel of judges were deliberating, there was a lot of excitement around Pasco-White and her work as well as ambitions of supporting early career artists. In awarding the Prize, the judges' variously described *messmates #1* as:

'[...] visceral, raw, layered and vibrant with an incredible surface texture and palette';

'[...] painting that pushes the limits of the medium itself'; and  
'[...] emblematic of the artist's life and current practice, and reflects the complexity of contemporary life as a female artist.'

Having visited Pasco-White's studio earlier in the year, her raw, intuitive canvasses had left an indelible mark. I was struck by the confidence in her mark making and the honest, messy reality of new motherhood laid bare on her canvas. We discussed female greats including Louise Bourgeois, Joan Mitchell and Helen Frankenthaler—whose impacts on contemporary art were profound—and the residue of their influence in Pasco-White's work. How thrilling to encounter a young ambitious artist addressing the themes of pregnancy, birthing and mothering through large-scale abstraction and then to welcome her work into the collection of Bendigo Art Gallery to inspire future generations.

Democratizing access to scholarly research on contemporary art, this edited collection provides a wonderful opportunity to explore Pasco-White's work in depth in the formative stages of her artistic trajectory.

**Jahnne Pasco-White: Kin**

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N.A.J. Taylor is greatly indebted to each of the contributors to this volume—and the peer reviewers—for meeting every editorial demand made of them during an extraordinarily difficult 18-month period, both individually and collectively. One of the joys of editing this book has been to document the grace and grit of his partner Jahnne as an artist, whilst observing these same qualities being developed in her mothering of Oslo. His own mother, Jan, deserves special praise for her editorial assistance. He would also like to acknowledge Simon Hayman and Samantha Lynch at Hayman Design and the team at Art Ink, as well as Norie Neumark and Jan Hendrik Brüggemeier at *Unlikely: Journal for Creative Arts*, for agreeing to co-publish this volume.

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