

WHAT NOW?

You've recently made the move to Los Angeles. How's it breaking you?
I moved to West Hollywood in February this year with my wife Sarah and am represented by the Heather James Fine Art Gallery. The gallery deals with new and secondary work from Andy Warhol, Picasso, Yves Klein and Damien Hirst. It has spaces in Palm Desert and Jackson Hole here in the States and I have a sub-gallery at the Paul Davies gallery in January 2013.

Can you tell us about the show at nightclubbing Palm Springs has been a big inspiration for your work?
I have made many trips to California in the past and the modern architecture for inspiration for my paintings and found similarities with modernist architecture in Australia.

It's great to be based in LA because it makes travel to Europe and the UK more accessible for exhibitions and visiting galleries, while remaining close to Australia. Travel is also a big part of the inspiration for my work and being in LA is great for this reason.

How does this position for Palm Springs and travel and its influence manifest in your work?

Travel is an important part of my work partly because I like staying in new places and meeting people but also to observe similarities in architecture and landscapes. I've used the modern architecture of Palm Springs for inspiration for my paintings and found similarities with modernist architecture in Australia, due to the mid-century modernism and warm climate. For me the paintings are meant to be ambiguous. These elements are actual locations, however they are collaged on the picture through wanting to create fictitious scenes.

An important element in my method is photographing source material. These images are taken at various locations to objectively record my presence at a particular site. However this objectivity becomes blurred once I manipulate the image by hand, for example with stretching and collage.

When I think of Palm Springs I think Joshua Tree and the kind of mysticism that surrounds it - does this aspect of the landscape inform your work?

Yes, the first time I visited Joshua Tree was in high school with my family. Mom and dad were kind of

PAUL DAVIES

happy and since the music of that era, we grew there and experiencing the place first hand was exciting as a kid. Sarah, my wife, and I went back a couple of years ago for a great road trip and the landscape is vast and huge like.

There are a lot of other influences at play in your work aside from travel, including many from design and architecture. Where do you draw inspiration?
Most of my inspiration is from nature, as I enjoy being outdoors and my family didn't have a TV till I was about 14. I have a kid and that has struck with me too. I also photograph buildings at various places and collage them with the natural landscape photos to create idealised scenes. The paintings remind me of the places I've been to since then, however I hope that as they are devoid of human form the viewer is invited to generate their own response.

The street I have moved to in West Hollywood is packed with many styles of architecture across the road to the Charlie Heard built for Charles Chaplin and his parents back in the 1920s and in the next street is Schneider's modernism house built around the same time. I find it interesting that these styles can coexist and tell different stories of the occupants.

Lara Johnson

Paul Davies, *Melrose Cathedral*
March 2013. Art by on line
121 x 160cm
www.pauldavies.com

New work by Paul Davies is exhibited at Sophie Gordon
Gallery in Melbourne from 18 November to 13 December
2014.

