

alex wanders —
modern times

02.06.23 —
26.06.23

handmark





Modern Times is an exploration in paint of some of Hobart's mid-century modernist architectural landmarks. These unique places embody many of the ideals and aspirations of the modernist project while at the same time reflecting the constraints and limitations of regionalism. Part nostalgia, part observation and part invention, the paintings in this exhibition are an invitation to re-visit and reconsider these singular structures which have helped shape our local urban and cultural landscape over the past 60 or so years.

Each of these locations has something of the comfortable familiarity of an old friend. Some project a delightful sense of whimsy and playfulness, while others are more restrained and thoughtful. Some have been altered and re-shaped, some have suffered from neglect and disrepair, and some have remained much as they were when they were first constructed. Together they are a continuing reminder of how the creative impulse can help define and enhance our experience of place.

The imagery in this exhibition has been pared back and presented in such a way as to acknowledge that there has been a shift in how we might understand and interact with each of these modernist structures. While we can still enjoy the breezy optimism and inventiveness which fuelled their design and construction, our experience of them is now tainted by a sense of nostalgia - times have changed and contemporary life seems perhaps a little more complex, uncertain and introspective than it did back then.

I've included colonial architecture in this exhibition as an acknowledgement that the ideas and values of the Enlightenment which were the foundation of Modernism also helped shape some of the nobler ambitions of the early colony.

new
paintings

02.06.23 —
26.06.23



Modern Times features the futuristic space age fountain at the centre of what is known colloquially as the Hobart Railway Roundabout or more recently, the ABC Roundabout. Built in 1963, the fountain was designed by Geoff Parr and marks the place where a number of Hobart's major transport corridors converge. In 2015 it was voted the World's Best Roundabout by the UK Roundabout Appreciation Society.

modern times

2022

acrylic on canvas
107 x 107 cm
\$7,500



When it opened in 1962 the Cat & Fiddle Arcade provided a pleasant uncluttered space complete with a fountain and seating where families could take a leisurely break from city shopping. Although the original design of the arcade has now been altered, visitors can still enjoy the hourly chiming of the clock and watch the mechanised display of the Cat & Fiddle nursery rhyme.

cat & fiddle arcade

2022

acrylic on canvas
107 x 107 cm
\$7,500



Esmond Dorney's 1959 Jarvis House is located above Bellerive beach and provides sweeping views of the Derwent River and the city of Hobart. Its roof is a series of shallow arches which echo the curves of sand dunes and surrounding hills. Optimistic and outward looking, the homes' large view windows encourage its inhabitants to fully enjoy the pleasures of coastal living.

jarvis house

2022

acrylic on canvas
107 x 107 cm
\$7,500



The giant arch of the Riverfront Motel was originally constructed to celebrate the 1945 visit of Queen Elizabeth II. Complete with a royal crown at its apex and standing almost 16 metres high, the arch was placed over the road at the lower end of Liverpool Street in Hobart. Once the visit was over the arch was removed and fell into disrepair, eventually to be salvaged, restored and re-erected in 1960 by the owners of the Riverfront Motel in Rosetta.

riverfront motel

2022

acrylic on canvas

107 x 107 cm

\$7,500



The austere facade of Dirk Bolts 1962 Long Beach Bathing Pavilion is decorated with a nine panel sculptural frieze designed by Ronald Sinclair. Said to be inspired by the playful shapes of children's sand sculptures, Sinclair – a local furniture designer, had each of the concrete panels cast in the beach sand directly in front of the pavilion. A café was planned for the second storey of the pavilion but was never built.

long beach bathing pavilion

2022

acrylic on canvas

107 x 107 cm

\$7,500



Built in 1959 the Hobart Olympic Pool was an open air swim centre which featured a 10 metre high diving tower at the pools 'deep end'. There was also a shallow wading pool for young children and a spacious grassed area suitable for playing and sunbaking. The pool was eventually re-modelled and re-opened as the Aquatic Centre in 1997.

hobart olympic pool

2022

acrylic on canvas

107 x 107 cm

\$7,500



'Lenah Valley' is a personal response to one of Tasmania's most enigmatic colonial landmarks – Lady Jane Franklin's 1843 reconstruction of a Greek temple in Lenah Valley. Originally intended as a centre of culture and learning in the fledgling colony, the museum's collection was dispersed in 1853 and the building and surrounding botanical garden fell into disrepair. Today, encircled by an ever expanding suburbia, this colonial landmark quietly encapsulates some of the ambitions, contradictions and tragedies of colonization.

lenah valley

2023

acrylic on canvas

107 x 107 cm

\$7,500



My Harvest Home is based on John Glover's painting of the same name but doesn't share in the sunny optimism of Glover's original image, hinting instead at the complexities and questions which lie beneath its surface. My painting includes Glover's homestead which, along with the convict harvesters, bullocks and cart all but crowd out the fertile plains and wooded hills which, even today, contain traces of a long and careful tending by the original inhabitants of the land.

my harvest home

2023

acrylic on canvas

107 x 107 cm

\$9,500



colony

2022

acrylic on canvas

92 x 62 cm

\$5,500



twilight
2023

acrylic on canvas
62 x 92cm
\$5,500



study for my harvest home
2023

acrylic on canvas
62 x 92 cm
\$5,500
