

Media Release – Draft

Jacek Wankowski 28 October to 13 November 2009

Private View 27 October 2009

ECHOES OF A DISTANT TIDE

There is something fascinating about the underwater world, the strange, fragile life forms that live there and the huge forces of tide and current that surge around them. As a teenager, Australian artist Jacek Wankowski filled his parents' home with aquaria containing everything from pike to piranhas. He went on to read marine zoology at university, obtain a doctorate in fisheries biology and lead fisheries research teams in Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Many years later, Jacek returned to another early love, art, and he now combines both of these obsessions to produce almost-sentient steel sculptures inspired by the varied forms of marine animals and abstract paintings that capture the violence and strength of the sea.

The sculptures and paintings will be exhibited together for the first time in Jacek's second London solo show opening at the Coningsby Gallery on Wednesday 28 October. The exhibition will offer a new perspective on the underwater world and a chance for gallery visitors to immerse themselves in it without getting wet!

Jacek's sculptures range from large scale, outdoor pieces to smaller, intimate works. They reflect his passion for exploring how the external forms of small sea creatures are dictated by their complex internal structures and how they reflect the tension generated by their interaction with, often violent, environmental forces.

Although grounded in biological forms – of creatures such as molluscs, sea hares, copepods, rotifers, barnacles and nereid worms – the sculptures are abstract interpretations, unambiguously hard-edged in their surfaces, construction and mass. As a result, each piece embodies the steely spirit of an industrial object even while describing the essential structure of a living organism.

Jacek's fascination with the marine environment is also reflected in his paintings. In this medium, however, his inspiration comes not from the living creatures of the ocean but from the dynamic flow and clash of wider oceanic currents and environmental forces and the resulting geographic features - archipelagos, island arcs, seaweed forests, deep-water hydrothermals and coastal landforms.

Real-life representations in this work are deliberately elusive, fleeting and changeable such that apparent associations of forms and events are often coincidental. Abstracting and distorting reality, the paintings are full of movement and elusive light or bold flashes of sudden bright colour.

The paintings and sculptures provide perfect foils for each other, at the same time working together to present complementary facets of the complex, and increasingly threatened, marine environment.

Since graduating in 2006 from the National Art School in Sydney, Jacek has exhibited internationally in both Australia and the UK. His work is in private collections in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. A collection of images of his work can be found on Jacek's website at www.straylightstudio.com

What: **Echoes of a distant tide – painting and sculpture by Jacek Wankowski ARBS**

Where: The Coningsby Gallery, 30 Tottenham St., LONDON W1T 4RJ

When: Wednesday 28th October to Friday 13th November. 10am to 6pm Monday-Sunday
Private View Tuesday 27th October 6:30-8:00pm

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