

The Art Life

"...it's just like saying 'the good life'"

(<https://theartlife.com.au/>)

Meet me at arms length

ART LIFE (<https://theartlife.com.au/category/art-life/>), REVIEWS
(<https://theartlife.com.au/category/art-life/reviews-art-life/>)

| Nov 22, 2010 | 2 Comments (<https://theartlife.com.au/2010/meet-me-at-arms-length/#comments>)

Sharne Wolff encounters the warmth, humour and the little bit of scary in Julie Fragar's Brisbane commercial gallery debut...

The first thing I notice about **Julie Fragar's** new exhibition at **Bruce Heiser Gallery**

(<http://www.heisergallery.com.au/current.html>) is the colour. On a humid afternoon in Brisbane the exhibition has a fresh, almost tropical air about it – from the swimmer in the vivid blue pool of '*Making It Work/Working it Out*' (in the window of the Gallery and visible from the street) – to the pinks, blues, yellows and greens of the seductive oil palette and a bright orange text work painted directly onto the Gallery wall. Although she's not a native Queenslander, Fragar is now based in Brisbane and the exhibition somehow feels like it belongs here.

(http://theartlife.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/SLOW_LANE_SLOW_LANE_ETC_ETC_2010.jpg)

Julie Fragar, *Slow Lane ETC ETC*, 2010. Oil on board, 60x40cms.

Fragar's exhibition *Meet Me at an Arms Length* is the artist's first solo show with Bruce Heiser and is the culmination of a good year for the artist. She currently has works in 'Primavera' at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and was included in '*Wilderness: Balnaves Contemporary Painting*' at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in March. Not a bad effort for any young artist and it seems to demonstrate that Fragar has the right kind of fans.

Fragar has often used text in her work and '*Meet me at an Arms Length*' functions as word play for this show as it explores the dual notions of the act of painting itself, and the personal nature of the works. Fragar paints autobiographical subjects that often include portraits of herself and her family. In many of her figurative paintings the artist discloses something of her intimate world to the viewer without ever letting us too close. She apparently uses found photographs as a medium for exploration in her autobiographical

works. The photograph is then reworked like a physical rewriting of history or an edited memory. This act is the equivalent of a double construction and perhaps hints at the fact that there can never be one single truth.

(http://theartlife.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/fancy_vivid_pink_diamond_meets_him_at_an_arms_length_2010.jpg)

Julie Fragar, Fancy vivid pink meets him at arms length, 2010.
Oil on board, 60x40cms.

The subject matter of many of the works here is quite personal – it includes Fragar’s immediate family, her husband and children. Metaphors for relationships abound. Cactus and succulent plants are a favourite for family relationships. Prickly on the outside but succulent at heart is pretty much a universal theme of family, although still an innovative means of presentation. The agave in ‘*Untitled (Agave)*’ is more sensual and smooth.

Fragar also uses a number of devices in her painting including the addition of the text layer in ‘*Slow Lane Slow Lane*’ or the yellow over-painting in ‘*Low Light*’ that encourage the viewer to eventually look beyond the surface of the picture. In other works, such as ‘*The Idiots*’ and ‘*Untitled (Self portrait with white dot)*’ we are stopped in our tracks by the white dots on the surface of the paint as if we are not permitted to enter or, as suggested by the title, are being kept at an arms length. In ‘*Kind of Woman*’ and ‘*Fancy Vivid Pink Diamond Meets Him at an Arms Length*’, the artist has completely fractured the underlying image with the shattered pieces of other ‘whole’ paintings (often self portraits) that never really existed on their own. They have the effect of directing the viewer toward the centre of the painting before trying to put the pieces back together.

‘*Undercover Self Portrait*’ is an interesting work combing the elements of painterly touch with family intimacy. It’s an emotional work just asking for touch and simultaneously hiding from the viewer. I found it funny and warm and just a little bit scary – perhaps like some family relationships and the theme of the show itself. Like many of the other works in the show, this work is decidedly feminine without being overly sentimental.

Julie Fragar

‘*Meet Me at an Arms Length*’

Heiser Gallery Brisbane (<http://www.heisergallery.com.au/current.html>)

Until 4 December 2010.

Tags : commercial galleries (<https://theartlife.com.au/tag/commercial-galleries/>) , painting (<https://theartlife.com.au/tag/painting/>)



YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

(<https://theartlife.com.au/2006/adrift-in-metaville/>)

Adrift In Metaville (<https://theartlife.com.au/2006/adrift-in-metaville/>)

REVIEWS ([HTTPS://THEARTLIFE.COM.AU/CATEGORY/ART-LIFE/REVIEWS-ART-LIFE/](https://theartlife.com.au/category/art-life/reviews-art-life/)) | Aug 23, 2006

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

(<https://theartlife.com.au/2009/ladies-love-a-nice-unicorn/>)

Ladies love a nice unicorn (<https://theartlife.com.au/2009/ladies-love-a-nice-unicorn/>)

ART LIFE ([HTTPS://THEARTLIFE.COM.AU/CATEGORY/ART-LIFE/](https://theartlife.com.au/category/art-life/)) , NEWS
([HTTPS://THEARTLIFE.COM.AU/CATEGORY/NEWS/](https://theartlife.com.au/category/news/))

| Aug 05, 2009

NO IMAGE AVAILABLE

(<https://theartlife.com.au/2015/surrealism/>)

Surrealism (<https://theartlife.com.au/2015/surrealism/>)

ART LIFE ([HTTPS://THEARTLIFE.COM.AU/CATEGORY/ART-LIFE/](https://theartlife.com.au/category/art-life/)) , EXHIBITIONS
([HTTPS://THEARTLIFE.COM.AU/CATEGORY/EXHIBITIONS/](https://theartlife.com.au/category/exhibitions/))

| Apr 27, 2015

2 COMMENTS

Pingback: Tweets that mention Meet me at arms length | The Art Life -- Topsy.com

([http://topsy.com/trackback?](http://topsy.com/trackback?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftheartlife.com.au%2F%3Fp%3D4240&utm_source=pingback&utm_campaign=L2)

[url=http%3A%2F%2Ftheartlife.com.au%2F%3Fp%3D4240&utm_source=pingback&utm_campaign=L2](http://topsy.com/trackback?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftheartlife.com.au%2F%3Fp%3D4240&utm_source=pingback&utm_campaign=L2))

Pingback: News & Reviews | Julie Fragar (<http://juliefragar.com/?p=57>)

LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

POST COMMENT

CASUAL DISCLAIMER

All original posts and other content on The Art Life, [including its name, url and other tags, bylines and identifiable material] remain the copyright of the editor and/or individual contributors. Want to contact The Art Life? Contribute? Email us: the art life [at] hot mail dot com

UNDER THE HOOD

Log in (<https://theartlife.com.au/wp-login.php>)

Entries RSS (Really Simple Syndication) (<https://theartlife.com.au/feed/>)

Comments RSS (Really Simple Syndication) (<https://theartlife.com.au/comments/feed/>)

WordPress.org (<https://wordpress.org/>)

THIS IS WHERE WE COME TO BE ALONE