

Patricia Piccinini

*Chromatic Balance*

16 November – 14 December 2019

*We spend a lot of time searching for balance in the world. There is something inherently satisfying in balance. This might have something to do with how difficult it is to find or achieve it. What interests me about balance is that while it appears to be static – a motionless moment perfectly poised between two states – it is actually completely dynamic. Balance is achieved, it is held and maintained, it must be cared for. We fall out of balance, not into it.*

*For this exhibition, I have created a series of works that attempt to capture this dynamically static possibility. These are works that balance between two worlds, between colours, between readings.*

*Shoeforms are a new series of sculptures that are related to my longstanding interest in a concept of naturalised technology. I'm very interested in looking at ways of representing fecundity in the most expanded sense. Life, abundance, diversity, fertility, reproduction, parenthood – all these ideas animate the world that I am trying to make – just as they animate the world around us. In much of my work I am looking for different ways to celebrate life and a different kind of beauty.*

*In their surreal blending of elements that never quite settle in one category, Shoeforms suggest all these ideas. These are works that talk about nature in a world where technology is inescapable and inevitable, perhaps even ineffable. How do we find a balance between nature and humanity that is both realistic and hopeful? How can we find the good in human activity without excusing all the terrible?*

*The Balance, which is the central work in this exhibition, is a continuation of a project that explores this dynamic, also by using this trope of naturalised technology. This work imagines technological wildlife, with its own ecology, as a metaphor for the Anthropocene. Like the works that preceded it, The Balance draws from the history of depicting animals in art as expressions of forces at play in the world. Unlike the classical sculpture that inspired it, this work occurs in a world where the balance between humans and the rest of nature is turbulent and precarious. Human culture now has the power to effect nature but at the same time it lacks the ability to control the outcomes of that effect. We can shift the climate, but we cannot influence the consequences of that shift.*

*The Balance depicts two creatures intertwined in a clinch. There is an ambiguous equality in the dynamic of the moment. It is hard to tell if this is a fight to the death or a playful embrace. Whatever the situation, we can see a strong connection between the two creatures, with their gazes locked together. Perhaps the next movement will show us the direction that this relationship will take, but in this moment we find them balanced.*

*This moment plays out again as a backdrop of a new series of Panelworks. These works are unselfconsciously formal. They amplify the formal and chromatic aesthetics of car culture, celebrating the balance between everyday life and the world of art. These particular panelworks move away from the patchwork approach of my earlier work towards a blend of colours. They shift across the spectrum, never really settling in one place. Often they are looking to find a way to balance a number of chromatic inputs. In a complex world, one colour will never be enough.*

– Patricia Piccinini, November 2019

Patricia Piccinini gratefully acknowledges the support of the Faculty of VCA + MCM,  
University of Melbourne in her research.