



Marnie Wark

Let No Flower of Spring Pass By Us

Peter Walker Fine Art (Walkerville, South Australia)

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Written by Emma-Kate Wilson

Finding hope within colour, Marnie Wark's new collection came from a deeply personal reflection, facing both individual loss and a community confusion in a COVID-world that cultivated sorrow on a global level. However, this profound reaction to her own grief inspired a change in Wark's perspective; clarity formed, exposing a new way to see life.

The abstract artist realised that from loss comes an appreciation for what is left. As the entire world faces uncertainty in the aspects around them, turning inwards, and at your closest loved ones, is a grateful reminder of what remains. Life needs to be interrupted to be understood.

Wark was inspired to turn to the Tibetan Book of Life, which encourages facing death—an unpreventable aspect of existence—can bring hope. Searching deeply, the artist has directed this new-found perspective into her palette, employing a composition of earthy vibrancy of warm colours layered with black and white.

The colours dance across the canvas, active and ready, the balance of tones and gestures fulfilling a sense of engagement, coming through as Wark's profound shift on life. The contrasts of black and white redirect the eye. A metaphor for reality, the artist believes colour is brighter when you have known black.

This juxtaposition highlights the decisive use of shadow and light as two extremes, as the artist works intuitively across the canvas. Painterly form is expanded on as the brushstrokes leave their evidence, an extension of humanness; while the mechanical spray paint punctures the works with markers of the streets.

Allowing the paintings to come together organically, and to prevent overworking, Wark applies the first layer and then put the works aside, the addition of aerosol paint supporting her desire to create a feeling of flow and immediacy. The final clean-lined shapes created by a masking stencil bringing stillness to the composition.

After spending time in NYC in September last year, and the closely followed lockdown that shut down the city that never sleeps, Wark looked at her travels in a novel way. The texture and rich colours of the streets now juxtaposing the lack of human activity that once defined it. The artist set out to capture her impression and the heart of experience.

While in NYC, Wark was profoundly moved when she saw Paul Jenkins' painting *The Prophecy* (1956) at the Guggenheim. "The turbulent intensity and breathless urgency of this artwork totally resonated with me and has inspired this show," says the artist. As such, this new series brings together those elements of formal abstract expressionism and unsolicited public art that serves as a reminder for the vitality of life.

However, this new series is bigger than Wark's experience in New York, as the artist now muses on the contrasting city busy life versus her calm studio in the Barossa. Wark captures energy and the hope in change using her palette to do so; aerosol reflecting the flow and immediacy of graffiti, and expressive brushstrokes capturing the human motion.

www.marniewark.com

www.peterwalker.com.au/marnie-wark-bio.html