

Decorative Paintings

Elizabeth Pulie commenced her Decorative Paintings project in 1988, though it was only defined as such retrospectively in 2012. It became the first of four distinct, self-assigned conceptual projects over the course of Pulie's career.

Established originally as a life-long commitment, the project gradually and unofficially concluded in 1999, by which time it comprised nearly 200 paintings. Each work is titled with a number, mapping Pulie's significant output numerically. Arranged chronologically, this selection is bookended by *One* 1988 and *One hundred and ninety* 1999, and ranges from multi-panel installations to much smaller individual works. Building to a crescendo of production and grandeur around 1995, the Decorative Paintings project slowed thereafter, ending with relatively quaint compositions.

Pulie conceived Decorative Paintings to both affirm and criticise the increasing use and understanding of art as decoration. Deliberately devoid of meaning, her intention for these hyper-aesthetic paintings was to both incorporate decorative motifs and to decorate the spaces they were exhibited in, positing pure decoration as art and inserting it into high art contexts. The adopted decorative styles vary, including Art Deco, Chinese Ornament, Folk Art, and Mid-century Modern, and are borrowed from a range of sources, most notably *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856) by Owen Jones.

Much like the Conceptual Art movement, Pulie eventually perceived her Decorative Paintings project as a failure because its intended criticality was accepted and absorbed by the art world. Nonetheless, the questions posed by this project and its craft sensibility have survived her entire practice, laying the groundwork for her formal and conceptual developments.

One 1988

Acrylic on canvas

Three 1989

Acrylic on canvas

Ten 1990

Acrylic on canvas

Eleven 1990

Acrylic on canvas

Twenty-three 1990

Acrylic on canvas

Twenty-six 1991

Acrylic on canvas

Twenty-nine 1991

Acrylic on canvas

Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art.
Purchased 1992

Thirty-three

1991

Acrylic on canvas

Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art.
Purchased 1992

Forty-seven 1992

Acrylic on canvas

Fifty-three 1992

Acrylic on canvas

Fifty-five 1992

Acrylic on canvas

Private collection: Luke Sandral, Sydney

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney,
except where noted

Small paintings (1–58) 1995

Acrylic on craftwood

Decorated Wall (One hundred and twenty-five to One hundred and forty-nine) 1995

Acrylic on canvas

Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchased with the assistance of Dr Edward Jackson AM and Mrs Cynthia Jackson AM, 1996

One hundred and fifty 1995

Acrylic on canvas

One hundred and fifty-one (Vicente) 1995

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, except where noted

One hundred and sixty-nine 1996

Acrylic on canvas

One hundred and seventy 1996

Acrylic on canvas

One hundred and seventy-one 1996

Acrylic on canvas

One hundred and seventy-eight 1996

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

One hundred and seventy-nine
(Buildings) 1996

Acrylic on canvas

One hundred and eighty-four
(Field) 1998

Acrylic on board

Private Collection: Stephen Lawson

One hundred and eighty-six
(Red Flower Study) 1999

Acrylic on craftwood

One hundred and ninety
(Blue Flower Study) 1999

Acrylic on craftwood

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, except where noted

Interim Works

Interim Works loosely categorises works developed by Elizabeth Pulie between 1997 and 2012 that do not fit neatly into her main three conceptual projects. During this period, Pulie made and exhibited works that had no deliberate or immediate connection to each other. Despite overlapping chronologically with her Decorative Paintings and Relational Art projects, the Interim Works are considered ancillary tangents – the products of personal whims, artist residencies, and unique exhibition impetuses. Due to its loose parameters, Pulie was free to explore ideas and forms in uninhibited ways. In retrospect, Interim Works represent Pulie's most natural expressions as an artist. Several ideas and motifs from this period are later revisited and evolve in Pulie's End of Art project.

Wood and Stone 1997

Wood, stone beads, wire, and metal rod

Collection: Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, Perth

Point 2000

Acrylic on canvas

Forgotten Paintings 1–5 c.2000

Acrylic on board

Freehand Over Landscape 2002

Acrylic on canvas

Language of Love (I) 2003

Language of Love (II) 2003

Gouache on paper

Female Form Drawing (I) 2003

Ink on paper

Rescue 2003

Line 2003

Gouache on paper

Uddiyana Banda (1) 2003

Pencil and ink on paper

Uddiyana Banda (2) 2003

Uddiyana Banda (3) 2003

Pencil and gouache on paper

Leopold Wall Painting Study 2004

Gouache and pencil on paper

Taller than before 2004

Acrylic and pencil on canvas

Collection: Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Liverpool

Josie 2005

Angelo 2005

Pencil and gouache on polyester

T.A.L 2006

Pencil and ink on paper

D.N.D.T.S 2006

Pencil and gouache on paper

Intruder (I) 2006

Intruder (II) 2007

Gouache, pencil on polyester

Signature Painting (II) 2008

Acrylic on linen

Foyer 2009

Acrylic and oil stick on canvas

Death of Art Series 1 2010

Pencil, oil stick and acrylic on linen

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, except where noted

Relational Art

In 1996, French critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term 'relational aesthetics', which he later defined as "A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space."

In 2002, Elizabeth Pulie commenced her Relational Art project, departing from painting to consider the social and political dimensions of practice. Within this project, Pulie established and operated a range of social enterprises. Her first initiative was Front Room, an artist-run gallery co-directed with Jay Balbi in the front room of their Chippendale home from March 2002 to December 2003. In 2003, Front Room was accompanied by a concurrent exhibition programme in Pulie's kitchen, aptly titled 'Kitchen', from where the table in this room is borrowed. The combined programmes resulted in fifty exhibitions by nearly forty artists who were not commercially represented.

Pulie then devised the magazine *Lives of the Artists*, self-publishing ten issues randomly between 2002 and 2005. The magazine included reviews, interviews, and articles, illustrating the social happenings and challenges faced by artists in Pulie's orbit. Selected texts from *Lives of the Artists* are included in the Reader published for this exhibition, and artist Ian Milliss has revived the magazine, editing the publication's 11th issue for release in 2022.

In 2005, Pulie initiated Sydney Ladies Artist Club, into which she and artist Sarah Goffman invited a group of women artists mostly from Sydney. The group operated as "A social and support organisation for invited female artists." Members attended events such as reading groups, sew-offs, catch-ups, and once a netball game. These activities are documented at sydneyladiesartistclub.blogspot.com.

Rather than exhibiting ephemera from this period, Pulie has recorded a conversation with curator James Gatt to represent the relational aspect of this co-produced exhibition. The conversation is played as ambient sound, its form and content echoing the social emphasis of her Relational Art project.

#119 (EP & JG / Relational Art Conversation at the End of Art) 2021

Sound, 45:24 minutes

#120 (Wall Painting for Mac) 2022

Acrylic on wall

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

End of Art

How to approach a practice concerned with defining art when art can be defined as anything? Here is where Elizabeth Pulie inserts her End of Art project, which hypothesises contemporary art as the logical end of Western Modernism due to its extreme openness to form. The resulting problem is locating a definition for art in this post-conceptual moment, which Pulie addresses in her work by embodying the predicament, in this case, extreme openness.

Established in 2012, End of Art embraces all possible media and ideas, opening Pulie's practice to new materials and techniques, including sewing, embroidery, and painting on hessian, alongside the parallel development of a discursive, theoretical practice.

Though the End of Art works are kept deliberately ambiguous, their content is inspired by various sources including social and political movements, personal experiences, dreams, academic texts, and random observations. All manner of things specific to Pulie's reality that impact her practice are possibilities for work. Here, the separation between individual and artist, person and practitioner, begin to blur. Pulie herself becomes a metaphor for artistic practice in delineating these identities, her reality forming an experiment in defining art.

#1 (Ealdwif) 2012

Acrylic and oil stick on linen

#11 (Exhale) 2012

#12 (Inhale) 2012

Acrylic and oil stick on canvas

#36 (The Female Form II) 2013

Acrylic on hessian, wooden pole

#39 2013

Acrylic on hessian, metal rod, Fimo

#43 2014

Acrylic, mixed fibre, hessian, jute

Collection: Art Gallery of Western Australia. Purchased 2018

#50 (Fuck sake) 2014

Acrylic on hessian, mixed fibre, Fimo

#60 (Thesis II) 2015

Jute, fabric, modelling clay, bamboo

#61 (Divinity Theory) 2015

Acrylic, wool, hessian, cotton, bamboo

#62 (Josie II) 2016

Acrylic, wool, hessian, cotton, cane

#81 (The Matrix Revisited) 2018

Acrylic on hessian

#82 (The Conspiracy of Art) 2018

Jute, wool, thread, cotton, dowel, modelling clay

#96 (Bauhaus Weaving Two) 2018

Mixed fibre

#113 (A) 2021

Jute, wood

#113 (B) 2021

Acrylic, mixed fibre, wood

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, except where noted

#118 (Heaven in Love) 2021

HD video, colour, stereo, 1:45 minutes

Cinematographer/Editor: Amir Dabaghian

Further information on calligraphy yoga available at
www.calligraphyhealth.com

Commissioned by the UNSW Galleries Commissioners Circle, 2021

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

#118 (Heaven in Love) was commissioned to accompany this survey exhibition and is one of the most recent works produced for Elizabeth Pulie's End of Art project. It documents her movement through a Calligraphy Yoga sequence titled 'Heaven in Love,' which she has practised since 2014. Combining Pulie's parallel practices of yoga and art, the video functions as a musing on what it means to make art and be an artist contemporaneously, both in the sense of occupying present time and practising in the current period of contemporary art.

Exhibited as the conclusion to this survey, the video represents a trajectory through Pulie's art practice, from highly productive states of making discrete objects to deliberately unyielding routines of movement that focus on being. The potentially endless repeatability of the video medium becomes synonymous with Pulie's yogic movements and breathing. To comprehend the 'End' (of Art), Pulie occupies the looping it finds itself in, suggesting that all we are left with is the ritual of doing and being.

Twenty 1990

Acrylic on canvas

Cow 2007

Gouache, pencil on polyester

#108 (Curtain for E) 2020

Acrylic on hessian, metal rings, mixed fibre

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney