

HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

Why pay attention?

At a time when nudie tours of art galleries are considered mainstream contemporary art, **Hayley Megan French** provides audiences with the immediate visual appeal of traditional abstract painting, but with a critical edge. And her career is taking off in 2016 with the artist's inclusion in a number of shows, including solo exhibitions at Penrith Regional Gallery and Galerie pompom, a group show at Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, as well as representation at the Auckland Art Fair and travel to the East Kimberley region as part of the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship for Painting 2015-2016.

What does she do?

French is known for her striking black, white and orange abstracted landscapes. But her paintings aren't merely pleasing to the eye. The artist critically engages with the formal pictorial elements of painting in a way that dynamically throws into question the traditionally dichotomous relationship between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous landscape traditions.

What's going on?

Rather than a series of didactic statements, French's work opens up a conversation about the highly problematic and contested terrain of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous ways of seeing the Australian landscape. She achieves this not through abstract theoretical investigations but via critical engagement with artists and their own specific histories and influences, together with a considered reflection of her own.

The artist says...

"The way that I've framed my research, the way that I think about my paintings, is as conceptual painting. I think of the work as conceptual objects that allow me to explore these ideas."

You can see it at...

French shows at Penrith Regional Gallery until 22 May 2016 and Galerie pompom from 6 April to 1 May 2016. The large-scale group exhibition, *Interiors/Exteriors*, is on at Grace Cossington Smith Gallery until 16 April 2016.

Carrie Miller

1. // Hayley Megan French, *The Red House*, installation view, Penrith Regional Gallery.

PHOTO: SILVERSALT.

2. // Hayley Megan French, from the series *Hints of things we know*, 2015. Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150cm.

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COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND GALERIE POMPOM, SYDNEY

