



KATE DORROUGH  
*River Language*



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## *River Language*

5 – 23 May 2020

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‘River Language’ continues Kate Dorrough’s ongoing focus on the river as a fundamental source of fertility within the Australian landscape. In her large-scale paintings and hand-built ceramic forms, the Sydney artist posits the river as a vital life force, with its cyclical nature of renewal and destruction, whilst also considering its importance as a potent historical and cultural emblem embedded in our literature and inherited visual language. The works siphon memories of places experienced during Dorrough’s art residencies and travels in Australia, yet these are not portraits of particular landscapes – they are evocations, distillates, capturing the essence of things seen, felt and imagined.

In a country marked by droughts, floods and fires, water is the nucleus of our individual, communal and cultural life. Even though we identify with the river, Dorrough renders it as a life force beyond our control; beyond our cognition. Drawing from this existential tenor of water, she envisions the river as a symbolic language to be deciphered. ‘The river is political, and a place of remembering. Broad and strong, the river is a unifying symbol,’ reflects the artist. She reduces the land to a sequence of abstracted calligraphic marks and incisions unfurling across canvas and clay. Scrawled like a scribbly gum script, these gestures conjure an implied language, or poetry, as Dorrough acknowledges our need to understand the river in order to preserve its fragile ecosystems. The river, trees, rocks and broad spatial vistas become a series of totems demarcating the wisdom of an enduring Australian landscape.

Inspired by the forms of Ancient Greece and Etruscan vessels, Dorrough’s new series of effigies mimic water jugs, yet their spouts and suggestions of handles are far from utilitarian. Water, here, is not as a resource to be used and consumed; but something to be venerated and preserved. These sculptural personifications of the river function as totems representing the destructive and the archaic, tempered with a hint of humour. The land becomes vessel, literally and symbolically. A vessel of life, of language, and of lost histories.

The cross fertilisation of hand-built ceramic forms with paintings on linen speak to the dynamism of the river, with its dualities of fluidity and solidity, transience and endurance. Limber brushstrokes, amorphous forms and gestural glazes dance in and out of recognition, while the stratified verticality of the compositions point to the memories and histories lodged and layered in the land. Dorrough’s stoneware ceramic forms evolve over time with numerous firings, where iron oxide bleeds through strata of glaze and slips, forming surfaces that summon the physicality of the river.

Sensorial vignettes are evoked by Dorrrough's stained linen canvases and swathes of acrylic, which elicit recollections of swimming in warm, shallow, Gum leaf-stained river edges and cool mysterious umber depths. This alchemic process of layering paint and glazes echoes a rich reservoir of stories told and untold – the memories of the river.

Dorrrough's work as a painter and ceramicist has led to an extensive career exhibiting work at leading galleries in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra, as well as a number of residencies including La Macina di San Cresci, Italy (2018), Art Vault (2011), the Hill End Artists Residency (2005), Bundanon Trust (1999) and the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris (1999). She has been a finalist in a number of awards including the Calleen Art Award (2019, 2018), North Sydney Art Prize (2019), Muswellbrook Art Prize (2019, 2015), Paddington Art Prize (2018, 2012, 2011, 2007), Mosman Art Prize (2012, 2004, 2001, 2000, 1995), Portia Geach Memorial Award (2004, 2001, 1992), Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize (2010, 2008), Sawmillers Sculpture Prize (2010), Clunes Ceramic Art Award (2010), and was selected for the Australian Ceramics Association Biennial Exhibition (2014). Dorrrough's work is also held in various public and private collections around Australia, including Campbelltown Art Gallery, Sony Music Entertainment, Grafton Regional Gallery, Bathurst Regional Gallery and Melbourne Casino.





*Language II*  
acrylic on linen  
137 x 152 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT





*Archaic sonnet at twilight*

acrylic on linen

152 x 168 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**





*Acknowledged history of the river, and forgetting*

acrylic on canvas

146 x 191 cm





*River language II*  
acrylic on linen  
152 x 168 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT





*The land speaks to us without words*

acrylic on linen

168 x 214 cm





*Totems of a river*  
acrylic on linen  
137 x 152 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**









*Ancient river dialect*

acrylic on linen

152 x 168 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**





*The mighty inland river*

acrylic on linen

168 x 214 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT





*Making sense*  
acrylic on linen  
96 x 106 cm





*A layered history*  
acrylic on linen  
137 x 152 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT





*River discourse*  
acrylic on linen  
137 x 152 cm





*Suspended silent depths*

acrylic on linen

168 x 214 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT





KATE DORROUGH  
*Ceramics*



*River language*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
40 x 36 x 22 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**





*River citations*

stoneware ceramic with glaze

55 x 33 x 32 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**





*River speech and signs*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
42 x 33 x 33 cm





*The enduring echo*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
36 x 49 x 20 cm

[WATCH 360° VIDEO](#)





*River linguistics*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
44 x 41 x 27 cm

[WATCH 360° VIDEO](#)





*Soliloquy*

stoneware ceramic with glaze

53 x 38 x 34 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT



*River dialect*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
46 x 39 x 23 cm

**WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT**





*River effigy*  
stoneware ceramic with glaze  
37 x 44 x 24 cm

WATCH ARTIST INSIGHT



# KATE DORROUGH

*Born 1964, Sydney, Australia*

## EDUCATION

- 1994 Master of Art, College of Fine Arts, Sydney, NSW  
1987 Bachelor of Visual Arts (Dist), Canberra School of Art, ACT

## AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

- 2020 Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize, Ravenswood School for Girls, NSW, Finalist
- 2019 The Still Life Award, Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist  
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
The North Sydney Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Georges River Art Prize, Hurstville Museum & Gallery, NSW, Finalist  
Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist  
Muswellbrook Art Prize, Works on paper, Muswellbrook Regional Gallery, NSW, Finalist  
Sculpture in the Vineyards, Small Sculpture Section, NSW, Finalist  
Hawkesbury Art Prize, Purple Noon Gallery, NSW, Finalist
- 2018 GreenWay Art Prize, Art Est, Cooks River Small Sculpture Prize, Winner  
Artist Residency, La Macina di San Cresci, Italy  
Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Art Gallery, NSW, Finalist
- 2017 Chippendale World Art Residency Prize, NSW, Finalist
- 2015 Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize, NSW, Finalist  
The Gallipoli Art Prize, Gallipoli Memorial Club, NSW, Finalist  
Muswellbrook Art Prize, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, NSW, Finalist
- 2014 29th Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award, Gold Coast City Gallery, QLD, Finalist
- 2012 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2011 Art Vault Residency, Mildura, VIC  
Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Hawkesbury Art Prize, Purple Noon Gallery, NSW, Finalist  
Manning Art Prize, Manning Regional Art Gallery, Taree, NSW, Finalist
- 2010 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Woollahra Council, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Sawmillers Sculpture Prize, Sawmillers Reserve, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Clunes Ceramic Award, Clunes, VIC, Finalist
- 2009 Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize, NSW, Finalist
- 2008 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Woollahra Council, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2007 Paddington Art Prize, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2005 Hill End Artists Residency, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Hill End, NSW  
Redlands Art Prize, Mosman Regional Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2004 Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Portia Geach Memorial Art Award, S.H Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist



## KATE DORROUGH

- 2003 Ceramic Residency, Fusions Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
- 2001 Conrad Jupiters Art Prize, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, QLD, Finalist  
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Portia Geach Memorial Art Award, S.H Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 2000 Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Redlands Art Prize, Mosman Regional Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 1999 Artist in Residence, Bundanon Trust, Bundanon Artists Centre, NSW  
Art Gallery of New South Wales Denise Hickey Studio Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris Sponsorship Grant, UNSW Alumni Association
- 1998 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, VIC, Finalist  
Fishers Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Regional Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 1997 Redlands Art Prize, Mosman Regional Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 1996 Waverley Art Prize, Waverley-Woollahra Art School, Local Section, Winner  
Waverley Art Prize, Waverley-Woollahra Art School, Open Section, Highly Commended  
North Sydney Council Prize, Coal Loader Centre, Open Section, Winner  
Fishers Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Joint Winner  
Alice Prize, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT, Finalist  
Jacaranda Drawing Award Exhibition, Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW, Finalist
- 1995 Blake Prize, Blaxland Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist
- 1994 Sydney University Archaeological Expedition, Drawing Team, Tarone, Greece
- 1992 Portia Geach Memorial Art Award, S.H Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW, Finalist  
Third Lloyd Rees Memorial Youth Art Award, Lane Cove Municipal Council, NSW, Finalist

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *River Language*, Arthouse Gallery, NSW
- 2019 *The Lyrical River*, Manning Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2018 *Pieve di San Cresci of Domesticity*, The Archaeological Museum of Domesticity and the Everyday, La Macina di San Cresci, Italy
- 2012 *The Enduring Landscape and the Inland River*, Arthouse Gallery, NSW
- 2011 *The Enduring Landscape*, Catherine Asquith Gallery, Melbourne, VIC  
*Landscape paintings, near and far*, Art Vault Gallery, Mildura, VIC
- 2010 *Pants Off*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2009 *In Stillness*, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
- 2008 *Ode to Light and Slow Time*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2006 *The Cup*, Melbourne Art Rooms, Melbourne
- 2005 *The Garden*, Beaver Galleries, Canberra, ACT  
*Hearts Are Trumps*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2004 *Fetes Galantes*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Kate Dorrough Ceramics*, Orson and Blake, Sydney, NSW
- 2002 *Whims and Fripperies*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW



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- 2000 *Café*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1999 *Suburban Scene*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1997 *Side Show*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1996 *Bronte Bathers*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 *Reflections of a Fading Sky*, Arthouse Gallery, NSW  
2018 *The Way You Came*, Arthouse Gallery, NSW  
*Hidden*, Rookwood Cemetery Sculpture Walk, Sydney, NSW  
*Sculpture in the Vineyards*, Wollombi, NSW  
2017 *On Paper*, Arthouse Gallery, NSW  
*Land*, Manly Art Gallery & Museum, NSW  
2016 *Drawing Conversations: Exhibition*, National Art School, Sydney, NSW  
*Redfern Biennale*, curated by Damien Minton, Art Month, Sydney, NSW  
2015 *30 Years/30 Artists/30 Works*, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Redfern Biennale*, curated by Damien Minton, Art Month, Sydney, NSW  
2014 *The Course of Objects: the fine lines of inquiry*, The Australian Ceramic Association,  
Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Sydney, NSW  
*Gesture*, Blue Mountains Grammar School Gallery, NSW  
2013 *Artisans in the Gardens*, Botanical Gardens, Sydney, NSW  
2011 *Artisans in the Gardens*, Botanical Gardens, Sydney, NSW  
*Hidden*, Rookwood Cemetery Sculpture Walk, Sydney, NSW  
*In Situ*, Mosman Festival of Sculpture & Installation, Sydney, NSW  
2010 *Sculpture in the Vineyards*, Wollombi, NSW  
Salon Rouge Gallery, Kapunda, SA  
2008 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
2007 *Naughty*, Sheffer Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
2006 *Shelf Life*, the Delmar Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Nest*, Slot Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
2004 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
2003 *Art on the Rocks*, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Sydney, NSW  
*Blush, Contemporary ceramics by studio artists*, Fusions Gallery, Brisbane, QLD  
*Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Sydney Art on Paper Fair*, Fox Studios, Sydney, NSW  
2002 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, VIC  
2001 *2001 A Space Odyssey*, Penrith Regional Art Gallery, NSW  
Hungry Mans Exhibition, Manning Regional Art Gallery, Taree, NSW  
Hungry Mans Exhibition, Grafton, Orange, Hastings & Gloucester Regional Art Gallery, NSW  
*A Studio in Paris: Australian Artists at the Cité*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
2000 *Paris*, National Trust Cafe, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW

# KATE DORROUGH

- 2000 *Art Fair 2000*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, VIC  
1998 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
*Australian Contemporary Art Fair • 6*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, VIC  
1997 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1995 *Salon des Refusés*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1994 *UNSW Travelling Art Scholarship*, COFA Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1993 *Fowlers Gap*, COFA Gallery, University of Sydney, NSW  
1989 *Inside the Greenhouse*, Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney, NSW  
1988 *Four/4*, Canberra Contemporary Arts Space, Canberra, ACT

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Manning Regional Art Gallery, NSW  
Campbelltown Art Gallery, NSW  
Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW  
Bathurst Regional Gallery, NSW  
Melbourne Casino, VIC  
Sony Music Entertainment Australia, NSW

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Jan Guy, *The Journal of Australian Ceramics*, 'The Course of objects: the fine lines of inquiry', Vol 53 No 3, Nov 2104, p.53–55  
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Alexandra Djurichkovic, *Australian Art Collector*, 'Artist interview: Kate Dorrough', 6 Nov 2012  
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Shaunagh O'Connor, *The Age*, 'Cup Capers', Home, Oct 2006, p.28  
Courtney Kidd, *Art Monthly Australia*, 'Art Notes NSW', Nov 2006, p.22  
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