

MOVING INTO PAINTING

ESSAY WRITTEN BY **SUE GARDINER**

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Reflecting on the nature of painting and the role of the painter, Adrian Jackman advocates for a return to the studio. "This is the starting point," he says. "Here, in the studio, the artist can set up a framework, a series of experiments or conditions for painting. Then you can start to develop ideas around style, methods and intention, and set about to bring it all together – start to move from a position of narrative into an exploration of painting itself." Acting as continuous threads in his work have been issues surrounding environmentalism, the interaction between painting and photography, and the manufactured landscape but central to his thinking is the artist and the studio. In fact, Jackman describes the interior of the studio as a laboratory or, at the extreme, a zone of exclusion.

A flipping between exteriors and the often isolated structures of interiors, between the public and the private, then, is a recurring theme in his work. The geometric patterning of the studio floor forms a grid like structure in paintings such as *Departed*, 2007 and *Ghost Ship*, 2007, while the playful painting of objects such as a melting ice-cream signal the passage of time.

In *Happiness*, 2006, it is an external melting we encounter, as Jackman paints a landscape from another zone of exclusion, that around the destroyed Chernobyl Power plant. Now, as the forces of nature and time take over once again, it is the artificial, striped pink buildings that are melting away.

Jackman has long been interested in dislocated time and the clash between history and contemporary culture. He draws together a sci-fi sense of the artificial computer world, with its flat lighting, pixilated surfaces, photo-shopped imagery, and edgy colours, interpreting its constructed reality through art historical painterly practices – the treatment of interiors in Dutch paintings for example, or the flat perspective found in the early Renaissance. In paintings such as *Fat over Lean*, 2006, Jackman combines these influences to create a dream like interior that time-travels between eras and presents a theatrical scenario that hovers between the fabricated and the real, between destruction and optimism. It is a reality conjured up from within the mind of the artist and the zone of the studio.