

Chris Bond

The Language of Fracture

Artist statement

Seven painted non-fictional book covers bring to life seven obsessions.

The psychology of lone hiking; black holes formed by concentric transparent rectangles; gargantuan trees strangled by vines; end-time architecture; the language of fracture; the painted objects of fictional Australian outsider artist Edith Mayfield; derelict public art – each of these feature amongst the subject matter.

These imagined books represent unlikely, ideal forms. They are publications that I'd like to find on the shelves of a bookshop, library or online store. I've invented them to fill a gap in existence.

The works oscillate between knowing and imagining, operating as almost credible facsimiles of things yet to exist. The titles, authors, publishers and imagery are all invented, their odd specificity stretching plausibility to breaking point.

The books are constructed of canvas and card, and the painted dust jackets use only thin black glaze for imagery, and white paint for text. I've established a clear set of rules that constrict the relationships between materials, form and content.

The internal pages of each painted book are blank, unseen. The works float on the wall as frameless, closed forms. They are grim and austere, inspired by the raw, stripped-back aesthetics of black metal (in particular the monochromatic album artwork), which I listen to as I work. The music drives the pace of the painting process and helps with decision making.

These works are not quite books – they inhabit the skeletal frame of the book, but are missing components that would otherwise make them believable publications. Each features an amount of loss or decay – sometimes in the form of painted cracks and stains, sometimes missing an author, occasionally a title or publisher, sometimes all text.

Materially, these books were conceived as paintings, more than books. The use of cut pieces of canvas to form the internal pages references the edges of stretched canvas paintings, more so than crisp edges of paper. The use of a transparent glaze style to depict pictorial imagery (as opposed to moulding the form with opaque mixtures of black and white), contributes to the positioning of these works as paintings, rather than replicas of printed material.

In these forms, the staging is the subject as much as anything else. I try to do the minimum in terms of disguising any artifice- ideally to position the audience in a kind of transient state of knowing and unknowing of the object's potential to operate as a carrier of honest representation.