

## ***Pat HOFFIE I WILL TELL YOU ALMOST NOTHING***

Making art can be an attempt to talk back to the world in a mute way.

It can be a means of trying to make sense of the world, while accepting that none of it makes any real, coherent, explainable, rational sense.

So it's a kind of ongoing conversation with yourself, with what's going around you - in your own personal sphere and in the broader world - the kind of conversation that keeps sifting through new or forgotten or lost or overlooked bits and pieces. The process becomes like a kind of subconscious beach-combing; a slow meander through the shorelines of your thoughts where you gather together things (images, ideas, spaces, references) that may not initially seem to be relatable.

There's nothing new in this – and sometimes the work sends you back to the past to think again about artists – writers, painters, poets – who've also meandered-as-a-way-of-thinking.

Dante Aligheri (1220 – 1321) drew from his private world to reflect on the big issues of the day – but that's where any similarities between his epic allegory and my own attempt to make sense of the world begin and end. Even so, the titles of the series of large works reflect some of Dante's terms and others are drawn from other epics from a range of sources.

Dante's epic poem, *The Divine Comedy* takes the reader on a meander through hell, purgatory and paradise. The allegory calls up questions about the exploitation of intellect and will, and the uneasy equilibrium between reason and faith. It's a great big poem about great big issues – it's about our so-called free will and the uncaringly cruel banalities of life.

If Dante were alive today he would probably be a film-maker. But for this series I've chosen to tackle some of the big, complex, contradictory conundrums of this world I'm in through the much simpler medium of paint. It's a stupidly slow process – but it's one that grants time to think more slowly; to retreat into a temporary cave of world-making that's provisional and personal.

The smaller works in the exhibition continue the theme; they reflect many of those quotidian moments that are part of fabricating a fantasy world - a temporary world we enter in order to step back again into the mundane world we must also inhabit.

Sometimes that routine regularity of that mundane 'normal life' gets punctured - by a bullet – a shaft of light – a train hurtling down a howling tunnel - a realisation – a moment of clarity – an unprecedented event - and we're shocked at just how thin the skin between the worlds of fantasy and what constitutes 'everyday reality' really is.

### **SMALL WORKS ON PAPER: \$1800 each**



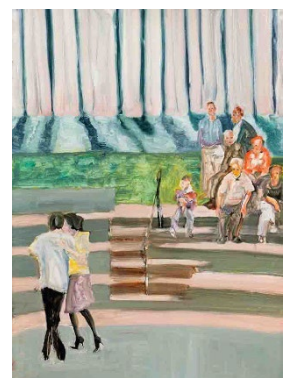
#### **Dog Days**

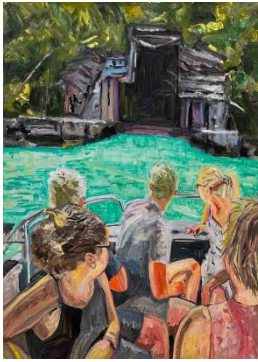
A strange rock island slowly emerges from the surface of the ocean as the stars sing their invisible songs across the indigo of the night sky. The surf goes on rolling disinterestedly onto the beach. Between a ladder and a film-reel two dogs face each other off while something – a Gronk-doll (?) – slings its slug-fat arm over a wall. This work finally emerged on May 21, 2022, when the Australian election was called.

According to the Outback Dictionary, a gronk is 'someone who is an A-class dickhead; someone who acts like a fool but think they are the greatest'. In Gaelic legend, Rocabarra is a mythical island that emerges mysteriously from the ocean and then disappears. So far Rocabarra has emerged only twice during the entire time of humans living on earth, and they say that on the third time it rises up, the world will end. But like all myths and legends, there are others who counter that interpretation – those others say that on the third day of the rising of Rocabarra (or Rocabarraigh), the world will enter a time of great wond'rousness.

#### **Last Dance**

A small crowd assembles on the steps to look down into the shallow amphitheatre where a couple clasped in each other's arms performs a slow dance. The steps lead upwards, and beyond them, light spills from between vertical bars: a forest of saplings? A jail cell? A compound? A park? The child clasps his bear to his chest.





### The Cave

A boatload of voyagers steers its way across the piercing light and sparkling water. Before it is the entrance of a dark space – a tunnel built into the walls of a cliff.



### Dwelling

A provisional dwelling hovers slightly above the dying strip of lawn in an eerie yellow light. It's a shelter built for a future. It's a dream of home that seems oddly impossible.



### Machapuchare to Macha Picchu

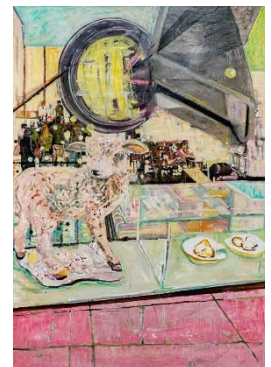
Machapuchare, is the name for the 'fish-tail' mountain that is part of the Himalaya massif in Nepal. It has never been climbed. It's believed to be a magic mountain – the sacred home of Lord Shiva. Macha Picchu is the 5th-century Inca citadel located in the Eastern Cordillera of southern Peru. Both places have been pilgrimage sites for a very long time, and both places are threatened by the waste of excessive tourism, unsustainable agriculture practices; erosion; landslides; and general garbage.

## LARGE WORKS ON CANVAS (\$POA) References for some of the titles:



**Agamemnon and Iphigenia:** In Ancient Greek myth, during the Trojan Wars, King Agamemnon was given a choice by the goddess Artemis to either kill his own daughter Iphigenia or have his entire family and kingdom killed by the angry Greeks. There is more than one interpretation of this tale, but one version has it that he thought about it for a bit –and then put in a sacrificial deer in her place.

**Pesah** – or Pesach – or Passover: is the Jewish festival celebrating the saving of their first-born sons from the angel of death who was doling out the plague, through marking their doorways with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. The blood was a sign to pass over the Jewish households.



**Contrapasso:** is a term used in Dante's *The Divine Comedy* to describe the kind of punishments meted out for the sins performed in life. His epic poem reminds readers of the consequences of their actions.

**Rocabarra:** is a phantom island that, according to Scottish Gaelic myth, only appears three times throughout history. It's third appearance, some say, will herald the end of the world. But others say it is a harbinger of a much more wonderful future. I guess your interpretation just depends on whether or not you're a glass-half-full-kinda-guy or not.

