

Glenn Barkley
Imayimightimust

S+S Sydney

7 – 23 June

Opening Thursday, 7 June, 6 – 8pm

imayimightimust¹

Sometimes I think that I have a form of obsessive compulsion that drives my work. For as long as I can remember I have looked at, researched, collected and studied different objects, artworks and cultural materials until I reach an exhaustion point.

I think that I have now turned this compulsion over to my work and it as if each new work is an obsession that once complete allows me to move on to the next pot, or collage or painting, until that too is exhausted in a process that can continue ad-infinitum.

I keep returning to the idea of time. Time has a particular relevance to ceramics which can come to us from the past looking exactly the same as the day they were made – 5, 50, 500 or 5000 years ago. I am also returning to a subject, history, that fascinated me as a teenager Reading of the efforts of the archaeologist Schliemann and Evans – whose sometimes ham-fisted excavations both obliterated and bought to light the past in a swashbuckling romantic way - are lodged in my brain.

I want my work to be like the sensation of Schliemann sinking a shovel into the soil of Troy, exposing the strata layer by layer looking for the proof of the ancients. I feel the weight of those poets before me for whom the past is rich source:

*From murals and statues
we get a glimpse of what
the Old Ones bowed down to,*

*but cannot conceit
in what situations they blushed
or shrugged their shoulders.²*

As I reach the end of each work I think about labour and I feel the time, desperate and fugitive, ticking towards dinner, to going home, to the next day, the next week, the next year. To being with the people you love, eating, sleeping, patting the cat, looking at the trees, walking from point to point.

Time goes/where does the time go? ³

¹ Marianne Moore 'I may, I might, I must'

² W H Auden 'Archaeology'

³ Joni Mitchel 'Chinese Cafe'