

HEATHER STRAKA | Paintings

3 – 26 April 2025



HEATHER STRAKA
The Rehearsal 3, 2025
Oil on canvas
900 x 730 mm framed
\$24,000



HEATHER STRAKA
Peephole 10, 2025
Oil on canvas
420 x 420 mm framed
\$4,500



HEATHER STRAKA
Peephole 9, 2024
Oil on canvas
420 x 420 mm framed
\$4,500



HEATHER STRAKA
Honeytrap 17, 2015
Oil on canvas
680 x 560 mm framed
\$16,000



HEATHER STRAKA
Peephole 7, 2024
Oil on canvas
420 x 420 mm framed
\$4,500



HEATHER STRAKA
Self Portrait, 2020
Oil on canvas
860 x 720 mm framed
\$16,000



HEATHER STRAKA
Peephole 11, 2025
Oil on canvas
420 x 420 mm framed
\$4,500

Trish Clark Gallery is pleased to present a striking selection of Heather Straka's paintings. Having devoted a number of years to her parallel photographic practice, and produced two significant bodies of work both exhibited at the gallery, Straka is once again deeply immersed in her painting practice. With qualifications in Sculpture and Film, Straka's unique cross-disciplinary approach delivers painterly cinematic photographs and paintings firmly anchored in sculptural space.

Recent paintings are marked by a commingling of what were previously two entirely separate impulses: her long-time engagement with the subtleties and intricacies of portraiture, and how reductive a portrait can be; and her acerbic *Defenders of New Zealand* landscapes. Sara Ahmed's *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* was one of the prompts for Straka's consideration of the notion of 'the stranger' – ineluctably referenced back to her own origins and those of the colonial culture in which she matured. A post-colonial assessment of her painting antecedents in the territory of landscape brings rich content to the portraits, equally othered by their back-facing stance, while the new *Peephole* paintings offer their subjects' intensely personal gazes directly back to the viewer.

Studying sculpture at the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in the early 90s, Straka honed an acute attention to detail that she later carried through to her painting practice, a shift made while working as Julia Morison's assistant in France. Scarcity of sculptural materials and proximity to the great paintings of Europe informed the refocus of her practice to painting.

Straka returned to New Zealand and exhibited her first painting show in 1998, later graduating with an MFA in Film from Canterbury University in 2000. Since then Straka has been awarded several scholarships and residencies. In 2002 she was presented the Pierce Low Award for Excellence in Painting from the Royal Overseas League, London. Straka was awarded New Zealand's esteemed Frances Hodgkins Fellowship in 2008, and the William Hodges Fellowship in 2011. Her work is held in all of New Zealand's major public collections.

Straka lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.