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A body of paintings that excite as well as offer pleasurable consolation.

The overwhelming impression on viewing Mostyn Bramley-Moore’s 50th exhibition is the exuberance he still brings to practice and ideas. In a career that has been simultaneously faithful to his central themes and yet questioning of ways to addressing them, we see a body of paintings that excite as well as offer pleasurable consolation.

This collection of painting evolves around the theme of an album and in Bramley-Moore’s terms, the works are at a tangible scale, operating like ‘a talisman that can be small enough to fit into a pocket, a powerful medicine that can be squeezed into a small capsule, (as well as) something significant put on a locket and worn around the neck’.

In the 32 paintings hanging at Watters Gallery, we experience not only the power of each individual work but also the cumulative effect of an artist working at the full force of his creative energy. For an artist whose pedigree is embedded in the heartland of abstraction,
America and the UK have been as informative and influential as his Australia experience. Bramley-Moore’s study in New York in the 1970’s shows his understanding and awareness of his aesthetic direction early on. While he recognizes his debt to early abstractionist his work now can be seen to belong to an international sensibility, and particularly to the greater history of ideas in painting. This exhibition shows how his quirky, personalized integration of history and tradition can reveal new and delightful paintings.

Above everything, these works reflect an artist alive to the physical world, experiencing it as a great cauldron of stimulation. We see here responses to rain, artists, cats, landscape, history, wind, all ideas that receive both the minutia and the grandeur of his vision.

Each work allows for contemplative, individual responses and I find paintings like Night Ideas and Black Cats open up for me an experience of the unknown, of darkness, of night-time and importantly to the subjective moment. He does so by his great facility with the medium of paint; his capacity to engender an almost diarist’s discussion between paint layer and mark making. Here is imagery that is both ephemeral by its very nature and yet at the same time technically robust. There is also just the simple pleasure of the dense, modulated paint colours, furthered enriched by surface; and as surface is a key element in all Bramley-Moore’s investigations, his new exhibition continues to explore new, beautiful and enlivening ways of experiencing this.

**Mostyn Bramley-Moore – An Album**

**Watters Gallery, East Sydney**

**10 – 27 July**

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