

## **ARTIST Q & A: Michelle Ussher**

### **Who was your earliest/biggest influence artistically?**

The first art book I ever saw was on Paul Klee. Later I discovered the Bauhaus. Their ideology and use of colour has always been important to my artmaking. My Mum and Dad have been my biggest influence. My Dad was an industrial painter and my Mum is an especially talented craftswoman. They both have intense use of colour and finely tuned intuition.



### **What media do you use and why?**

My practice begins with photos and /or collage. I then translate the images using watercolour and pencils mainly. I frequently use oils. I work very intuitively and can look at an image and if it makes me think of what i would use to colour it in, then i go ahead and start it. Some images take longer and i stick up the photo or collage for a while, or re-draw it in lead pencil to understand it better, to work out what materials/colours will work. Drawing is the most immediate form of translating an image from the imagination into reality. What is interesting about my practice is that I take the images from reality, imagine them appearing differently, with different colours and breaking their compositions down and mixing them up with other things, then make them into paintings/drawings so they exist in reality again.

### **What study have you undertaken, in art and other disciplines, and how has this contributed to your practice?**

I travelled overseas between studying Industrial Design and Fine Art. I go back to this time often in my mind and believe exposing myself to other cultures was integral to the way I now perceive the world around me. Studying Industrial Design gave me an appreciation of objects and excellent understanding of the constructed world. I gained technical knowledge for drawing and processes to build things. This benefits my own practice and helps me understand others. Knowing "how" something is made is a good skill to have as it helps me value all forms of art-making, not just the one I practice. It also gives an added purpose to the things I make. I am not limited to a single skill and choose carefully to translate an idea/image using a process that I think suits the concept best. The history and theory of Design is fantastic to learn parallel to the history and theory of Art. Both cross over in understanding aesthetics. I completed an AVID course in Interior Design when I was doing Fine Art. This introduced me to film, moving images and narrative. Recently I completed my Honours in Drawing and this has helped me consolidate all these other practices into a single one.

### **What is the biggest source of inspiration for your work?**

Playing and Living.

### **Is there a dominant message that you try to convey through painting to your audience?**

No. Mostly I am exploring ideas that I don't understand yet. Through their making I begin an understanding. I do believe if it isn't fun then it isn't worth doing, and through our play, meaning prevails.