



# THE MOUTH OF THE BEAST

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IN THE MOUTH OF THE BEAST

*“At the basis of the whole modern view of the world lies the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. So people stop short at natural laws as at something unassailable, as did the ancients at God and Fate... We make to ourselves pictures of facts.”*

- Ludwig Wittgenstein

The act of making a picture has always been an act of transgression, pouring a thought once private into the public realm. But what is transgression? What is the point at which ‘going beyond’ becomes the pornographic, the voyeuristic, the iconoclastic? Do these terms have any currency now?

These images and sculptures are raw. They hide nothing. We are watching, and we are being watched. Open mouths, open vessels, dark and tempting. The emptiness and its accompanying silence allows us to release deeper, carnal responses. We seek our native tongue in the mouth of the beast.

We see a girl. Is she fleeing? Dancing? Masked? Disfigured? Is she, indeed, human? Is she the object of a male desire, or the creation?

A man kneels on the ground, around his neck a human skull on a chain. Is he a shaman or a captive? Is he invoking a spirit or awaiting his fate?

And the beasts. Uninterested in our gaze, devoid of care beyond the moment of copulation, we see the act in its violence and beauty. Death is a possibility, it is never far from the frame.

We are the watchers, the almost-casual onlookers. But these works solicit the deviant thought, the stolen glance. We dress our thoughts in the cloth of reason and natural law but inwardly desire them to be ripped away; to see the displays of muscle and sinew for what they are - lust in action.

Lust in action. The peasant, the tribespeople, the countryman live in the immediate world of husbandry, the day-to-day business of mating stock and breeding. Their taboos, their superstitions are not ours. Their invocations implore the rising of the seed, the the transfer of semen, the successful coupling. They know the act in its entirety, the spider devouring its partner, the intricate, brutal, bursting bee endophallus, the tugging sheep, the roving bitch in heat, the rampant bull.

In these works seduction and courtship take second place to violent displays of power and dark incantations to the unseen. It is a serenade to sexuality.

*“Whereas we believe lightning to be released as a result of the collision of clouds, they believe that the clouds collide so as to release lightning: for as they attribute all to deity, they are led to believe not that things have a meaning insofar as they occur, but rather that they occur because they must have a meaning.”*

- Seneca on the Etruscan system of belief

- Caleb Cluff





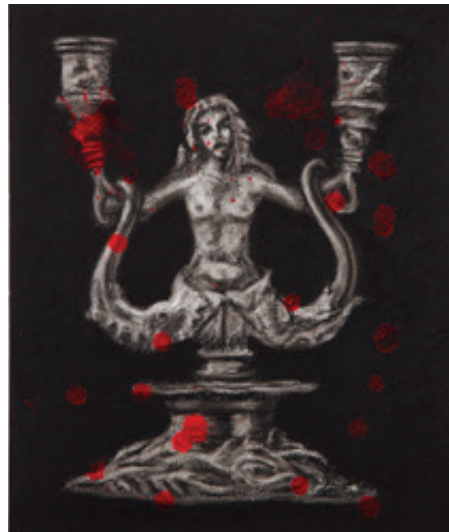
*Courting Desire, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed



*Too fast for shadows, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed



*once mermaids mocked your ships with wet  
and scarlet lips and fish dark difficult hips, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed



*if you could say that stillness meant surrender, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
640 x 715mm framed



*All thoughts are prey to some beast, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed



*Peep Show, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
520 x 580mm framed



*towards the studded male in a bent, midnight blaze, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
520 x 580mm framed



*out-of-doors, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
520 x 580mm framed



*and the slit moon only emphasised how blood must flow  
and teeth must grip, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
1007 x 815mm unframed



*Courting the beast, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed



*Familiar, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed



*Veiled Gaze, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
505 x 445mm framed





*The beast unbridled, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed



*Love Play, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed



*Their lonely betters, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed



*In looks and lips that can no more dissemble, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed





*The seed is struck, the pleasure's done, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
690 x 880mm framed



*The Mouth of the Beast, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
550mm diameter unframed





*To trot with a loud mate the haybeds of a mile, 2016*

charcoal on primed paper  
560 x 760mm unframed

*and men in bed with love and fear, 2016*

Black gesso, white pencil and conte on paper  
760 x 560mm unframed



CATALOGUE

The Mouth of the Beast at Space 39, level 2, 39, Little Collins Street Melbourne.  
June 2nd - 15th 2016.

Exhibition includes sculpture by JOELLE MAYBERRY and drawings by TIFFANY TITSHALL

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