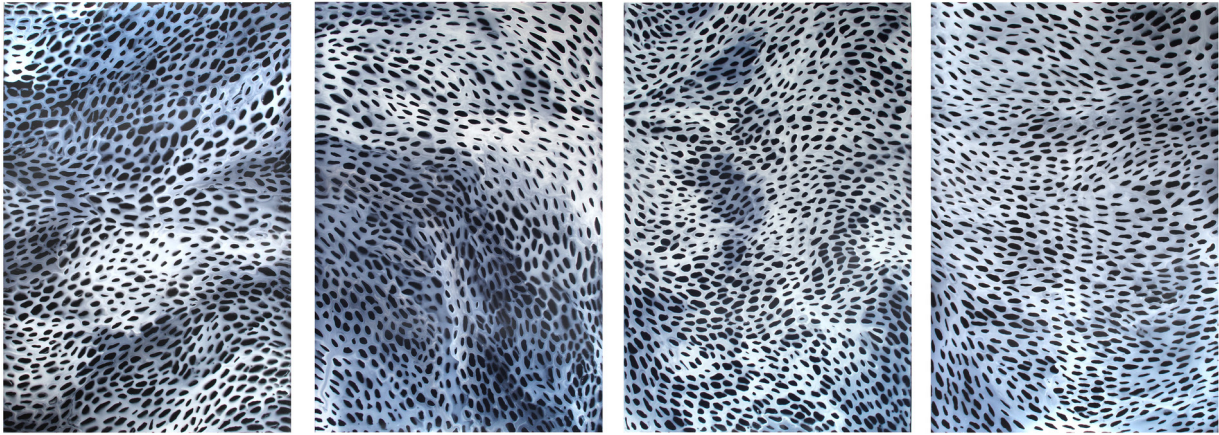


CATHERINE WOO

20 APRIL - 22 MAY

VIBRANT MATTER

ARC ONE



A master of the surface and abstraction, Catherine Woo's striking new body of work is an instinctive and powerful examination of the human connection with the natural world. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday 21 April, 6-8pm.

Catherine Woo is known for her visually arresting oeuvre of 'painting with weather'. By using a range of unconventional materials and processes, Woo creates works that are both macro and micro-interpretations of natural phenomena. Her delicate, abstract forms, rendered in intensely detailed surfaces, draw forth various analogies between the body and the environment. In this recent body of work, Woo continues this investigation into the interrelationship between humans and the natural world via layered, undulating and ethereal paintings that examine the complex systems and structures of nature.

In previous works Woo found herself a silent partner to the visualisation of natural forces – vibration, evaporation, reticulation. In this chapter, she is now compelled to make the human element more present by incorporating intimate, hand-painted forms.

Intricate compositions weave together evoking water currents; leaf veins; coral skeletons; pulsing arteries; webs; microscopic snapshots from within the body and formations of earth. In conflating the regions of the body and the environment, new possibilities are explored where the self is inextricable from the environment that contains it. Drawing the exhibition title from a text by philosopher Jane Bennett, Woo suggests that by seeing ourselves as part of a network of *Vibrant Matter*, we can begin to think more ecologically:

"Rather than seeing the environment as something 'outside', beyond our bodies, these patterns and processes suggest being within it – where our own bodies are part of a larger body, intimately and inextricably linked. It is a kind of visual acknowledgment of our participation in a vast changing body of living matter." - Catherine Woo, 2021

As Jane Bennett asserts in the text *"such a new found attentiveness to matter and its powers will not solve the problem of human exploitation or oppression, but it can inspire a greater sense of the extent to which all bodies are kin in the sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations. And in the knotted world of vibrant matter, to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself. Such an enlightened and expanded notion of self-interest is good for humans."*¹

Visually stunning, these extraordinary paintings simultaneously speak to themes of nature, beauty, the body, and geography, while resisting representation in the pursuit of more philosophical concerns.

*Catherine Woo graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Tasmania in 2013, having also studied at Sydney College of Fine Arts and the ANU School of Art. She has exhibited her work across Australia and internationally since 1997. In 2008 and 2011, Woo was awarded a \$20,000 New Work grant by the Australia Council Visual Art Board, and was included in the Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia (2008). In 2010, Woo was curated into an exhibition at the Samstag Museum in Adelaide titled *Abstract Nature*. She has been a Finalist in the City of Hobart Art Prize in 2002, 2011 and 2012. Her major*

corporate commissions include: Visy Corp Australia, the Chinese World Trade Centre, Beijing, Shangri-la Hotel, Beijing; Four Seasons, Hong Kong; and the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Shanghai and Perth. Her work is represented in private and public collections in Australia, including Artbank, Macquarie Bank, and RACV, as well as in the UK and Asia.

1 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010), 13.

*For all enquiries, interviews and images please contact ARC ONE Gallery at
mail@arc1gallery.com*



Images: Catherine Woo, *Current I-IV*, 2021, acrylic on aluminium, 183 x 503 cm (overall);
Catherine Woo, *Corallium*, 2021, acrylic on aluminium, 122 x 122 cm