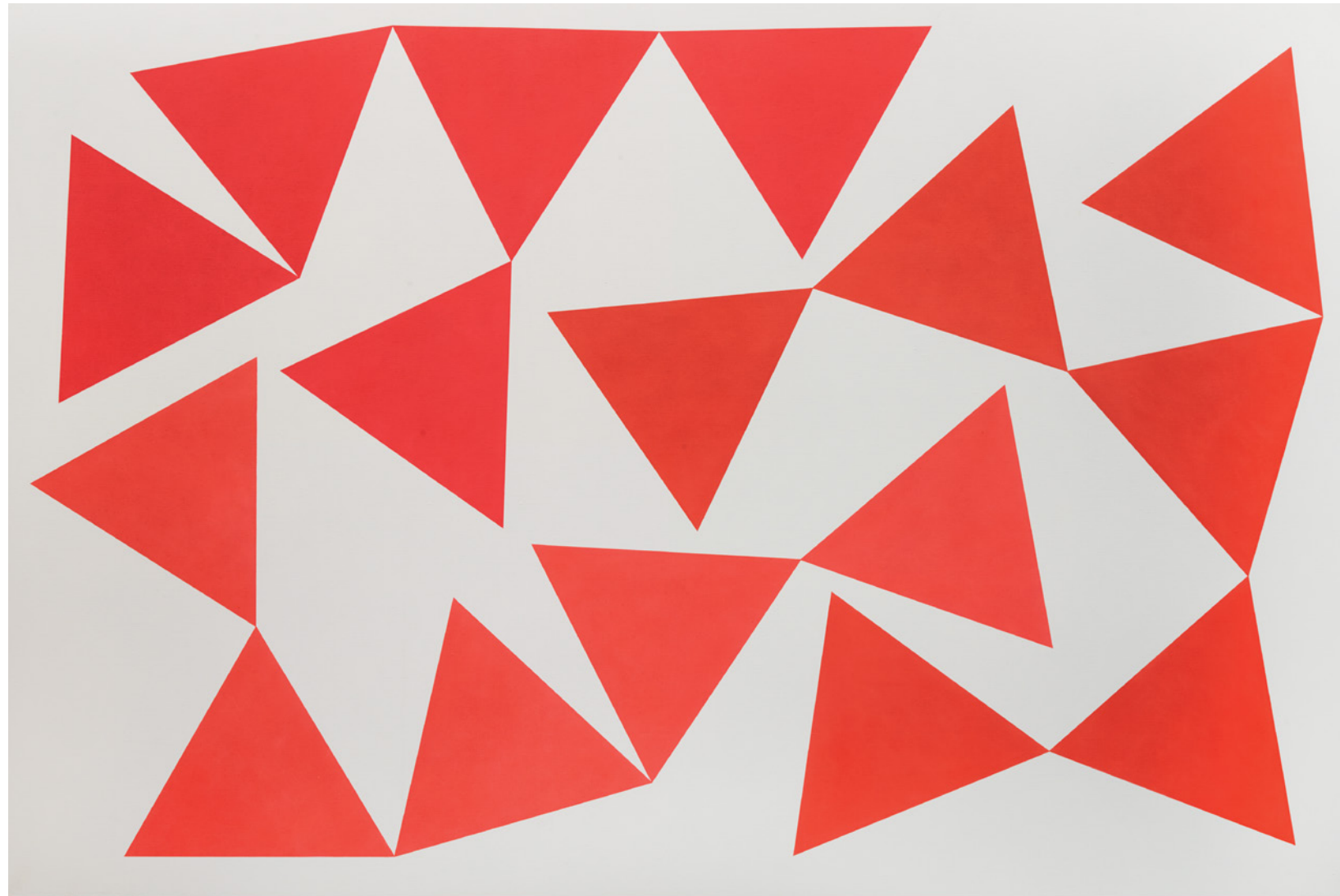


In the abstract



Australian Abstract: Contemporary Abstract Painting by Amber Creswell Bell, Thames & Hudson Australia, Hardback, RRP \$70, Art Gallery members \$63

Australian Abstract: Contemporary Abstract Painting is the fourth book on Australian art from curator and bestselling author Amber Creswell Bell. It follows her recent engaging titles *Clay, A Painted Landscape* and *Still Life*, which was the winner of the 2022 Indie Book Award.

This is a welcome and positively overdue survey of over 40 contemporary Australian abstract painters, including Sydney artists such as Louise Tuckwell, Celia Gullett, Belem Lett and Antonia Perricone Mrljak, rising stars such as Emily Besser, Jade Sibinovski and Lottie Consalvo, and numerous artists with works in the Art Gallery's collection, such as Helen Eager (pictured), Matthew Johnson, Aida Tomescu and James Drinkwater.

Much like Creswell Bell's preceding books there is no doubt that this will be an essential and precious resource in the hands of both students and art-lovers for years to come.

In a brief introduction, Creswell Bell outlines the scope and intention of the book and acknowledges the challenges involved, all while providing, with signature

warmth and personality, an overview of abstract art at large and as it exists in Australia.

The selection of artists that follow are skilfully tuned to reveal the abundant diversity of style and experience within the genre. Each artist receives approximately four full pages, which may seem scant on paper, but does not inhibit what are often very intimate explorations of artistic journey and vision, discussions on inspiration, industry experience, philosophy, process and materials.

Texts are based on interviews with each artist and are accompanied by a photographic portrait – a lovely inclusion and one that assists greatly in connecting to the conversation and works. The sequencing of the artists and artworks is beautiful and rhythmic, and the book is brimming with full-colour reproductions.

Though *Australian Abstract* mirrors the format, structure and design settled upon in *A Painted Landscape* and *Still Life*, there is a refinement and confidence here that takes this book to a new level. Creswell Bell has managed to take what to many (myself included) can feel a dense and challenging

genre, only for the initiated, and turned out an accessible, rich, charming and lively page turner that cannot fail to engage more people with the rewards of abstraction.

Potentially the most energising book on Australian art that we will see this year, we are sure to see this publication on many end-of-year lists and gift guides. Given the calibre of this publication it is exciting to ponder where Creswell Bell might turn her attention next.

Daniel McCready,
Gallery Shop book buyer

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Margaret Preston cushion covers

Exclusive to the Gallery Shop, our Margaret Preston cushion cover collection features floral prints drawn from the Art Gallery's rich collection of Australian art. Made from 100% organic cotton, each design features details of an iconic Preston print. Covers measure 45 x 45 cm, have invisible zip closures and are designed and made in Australia.



Fifi Milo jewellery

Featuring bold colours and quirky shapes, Fifi Milo crafts wearable works of art that are designed to bring joy to the wearer. Taking inspiration from geometry and abstraction, Fifi Milo designs are made from 100% recycled aluminium and sterling silver. Striking enough to make a statement, yet lightweight enough for everyday wear.



Olivia Raymond Designs

Years of development and experimentation have resulted in a dramatic and colourful range of statement pieces. Inspired by the way colour and beauty are formed almost instantaneously through heat, Olivia handcrafts her contemporary pieces from Italian glass and 925 sterling silver.

Top left: Helen Eager *V/F* 2010, oil on linen, 200 x 300 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Patrick White Bequest Fund 2013 © the artist



Abstract Art (Art Essentials), Stephanie Straine, Thames & Hudson Australia, paperback, RRP \$22, members \$19.80

Explore abstraction further with this lively introduction, tracing art movements from the early 1900s right up to the present day via a veritable hit-parade of well-known pioneers and lesser-known groundbreakers. This guide takes a fresh approach to one of modern and contemporary art's most vital forces.