

SAMU X GRAU PROJEKT

MATT BAX

**CAN YOU GIVE YOURSELF A RETROSPECTIVE ?
I GUESS I JUST DID. ENJOY.
10 INSTALMENTS OF OLD SHIT NEW SHIT**

**2.TOWN N COUNTRY
01 03 26 - 31 03 26**

Painted during the enforced interiority of the pandemic lockdowns, this series navigates a psychological landscape of confinement and a yearning for the vastness of the Australian bush. Drawing on a childhood in the remote South Australian town of Naracoorte, Bax confronts the tension between memory and immediate experience, engaging directly with the Western canon of Australian art from the "alien" landscapes of early colonial paintings to the beautiful depictions of children lost in the bush, through to the structural abstraction of Arthur Boyd and Fred Williams.

Informed by the discipline of Chanoyu (the Japanese Way of Tea), Bax adopts the role of a "student of nature," narrowing the gaze to eliminate the noise of the periphery. Where Williams sought the vast, empty horizon to make sense of the continent, Bax finds the bush in the minute details of the urban environment—collapsing the macro into the micro to dissolve the boundary between the organic and the industrial.

There is a quiet optimism in this recalibrated vision. Rather than getting "lost" in the bush, we are asked to find it anew to recognize the iridescent spectrum of a gum tree on a city street as a vital, living tether to the land. Bax offers these works as a reminder that connection to nature is not a luxury of location, but a discipline of attention.



Spray paint, binders, acrylic on linen
2024
1980 x 1370mm
13,000

FEB: OLD SHIT. YOU CAN'T BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY WEARING RED

MAR : TOWN N COUNTRY

APL :

MAY :

JUN :

JUL :

AUG :

SEP :

OCT :

NOV :

MATT BAX

Matthew Bax (b. 1974, Adelaide) is a Melbourne-based contemporary painter whose practice excavates the poetics of the overlooked, transforming the mundane detritus of urban existence into meditations on emptiness and presence. Drawing from the Japanese aesthetic philosophy of wabi-sabi—the beauty found in imperfection, impermanence, and incompleteness—Bax's work locates profound resonance in the incidental marks of daily life: the weathered patina of battered city walls, the decaying tiles of public toilets, the accidental compositions of drips and stains that accumulate in forgotten corners of the built environment.

Central to Bax's conceptual framework is the notion of mu, the Buddhist concept of nothingness or void. Influenced by John Cage's assertion that "every something is the echo of nothing," and the material investigations of Antoni Tàpies who described the void as "that play of emptiness and fullness which composes everything and which reveals the meaning of nature"—Bax's paintings function as visual koans, inviting contemplation of what exists in the spaces between intention and accident, between presence and absence. His canvases become sites where the ordinary is transfigured, where the overlooked backdrop of existence is foregrounded as worthy of sustained attention and aesthetic consideration.

Bax's extensive exhibition history spans Australia, Europe, and Asia, with solo presentations at Grau Projekt (Melbourne), Anna Pappas Gallery (Melbourne), Fost Gallery (Singapore), and Marquardt Ausstellungen (München). His ambitious 2017 public installation series #partsofpaintings traversed multiple continents, appearing in Paris, Venice, Bellagio, Matera, Alonissos, and Melbourne, questioning the boundaries between gallery space and public realm, between art object and urban intervention. His work has been featured in significant group exhibitions including Venice - Word of Mouth (2019, curated by Dr Peter Hill) and the Australian Video Pavilion at Art Stage Singapore (2015, curated by Paul Greenaway).

Holding a Master of Fine Art from LASALLE College of Arts (Singapore) and a Master of Contemporary Art at the VCA (University of Melbourne), Bax brings both rigorous theoretical engagement and intuitive material sensibility to his practice. His work has been extensively reviewed in *The Age*, *Broadsheet*, *Australian Art Review*, and *GQ Magazine*, establishing him as one of Australia's most compelling emerging voices in contemporary painting—an artist who finds wonder in the quotidian and reassurance in knowing nothing.