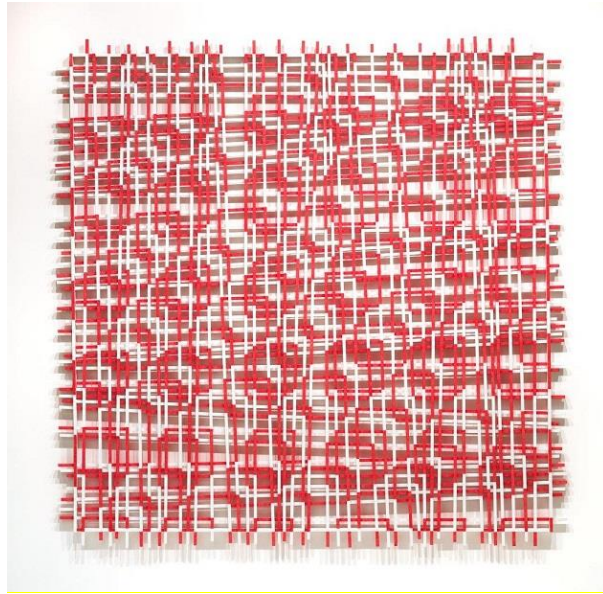


# **Hilarie Mais**

**Curated by Blair French and Manya Sellers  
24 February – 29 April 2018**



Hilarie Mais, *RES* 2010, oil on wood, 210 x 210 x 4 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Contemporary Collection Benefactors 2013  
Image courtesy the artist and Art Gallery of New South Wales © Hilarie Mais

*"The work does not shout or demand, it reveals itself slowly,"* Hilarie Mais, 2016.

UK-born, Sydney-based artist Hilarie Mais' first major solo exhibition in over a decade will visit TarraWarra Museum of Art, 24 February – 29 April 2018.

The exhibition of 20 works over the last decade is the result of a close collaboration between Mais and the exhibition curators, Blair French (MCA Director, Curatorial and Digital) and Manya Sellers (MCA Assistant Curator).

Since the early 1970s, Mais has consistently produced work underpinned by what she describes as her abiding interest in the history of abstraction, first in the United Kingdom, then the United States, and in Australia since 1981.

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Mais is best known for her constructions and paintings that merge the formal structure of the grid with an interest in organic forms found in nature. These patterns and sequences are often drawn from the growth of biological forms. Beginning with a geometric pattern the work then develops instinctually, with Mais incorporating a highly personalised application of paint. Resulting works appear to shimmer optically, drawing the viewer's eyes back and forth through their cycles of line and colour.

Despite the systematic quality of the work, Hilarie Mais notes, "*The outcome cannot be predetermined; it evolves, it can be a surprise.*"

MCA Director, Curatorial and Digital, Blair French said, "Hilarie Mais further establishes MCA's commitment to supporting Australian and international artists at all stages of their careers. It is a privilege to work with Mais, whose practice is of great maturity, evidenced in part by the trust in simple materials, forms and processes, and by the way a particular form can be returned to over and over again, producing new meaning."

Three key threads of the artist's practice can be seen in the exhibition. The first includes work where a 'ghosting' of colour appears to be formed between the work and the wall, drawing the eye beyond the material form and structure of the work to the perceptual field it creates around itself. The second approach is represented in the ongoing *Tempus* series of paintings, in which Mais returns over and over again to the basic relationship between the grid/square and circle/spiral systems as an underlying structure for making painted wall-based constructions. The third is represented in a multiple component work, *Nomad* (2006–12), produced as a colour spectrum – another system used within the history of abstract art – based upon waste plastics collected by Mais over a number of years.

TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Victoria Lynn, said the merging of formal geometric grids and the handmade structure in Mais' work give rise to endless expressive possibilities.

"The apparent formality of her works is underpinned by an intimate sensibility, while the handmade quality evokes a personality which has been referred to as 'feminising' abstraction," Ms Lynn said.

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated publication covering the whole of Mais' career, presenting and discussing some of her very first artworks through to new work produced for this exhibition. It includes an extensive overview essay, written by Victoria Lynn, along with an artist interview and a number of focus texts on selected bodies of work by several authors including the curators Blair French and Manya Sellers.

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**ENDS.**

**To arrange interview with Victoria Lynn or for supply of images please contact:**

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**TarraWarra Museum of Art**, 311 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, Healesville, Victoria, Australia  
**T +61 (0)3 5957 3100** <http://www.twma.com.au/exhibition/rosemary-laing/>

## **Opening Hours:**

Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. Open all public holidays except Christmas Day.

Open 7 days a week from Boxing Day to Australia Day.

Exhibition Admission: \$12.00 Adults; \$10.00 Seniors; \$8.00 Pensioners and Students; Children 12 and under free.

## **Hilaire Mais, background**

Following her first solo exhibition at Cuninghame Ward Gallery, New York in 1977, Mais has exhibited widely both within Australia and internationally, including the solo survey exhibitions *Hilarie Mais: Survey of Works 1974–2004*, Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra (2004) and *Hilarie Mais: Australian Works: 1982–1990*, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide and Plimsoll Gallery, Centre for the Arts, Hobart (1990).

Selected group exhibitions include *Vibrant Matter*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria (2013); *Cross Currents: Focus on Australian Contemporary Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2007); *Good Vibrations: The Legacy of Op Art in Australia*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (2002); *Home and away: contemporary Australian and New Zealand art from the Chartwell Collection*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland, New Zealand (touring) (1999); *Southern Reflections: Ten Contemporary Australian Artists*, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, (touring) (1988); *Systems End: Contemporary Art in Australia*, OXY Gallery, Osaka (touring) (1996); *Spirit + Place: Art in Australia 1861–1996*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (1996); *The Loti and Victor Smorgon Collection of Contemporary Australian Art*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne (1988); *From the Southern Cross: A View of World Art c1940–1988*, 7<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales and Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1988); *3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Sculpture Triennial*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1987); *Origins, Originality + Beyond*, 6<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales and Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, Sydney (1986) and *Australian Perspecta 1985*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (1985).

Mais has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including the Blake Prize for Religious Art in 1994, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2000 and an Australia Council Visual Arts Fellowship for the period 2012–14. She is represented in numerous public and private collections throughout Australia and internationally.

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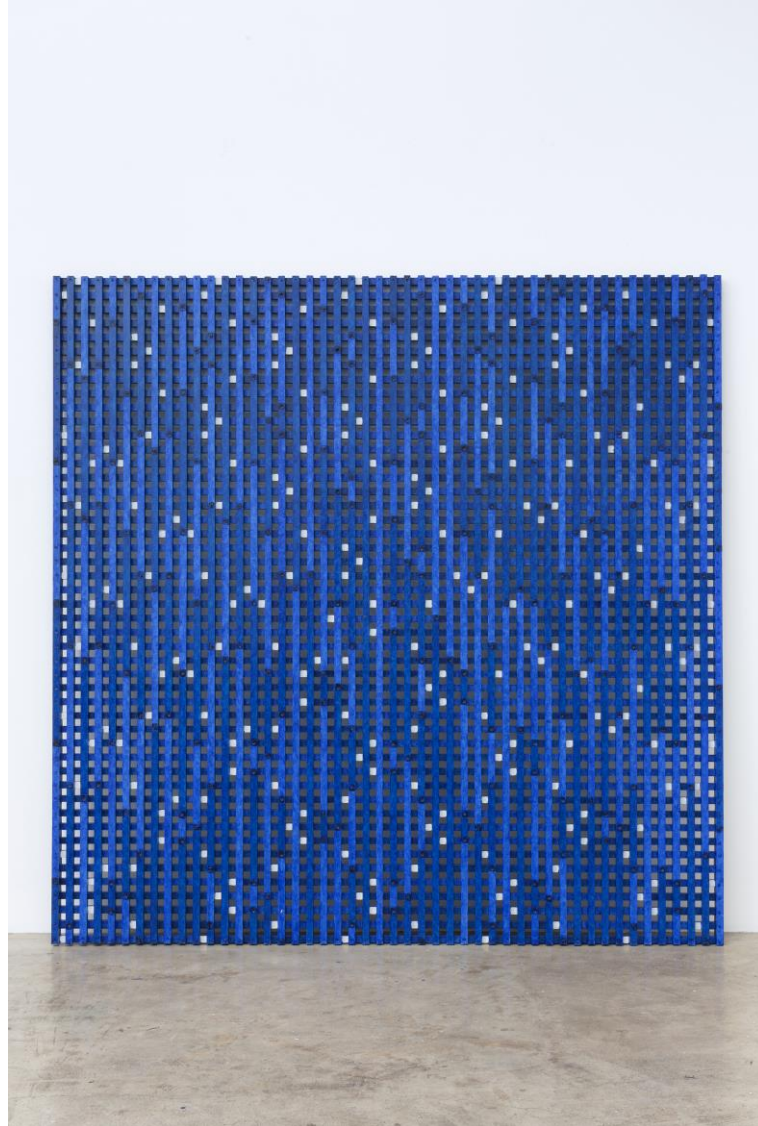
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Hilarie Mais, *Reflection Blue Angel* 2007-11, oil on wood, 183 x 183 x 4 cm  
Image courtesy the artist, Photo: Jessica Maurer © Hilarie Mais

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