

# CARDWELL + McLACHLAN

Acquiesce



Oct 28 – Nov 4 2020

# CARDWELL + McLACHLAN

## Acquiesce

There is something deceptive about the works of Cardwell + McLachlan, but in the most enchanting of ways. In an age where beauty can be manufactured with the click of a mouse it is gratifying to realise that every tiny detail you see in these photographic sculptures is real and has been lovingly created by hand.

Welcome to the miniature, magical world of Acquiesce.

The series is the brainchild of Simon Cardwell and Stuart McLachlan, both successful Australian artists in their own right who together have created a new genre of art that defies classification. 'Living dioramas' or, as McLachlan jokes, 'living deer-amas' may come close.

Cardwell + McLachlan have been collaborating for a decade, having first met in Amsterdam where Cardwell was finishing a visual arts degree. Both have had varied professions within the visual arts world - McLachlan as a commercial artist whose work ranges from designing for Collette Dinngan and Singapore Airlines to the popular Australia Post Christmas stamp series and commissions for his hand-cut paper sculptures from Vogue Australia, the Sydney Opera House and inclusions in international publications such as PaperCuts (USA) and Lonely Planet covers. In addition to his work as a collectible botanical photographer (repped by Curatorial+Co.), Cardwell works in film photography, his stills providing the hero image for films including Mao's Last Dancer, Bad Boy Bubby and the TV series Tomorrow, When the War Began.

With Acquiesce, they have created a spellbinding world that draws the viewer into its intimate, beautiful, hopeful yet slightly melancholic narrative that gently asks the viewer to consider the fragility of our environment and its inevitable annihilation if we choose not to act.

Each work takes around a fortnight to create. The pair begins by conceptualising and sketching their vision before hand-building the forest in McLachlan's studio. Each set has its own board, onto which a natural living ecosystem is painstakingly brought to life, from dirt to mosses, rocks, succulents, firs, branches and foliage, all gathered from McLachlan's garden and surrounding nature.

"It's about finding the right 'trees' that make sense, the right thickness or thinness, the naturalness of the rock. The difficulty is the size, because to create an illusion of scale we have to find plants to match that concept," says Cardwell.

The choice of deer speaks to an animal that is globally prolific yet not immune. "Deer are beautiful and delicate but also one of the most common animals on earth. If they are wiped out it shows the environment is on the edge of collapse," McLachlan says.

The deer skeletons - exquisite artworks in their own right - take McLachlan a week to create, from researching anatomical images to the layering and gluing of paper, cutting and shaping before an accurate likeness emerges.

By the end the set weighs around 100 kilograms, built as it is within a contained camera frame to create a sense of theatre when it is lit and shot - typically in just one take - before it is completely dismantled and remade afresh.

The artists hope viewers will come away with a sense of wonder - both about the beauty of the nature they see before them, but also an appreciation that it is real.

"The problem with paper art is everyone assumes it's been photoshopped," says McLachlan "We wanted to do something that hasn't been done before, that's the true meaning of art, not just replicate things that have happened in the past."

Cardwell + McLachlan have found the collaboration exhilarating and are already discussing their next project. Keen to continue exploring nature and guided by the change of seasons and the different foliage that emerges, they have begun brainstorming a world that exists beyond the forest.

"There's a narrative that goes through Acquiesce and we want to continue this story in the next exhibition, have another animal looking at the deer but from outside the forest, almost like a children's book. It's very exciting, it's opened up a whole new genre for us, a whole new way of working."

c. Jane Albert 2020

### Front Cover

**Acquiesce #2 : Fear's Leap 2020**

**Cardwell + McLachlan**

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm - Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm - Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm - Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP



# Oberon's Gait

Acquiesce #1 : Oberon's Gait 2020

Cardwell + McLachlan

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm

Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP





# Sintra's Hollow

Acquiesce #3 : Sintra's Hollow 2020

Cardwell + McLachlan

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm

Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP





# Evermore

Acquiesce #4 : Evermore 2020

Cardwell + McLachlan

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm

Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP





# Bloom

Acquiesce #5 : Bloom 2020

Cardwell + McLachlan

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm

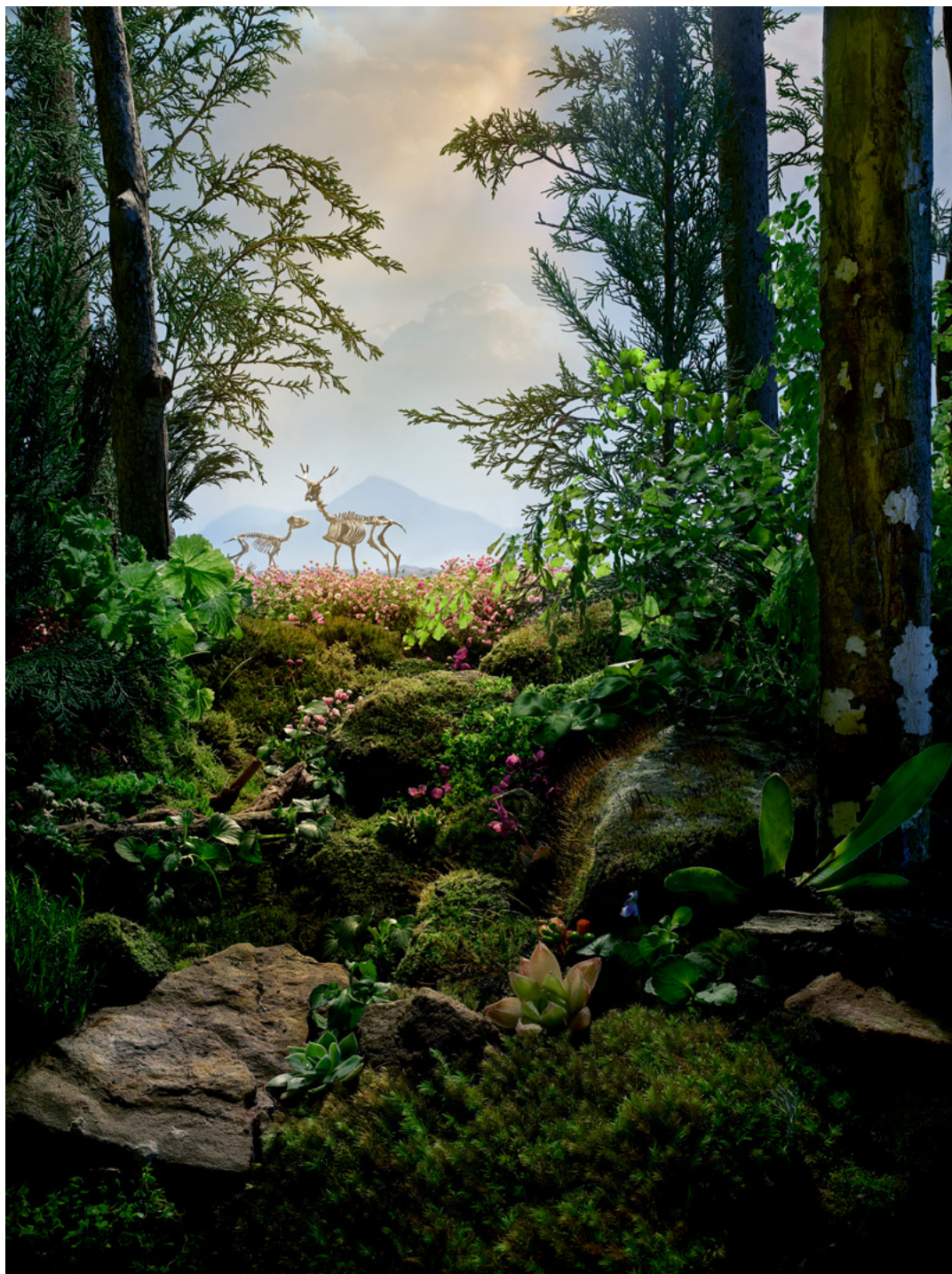
Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm

Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP





# The Charge

Acquiesce #6 : The Charge 2020

Cardwell + McLachlan

Archival pigment print on cotton rag fine art paper

110 x 82.5 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

140 x 105 cm

Edition of 8 + 2 AP

200 x 150 cm

Two 'Hero' editions + 1 AP



cardwell-mclachlan.art

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