

Worlds of their own

The attractive quality about Sue Lovegrove's art is the depth and breadth of associations and cultural references which she brings with her practice and the exquisite skill which she employs to express them.

She has been exhibiting for many years in Canberra with the now defunct and greatly missed Helen Maxwell Gallery and this is her first exhibition with the Beavers.

Lovegrove is an artist who allows the experience of a place or of an environment to flow through her and into her art. She has travelled extensively by bicycle throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East as well as Australia and has had more appointments as artist-in-residence in various locations than most artists have had hot dinners. In some ways this breadth of experience is reflected in her art, where the exotic becomes the familiar, but it is never interpreted literally – the glamour of a tourist postcard is not a feature of her work.

The 17 paintings in this exhibition have taken as their point of departure the native grasses and sedges in Tasmania which she has observed in isolated locations



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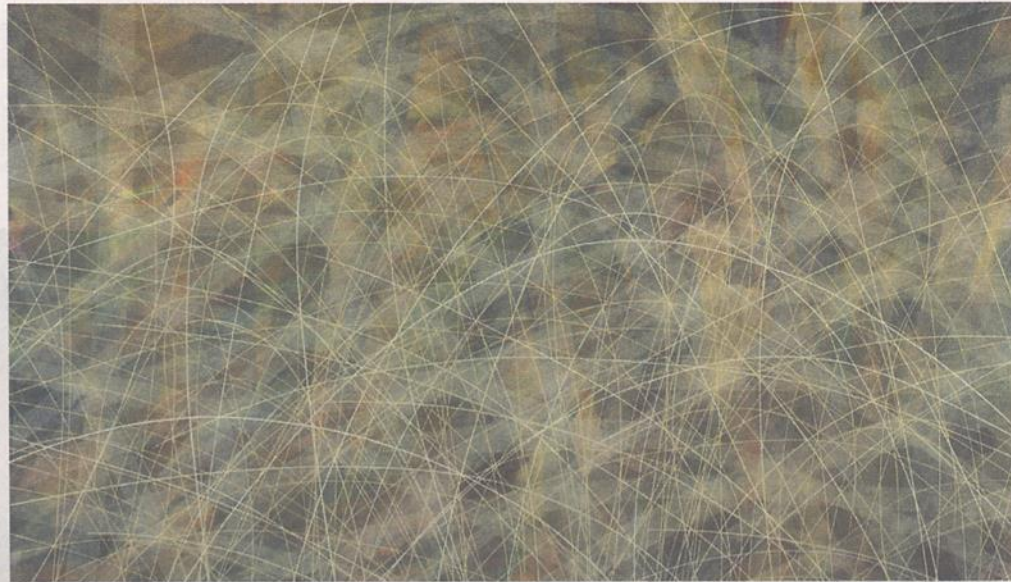
Sue Lovegrove: *Still light.*

Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin. Until November 23, Tuesdays-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturdays-Sundays 9am-5pm.

such as Maatsuyker Island and Tasman Island, or in more accessible habitats, including the Egg Islands in the Huon River and the slopes of Mt Wellington. The grasses are observed holistically, as a tangled organic mass caught within a kinetic force field. In my mind there is a visual association with projected rays of energy that we encounter in Italian futurism or Russian Rayonism, although, in reality, these are likely to be totally unrelated but parallel developments.

It was Wassily Kandinsky in the early 1920s who pioneered the concept of "little worlds" and the idea that each work of art needs to be a little self-contained world complete within itself.

In the finest of Lovegrove's



paintings in this exhibition, which include *Still light No 484*, *Still Light No 494* and *Still Light No 481*, this quality of microcosm and self-containment is achieved. In these pieces she has devised a very effective technique where through a combination of gouache and acrylic we experience both the sweeping dynamics of the undergrowth as well as the picked-out lines of the individual blades of grass.

When viewed with the sweeping gaze, in the canvases there is the sensation of mass, but then the eye is also allowed to focus and pick out the particular. Within these dense tangled masses Lovegrove has also created a feeling of the mystical other, a record of not only the appearance of nature but also of its spiritual presence.

Sue Lovegrove's *Still Light No 484* can be seen at Beaver Galleries until November 23.