





Cover

Painting 11, 2012

Oil on linen

76 x 114 cm

Left

Interior figure 1, 2009

Monoprint, ink on paper

30 x 24.5 cm

Back cover

Drawing from *Electra*, 2010

Acrylic on paper

20 x 20 cm

Susan Wald handles the solitary nude as if it is a vehicle for stating our mortality. One hesitates over whether they are self-images, or more a statement of the condition of us human beings clinging on in turbulent times. Either way, her unclothed female figures rendered in charcoal and, sometimes, conté are chilling hushed things. I could speak of their formal qualities, because dexterity is mated with inventiveness in Wald's work. She is technically an accomplished and talented draughtsman. But it is the image which throws you, for her drawings just do not offer the consolation of beauty; or sensuous ease; or physical desire. Depths appear here, upsetting things for some viewers, no doubt, because her compositions almost throb with aloneness. Not loneliness, or solitude, but the sense of being quite alone. There this person stands or lies, naked, comfortless, in a bare, shadowy anonymous room somewhere in suburbia. You can almost hear the slow low click of a clock cutting away fragments of time, ever passing by, never to be reclaimed. Words like 'melancholy' and 'indifference' cannot start to elucidate the desolation distilled in Wald's drawings, and the prints that have evolved from them. Some inexplicable thing about the way her vulnerable figures are realised, their pictorial psychology, brings back for me that nervousness I once experienced in the hours before undergoing surgery, the quiet, carefully contained dread as one lay propped up in a hospital bed waiting, waiting, waiting... There is an implicit level of introspection in such drawings, an agony, that is not faked. What Susan Wald achieves seems to encapsulate what so many Australian draughtsmen are reaching for when working from the figure. These are glimpses of naked mortality, of existential remoteness—not clichéd nudes—and that is difficult. And uncomfortable.

Dr Christopher Heathcote

from his essay 'Journeys into Drawing' in

Contemporary Australian Drawing #1 by Janet McKenzie.



Susan Wald
Paintings and works on paper

August 11 – September 2, 2012
Opening, Saturday August 11, 2–5pm

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Wednesday to Saturday 11am – 5pm and Sunday 1 – 5pm

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