

## in silence: Lottie Consalvo

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**BELINDA AUCOTT**

Earthy, satisfying and engaging - Lottie Consalvo's exhibition at Dominik Mersch Gallery let's the viewer walk a tightrope of ambiguity.



*Installation view of Lottie Consalvo's exhibition in silence at Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney; supplied*

When you look at Lottie Consalvo's work you can't help but feel movement. Each painting appears as if it were made quickly, perhaps over a few sessions. While black predominates, it's the white that really leaps out at you.

For 'in silence' - Consalvo's first solo show since signing with Dominik Mersch Gallery, in Sydney NSW in 2017 - she has hung large paintings, predominantly black and white, with a palette of earthy mustards, browns and greens. Some are wild and the best ones are restrained.

Whether it is in broad vertical body paint stripes, as in *strong knowing* or the rounded hourglass shapes seen in *totemic emptiness*, the broad gestural brushstrokes fly across the canvas.

They offer a dark maternal cave, both terrifying and protective, while others seem to be a bridge between our world and the underworld.

Are these paintings created by abrupt, geological forces? The most striking is an almost 4-metre long painting called *in silence*, that hangs in the front room of the gallery on one single wall.



*in silence (2017); supplied*

This large horizontal canvas allows space for Lottie's vivid language to breathe; it let's the viewer walk a tightrope of ambiguity. Not as soft and quiet as the show's title might suggest, 'in silence' is a whole series of paintings that seem to 'value expression over perfection, vitality over finish and fluctuation over repose'. They have a performative element - a ripe, heavy, old tribal rhythm.

The height of a plummeting cave or cliff is explored in *silence in falling and the caverns of time eternal* seem to beckon us in the beautiful warm mustard composition *leaving paradise*. But others, with a black-out clarity just simply suggest the Paleolithic era where humans lived with fire.

These paintings will be watched closely by critics and institutions now, because Lottie is a self-taught artist coming of age. After fourteen years of painting, with some deep dips into performance art, she has formed one language out of both mediums.

Lottie developed her performance art further in 2015, under the watchful eye of Marina Abramović in Sydney, as part of Kaldor Art Projects - *Project 30*. But previous to this she had found her own method and language in the performance art realm, whilst hanging out in the edgy art circles of Leipzig, Berlin and Hamburg.

While her 'in silence' series is definitely informed by her previous studies into desire, her inspiration still feels fresh and not laboured. On the contrary this show is raw and young and less graphic than some of her last works (*standing in altered space*). Her best works being pared back.

With another solo painting show just around the corner in March 2018 at the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Victoria, there is a sense of excitement about what this 32-year old artist will do next.

Her works are not colour field or abstract expressionism, but their style borrows heavily from both schools. There is also a wonderful rude and lawless symmetry to her works that adds a familiar comfort to her earthy forms.

Importantly, Lottie Consalvo's works capture a very individual, emotional quest to create a primal feel. These are paintings that feel as old as time, and as new as a scratch in red earth - Earthy, satisfying and engaging.

**Rating 4 out of 5**

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**Dominik Mersch Gallery**

**Upstairs 75 McLachlan Ave, Rushcutters Bay**

**Closes 12 August**

[www.dominikmerschgallery.com](http://www.dominikmerschgallery.com)

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