

MICHAEL REID

S . H I G H L A N D S



Conor Knight

Soliloquy

With *Soliloquy*, Brisbane-based oil painter Conor Knight makes his return to Michael Reid after nearly two years, presenting a suite of works across our Murrurundi and Southern Highlands spaces throughout June and July.

Knight depicts his floral subjects as boldly illuminated and set against spare grounds, such that the force of our attention rests on the elegance with which these still-life forms are depicted: the curve of a leaf, or the delicacy of a petal.

In this lighting, his subjects are endowed with an almost actorly grace, as though stage-lit and moments away from delivering a great monologue. "In theatre, a soliloquy is a window into the inner thoughts of a character," says Knight. "These still-life paintings use that concept to create works that touch on themes of intimacy, theatricality and solitude. Borrowing their titles from famous monologues and soliloquies, the collection explores feelings that sit between softness and unease."

Always, there is attention to the gradations of tone changing across his forms as they turn towards and away from their light sources. The control of his brush, allowing it to deposit just enough paint to successfully record a form and then nothing more, gives each work a buoyancy and lightness.

On this level, he recalls one contemporary Australian master, Robert Malherbe. Further back, one can see that the artist is an eager student of history, with a deep respect for the traditions of Dutch and Flemish vanitas painting, albeit in a more gestural register and one less constrained by the pursuit of exact fidelity.

Also coursing through his work is a care for his medium which begins at its earliest stages, mulling his paints himself so that he has the most

precise control possible over their viscosity and performance on the canvas. "I've really come to appreciate the unique quality of oil as the binding agent in paint," Knight says. "Oil is able to hold light within. When light hits the surface of an oil painting, some of that light passes through the paint and reflects within the oil."

In a stylistic flourish, Knight allows elements of the imprimatura to poke through: a nod to the process itself, whereby a stable orange ground becomes the starting point and base colour upon which all others are applied. It is also very much an active element within the final composition, giving the work an almost weathered quality - as though uncovered after centuries.

If his botanical forms can be considered stars of the stage, characters of such devotion singing their arias, then concluding on the cuts of meat must be an undeniable and wry gesture: after the beauty, the meat of the scene, or its substance. Of course, by including the subject, Conor tells us that there is some underappreciated beauty in this subject too.

INTRODUCTION.

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ARTWORKS.

5 - 20

Tomorrow
Firstlings of my hand
I have no horns
Look to your left, look to your right
Something that shimmers
Now and in old age
Ten thousand hopes
Let me see now
One in three
And tomorrow
Give you my soul
Leave me my name

GALLERY CONTACT DETAILS.

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Conor Knight
Tomorrow 2026
oil on canvas
50 × 40 cm, timber floating frame
\$2,100



Conor Knight
Firstlings of my hand 2026
oil on canvas
40 × 30 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,600



Conor Knight
I have no horns 2026
oil on canvas
35 x 30 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,100





Conor Knight
Look to your left, look to your right 2026
oil on canvas
40 × 30 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,600



Conor Knight
Something that shimmers 2026
oil on canvas
50 x 25 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,600



Conor Knight
Now and in old age 2026
oil on canvas
50 × 40 cm, timber floating frame
\$2,100

“Oil paint is my medium of choice. Through the process of making my own paint, I’ve really come to appreciate the unique quality oil as the binding agent in paint. Oil paint is able to hold light within it, when light hits the surface of an oil painting some of that light will pass through the surface of the paint and reflect within the oil. Unlike other mediums that when dry, would be mostly opaque, oil paint retains a degree of translucency. This is what can give oil paint such a luminous quality. As a representational painter, who is particularly interested in understanding light and how it can be represented and depicted, oil paint seems like the obvious choice for me.”

~

Conor Knight





Conor Knight
Ten thousand hopes 2026
oil on canvas
40 × 40 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,800



Conor Knight
Let me see now 2026
oil on canvas
40 × 20 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,200



Conor Knight
One in three 2026
oil on canvas
20 × 20 cm, timber floating frame
\$800



Conor Knight
And tomorrow 2026
oil on canvas
25 × 20 cm, timber floating frame
\$900





Conor Knight
Give you my soul 2026
oil on canvas
25 x 20 cm, timber floating frame
\$900



Conor Knight
Leave me my name 2026
oil on canvas
30 × 40 cm, timber floating frame
\$1,600

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Monday - Saturday 10am - 5pm

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Michael Reid Southern Highlands acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the area now known as The Southern Highlands. We pay our respect to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging.