

An abstract painting by Philippa Blair titled 'Camouflage'. The artwork is a complex composition of layered colors and textures. It features prominent areas of bright red, white, and blue, interspersed with darker tones like black and grey. The brushwork is visible and expressive, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of a dense, multi-colored field that could be interpreted as a camouflage pattern or a chaotic, organic form.

PHILIPPA BLAIR  
CAMOUFLAGE

29th June - 16th July 2011  
Preview: Tuesday 28th June 5.30pm - 7.30pm



Warwick Henderson Gallery





Tutukaka (parrot perch), 122 x 122cm, 2010, Oil on canvas

## Camouflage: recent paintings by Philippa Blair

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Antropizzato 2, 60.5 x 60.5cm, 2010, Oil on canvas



Tusitala (Jumping Spider), 60.5 x 60.5cm, 2010, Oil on canvas

‘Extending paint to its limit, pushing the medium into new directions’, is how Philippa Blair describes the way her abstract works occur. The canvases, whether large or small in scale, solo or in diptych form, are characteristically dynamic “fields of action”, of colour, texture, line and form. Aside from their indisputable drama, there is also humor (and cheekiness) in them too, often through their bricolage technique. By this I mean, bringing different styles and pigments to coexist in a canvas as though emulating the chaos (as much as rhythm) of everyday life. The arc-like sweeps of a squeegee, for instance, the fine lattice webs made by stenciling, the armature of line, the benday dots (like the Pop era), the full brush strokes with drips unchecked that remind one of

De Kooning, and not least, the intentional “mish-mash” like a Polke or work by newer talent Albert Oehlen. But Blair is her own master and although she has stated an admiration for these and other painters (especially Kandinsky) her course remains personal and independent.

For some 14 years now, the artist has lived in Los Angeles with her architect husband – first at Venice Beach and more recently at the port settlement of San Pedro. Moving permanently from New Zealand to the United States in the early 1990s brought with it the re-shaping of a career that was already well established. The shift in location of her studio prompted imagery that was linked to her home country but increasingly reflected





Strike, 122 x 122cm, 2010, Oil on canvas

a very different geographical, cultural and urban landscape. For some artists, the shift from one context to another hardly alters the tenor of their practice, yet for Blair, changes in the ambience and dynamics of place are crucial.

She brings to her paintings now an improvisational dynamism that reflects Southern California, and one that could not succeed without formal training, a respect for the power of chance encounters and of the mind-body dichotomy. Her years of dedicated experience as a professional artist, honing her eye and unafraid to take formal and conceptual risks have resulted in images of considerable authority. Here, in this current exhibition, there are paintings that take you into a terrain that simultaneously evokes the senses, not only of sight but also of music and sound, of the crackle of electronics, or the brute force of industry piercing the air as much as the peace and beauty of a beloved home. Then more clandestinely, there is imagined evidence of the sole graffiti performer with his

spray can, the totemic figures of Jung's unconscious coming forth and the palimpsest – like layers of colour that contribute to configuring memories of times past. She maps both topographical and psychological territories as much as those of process, taking the viewer on journeys that are not predictable and comfortable but are always energizing and inspirational.

Text by Dr. Anne Kirker

Cover Illustration Pick Up Sticks (Detail), 92 x 92cm, 2010, Oil on canvas



Walkabout, 60.5 x 60.5cm, 2010, Oil on canvas



Antropizzato 1, 60.5 x 60.5cm, 2010, Oil on canvas

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## The Catalogue

#	Title	Medium	Date	Size
1	Tūtukaka (Parrot Perch)	Oil on canvas	2010	122 x 122cm
2	La Pirata (diptych)	Oil on canvas	2010	122 x 122cm (x2)
3	Strike	Oil on canvas	2010	122 x 122cm
4	Pick Up Sticks	Oil on canvas	2010	92 x 92cm
5	Gateway (Map)	Oil on canvas	2010	92 x 92cm
6	Breakoff (Breakaway)	Oil on canvas	2010	92 x 92cm
7	Chase (Action Movies)	Oil on canvas	2010	92 x 92cm
8	Tusitala (Jumping Spider)	Oil on canvas	2010	92 x 92cm
9	Antropizzato I	Oil on canvas	2010	60.5 x 60.5cm
10	Antropizzato II	Oil on canvas	2010	60.5 x 60.5cm
11	Map (Otautahi)	Oil on canvas	2010	60.5 x 60.5cm
12	Mangrove	Oil on canvas	2010	60.5 x 60.5cm
13	Palma (Firenze)	Oil on canvas	2010	51 x 51cm
14	Walkabout	Oil on canvas	2010	51 x 51cm
15-18	Broken Plains I, II, III, IV	Oil on canvas	2010	36 x 28cm

Philippa Blair has been based in Southern California since 1995. Blair is represented in most New Zealand gallery collections including the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington), Auckland University, Chartwell Collection (Hamilton) and many private collections internationally and nationally including the Citibank Collection (New York).

Thanks to Dr. Anne Kirker for providing the text for Camouflage. Dr. Kirker is an Art Historian and writer currently residing in Brisbane. Dr. Kirker has written the seminal arts book "New Zealand Women Artists" (1986, revised 1993) and has worked as a Senior Curator at The Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, a curator for The National Art Gallery, Wellington and as the Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Auckland City Art Gallery.



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Pick Up Sticks (Detail), 92 x 92cm, 2010, Oil on canvas

