



BOROONDARA  
ARTS

# Light Gestures: Samara Adamson-Pinczewski

TOWN HALL GALLERY  
HAWTHORN ARTS CENTRE

SAT 17 APRIL – SAT 3 JULY 2021

# Light is Life

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski's studio is on the first floor of a terrace in Carlton and through her north and south facing windows she sees cropped forms: sections of the surrounding buildings, a slice of her neighbour's rooftop, parts of trees, and segments of the sky. Through the same windows throughout the day and night stream splinters of light, the splayed shadows of tree branches, reflective architectural forms, and cascading headlamp beams of passing cars which, together, create magical light projections across her studio walls. 'Looking, thinking and being sensitive to everyday phenomena is what being human is all about,' she says. 'The light is never going to repeat itself.'<sup>1</sup>

'Light Gestures: Samara Adamson-Pinczewski' is a survey exhibition featuring highlights from the artist's 20-year art practice, including new works commissioned by the Town Hall Gallery. Interested in the relationship between geometric abstract art, architecture and urban space, the artist employs reflective materials, iridescent colours, fragmented abstract forms and oblique linear structures to create abstract works that examine how we see, experience and navigate the physical world. This exhibition reveals the diversity and material innovation in Samara's work, including early painted cardboard constructions, collages on aluminium sheeting, paintings on paper, wood panels,

and stretched canvas, alongside irregularly shaped 2D and 3D wall constructions and freestanding 3D-printed sculptures.

The artist was raised in a unique visual environment, surrounded by metals and reflective surfaces. On immigration to Australia from Poland, Samara's grandfather worked as a rag-and-bones man and had a scrap metal yard in Carlton. Discarded silverware and other reflective objects made from brass, copper, bronze and pewter were brought home to decorate the house, an experience which informed Samara's colour palette and a passionate interest in metallic colours. While attending art school, Samara discovered the history and tradition of Abstraction. She recalls a life drawing class focused on the study of Cubism, which encouraged experimentation with pictorial space and the simplification and stylisation of form; an instrumental experience in the formation of her own visual language.

'Self-Portrait 2', 1998, is a large, irregularly shaped, cardboard construction created in Samara's 3rd year of art school. In this upbeat and youthful abstracted self-portrait, the artist presents herself in corrugated relief, made from recycled cardboard oven boxes that were cut up, constructed and painted in acrylic and oils. The central vessel-like form wears a stylised blue dress; her vermilion red décolletage is

decorated with a bright red necklace, and her bold aubergine hairstyle is windswept.<sup>2</sup> Similarly constructed but less joyful, 'Two Female Forms 2', 1998-99, depicts two semi-abstracted female silhouettes punctuated with zigzag adornments. Samara reflects, 'I wanted the subject matter to be pictorially ambiguous and dynamic in form and colour. These were breakthrough works, shaped in my own shapes.'



Visits to major cities like New York, Hong Kong and Paris helped drive the artist's practice forward. Having grown up in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, Samara admired local modernist designed homes and buildings by Robin Boyd, Theodore Berman, Anatol Kagan and McGlashan Everist, and the contemporary architecture of the CBD. Exploring the world's great metropolises, she became attuned to the sensory onslaught of the city: the verticality of glass skyscrapers, the speed of polished metal subway carriages, the jutting

edges of concrete urban spaces, and the often disorientating experience of natural and artificial light reflecting and refracting off every surface.<sup>3</sup> These sensations could be mirrored in her paintings by splintering the picture plane with fragmented forms, rendered in reflective and reductive colour schemes.<sup>4</sup> In 'Surface Slope', 2014, the use of stacked black, rhomboid forms and slanting angles creates a simultaneous looking experience: viewing up, through and backwards. This sophisticated illusion induces feelings of vertigo, dizziness and anxiety.<sup>5</sup>

New paint technologies and reflective pigments entered Samara's practice during her 2013 residency at the Sam & Adele Golden Foundation in New York where she had access to metallic, iridescent, fluorescent and gesso colours in development.<sup>6</sup> Her skilful application of these paints creates a scintillating viewing experience where colours are activated by light and flip with the changing position of the viewer, an effect extended with tilting surfaces within irregularly shaped painted constructions. 'I started to literally tilt the picture plane away from the wall, so that the forms were protruding or moving out toward the viewer, into physical space. I was interested in how this might exaggerate colour shifts.' 'Mercurial', 2018, is a large-scale 2D construction, featuring contrasting off-white and purple, green and blue hues that simultaneously shimmer or flip. The central pale shape glows in the dark when activated by natural or artificial light and the fluorescent pink paint of the reverse glows like a halo cast on the wall.<sup>7</sup>

The newest ground in Samara's practice is in sculpture; 3D-printed in resin and painted by hand.<sup>8</sup> These contorting and sinuous forms are a natural extension of her 2D paintings and constructions, now leaping completely from the vertical axis of the wall to allow the viewer to experience the dynamic curves, unfolding angles and brilliant colour shifts from any viewing position. Initially, a maquette is constructed from cardboard, the dimensions of which are then fed into the computer controlling the 3D printer. The printed objects are vibrantly hand-coloured, twisted, humanoid sculptures that embody movement and tension, with echoes of Umberto Boccioni's 'Unique Forms of Continuity in Space', 1913, and the architecture of Frank Gehry. 'Around the Corner 6', 2020, has voluptuously curved, neon tangerine, pink and lustrous silvery white folded planes. This work is part of an ongoing series of sculptures the artist acknowledges are works of their time; 'With the COVID-19 crisis, it is clear that no one knows what is around the corner.'<sup>9</sup>



Although Samara's work is not narrative-based, it does reference the person who makes it. For the artist, Abstraction is personal; it's about her lived experiences, her interests and preoccupations, her idiosyncrasies, and the many things that nourish us during our unique journey through life. 'Light Gestures' illuminates Samara's unswerving commitment to geometric abstraction and the evolution of her own visual language.

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1 Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, in conversation with the author, Melbourne, 22 February 2021

2 Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, email correspondence, 1 March 2021

3 Kate Nodrum, email correspondence, 17 March 2021

4 Dr Kristen Sharp, "The Beautiful Corner", Melbourne, Victoria, 2014

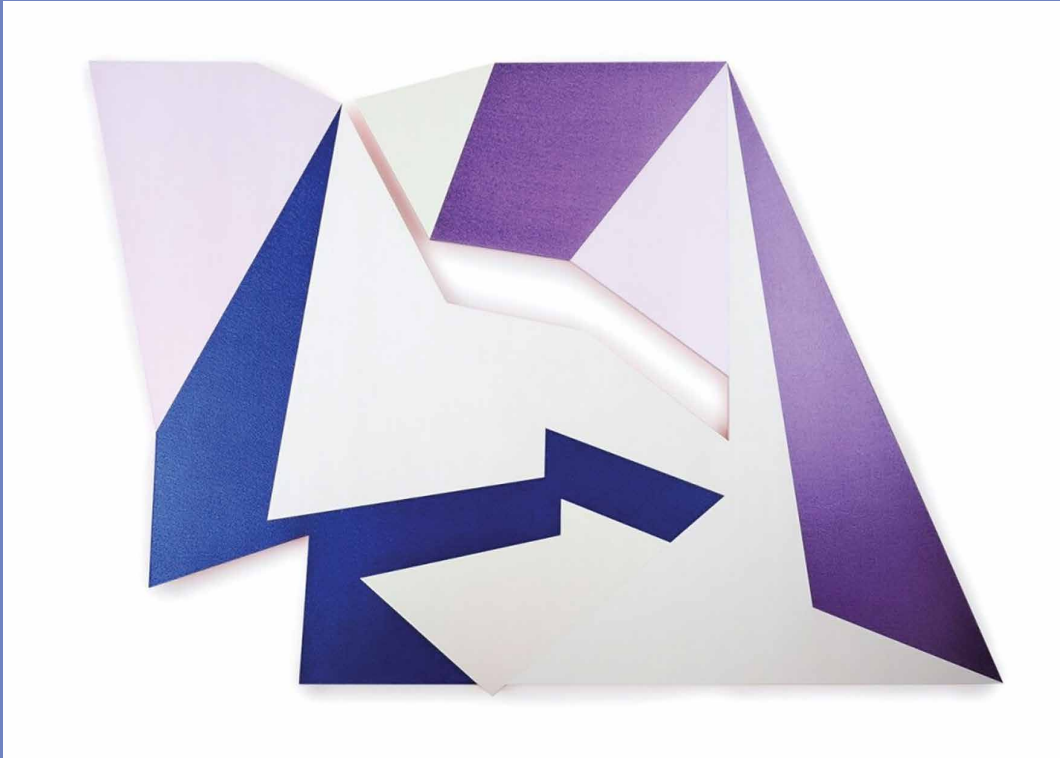
5 Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, "Thresholds for Disorientation", Melbourne, Victoria, 2013

6 The Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts Inc., "Made in Paint", New York, 2013

7 Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, email correspondence, 1 March 2021

8 Kate Nodrum, "Sinuous Spheres", Melbourne, Victoria, 2020

9 Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, email correspondence, March 2021



**COVER:**

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, 'Kink', 2020, acrylic, iridescent acrylic, fluorescent acrylic and topcoat with UVLS on canvas, 183 x 137cm, collection of Gideon Kline, image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery. Photography by Gavin Hansford.

**CENTRE SPREAD:**

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, 'Self-Portrait 2', 1998, acrylic and oil on cardboard, 120 x 95cm, private collection, image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery. Photography by Viki Petherbridge.

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, 'Surface Slope', 2014, acrylic on canvas, 183 x 137cm, collection of Patrick Barry, image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery. Photography by Viki Petherbridge.

**ABOVE:**

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, 'Mercurial', 2018, acrylic, iridescent acrylic, fluorescent acrylic, phosphorescent acrylic and Topcoat with UVLS on wood, 113.6 x 155.9 x 5.6cm (unfixed orientation), private collection, image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery. Photography by Gavin Hansford.

**BACK COVER:**

Samara Adamson-Pinczewski, 'Around the Corner 6', 2020, acrylic, iridescent acrylic and fluorescent acrylic and UV Topcoat on ABS resin (SLA), 40 x 75 x 40cm, private collection, Melbourne, image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery. Photography by Gavin Hansford.



#### OPENING HOURS

Monday – Saturday

12noon – 4pm

Closed public holidays

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