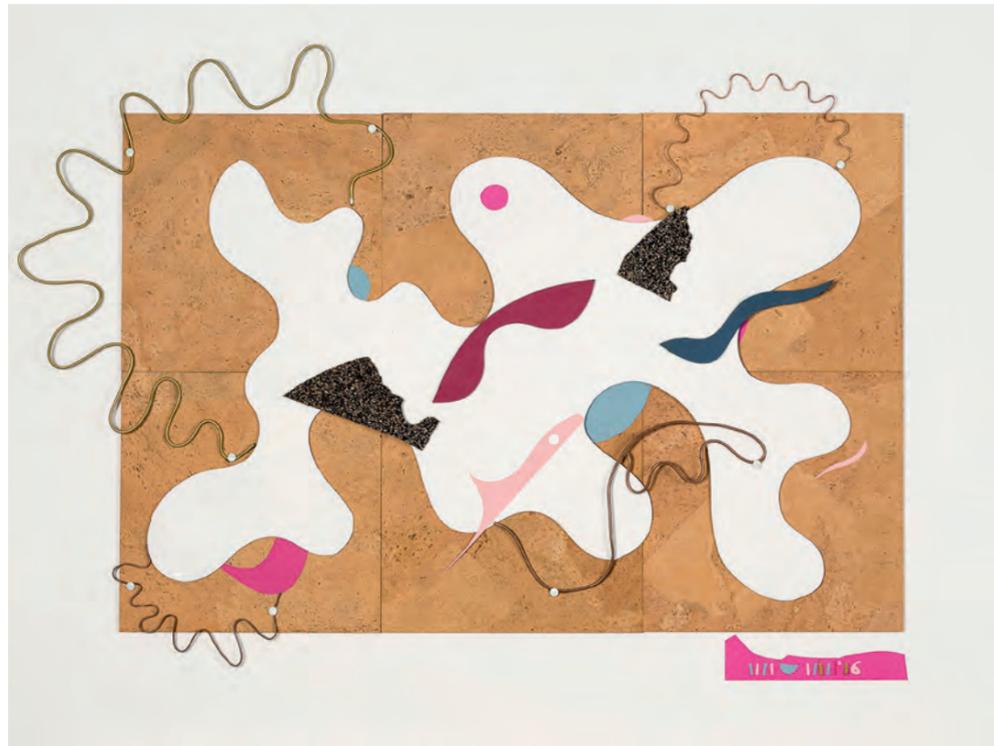




MATTHEW BROMHEAD *Chippy* 2016, brass, copper, cork, paper on board, 90 x 120 cm



MATTHEW BROMHEAD

Collage, sculpture, and drawing form the basis of Matthew Bromhead's practice. They are made concurrently, and all three are always included in each exhibition. Represented by Ray Hughes Gallery from 2010-2012, Bromhead has produced a number of solo exhibitions including *Tempest Travel* (2010) at Rex Livingston Art Dealer, *Firstlight* (2012) at Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney, *Landlubber* (2013) shown at Clifton School of Arts, NSW, and Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney.

His last solo exhibition was *Chinese Checking*, shown at Wellington St Projects, Sydney, in 2014. He has been a finalist in several significant art prizes, including the Hazlehurst Works on Paper award (2015), Sculpture by the Sea in Cottesloe, WA (2014), and the Churchie National Emerging Artist award (2009). In 2007, Bromhead won the Lloyd Rees Memorial Art Prize, and he has participated in several artist residency programs, including the Hill End Artist in Residence Program in 2016.

Matthew Bromhead would like to thank Richard Perram, Sarah Gurich, Emma Hill and the staff at BRAG; and the Hill End Artists in Residence Program.

Matthew Bromhead: Lapis Leisurely is a Hill End Artists in Residence Program exhibition

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
7 October - 20 November 2016

All artworks © the artist
All dimensions width before height

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COVER IMAGE: MATTHEW BROMHEAD *Dressed For Breakfast* 2016, brass, copper, cork, paper on board 81 x 102 cm.

IMAGES OVER: MATTHEW BROMHEAD *Lapis Leisurely* and *It's a Small World, and Sometimes it Gets Smaller* 2016, brass, copper, cork, paper on board, 90 x 120 cm



MATTHEW BROMHEAD
LAPIS LEISURELY

7 OCTOBER - 20 NOVEMBER 2016



MATTHEW BROMHEAD *The Woe of No Woe* 2016, brass, copper, cork, paper on board, 81 x 102 cm

One can paint without brush, ink, or paper. For the gesture must be conceived in such a way that when one makes it, it was already there.

Shitao (1642–1707)

Not long ago I was speaking with Matt Bromhead about a decision I was struggling with. He listened patiently before pinpointing the thing that was holding me back: ‘...but you’re not using real information to make this decision’, he said, ‘you’re only using judgement – what you need is experiential information.’ He was right. I was trying to decide my next move from too far away, distancing myself from the thing at hand.

Bromhead prefers to rely on experience to make his decisions. It’s the way he feels his way through situations, and it’s the way he makes his work. For instance, Bromhead spends a lot of time outdoors. He’ll drive to the coast, or to national parkland, and then he’ll wander. As he walks –

over sand and rock – he collects the things that he knows he will use. Solid hunks and wedges and bits and pieces return with him to the studio, but importantly, so too does the experience of the walk. It’s this time that allows Bromhead to observe shapes and textures, to pay attention to the way things naturally fall and sit against one another, to see how materials look in a state of decline. It seems that this kind of information – the observed, actual, physical kind – is what he requires to make his work. This, I think, is how he can so easily recommend experience as a path to understanding.

As the observer will note, there is nothing stern or monumental about Bromhead’s work; instead, everything is rather skewed and frayed. Brass and wire are as irregular and twisted as plants left to their own devices; marble and pearlite remain rough and broken; wood appears used, waterlogged, forgotten. It’s a relief to look on these items as they are: comforting confirmations that nothing is flawless, that everything is marked by time, that the most solid of forms will one day be pieces, new ruins from which to begin again.

When Bromhead isn’t making his sculptures, he’s concocting collages of windy, restless, jostling



MATTHEW BROMHEAD *Midnight at Morning* 2016, brass, copper, cork, paper on board, 81 x 102 cm

lines; lines that look like a cartoon brawl, or a nutty map to nowhere. Georges Bataille wrote that ‘for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape.’ Bromhead doesn’t mind upsetting academic men. His drawings do not take shape. Rather, they are mobile, moving, evasive – as if some part of them has wandered off the page, or forgotten to turn up. The result for the viewer can be a sense of expectation coupled with a touch of the unreliable. However, this isn’t to say that each and every line isn’t laid with absolute confidence. In fact, Bromhead’s confidence probably deserves a paragraph of its own:

It seems that all of the loose, unstructured, rambling parts of his work owe their existence to his hardy confidence. Although he may begin a meandering line that threatens to go nowhere, he lays it thickly, surely, so that when the hand stops and the line ends, it has gone exactly where it needs to. Who can say how confidence is born? Perhaps, when it comes to art, it has something to do with the artist’s faith in their own process; their belief in the tactile language of lines and shapes.

Jean Arp said of his own work: ‘The forms arrive pleasant, or strange, hostile, inexplicable, mute, or drowsy. They are born from themselves. It

seems to me as if all I do is move my hands.’ And more than two centuries earlier, Shitao said the same thing, but in different words: ‘One can paint without brush, ink, or paper. For the gesture must be conceived in such a way that when one makes it, it was already there.’ Bromhead seems to work in this kind of way. He establishes the conditions in which to make, and then, with his hands moving freely, he makes.

Because Bromhead has lived with the process of making this work, so too should the work be lived with. His art should be touched, handled, moved from room to room, placed amongst other things, put on a kitchen bench, or in a garden. This work came from a wild, disordered, honest place – so use it, if you can, as a distraction to calendars, emails, smart-phones and admin. Use his collages as a way of imagining the workings of another mind, and use his sculptures as a way of investing your focus in objects that are solid, flawed and full of potential.

**Emma Capps and Tom Melick
September 2016**



MATTHEW BROMHEAD *Plume for Partner* 2016, copper, metal, plaster, 100 x 10 X 10 cm