

PETER MILLER

(b.1955)

Peter Miller is an Auckland-based painter whose work reflects a deep fascination with time, memory, and the fragile beauty of existence. While best known for his contemporary still life paintings, Miller also works beyond that genre, producing narrative-based figurative works and large-scale portraits, the latter now a strong and growing focus of his practice.

His interest in the symbolic power of painting was sparked while briefly attending art school, where he first encountered the Vanitas tradition of 16th- and 17th-century Dutch still life. The Vanitas painters' use of rich symbolism to reflect on mortality and impermanence resonated deeply with him. While Miller draws from this tradition, his approach is more contemplative than didactic, layering quiet metaphors into his compositions through the use of object, shadow, palette, and form. These elements often suggest a narrative, but invite the viewer's own interpretation rather than assert a fixed meaning.

Miller's still life paintings frequently feature timeworn domestic objects or vintage toys that carry the patina of childhood play. These aged and often damaged items act as subtle symbols of transience and memory, drawing on the Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* in their embrace of imperfection and impermanence. At times, these objects are elevated through stark compositions and gentle lighting, offering a quiet reverence for the overlooked or obsolete.

In recent years, Miller's practice has expanded to include portraits and figure-based works. These paintings explore identity and human potential, often through an ambiguous or emotive gaze. They speak to his enduring interest in the human condition, and the tension between presence and passage, a link that connects them conceptually to his still life works.

Since first exhibiting in 1997, Peter Miller has been a regular finalist in major national awards, including winning the Molly Morpeth Canaday Award in 2014. His paintings are held in private collections across Aotearoa and internationally.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020	<i>Time Machine</i> , Föenander Galleries
2018	<i>Beneath the Surface</i> , Föenander Galleries
2017	<i>This Mortal Coil</i> , NKB Gallery
2016	<i>Presence</i> , NKB Gallery
	<i>When I grow Up</i> , NKB Gallery
2013	<i>The Mark of an Object</i> , Railway Street Gallery
2009	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> , Whitespace Gallery
2007	<i>Time Passing</i> , <i>Passing Time</i> , McPherson Gallery

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019	<i>Transitions-nOva</i> Art Space, Sofia, Bulgaria <i>The Intimacy of Distance</i> , NKB Gallery, Auckland
2018	Round, Gallery 33, Wanaka
2017	<i>12 Years On</i> , Gallery 33, Wanaka
2016	<i>Keepsake</i> , NKB Gallery, Auckland
2015	<i>The Figurative Show</i> , Vivian Gallery, Matakana Group Exhibition, Gallery 33, Wanaka <i>Christmas Exhibition</i> , Gallery 33, Wanaka
2014	<i>Fusion</i> , NKB Gallery, Auckland <i>Christmas Exhibition</i> , Gallery 33, Wanaka

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES & COMMISSIONS

2020	<i>Walker and Hall Award</i> (finalist) <i>Adam Portraiture Award</i> (finalist)
2017	<i>Molly Morpeth Canaday Award</i> (finalist)
2016	<i>James Wallace Trust Art Award</i> (finalist) <i>New Zealand Painting and Printmaking Award</i> (finalist)
2015	<i>New Zealand Painting and Printmaking Award</i> (finalist) <i>Molly Morpeth Canaday Award</i> (finalist)
2014	<i>Adam Portraiture Award</i> (finalist) <i>Molly Morpeth Canaday Award</i> (finalist, 1 st prize)