

The stories that are told within Brenda Draney's *Medium of Exchange* occupy the space that they need and no more. The canvas, like the page, is a complicated terrain. There are whole worlds in the white space and a vast underbelly to the surface that is dying to be dredged. What is brought forth and what is held back is a matter of artistic intention and a channeling of inspiration, technique, and memory.

Sometimes Draney's images crowd the corners of the canvas such as *Clean* but at other times they seem to emerge from a background that we are left to imagine, as in *Banquet*. She has described this as "that sort of liminal space between a secret and a mystery ..." (A conversation with Brenda Draney, Canadian Art, 2018).

The works feel reminiscent and evoke stories that are in transition or re-telling – which is appropriate since they are largely drawn from memory and a "trying to get closer to true".

As a lover of studies I have always found that there is something so evocative about the putting down of an impression without the expectation of framing it whole. There is a freedom and a creative honesty in the white space that surrounds the fleshing out of ideas and the allowing of things to be truncated and dissected and abrupt and imperfect. In this way they are complete. There is also something disturbing and unnerving about it .....

As children we are taught that the hill is in the background, and the horizon somehow tapers off and the people are front and centre and the sun is in the corner with the rays beaming down, and you fill the page – you absolutely fill the page. Deviating from such prescribed patterns and our expected norms is uncomfortable for some and an invitation for others. In the same way that a word suspended in the middle of a page, or the sparsest of poems ("The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams, for example) makes the words elicit so much more power than a page full of words ever could, so too does the visual version of that fragmented but purposeful effect.

There is no expectation of conclusions, only an invitation to contemplate the works of *Medium of Exchange*. The interrupted intimacy of *Vanity* and the nebulous foreboding of *Three on the Tree* speak to narratives that are unresolved but knowable, and rendered in sparse but incredibly accurate outlines.

Art is an offering and Brenda Draney uses the canvas as a *Medium of Exchange* between the viewer and what is on view; fragments of memories which commemorate people and places and incidents which resonate with powerful aplomb for all the indistinct edges.

Arin Fay, Curator