



LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Robert Brownhall: *Australian Stories* is the first major publication celebrating the Queensland artist and his 20-year career. Brownhall's gritty realist style reflects his perspective on life in Australia, and the book, a visual diary, covers works ranging from urban scenes to panoramas of the Gold and Sunshine coasts. *Australian Stories* (\$49.95) is available from Philip Bacon Galleries and QAGOMA in the lead-up to Brownhall's latest exhibition at Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane, 14 May–8 June. philipbacongalleries.com.au.



LIKE MIKE

Avant-garde legend **Mike Brown** will be celebrated at **Heide Museum of Modern Art**, showing a retrospective of his work until 12 October, and by contemporary artists at five small galleries who will pay homage in a series of exhibitions under the banner **Like Mike** (May–July; dates vary). **Above:** collaborators Brown (centre), Ross Crothall (left) and Colin Lanceley (right) in front of *Byzantium* (1961–62). heide.com.au; lindenarts.org; utopianslumps.org; sarahscoutpresents.com; charlesnodrumgallery.com.au; neonparc.com.au.

BEAUX ARTS

Inspired by history, Australian art goes international.



After a three-month residency at Paris's Cité Internationale des Arts, Sydney-based artist **Paul Davies** is returning to Australia with a new exhibition. Davies used stencil and other techniques to create *Flattening Sublime*, a series of studies of Le Corbusier's modernist icon Villa Savoye, in Poissy, France. Olsen Irwin Gallery, Woollahra, NSW, 6–23 June; timolensgallery.com.

Several Australian galleries will join the hundreds of international exhibitors at the **Art Basel Hong Kong** art fair this month. Exhibiting Australian artists include Katherine Huang (Neon Parc), Brendan Huntley and Martin Bell (Tolarno Galleries), and Sanné Mestrom (Utopian Slumps), who will show ceramic works such as Mestrom's *Untitled*, (2012), **right**, 23–26 May; artbasel.com.



PHOTOGRAPHER: GORDON DE LISLE (MIKE BROWN); PRODUCER/TEXT: DJANIA KUMURDIAN; IMAGES COURTESY THE GALLERIES AND ARTISTS; PHOTOGRAPHER (MAN VS WILD, OPPOSITE PAGE): EARL CARTER; PRODUCER (MAN VS WILD): ANNEMARIE KIELY

MAN VS WILD

While examining our relationship with nature, Juan Ford's work opens up new ideas of realism in painting.

AS THE PAINT dries on a hero piece destined for the Hong Kong Art Fair, artist Juan Ford has a crack at rationalising its content. "I began very experimentally, by taking an old sheet and burying it for about a week in that dirt mound over there," he says, pointing to a pile outside his Eltham studio on Melbourne's bush edge. "I was thinking about a previous painting I had done with this post-apocalyptic desert visionary and I thought, 'Let's play with this idea again and see what happens when I wrap my head in the sheet and take my camera out into the sunshine.'"

And so it went from there, Ford finding the perfect open-air place, layering up the clichés of tribal garb until he got his 'future oracle', then 'click'. Remembering to carry catalogues that would assuage the concerns of police called to attend 'the freak' pouring paint over himself atop a hill in nearby Research, Ford says that he "lovingly" translated the cold detail of that lens capture into this hyper-realist painting that messes with all ideas of the real and represented.

"I haven't yet had the time to work it all out," says the artist, who first found fame by smashing all the clichés of the Australian art canon into those of the realist genre so that "daggy" native plants were again deserving of attention. But while Ford plumbs the philosophical depths of a work that continues his oeuvre's subjugation of nature — giving it a "Bunnings aesthetic" — the faceless shaman of his painting puts it straight: keep smothering nature and the end is nigh. ANNEMARIE KIELY
Juan Ford is exhibiting with Dianne Tanzer at Art Basel, Hong Kong, 23–26 May; juanford.com.



Juan Ford beside the freshly finished *Reorientalist* (2013), a hyper-realist painting that depicts a faceless visionary who inhabits the barren desert of a post-apocalyptic world.

