

# Simon Degroot makes his mark with Soft Pressing

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ArtsCouncil

By Natasha Harth



Artist Simon Degroot's exhibition 'Soft Pressing' is on at Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery until 26 May.

In his exhibition *Soft Pressing*, on display at Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery, artist Simon Degroot explores the marks we leave behind and how they can form the basis for new artworks that speak to our connection to place.

Through a process combining frottage, painting, and conversation in the community, Simon creates works that reference the past and the present.

Frottage is the process of taking a rubbing from a textured surface to form the basis of an artwork.

After making a rubbing, Simon then takes the page or canvas back to his studio where he makes gestural marks into printing plates that are printed on to the frottage surface.

"The blank surface of a page or blank surface of the canvas is a little bit detached from the kind of world that we live in, which of course has a long history," Simon said.

“The metaphor of the blank surface is totally inadequate for the type of artwork that you want to make that exists in the real world.

“So, by first of all making a frottage on the surface, it means that the artwork already has a trace of that history and then, in the studio, I'm working with that history to add something new.”

The works in *Soft Pressing* were made from rubbings taken around Bundaberg, where Simon has been a frequent visitor for many years, having exhibited previously with Bundaberg Regional Galleries, as well as visiting family in the region.

It is familiarity with place that Simon said appealed to him.

“These works are about that intimacy, about that human connection to a place.”

As part of the exhibition, Simon will conduct workshops in Bundaberg, for teachers, visual artists and art students to engage in a similar process.

Simon plans to develop the exhibition throughout the year as he conducts similar workshops at the five venues to which the exhibition will tour.

“People who register to come along will go through the same process that I went through with the paper,” he said.

“We can print on each other's and have a bit of a collaborative conversation through the work.

“It's very inducive to having conversations with each other while working, collaborating, and those works will then start to create a collection of works from different places.

“I'd be interested to see how similar and different they might be.

“It'll accumulate and inform, and I'm hoping that I can then reflect on the different experiences of the workshops.”

*Soft Pressing* is on display in Gallery 2 at Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery until 26 May.

## **Teacher professional development workshops**

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**When:** Thursday 21 and Friday 22 March

**Time:** 5 – 8pm

**Cost:** \$60, which includes drinks, light refreshments, a professional development kit and all art materials.

Each participant will create two works, one to contribute to the exhibition and one to take home.

Bookings required.

See the full Galleries Autumn Program [here](#), and read more about what to look forward to in 2024.

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