

sculptures of trees hand-cut out of shopping bags border on the miraculous. Each tree is an individual portrait of a tree in his neighborhood and each conveys all the strength and majesty of the original, albeit on a tiny scale. When seen framed inside the bag that was cut to create the image, the work takes on an extraordinarily theatrical character. Tony Wong's paintings are sculptural objects made out of paint that combine narrative whimsy with a robust physical presence.

The most engrossing work is by Hong Kong artist Tsang Kin Wah whose video projections of waterfalls of words have a commanding presence. His animations start with words and phrases that appear, float, and vanish like the first tentative flakes of a snowstorm or a barely heard whisper and then build in intensity to a flood or a shout. The video was accompanied by the sound of rushing water but the tumult of words in crimson red also feels like the fires of hell. This is the artist's most complex and fully resolved work to date. His masterful invocation of fire and water, sound and vision, art and language, life and death, redemption and damnation is technically accomplished and visually riveting.

Jonathan Thomson

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Martine Emdur at Cat Street Gallery

Water as a subject in art has a long history across visual cultures. Whether water is at the center of the work or merely a bit player, so to speak, it has a forceful and often eerie presence; after all so many great tragedies and dramas have happened in roiling seas or in dark, fog-clouded lakes. Horror cinema especially likes such locations for their dramas. But one needs only to look at swiftly falling waterfalls in classical Chinese painting or the shimmering waters of Monet's works or the enticingly cracked water of David Hockney's



Martine Emdur, *Valentine I*, 2010, oil on linen, 183 x 214 cm. Image: Courtesy of The Cat Street Gallery.

California swimming pools to sense just how attractive water is as a calming subject and how appealing it is to a lively imagination. Water as a material presents the artist with so many opportunities through which to express so much that is ethereal about the natural world and a person's place within it.

The Australian artist Martine Emdur's recent paintings are dominated by water, as much a subject as it is theme. Emdur's large oils on linen, under the collective title *Lazuline*, show a range of individual, mostly nude, females swimming or merely floating in water. The manner in which Emdur 'fashions' her waters, from a light turquoise in *Sapphire* (2010) and *Quartz* (2010) to a deep, rich, dark blue-green in *Valentine I* (2010) draws the viewer gently into each momentary narrative of pleasure. The water and its hues and the surrounding dark environments fascinate: water, like the dark, speaks to bad dreams and the terrors of the unknown.

Emdur's figures are casual, caught in their weightless worlds like giant sea creatures taking it easy. But these are people, always anonymous since, for the most part, we can't see their heads. The refraction of the water emphasizes the ripples of the water and the streaming sunlight and rippling water blotch the skin, highlighting its pinkness.

the surface in joy or it could just as well be breaching the surface in a panic. The combination of dark waters, splashing, and sunlight adds to this suggestion of panic. One sees each scene as calm, but one cannot help but feel unease. That we are both calmed and trembling with anticipation adds a delightful touch to viewing the paintings for it means that Emdur has caught our imaginations by the scrotum and made us think beyond the surface.

Where there are two figures in Emdur's art, one might expect a certain sensual energy, but this is not the case, for the figures remain apart. A pair, somehow, too, emphasizes the sense of loneliness of her figures, an aching alienation from the world that is not assuaged even by calming waters and brilliant sunshine. We should be pleased by Emdur's challenge to our senses.

Ian Findlay

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Georgia Russell at Contemporary by Angela Li

The range and uses of paper have grown exponentially as technology has developed during the past two



Above left: Georgia Russell, *MC 1/Marie Corise*, 200 x 105 x 17 cm, mixed media installation. Above right: Georgia Russell, *Drawing Out 2*, mixed media installation. Images: Courtesy of Contemporary by Angela Li.