

Interview: Paul Davies

The Australian artist shares his story behind the graphic nature of his architectural masterpieces

By Jessica Cheng

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With a glint in his eye and slight grin on his face, Paul Davies looks at his work with veneration. He explains each piece judiciously and shows us the textures and under layers of the work that he has created. As we wrap around the Cat Street Gallery and he finishes enlightening us on the complexities of each of his pieces, we settle down to talk. Positioned in front of a painting of a derelict pool painted in burnt sienna orange and bubble gum pink, Davies begins to tell me about his journey of becoming the artist he is today and unveils his love for architecture and street art.

"I hope that people feel that they are invited into the space, but then have a contrast with feeling like they shouldn't be there at the same time," says Davies. "I always leave the paintings devoid of human form so that the viewer is encouraged to generate their own response to the space."

The space that Davies speaks of is usually comprised of mid-century modern structures and derelict spaces. These spaces are depleted of life and may be buildings that aren't particularly ornate or beautiful, but to him represent Australia in a way that is near and dear. He explains that his process of working is to bring a camera with him almost everywhere, capturing buildings and areas that inspire him. His paintings end up being a beautiful collage of his stored photos, some of which depict a grass hut in Sumatra, a swimming pool in Los Angeles and even his mother's house.

"The paintings always begin with a photograph that I take in different locations. The photographs might sit up on my studio wall for one to two years before I actually make use of them," explains Davies. "I mix the photographs together on the picture plane to create new utopias."

As our conversation comes to an end, I ask Davies what he wants a viewer to take away from his graphic and architectural paintings of these new utopias he speaks about. His response is that he hopes his paintings are not there to provide the audience with an answer, but rather allow the viewers to generate their own responses and seek answers within themselves.

Paul Davies – Blow Up

Venue: Cat Street Gallery, 222 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan

Date: May 16 to June 9, 2013

Time: Mon-Fri, 11am-7pm; Sat-Sun, 11am-5pm

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