

## SKIN DEEP

### Debra Dawes

**Opening:** 21 January, 6 – 8 pm

**On view:** Until 16 February 2020

Yavuz Gallery Sydney is proud to present *SKIN DEEP*, a solo exhibition of works by leading Australian abstract artist **Debra Dawes**.

Marking Dawes' debut exhibition with Yavuz Gallery, *SKIN DEEP* features seven large-scale monochromatic paintings that expand upon the artist's dynamic engagement with dimensionality, form and abstraction.

In this new body of work, Dawes departs from her precise colour fields of interlocking patterns and controlled symmetries. Opting instead for the palette knife as a key tool, paint is visibly scraped and pushed, creating loose sweeping gestures that require no precision. With each replicated and serendipitous gesture, marks are created contingent upon the size of the knife and the amount of paint carried by it. The urgency required to cover the painting's surfaces in one day heightens the physical and emotional intensity of body to canvas. From top to bottom, left to right, different states of being are rendered. After several hours of repeated action the exertion, exhaustion and a kind of desperation to cover the surface is telling in the marks. The refined edge and unified plane so familiar in previous work dissolves into depth, rawness and a tangible perception of chaos. Disrupting the structural and inherent organising parameters of the grid, Dawes instead emphasises the sensorial encounters of abstraction.

The exhibition's title, a critically important cue, points to Dawes' exploration of the phenomenological. In her deliberate separation of the words 'skin' and 'deep', Dawes examines the way these words reflect and look yet reveal a contradiction. 'Skin' alludes to ideas of superficiality, of the surface and materiality of the body; whilst 'deep' denotes depth and the profound. A metaphor for the act of abstract painting itself, the works disclose the ways in which one may shape and be shaped by forces known and unknown. They simultaneously embody surface and depth, sensing heightened corporal presences in the surface of the paintings.

In *SKIN DEEP*, Dawes pushes beyond the measured boundaries of geometric forms that have been central to her previous bodies of work. Navigating instead between the phenomenological encounter, the exhibition extends the artist's deep exploration of the nature and form of the abstract image.

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

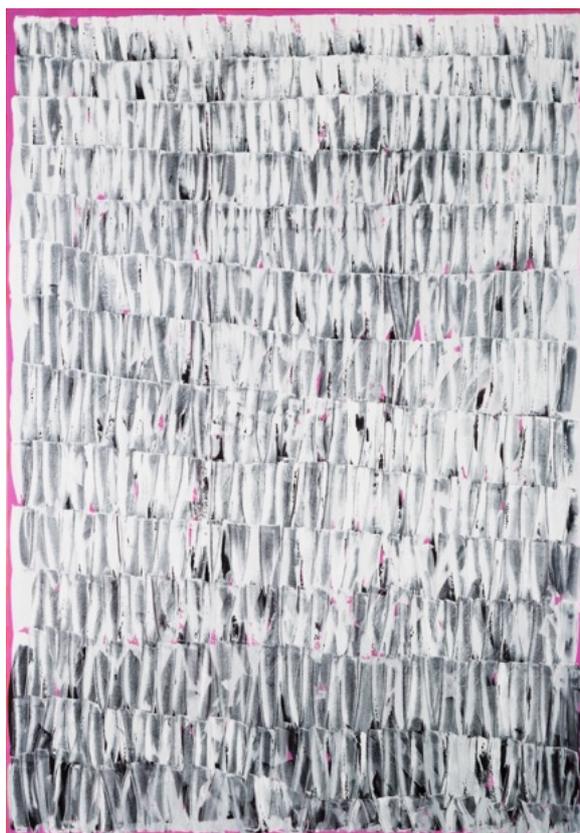
**Debra Dawes** (b. 1955, Australia) is most widely known for her paintings featuring grid-like structures and geometric patterns. The scope of Dawes' range as an artist is defined by her ambitious engagement between Modernist aesthetic traditions and techniques. Her practice embodies a sense of responsibility and conscience, demanding a response to the public infractions of contemporary experience that are compacted, codified and projected through her various bodies of work. Dawes has exhibited extensively at numerous institutions across Australia over her illustrious three-decade career. Recent shows include *Measure* at Wollongong Art Gallery, Australia (2018), and *Measure (ii)* at Tamworth Regional Gallery, Australia (2017), selected surveys of Dawes' artworks from 1991 to present. Her works are in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (Australia), National Gallery of Victoria (Australia), Art Gallery of New South Wales (Australia), amongst many others.

**For inquiries and more information, please contact Caryn Quek at [caryn@yavuzgallery.com](mailto:caryn@yavuzgallery.com) or tel: +65 6734 3262.**

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## Selected Works



*SKIN DEEP Unspoken #3*, 2017 – 2019, oil on canvas, 260 x 180 cm



*SKIN DEEP Glimpse*, 2019, oil on canvas, 260 x 180 cm

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