

COLOUR IN THE WORK OF PIPPIN DRYSDALE

Over the last quarter century Pippin has been refining her forms, her materials and her colour palette to create a unique body of work that is a response to various landscapes. Although an urban based artist, she seeks out places that have a special character or resonance, such as the Tanami Desert in central northern Western Australia or the Hunsa Valley at the end of the Karakoram Highway in Pakistan. Once she has absorbed the site, she carries its colours, patterns and ambience back to the studio, where she patiently re-creates their glow and echo in the delicate web of glazes etched into and brushed onto the surfaces of her elegantly shaped forms. The process of analysis, review and revision continues until she is convinced she has captured the character of each new place. The thin, tense lines, sometimes relaxed, often flowing, occasionally broken, trace the shadow gaps between the rows of dunes blown into long scarification's by the wind or the stratified rocks laid down over millennia, the rows of Spinifex woven through the desert or the meandering tracks of reptiles cut into the red dirt. Sometimes she combines them with broadly brushed colour, emulating the explosion of spring, an approaching storm, the red dust sunsets of Pakistan, or with rich gold lustres evoking the riches below the surface in the eastern goldfields.

The richness of the surface of the *Tanami* works is the point of immediate contact, the lure and first attraction; it is the play between the void of colour glimpsed over the horizon line of the lip and the complex surface that makes these works exceptional. The interior gradation down to a deeply resonant base is hypnotic and literally breathtaking. These pools of intense colour are moments of absolute calm, a point of slippage into another dimension of thought and existence, where the considerations of everyday activity are left behind. It is impossible not to be moved, deeply moved, elated and calmed by this experience. The sonorous colours seem to come from another place, a place where everything is pitched at a heightened sense of reality, so deep and luxuriant that it literally invades your being.

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