



MICHELLE
ESKOLA

**ATMOSPHERES
AND STABILITY**

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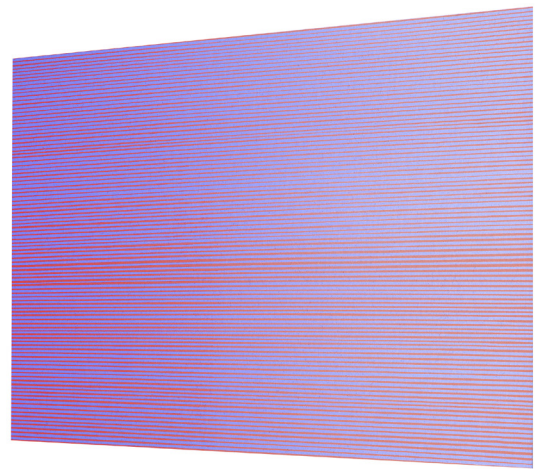
SPACE AND CLARITY IN PRACTICE

I first viewed *Atmospheres and Stability* in the middle of a warm Brisbane winter. As I looked at the work that day it felt as if the sun had followed me into the studio, each piece radiating an optimism that filled me with courage and calm. Describing something that I seemed to know, the surfaces, forms, gradients and colours offered a soothing familiarity. This is the beauty of abstraction. Through the reduction of form, interpretation becomes anyone's.

Building upon a legacy of artists who sought to reveal the governing forces of the natural world through abstraction, *Atmospheres and Stability* explores the stillness and rhythms that define our everyday. A set of abstract works created through the meticulous application of pigment, Eskola's visual language is comprised of just five pigments and a handful of visual motifs. As one experiences these works, however, it becomes apparent that the artist is trying to capture something far bigger than her frame permits. An amorphous expanse of light and form, each piece appears as if, through skill and determination alone, Eskola has brought the fluid and heady haze of the universe to a brief moment of clarity and focus. This is what Eskola does best throughout *Atmospheres and Stability*: effortlessly distills the essence of our everyday.

Acknowledging that time and space are necessary for transformative experiences, Eskola uses her art practice to clear space both physically and mentally in her life. Driven by a dedication to practice rather than production, she works intuitively, making decisions quickly. Treating painting as a form of meditation, she works in the studio to escape and process the chaos of the everyday. This produces work in a measured and methodical way, ultimately providing the artist time and space to receive lessons in patience and trust.

Fundamental to this body of work is colour. Working this time with vivid blues and oranges, Eskola applies layers of pigment to create gradient effects and swathes of dense flat colour. Luminous in appearance, these colours, particularly the blue, evoke the universal presence of the sky, our most important source of light and life. While these blues may



hold many cultural connotations, in these works they are flooded with light to create a sense of expansive space, freedom and calm.

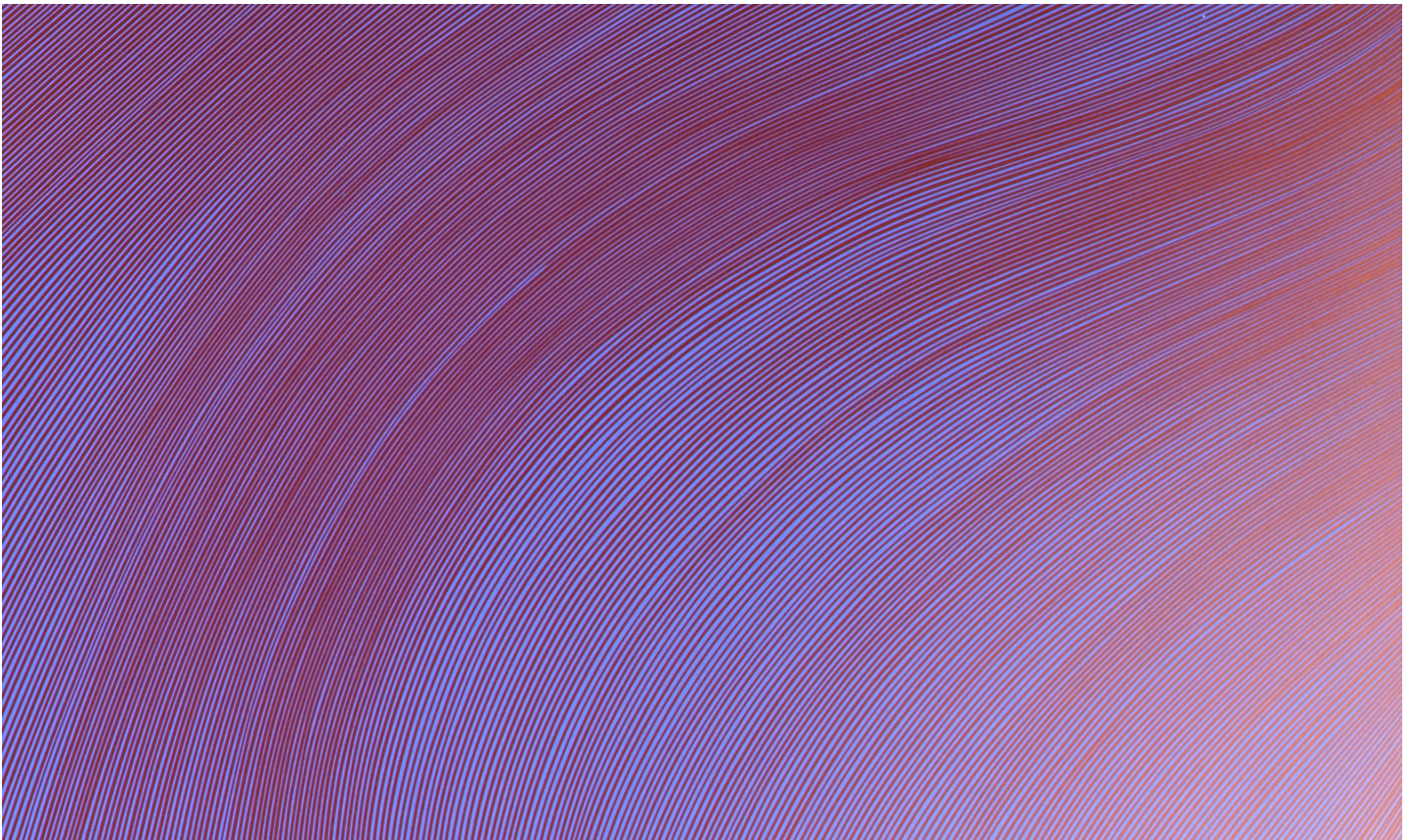
Compositionally, Eskola overlays and slices through these vibrant blue and orange backgrounds with multiple fine threads of contrasting pigment. Applied through a repetitive process of trimming strips of tape, these lines create a vibrating effect. Appearing as either a singular strand pulled taught across the surface, or as a sheet of hundreds catching the light as they float in the breeze, these motifs bring form to the planes of colour on which they sit. Up close, the detail of these lines is evident, so thick with pigment, they create a raised surface across the image. From far away, however, they begin to merge with the background, transforming the picture plane into a pulsating and undulating surface.

Aesthetically, it is hard to deny these works' connection to the

abstract and minimalist paintings of the 1960s, particularly the work of the colour field painters who explored the affective quality of colour. However, Eskola's investigations go beyond these concerns to examine the contemporary relevance of materiality in an increasingly digital existence. Resisting documentation, no digital reproduction of these works can be a true representation of the original, as current technology is not capable of recording the subtle shifts in colour Eskola's work relies on. This technological limitation means that to fully understand these paintings, one must view them in the flesh: a significant demand in a time when much of life can be experienced digitally.

Atmospheres and Stability describes the internal machinations of the mind through the physical sensations of light and space. Highlighting the ways in which art practice can provide refuge for transformation and hope, Eskola's work celebrates a slow and thoughtful engagement with material both physical and mental.

Words by Jenna Green



Exhibition Dates:
October 7 - November 11, 2017

SGAR
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Opening Hours During Exhibition periods
Thursday - Friday: 11am - 5pm
Saturday: 12pm - 4pm

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Front and Back Cover: *Scrambling and
Transmission (detail)*, Diptych, 2017,
Pigment on paper, 40x55cm

Inside: (Left) *Algorithms Apparitions (Sam-
ple)*, 2017, Pigment on paper, 85x75cm

(Right) *Between Time and Form (detail)*,
2017, Pigment on paper, 90cmx65cm