

Artists statement Sydney Panacea 2025

Panacea

noun: a solution or remedy for all difficulties or diseases.

The modern condition has resulted in a profound separation of mankind from the natural world. In many ways we also insulate our personal selves from our own natural animal state. Increasing diagnosis of mental and physical malaise, are met by an eager pharmaceutical industry offering chemical interventions.

As part of a living ecological system from which we often presume ourselves exempt, its becoming increasingly apparent we have paid a huge price for this exceptionalism. Perhaps instead of drugs and sugar hits we need most urgently to reconnect with our natural world, as an antidote or 'Panacea' against the stress and alienation of our fraught modern existence.

Another defining feature of our modern world is an emphasis on convenience, quick fixes and 'bite sized' chunks of experience and consumption. These new works offer a playful nexus between our commoditised consumer society and the natural world. I offer easily swallowed doses of nature to which our biophilic* needs remain. Ubiquitous consumables such as aluminium soft drink cans are ideal vehicles for consumption on the go. Even a fire extinguisher might be seen as an urgent delivery system for nature. An emergency response to be applied liberally as needed?

Meanwhile the popular expression 'The cost of living crisis' is repurposed here as a subversion of the original meaning to suggest instead it is the cost of our consumption itself which is born less by ourselves and ever more by the natural world.

In other works Gas bottles are used to 'package' the essence or maybe just the vital fresh air we need to breathe, and provide another useful container to remind that much like the pharmaceutical interventions we increasingly rely on, the wild places and awe inspiring places we might visit are absorbed and contained within us, and have sustained and enriched our lives for millennia- and with which we simply cannot survive without.

These new works offer a playful nexus between our commoditised consumer society and the natural world. I offer easily swallowed doses of nature to which our biophilic* needs remain. Please note many of these works (but not all!) are designed to be picked up and handled- please see gallery staff if handling instructions aren't clear. The idea is to 'break the fourth wall' so to speak and offer a visceral experience aligned with the concept of a Panacea. Time to take your medicine!

* Biophilic. A love of living things and nature, which some people believe humans are born with, biophilia, the inborn affinity human beings have for other forms of life.

Dale Cox 2025