

nanda\hobbs

Contemporary

Louis
Pratt

BLACK GOLD



3 - 18 DECEMBER 2015

BLACK GOLD

Social issues pervade Louis Pratt's work. He sees his art as reflecting where we are historically, culturally and socio-politically. There is a good deal to learn from these fully realised artworks.

Underpinning his aesthetics is a high order of coding prowess. Pratt has for his entire career been at the cutting-edge in the use of technology in his art practice. Nimbly and successfully he straddles the virtual domain—a world centred on algorithms—and the real world of material modification and representation. He bonds them in a way that satisfies a powerful aesthetic language.



In *Black Gold* no less a dimension than that of the alchemist may be detected—carbon-encrusted suits, the uniform of the financier—hang with the worker's 'hoody' as metaphors of social status. Nailed to the wall or free-hanging on brass-plated meat hooks, Pratt does not sanctify or deride one side or the other.

In this exhibition we walk through the carefully positioned objects of desire created from the detritus of our lives—once discarded and seemingly useless yet now valued with their veneer of gold and the sense of nostalgia they bring. These are the transmutations for our times.

Pratt, however, is never turgid. His core message is conveyed with an element of levity and astringent wit. The natural world is an acknowledged co-creator in this exhibition. Lumps of black coal carved from the earth's skin for the basis of much of the work

SMILEY FACE

2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, pigment & gold leaf
with brass-plated nails \ 36x38x12cm

are coupled with harnessing the use of gravity, the all-pervading force of the natural world. Pratt uses gravity as a tool in the sculpting process, hanging objects while they set, sometimes at 30 degrees, sometimes at 90. In the rising and slumping quality of *Dollar, Dollar*, for example, he also alludes to the forces at play in our economic system.

His mature social consciousness perceives the problems—at the coal-face. As a coder, he is, however, also a problem solver. Drawing on the cornerstone of his art-training in sculpture, he sets about developing expressions of concern, of hope, of dismay, of pleasure. All are underpinned by dedication to the achievement of technical excellence and are leavened with sobering ideals that are irresistibly engaging. Pratt's aesthetic is for our time and is about our time.

Ralph Hobbs, 2015



ELEMENTAL

2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, flock, pigment &
gold leaf \ 81x37x68cm



SUIT AND TIE
2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, pigment & gold leaf
with brass-plated nails \ 81x56x9cm



DOLLAR, DOLLAR
2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, pigment &
gold leaf \ 100x81x20cm



SACK OF GOLD
2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, pigment & gold leaf
with brass-plated nail \ 43x25x17cm



Louis Pratt

(Cover)

RETIREMENT

2015 \ Coal, fabric, resin, pigment & gold leaf
with brass-plated nail \ 72x12cm



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