

From the Dataset of the Multiverse
by Sam Leach



Sebeok on Safari, 2013, oil and resin on canvas on wood, 24 panels, each 50 x 50cm, 200 x 300cm overall
courtesy the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf

Sam Leach was born in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1973. He originally studied economics and worked for the Australian Taxation Office in forecasting and econometric analysis before completing an MFA at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His research has focussed on the emergence of modernism and the legacy of the early enlightenment, specifically examining the origins of modernity in the seventeenth century and linking them with the paradoxes and ambiguities of late modernity. By exploring the cultural and scientific structures we currently live with, Leach's work seeks to gain insights into contemporary society.

Leach's previous research looked at the ways that corporate space, as exemplified by the foyers and conference rooms of corporate offices, reflect societal anxieties about wealth and power. His works have drawn on the history of painting, with particular reference to seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting, as a framework within which to conduct the exploration of contemporary space. His more recent work has examined the tropes and techniques of late twentieth-century formalism. The pared-down experimentation with formalism is related to the reductive tech-

niques required for scientific and economic modelling and the visual display of data. By placing formalist abstractions with both real objects and realistic representations, Leach seeks to highlight the paradox that simplification and reduction are among the tools essential for developing a richer understanding of the world; in so doing, he makes a link between the utopian urge and excessive loss. [Because these connections are made with such exemplary force through his painting, *Scapegoat* is excited to feature his work throughout this issue.]

Leach's work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Australia and worldwide, and has won several awards, including the Metro Prize and the Geelong Gallery prize in 2006, the Eutick Memorial Still Life award and the Siemens Art Prize and travelling scholarship in 2007, and both the Wynne and Archibald Prizes at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2010. His work is held in public collections of the Art Gallery of South Australia, the regional galleries of Geelong, Newcastle, Gold Coast, Coffs Harbour, and Gippsland and the collections of RMIT, the Latrobe University and University of Queensland. He is currently completing a PhD in Fine Arts at RMIT in Melbourne.✕