

# COLLECTORS LOVE

Our writers look at the work of artists who caught the eye of collectors last year and achieved sell-out shows.

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**ANDRÉ HEMER >**







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New Zealand painter **André Hemer**'s work lusciously, fruitfully explores the slippage between the digital and physical in our media saturated age. Now based in Sydney and Europe, a 2015 sell-out show at Bartley and Company Art in Wellington paid testament to how the artist is going from strength to eye-popping strength. Success is catching up. Hemer's work graced the cover of *100 Painters of Tomorrow* published by Thames and Hudson in 2014 and 2015 alone saw him show outside Australasia in London, Paris and Shanghai.

In sophisticated but intuitive ways, Hemer's work recognises the visual persuasiveness of digital manipulation and processes in our lives, placing them in tension within the physical object with what we traditionally expect abstract painting to be. While the work reproduces incredibly well, it is far more complex and nuanced when experienced.

Speaking to me from a residency at the Villa Lena Foundation in Tuscany last November (following residencies in Berlin, Paris and Seoul) Hemer agrees that its deeply ironic that his work looks good in digital reproduction. The distance of Australasia means being located in Europe is a real advantage. "It has to be experienced in situ," says the artist. "Your work is on Instagram feeds and social media all the time. If I can embrace the opportunity for someone to come and stand in front of it, it's fantastic."

Hemer describes his work as embodying a "new representation", a term he coined during his PhD to describe the painting he is making. "You have these terms like post-internet but new representation speaks more generally to the idea that, because the way we consume and create media has changed so markedly over the last decade, the way we represent the world must change because of that. This is about how you represent all this dematerialised form in the world – how you rematerialise it."

Hemer's work has an extravagant, almost baroque collision of different sources and light that asks us to question how we see the world. As we talk, he is preparing for a show at Tristan Koenig in Melbourne. The work involves setting up a scanner outside >

1. // André Hemer, 2015.  
Portrait by Niklas Adrian Vindelev.

2. // André Hemer, *A Hot Mess #8*, 2015. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 160 x 120cm.  
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND TRISTIAN KOENIG, MELBOURNE

3. // André Hemer, *New Representation #3*, 2015. Acrylic, oil and pigment on canvas, 151.5 x 121cm.  
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND FATIHA SELAM GALERIE, PARIS





› Melbourne. The work involves setting up a scanner outside under the sunlight, playing off the idea of a Tuscan landscape and plein air painting. Hemer puts on the scanner painterly forms sculpted in his studio, made out of acrylic compounds.

“Scanning in the open air sees two different types of light playing with each other, LED from underneath and the natural light coming in from the sky. The imagery looks digital, but is not made in a digital way – the three-dimensionality is all a very physical act. Then I am sometimes manipulating those images in Photoshop. I print those onto canvas and then I later add different forms of painting on top – spray-paint, acrylic, oil and very three-dimensional impasto. Sometimes the forms I used originally get collaged back onto the canvas.”

Like fellow New Zealand-born artist **Martin Basher**, there’s an adventurous and sophisticated play between the hot, juicy, amped up electricity of today’s consumer display and the delicate dimensionality of the art object. They are beautiful yet disturbing in their dynamic hyper- abstraction. Yet they are also reminiscent of the exquisite medleys of floral blooms in 17th century Dutch still lifes. Texturally gutsy, they are full of licks of delicate digitally infected colouring, as if curdling in the throes of a machine-bred, overheated, visual sickness.

*Mark Amery*





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4. // André Hemer, *A Hot Mess #6*, 2015. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 183.5 x 137.5cm.  
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND KRISTIN HJELLEGJERDE GALLERY, LONDON

5. // André Hemer, *New Smart Object Plus #12*, 2015. Acrylic, oil and pigment on canvas, 81.8 x 61.4cm.  
COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND BARTLEY AND COMPANY ART, WELLINGTON

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