

Media Release - April 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stanley Street gallery

ARTHERE

hEAd ON
photo festival

Luke Hardy

foxfires / kitsunē-bi

24th April - 11th May 2019

Official Opening
Wednesday 1st May @ 6pm

ARTHERE is delighted to present enigmatic new work by Luke Hardy at Stanley Street Gallery in Darlinghurst, as part of the upcoming [2019 Head On Photo Festival](#).

This work was very successful when previewed at Sydney Contemporary 2018. Now is the opportunity to see the full series.

We find courtly figures, some in lustrous silks, leading us into chilly nightscapes where the wild foxes gather. The purpose of these gatherings could be ceremony or conspiracy, but we also sense an edge of discord. Speaking about this work, Hardy says, "Foxes are poets of beguilement. They are also masters of trespass. In Japanese yokai folklore, foxes even have the ability to take human form, entering our bodies through our dreams. "In some stories, foxes are faithful guardians, hence their presence as sentinels in Shinto shrines, but even there they may be infiltrators. I like the fact they steal across thresholds and defy our keep out signs. Art must also do that.

"In nature foxes are quite solitary, but in myth they meet at night, their gatherings marked by clusters of little yellow-red lights called foxfires, or kitsunē-bi in Japanese. These are sometimes visible far off in the dark, appearing in pairs and about eye-height off the ground."

In Hardy's work, the frame is itself a threshold, his subjects sometimes passing in or out of narrow view. "This suggests a story moving beyond our sight." These images invite us to make our own stories, teasing the tamed and wild sides of our nature. They explore Hardy's preoccupation with the way we invoke gods and beasts in our search for identity.

Previous series by Luke Hardy inspired by Japanese legends and ghost stories are Yuki Onna 2009, Dragonfly 2011, Patina 2013, Shadowings 2018. Together these series constitute a major oeuvre exploring the human psyche.

1/52-54 Stanley Street Darlinghurst NSW 2010
P: 0293681142 www.stanleystreetgallery.com.au E: mail@stanleystreetgallery.com.au
Hours Wed - Fri 11-6pm Sat 11am-5pm



Stanley Street gallery



"Hardy's photographs are memorable for their ethereal qualities, their faultless composition, their mysterious narratives and a distilled calm."

SMH Spectrum, 17-18 October 2015

"Luke Hardy's work is ascetic, but demands an emotional response; the images are sometimes in soft focus, but the intent is always precise... The word that best sums up this aesthetic is wabi: a simple austere beauty... Another term that comes to my mind is yugen: profound grace, but with undertones of something dark and mysterious."

William Yang

"Hardy's work is charmingly evocative. He places an emphasis on gesture and light, leaving us with a loaded sense of atmosphere ..."

Dan Rule, The Saturday Age, 3 September 2011

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LUKE HARDY

Luke Hardy is a photographic artist who has spent a significant period of his adult life living in various Asian countries. Out of this experience he has built a body of essentially portrait-based work reflecting on Buddhist and Hindu ritual, often involving water and purification. More recent work contemplates altered states and the thin line between the spiritual and the sensual. His subjects tend to be meditative, half-awake, sometimes somnambulist.

Hardy has had a lifelong fascination with Things Japanese, starting from when he was a child absorbing Japanese popular culture on television and in the cinema. This grew into a more serious consideration of Japanese art and literature, although to this day classic Japanese cinema, particularly the work of Ozu, Masaki Kobayashi and Kurosawa, is a favourite point of contact.



Hardy has travelled countless times throughout Japan in all of its seasons over the last thirty years, initially engaging his camera as a means of documentation. Lately, as his practice has become more conceptual, he has tended to capture authentic elements that he then incorporates into meticulous imagined compositions, as in his series yuki onna , dragonfly and foxfires.

Hardy's work is held in private collections in Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, France, the UK, Canada and the USA. He has been nominated for the Blake Prize [2008] and the Head On Portrait Prize [2006, 2010]. Other works of his have also been shortlisted for Head On prizes over the years. His photographs appear in a number of publications, including Australian Art Review, Photo Review Australia, the Australian Photography and Gallery Compendium and Burma: Art and Archaeology [The British Museum, 2002].

Foxfires/kitsunē-bi was previewed to great success at the Sydney Contemporary Art Fair in September 2018.

Links:

<http://stanleystreetgallery.com.au/exhibition/luke-hardy-24th-april-11th-may-2019/>

<https://arthere.com.au/hardy-main>

<https://www.headon.com.au/exhibitions/foxfires-kitsune-bi>

https://www.instagram.com/stanley_street_gallery/

<https://www.facebook.com/StanleyStreetGallery>

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