



Above: *Welcome to our world* acrylic on canvas  
Front: *Lost in a world I do not know* acrylic on canvas  
Photography by William Bean

# Trevor Weekes

To be Humanised 2



MANNING REGIONAL ART GALLERY  
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# Trevor Weekes

## *To be Humanised 2*

Dressing animals in clothing is not something new and draws a variety of comments from the uninitiated. I have to admit that I am guilty of thinking how cute they look dressed up in suits and dresses but underneath remains a thought that the owner really wants a child and the animal is a substitute for that child. I do not judge anyone harshly as long as the animal is not hurt by this action. Some will say they are mentally scarred.

For this body of work I have presented big cats in a variety of outfits, but tried very hard not to just plonk a piece of clothing on and was certainly not trying to make the models cute.

The garments and adornments are weighing the cats down.

I wanted to try and make the garments fit their anatomy or not, therefore adding a burden when wearing them.

The landscapes represented in the artworks are all based around our use of nature as inspiration: design in paintings, fabric design, wallpaper or adaptation from Mother Nature for pure decoration.

Nothing in the animal's world is real, it is all generated by humans.

For me all animals are amazing. Observing them in their environment, day to day living, the variety of characteristics they possess and their need to survive together gives me insight into their world.

Human history has projected a sense that we are the superior race, therefore we know best when it comes to the wellbeing of the Natural world. That has proven not to be the case.

I have tried to present the cats as beautiful creatures and have based the gestures and poses on humans. In the series contained within the body of work *Human-eyes* I have substituted cat's eyes with human eyes and used references of humans in various positions then translated that pose to cats. It will be apparent when viewing the works that some of the images will be recognisable. I have adapted works using well-known paintings.

I wanted to show opulence from a human perspective and how this is imposed onto the animals. The expressions on the faces of the animals gives some insight to the imposition and amplifies the 'we know better' attitude. To make our animals look the way we think they should look and be more human.

As I write this I realise how loaded and complicated I have made these seemingly simple paintings. This is my second body of work that has used the theme of animals being humanised. In the past I spent many weeks at *Taronga Park Zoo* observing animals. The animal I focused on was the spider monkey placing them in domestic situations.

Inside the house, the spider monkeys were doing human things: in the kitchen, in the bathroom, and on the lounge.

As time moves on I do worry about the animals of the world. We have lost so many. We cannot afford to lose any more.

My choice of big cats was an opportunity to work on an animal that I absolutely love and have the utmost respect for. It could have been any animal really. Well maybe not ants.

Closer to home it has become chronic for our native animals. It comes down to the desecration of their environment, feral cats and feral foxes.

To some the survival of these unique animals may not matter but it matters to me.

Extinction is our greatest shame.

*Trevor Weekes 2021*



*Our land was yours* acrylic on canvas



*What we do* acrylic on plywood



*If only there was music* acrylic on canvas



*That much better* acrylic on canvas



*Rehabilitation* acrylic on plywood



*Your Grandmother* acrylic on canvas