



glimpses

TIM ELLIS



FOREWORD

Somewhere within this body of work by Tim Ellis – within the glimpsed scenes that he has painted – there are surely mirrors, surreptitiously offering the viewer glimpses of the artist himself. While the works are not autobiographical, the artist actively draws on his personal history to execute them, transmitting echoes of the lives he has lived and the ways in which he perceives the world.

Ellis initially trained as an artist in the UK and Europe, then worked as an Art Director in the UK film and television industry for twenty years. Alongside this professional trajectory was Ellis' personal development as a queer man in London in the 1980s-90s, influenced by the gay rights movement and defiance in the face of the AIDS crisis and heightened homophobia. This dual background has informed Ellis' methodology and his stylised aesthetic; combining the rigidity of composition, lighting and framing choices with theatricality and a camp sensibility. Further, Ellis has become empowered to speak boldly as an artist, and this translates in *Glimpses* through his use of scale, contrast, and in elevating the banal to the remarkable.

Despite living in Far North Queensland for the past two decades, Ellis still approaches regional and rural Queensland somewhat as an outsider. He notices objects and everyday environments which would likely otherwise be neglected, compulsively photographing and recording them to amass a vast digital library. Ellis draws from these references, but also embellishes from memories. While the paintings may appear hyper-real at first glance, Ellis incorporates areas of contrast, focus and muted colours. This way of remembering and looking beyond the mundane reinforces his almost dreamlike aesthetic; with softer edges used to differentiate areas of focus. Ellis uses fine detail to draw the viewer's eye to the subject or character of importance, and to inform implied narratives.

The painting process is important to Ellis, too. The artist uses his source material to digitally composite images, heightening colours and perspective before physically tracing the image onto the canvas. For this body of work, he then built-up layers of acrylic and mediums, employing impasto gels and glazes, wood-graining tools, air-brushes and stencils, while borrowing techniques from illusion painting and sign-writing. Accordingly, Ellis' painterly marks reveal the hand of the artist on the macro level, while inferring realism from afar.

The cropped compositions of Ellis' paintings further transform seemingly ordinary scenes. Several of the works hint at characters or events outside of the frame – the dog shadow in *Watching the Gate*, for instance, or the figures in *Tall-y* and *Superman Changing*. By decentering the figures, the artist invites the viewer to imagine themselves just outside of the frame; bystanders to the scenes being glimpsed. Ellis aims to convey these glimpses accurately (insofar as he interprets them), and also welcomes viewer interpretations.

With this in mind, we are pleased to extend the viewership for this series. Exhibited previously at Cairns Art Gallery and Tableland Regional Gallery, *Glimpses* will now reach Umbrella's audience in Gurambilbarra / Townsville. While the paintings from this series reimagine glimpses of Far North Queensland, they could just as easily be scenes from this region. This familiarity bridges regional perspectives and invites audiences to consider their relationship to place, regional culture and its people, and ultimately to consider the everyday. As Ellis has noted, "with all forms of storytelling, the audience identifies with their own experiences." Echoing his sentiments, I would encourage you to look closely at the works and concepts within *Glimpses*, and to find new perspectives for your own glimpsed moments.

Daniel Qualischefski
Deputy Director
Umbrella Studio Contemporary Arts

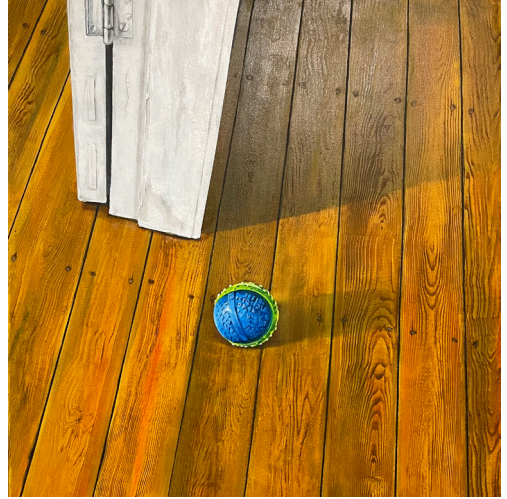






IMAGE LIST

Front cover: Tim Ellis, *Tall-y* (detail), 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 160 x 120cm. | **p.2:** Tim Ellis, *Superman Changing* (detail), 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 160 x 100cm. | **p.3-4:** Tim Ellis, *Mossman Mill* (detail), 2025, Acrylic, impasto and glazes on canvas, 140 x 180cm. | **p.5:** Tim Ellis, *Watching the Gate* (detail), 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 110cm. | **p.6:** Tim Ellis, *Unicorns Dinner* (detail), 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 160 x 120cm. | **Below left:** Tim Ellis, *Happy Place*, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120cm. | **Below right:** Tim Ellis, *Ball on the Floor* (detail), 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 90cm. | **All images:** courtesy the artist.



UMBRELLA STUDIO CONTEMPORARY ARTS

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Tues-Fri 9am-5pm | Sat-Sun 9am-1pm | Closed Mon + public holidays, incl. Anzac Day Sat 25 April

Tim Ellis - *Glimpses*: 24 April - 7 June 2026 | www.umbrella.org.au/glimpses

Umbrella respectfully acknowledges the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun and the surrounding groups of our region - Bindal, Gugu Badhun, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Bandjin and Gudjal - as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, share and celebrate local creative practice. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and Culture.

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