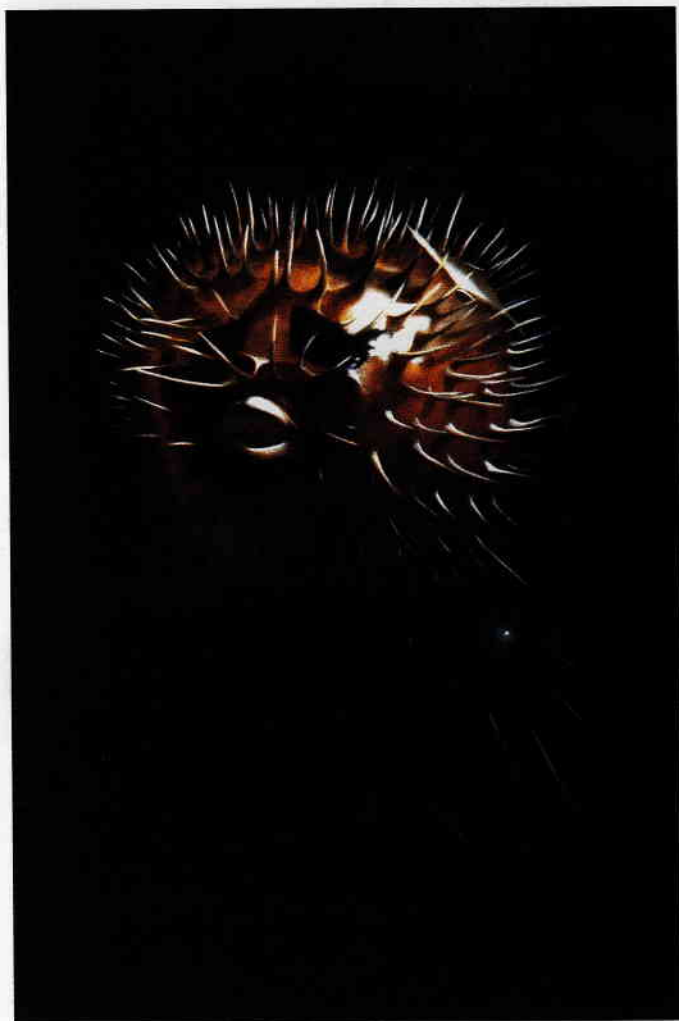


Sam Leach



The velocity of **Sam Leach's** rise to the rank of contemporary art-star is matched only by his insatiable professional drive.

Since completing a First Class Honours degree in Fine Art three years ago, he's managed to bag two prestigious prizes – the Metro 5 Art Award and the Geelong Art Prize – be short listed for a couple of others – including the 2007 Archibald – all while undertaking postgraduate work and producing and exhibiting a formidable body of work. According to Leach, that's just the beginning: "I will continue to develop my work, finish my Masters and hopefully get rich and famous." And he's still only 34.

Leach displays a deft touch with art history as well as art materials. His beautifully executed paintings reference the 17th Century Dutch Renaissance tradition, both in style and subject matter, but are made contemporary by an allegorical twist: traditional still-lives inhabit corporate interiors to expose what the artist calls the "spiritual vacuum" of commercial culture through the introduction of "a vanitas symbol" into the corporate void.

Employing the history of architecture painting, specifically as it relates to the modern Dutch tradition, allows Leach to examine "how the construction of atmosphere through light, space and surface has been used to respond to an

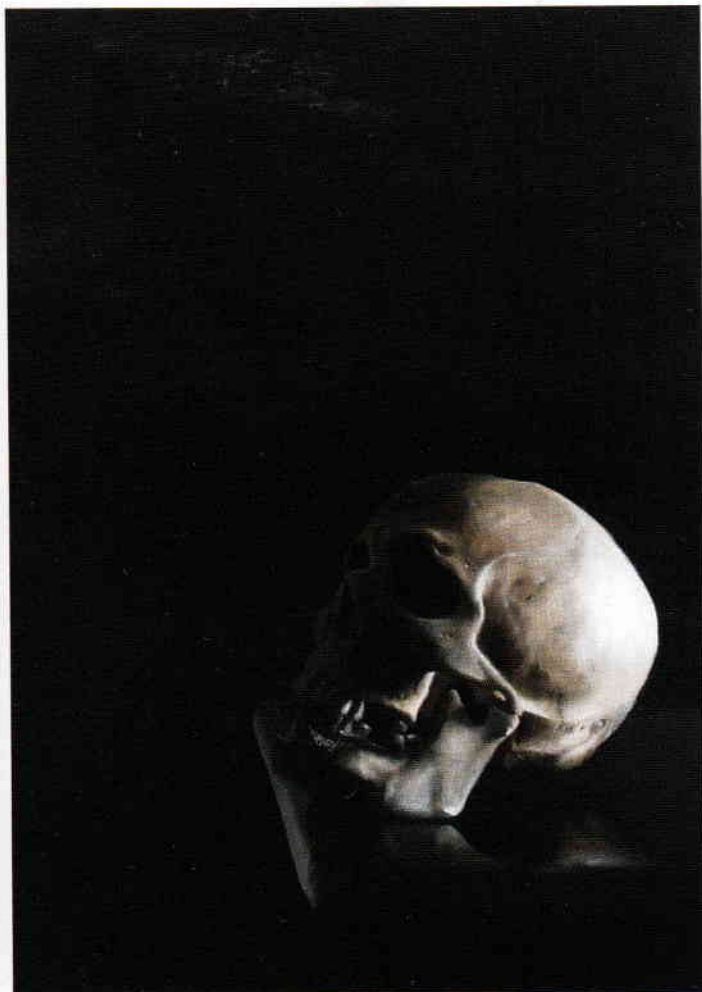
Above left: Sam Leach, *Puffer and Sputnik*, 2007. Oil and resin on copper, 30 x 20cm.

Right: Sam Leach, *Company of Monkeys*, 2007. Oil on linen, 121 x 76cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND SULLIVAN + STRUMPF FINE ART, SYDNEY

Opposite page: Sam Leach photographed in his studio by Mark Chew.





ambiguous attitude towards the creation and accumulation of wealth”.

The result? A dead hare languishing across an LED display panel; a partridge hanging prone over a lift-well.

As panellist Ashley Crawford says of the second-time entrant on this list:

“Leach’s small, gem-like paintings give a new twist to the age-old art of still-life. The seductiveness of these is aided and abetted by the clear intelligence at play behind their execution.”

And they’re gems worth collecting. With sell-out shows and an avalanche of attention, the only concern for a would-be collector will be the waiting list for one of his works.

CL

Born: 1973

Contacts: Nellie Castan Gallery, Melbourne; Peter Walker Fine Art, Adelaide; Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

Price range: \$3,000-\$8,000

Showing this quarter: Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney from 18 March to 6 April 2008.

Above left: Sam Leach, *Footless Peacock*, 2007. Oil on linen, 121 x 76cm.

Right: Sam Leach, *Platform Skull*, 2007. Oil and resin on wood panel, 35 x 25cm.

Opposite page: Sam Leach, *Des Esseintes Tortoise*, 2007. Oil and resin on wood panel, 35 x 25cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND SULLIVAN + STRUMPF FINE ART, SYDNEY

