

Bill Hammond 'Placemakers'

"Hammond bends, distorts, and manipulates the figurative elements in his work to engineer the dreamy image. Resultantly, the birds at times become simple visual devices used to both develop dimension and to control the composition as well as serve as his personal harbingers."

Composition

The main image of this painting is the multiple birds like figures with a human body, this draws the viewer's attention as it is something that is unusual and out of the ordinary, which makes you want to look at it closer and try and understand the painting more. The main point of focus would be the two birdlike figures in the centre and the lighter blue colour birdlike figures on the bottom left these figures draws the viewer's attention the most as it is done in a different colour and are brighter than the rest of the painting they are also the lighter tones compared to the other objects and the background therefore furthermore making it the main point of focus.

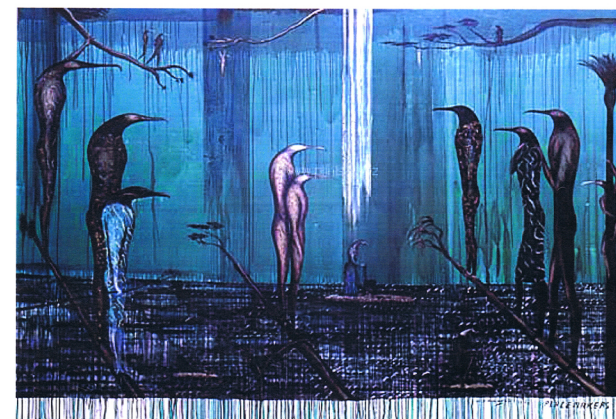
Bill Hammond has arranged the birdlike figures in a way that they are facing each other and are somewhat balanced as there is three birds on the left and four on the right, with two in the centre this means that the arrangement is quite simple. The horizontal lines that are formatted create a horizon line.

The painting is quite symmetrical and balanced this is demonstrated in his placements of the bird like figures and the three branches that they are standing on at the bottom of the painting that are evenly spaced out and are positioned on the same or similar angles as one another.

Bill has used mainly vertical lines to achieve an actual dripping paint, these are transparent, thin and adds to the composition.

Colour

Hammond has used different colours, tones and different intensity of blue as well as mixing it with shades of green to create a greeny blue palette. He introduces the vertical dripping paint effect in a darker shade of blue. The three birdlike figures on the right and two on the left are done mainly in black while the one closest to the bottom is done in light blue. The two figures in the centre are done in copper like colour making it stand out from the rest.



This is also due to them being a warm and light colour on a cool background furthermore making it stand out from the rest.

The colour used creates depth this is shown as the blacks pushes the image back while the lighter colours brings it forwards.

Form

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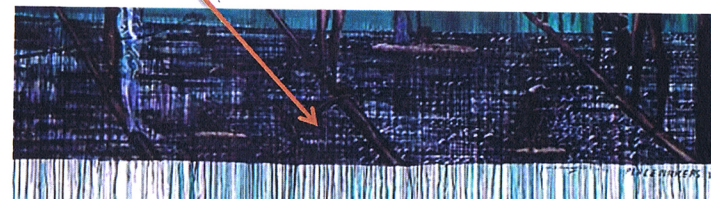
The birdlike figure creates a simplified and idealised form which helps emphasis the dreamy world. The forms are rendered to look solid this is done by the use of tones to create a three dimensional look to the birdlike forms. The birdlike forms are imaginary, simple and are quite static.

Space

The use of vertical and horizontal lines of blacks overlapping each other at the bottom of the painting helps create a sense of space and a ground like suggestion.

Line

There are multiple lines used in this painting most of which are linear vertical lines which run from the top of the painting these lines created by the dripping paint. Some of the lines are short while some are long to create a different look from each other. Some of the lines are straight while some are not as straight as quite jagged this is shown right at the bottom of the painting. This is created by diluting paint with water and as a result of his process. The painting is most likely done on an angle surface such as a wall or easel.



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Hammond travelled to the sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands south of bluff. Their destination, "Enderby Island, was once used for whaling station and its history is punctuated with shipwrecks and short-lived settlements." This leads to his environmental concern,

on his way he tried to escape seasickness and stood on the bridge and 'rode' the boat. When the boat finally reached the second crossing according to Hammond it was like 'bird land' as there were no predators. It was a beautiful place but was also full of ghosts, shipwrecks, death. "This other-worldly idea of a bird land was to remain with Hammond, who began to paint into existence a new, sentient race of bird creatures." This leads to his anthropomorphic birds.

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A wider context

"Bill Hammond combines social commentary, his own avian mythology, and a specific yet personal colour palette in his modern Symbolist and almost parabolic paintings. With his anthropomorphic birds, he creates a new society that is nonetheless endangered by its own arrogance, spiritual decay, and denial of both ancestry and providence. In his quirky, gaunt and washed teal images, Hammond draws from Egyptian, Assyrian, and Māori tradition to create both a contemporary hieroglyph and a fabric, well-woven with allegory."

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Most of Bill's paintings are very similar to each other each consist of this birdlike figure to possibly continue his theme of a dreamy world.

Symbolism

The birdlike figure is a hybrid (unreal form) that can only exist in a dream world furthermore emphasising his theme of a dreamy world. The birdlike figures most likely are influenced from the Egyptian arts that are found in the Egyptian temples such as the pyramids that shows animals with human bodies.

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Pictorial Proposition

Bill Hammond tries to create a dreamy world full of birdlike figures with human bodies. These figures help to convey his theme as it is something that is unrealistic and can only most likely be in a dream.

"Reaching further back into the acient world of egypt and Assyria," Hammond cretes his own version of "Horus, Egyptian lord of the skies, is in fact the extinct giant New Zealand eagle that once ruled the skies and preyed upon the flightless moa."

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(Stone panel from north-west palace of Ashurnasirpal II (reigned 883-889BC))

Hammond also painted detailed ferns on some of his anthropomorphic birds to symbolise that it is a New Zealand bird furthermore emphasising the extinct New Zealand eagle which once ruled the skies and preyed on the moa. This also helps to show New Zealand the country in which he lives and grew up in as well as showing the Māori culture.

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