

THE MAGIC OF RESISTANCE

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Wreathed in memory, our communities—and the homes and gardens and streets and trees and gutters that embody them—have a heartbeat. It is a pulse to which we are constantly reborn, from the quickening rush of birth to the golden hush of our final resting place, there's always that tingling sense of déjà vu.

The corner butcher shop, its tiled planes once slick with blood, is now home to a Gen Y overachiever, the carcass hook replaced by a plasma screen over a hipster bar. Out the back, the avo' tree, still spilling creamy green fruit for \$20 breakfasts, has a skeleton treehouse high in its branches, festooned in childhood dreams. And a Hills Hoist, wet washing dripping onto its rust-stained poles, clanks in a lacklustre wind.

Our built and natural environments are fundamentally connected to our sense of identity. But in an increasingly fraught world where place is disregarded in favour of development – terra nullius born high on the candied snouts of government and real estate agents – there is a need for higher power.

The fugitive beauty of Gabrielle Bates' Mystic City weaves a spell around the viewer. Magic emanates from amulets made from foraged and anointed ephemera – bones, sticks, twine, horse hair and the spittle of an angry young woman at a council meeting – invoking the spirit world and its animistic sovereignty for protection and possession. A TalisManic Memory Map is an emotional geography of cherry-pip conversations, a battery of chicken dinners and the virulent need to ward off profit-driven development as it shatters communities and holds land hostage.

The relationship between culture and place shifts and sighs as if alive, but the lore of place is constant. Gnarled fig trees will grow again. Dead pets will hold sway in garden cemeteries. Sun-streaked boards will find new purpose at the protestors' camp. The rust of ages will flake into a showering amber light over high-vis destruction with a mandate for stealth and secrecy.

The magic of animistic resistance calls on our mythology and fable to protect us; to fight back. Let the howl grow, and let the venal authority that challenges our communities, our homes, and our rights, see the innate power of our place.

