

Fathom

It is said that we know less about the oceans depths than we do about the surface of the moon. We are reduced to playing at the edges- fishing, boating, surfing, or just staring at the horizon – perpetual tourists who can never take possession. We tell ourselves we belong to it, that it is in our blood. The sea talks to us of freedom, lightness, nakedness and beauty, offering the illusion that we might plunge off the edge of the world to inhabit a carefree new one of rapture and enchantment. We mask our awe with stories.

At the end of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*, a bunch of dissolute party guests staggers drunkenly onto a beach at daybreak to find a sea monster trapped in a fishing net, breathing its last: a fateful conjunction of two worlds, one hedonistic, the other inexplicable, and each at the end of its tether.

The prints, paintings and drawings in Barbie Kjar's *fathom* have this same mythic quality. Their candid directness conveys both the delight and the unknowability of the sea, at once intimate and universal. The tales they tell are of exploration and discovery. Ultimately, like Homer's *Odyssey*, from which they take their cue, they are stories of homecoming.

Peter Timms, June 2012