

## Mindy Gill on the mire of identity politics

Race, gender, class: categories of identity have become central to not only our understanding of politics, but also our appreciation of art. However, the prominence of these categories has also bred dogmatic assumptions that only circumscribe the achievements of the writers we lionise in identitarian terms.

In the cover feature for the March issue of *ABR*, Mindy Gill shows the impact identity politics has had on our reviewing culture. By unpicking the rhetoric with which non-white writers are evaluated, Gill shrewdly observes that in equating marginalisation with authenticity we do writers no favours. For in having their cultural background valued above all else, writers are being tacitly encouraged to eschew refinements of style and technique for a verisimilitude that often borders on caricature.



### Extracts from Mindy Gill's article

'I too have nodded along to the old dictum, "all art is political". Its satisfying consonance lends it the heft of any halfway-decent party line ... But, to me, political impact has never been a useful measure of art's worth or success.'

'I know the desire to "feel seen", particularly when one is starved for representation, and when the only representation available to you has relied on discomfiting caricature. It's complex territory when both racism and race-consciousness hold similar ideas of group identity.'

'Australian literary culture has come to equate the rejection of literary craft and artifice with a progressive literary voice.'



Mindy Gill

### About Mindy Gill

Mindy Gill is a Brisbane-based poet and critic. She has received the Queensland Premier's Young Writers and Publishers Award, and the Australian Poetry/NAHR Poetry Fellowship in Val Talleggio, Italy. From 2017–20, she was Editor-in-Chief of *Peril* magazine. Mindy is *ABR*'s fifth Rising Star.

### Interviews

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