

**EMERGE AND REVIEW:**

A LOOK INTO THE UBS AUSTRALIAN ART COLLECTION













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FRONT AND BACK COVER:  
Hany Armanious  
*Untitled* 2006  
site-specific wall drawing  
adhesive vinyl on wall  
running length 33 metres

## EMERGE AND REVIEW:

### A LOOK INTO THE UBS AUSTRALIAN ART COLLECTION



LEFT:  
Susan Norrie  
*Be seeing you (the arrival)* 2006 (detail)  
oil on canvas  
140 x 132 cm

INSIDE FRONT COVER:  
Michelle Ussher  
*Over growth* 2006 (detail)  
site-specific ceiling drawing  
pencil and watercolour pencil on gesso on MDF  
4 panels, 360 x 600 cm overall

INSIDE BACK COVER:  
Susan Norrie  
*Air* 2006 (detail)  
site-specific wall painting  
acrylic and polyurethane on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 630 cm overall



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We are very pleased to have had the opportunity, with the move to new offices in both Sydney and Melbourne, to include art in the everyday lives of our staff, while providing our clients with an almost gallery-like experience when they visit our premises.

The philosophy underlying our collection is to build and maintain a seminal body of work that provokes thought while being inspirational. We also believe that this collection has allowed UBS to uphold its commitment to support and encourage the Australian artistic community: by the acquisition of works by both emerging and better-known developing artists and the retention of works by more established Australian artists.

To UBS, owning these outstanding works of art implies the responsibility to show and share them – with our clients, our employees and the communities in which we work. Bill Culbert's light sculpture *Rocket* in Melbourne and Robert Owen's *Vessel #2 (blue)* sculpture in Sydney are both visible to those working in the buildings around us, while our clients and staff alike have access to a large body of works in various forms and locations across the two offices.

We believe the arts serve as a constant reminder of the value of creativity, innovation, inspired action and energy – values that we at UBS seek to bring to the relationships we share with our clients every day.

UBS AUSTRALIA  
AUGUST 2007





## FOREWORD

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UBS is known internationally for its innovative approach. A successful worldwide organisation, it remains grounded in the diverse environments in which it operates, finding imaginative ways of contributing at the local level.

The UBS Australian art collection is one of the most concrete expressions of this local engagement, part of a long and proud UBS history of commitment to art. Internationally, UBS has built an important contemporary collection, which has travelled the world from the Museum of Modern Art, New York to Tate Modern; fortunately it will be in Sydney and Melbourne this year.

The support of UBS as a major sponsor for both the Biennale of Sydney and Australia's participation in Venice makes it possible for these events to be of a world-class standard and sets an example to other corporations.

The move to new offices in Sydney and Melbourne has provided the perfect opportunity to update the collection and continues UBS's commitment to encourage young Australian artists directly by the recent acquisitions and commissions.

These works reveal an excellent cross-section of the Australian art scene. From Dale Frank's rich and sensuous paintings to Maria Kontis's contemplative pastels in grey tones, the collection deftly incorporates a diverse range of works from the large-scale to the refreshingly intimate. The acquisition of a significant number of Aboriginal works of art is part of the new scope of the collection.

Wandering through the offices, I particularly like the approach taken to display. The hallways and rooms are a series of exciting encounters, with each work given its own breathing space, allowing the

viewer the chance to develop an understanding of the art on its own terms.

The Sydney collection has a primary focus on painting, anchored by large commissioned works by leading practitioners – Hany Armanious, Sydney Ball, Dale Frank, Louise Hearman and Susan Norrie. Two very different works by Norrie remind us that she is not only a film maker, but also an accomplished painter.

In its renewal, the Melbourne collection has retained representative works of some of the leading artists of the last 30 years, providing a historical framework for acquisitions of works by a younger generation of artists.

I hope UBS will continue to collect the best of young Australian art for the enjoyment of its staff and clients.

JOHN KALDOR AM

## PREVIOUS PAGE:

Freddie Timms

*Blackfella Creek* 2006 (detail)

site-specific ceiling painting

ochres and pigment with acrylic binder on

Belgian linen

3 panels, 205 x 514.5 cm overall





## INTRODUCTION

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The Sydney and Melbourne components of the UBS Australian art collection are interrelated, together presenting a coherent picture of art in Australia today. Works by artists under 35 comprise over half the collection and new works in all media are represented, including painting, sculpture, drawing, photography and video. Though young, the professional profiles of the artists are reassuring, demonstrating support from both established – museum and critical – and hip ‘underground’ circles. In Melbourne, new paintings of country by Pintupi women artists hang alongside a selection of landscapes by an earlier generation – including Olsen, Whisson, Boyd and others retained from a previous holding of Australian works – to add depth and

complexity. Both the acquisition and installation of art have proceeded in a creative, collaborative and well-informed way, in line with the sort of diligence and judgment that characterises any UBS transaction.

Through astute selection and thoughtful placement, the art has lifted and enhanced the work environments in Sydney and Melbourne. Seventeen of the artists created site-specific works which have been seamlessly integrated, bringing life to the architecture. Unusual sites were chosen for these works – including ceilings in Melbourne and entire corridors in Sydney – and the artists demonstrated great intelligence and understanding of the brief, leading to successful outcomes in every case. And for its part, UBS displayed exceptional spirit

and imagination by enabling these projects to be realised.

I would like to thank Philip Coleman, Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of UBS Australia for the opportunity to put the collection together, and Isobel Rogerson and Jennifer Eikenboom for their collaboration.

**BARBARA FLYNN**  
CURATOR  
ART CONSULTANT TO UBS AUSTRALIA

OPPOSITE:  
Julie Fragar  
*Portrait from 89 cm* 2006 (detail)  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 120 cm

FOLLOWING PAGE (left to right):  
Dale Frank  
*Matthew Macfadyen* 2006  
site-specific wall painting  
varnish on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 679 cm overall

*Adrian Grenier* 2006  
site-specific wall painting  
varnish on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 747.5 cm overall





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**18** *Mountains valleys caves* 2006  
white acrylic on fibreglass  
120 x 480 x 100 cm

*Calculus. Henri Poincaré. Man Ray. Computer-numerically-controlled milling. Monocoques. Casting. Negative spaces. Peter Saville. Unknown pleasures. Mountains. Valleys. Caves. James Angus 2007*<sup>1</sup>

In a new monograph on James Angus curator Rachel Kent tabulates the basic tenets of the artist's approach to sculpture. According to Kent, it is an approach characterised by a use of colour that reinforces the nature of the works as objects rather than as imitations of life. Other hallmarks are a casualness of placement that is intentional; a high level of precision in finish; and the employment of a range of physical shifts, making the sculptures 'at once familiar and strange to the eye'.<sup>2</sup>

Angus's works can seem disparate when considered as a whole:

*[He] avoids the constraint of stylistic continuity in his work yet there are threads that he pursues, 'things that I'm interested in, problems, writers, artists, buildings, histories [although] sometimes it takes years for them to emerge ... I make what needs to be made at any given stage ...'*<sup>3</sup>

One of the early works, a pink rubber giraffe, inspired flattering descriptions of Angus's 'conceptual restlessness' and 'clarity of purpose' from two leading New York critics when it was exhibited in the artist's first New York solo show in 1997.<sup>4</sup> Recent works seem to pivot on the edge that separates science and intuition. For example, *Basketball dropped from 35,000 feet*, commissioned in 1999 by the Public Art Fund, New York, is a representation in bronze of a basketball on impact after having been dropped from the altitude of 35,000 feet – the normal cruising altitude of a Boeing 747 passenger plane. One museum director thought it looked punctured, to which Angus responded that this had been an effect he sought: '... that there would be some sort of gap between a very empirical, scientific approach to what something looks like, and a much more intuitive one. It interests me that this moment of relatively massive energy can also seem pathetic.'<sup>5</sup> Angus likes and encourages the play between opposites and his works point out the difference between what we see and what we know.

The 12 names and concepts that make up the beginning quote were emailed by the artist to describe his sculpture *Mountains valleys caves* – a fundamental work and part of the UBS Melbourne collection. In both content and typography the email encapsulates Angus's art. Like his sculptures, the names and concepts he cites are evocative of whole parallel worlds, but they are given in shorthand and separated by full stops. Like his art, the quote expresses concepts that are highly complex with singular intelligence, economy and wit.

Two of the terms in particular – 'Man Ray' and 'unknown pleasures' – are key to understanding the sculpture *Mountains valleys caves*. In the spirit of the surrealists – for instance, the work of the American-born, Paris-based artist, Man Ray (1890–1976) – all is not instantly revealed in *Mountains valleys caves*. Land forms that should be brown or green are white and the white of the surface is so luminous it blurs everything that should be so familiar to us,

making it appear slightly out of kilter.<sup>6</sup> The sculpture stands on 'feet' which are inverted peaks so tall we can look underneath and up into the underbelly of the sculpture – presumably to discover the 'unknown pleasures' referred to in Angus's email.

The surrealists played with puns and hidden meanings, which Angus echoes with his reference to Man Ray: the artist's name is literally incorporated as the 'hidden meaning', as it were, into one of his most well-known sculptures, *Manta Ray* (2003), which conceptually is closely linked to *Mountains valleys caves*, the sculpture now in the UBS Australian art collection.

*Manta Ray* was Angus's first machine-sculpted object. Like *Mountains valleys caves*, *Manta Ray* was constructed by computer – a numerically-controlled milling process in which the computer controller reads instructions from a CAD drawing and drives the milling tool to make a particular form. Like the American sculptor Richard Serra (born 1939) whose *Torqued ellipses* (1996) were made possible through the application of CAD drawing to the making of sculpture, computer technology has enabled Angus to build any form he can imagine. Effectively, the computer milling process is capable of producing a perfect form which Angus then humanises through the application of a surface coat of white paint. Being highly light-absorptive, this surface evokes the most humane and traditional of sculptural materials, plaster.

Angus has characterised the perfection achievable through the use of the computer as almost 'too perfect' and 'disturbing'.<sup>7</sup> He seems comfortable with the contrasts that coexist in *Mountains valleys caves* and *Manta Ray* between the nobility of the genuinely sculptural on the one hand, and the sleight-of-hand or potential insincerity of digital effects on the other. Both sculptures straddle a border between 'old school' object making and notions like 'integrity' and their opposite – what could best be described as a seamless, unmonitored kind of virtual space. Further reinforcing this impression, Angus has said that *Manta Ray* 'is a digitally produced sculpture, caught attempting to swim back into an analogue universe. Acutely modern, it also looks suspiciously odd'.<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere he has described the mandate of the artist as 'pursuing an obsessive, homespun, do-it-yourself version of the world and then using it to search through streams of information, hoping to uncover some sort of meaning or hidden logic'.<sup>9</sup> In the end it all comes back to the moment of looking at a work; while the methodical and labour-intensive nature of Angus's process may seem anachronistic today, it is an approach to art-making that encourages a high level of engagement, which in turn ensures an insightful experience of the sculpture in real time.

1 James Angus, email to Barbara Flynn, 29 March 2007.

2 Rachel Kent, 'Shape shifter: the art of James Angus', *James Angus*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2006, p. 7.

3 Ihor Holubizky, *James Angus: truck corridor*, exhibition catalogue, 'AGNSW contemporary projects' exhibition series, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 8 Aug–4 Oct 2004.

4 Ken Johnson, 'James Angus', *New York Times*, 26 Sept 1997 and Jerry Saltz, 'James Angus', *Time Out New York*, 7–14 Oct 1997.

5 James Angus in an email conversation with Henriette Bretton-Meyer, 'Between science and fiction', *James Angus*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2006, op. cit., p. 73.

6 'I would be reluctant to use the word timeless, but I know what you mean. It's like taking something which is extremely familiar and disturbing it slightly. Making it blurry almost, so you know what you're looking at but are unable quite to see it.' Angus in email conversation with Henriette Bretton-Meyer, *ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

7 James Angus, 'Manta Ray: in search of perfect ambiguity', *Art and Australia*, vol 40, no 4, June–Aug 2003, p. 580.

8 James Angus, artist's statement, 'On making *Manta Ray*', *Face up: contemporary art from Australia*, exhibition catalogue, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin 2003, p. 59.

9 Angus in email conversation with Henriette Bretton-Meyer, op. cit., p. 76.







**22** *Untitled* 2006  
site-specific wall drawing  
adhesive vinyl on wall  
running length 33 metres

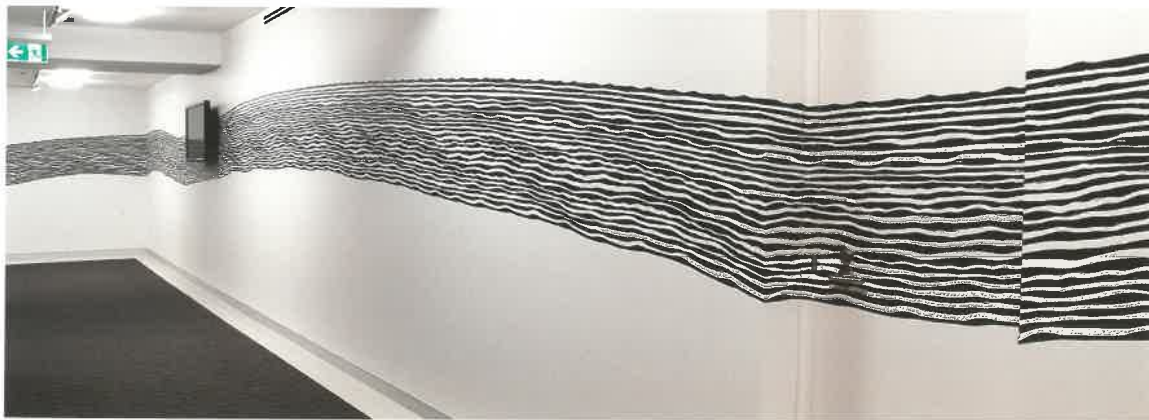
*I have captioned these images with brief descriptions of their making, emphasising the 'doing' in relation to the finished piece. These are not intended as explanations of the work but simply as a way of clearing a path between the images on the page and the person regarding them.*  
Hany Armanious 1999<sup>1</sup>

*A sheet of black adhesive vinyl is rolled up. The roll is roughly cut making a series of irregular spools. At this stage the work is a series of rough spools of tape, stacked and fitted together like the tumblers in a combination lock. Each spool is unravelled and stuck to the wall in sequence, leaving a parallel space of white wall between each line. Slowly the work evolves by this unravelling and aligning, a simple and repetitive action, until finally the work reveals itself. To me this is like stored energy which, when allowed to escape, flows like an electrical current. I have also thought of this kind of work as digital language, speaking of its own creation, comprehensible only to the mind's eye ...*  
Hany Armanious 1996<sup>2</sup>

Armanious took early to making art and was an admirer of influential Australian artists Ian Fairweather and Tony Tuckson. He studied painting at the City Art Institute (now the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales). While he initially struggled at school to find a valid form of expression, ultimately he felt confirmed in his inclination to work across a number of disparate media following his experience of the exhibition *The readymade boomerang: certain relations in 20th century art*, 8th Biennale of Sydney in 1990.

Armanious's site-specific tape wall drawing for UBS is one of six such drawings the artist has made which exist as a permanent installation in a semi-public context. Taken as a group, these tape wall drawings incorporate chance in a manner similar to the way the musician John Cage (1919–1992) and the artist Marcel Duchamp (born France, 1887–1968) used chance elements in their work. For example, the random action of Armanious's band saw can be compared to Cage's throw of the dice when he composed a musical score. And Armanious's adhesive vinyl can be classified as a 'readymade' in the spirit of Duchamp – defined as any ordinary item which the artist had brought to an art site and imbued with aesthetic character, transforming it into art.

Described by one critic as 'promiscuous in his choice of materials', works by Armanious typically incorporate a great range of (usually) malleable components – liquid petroleum rubber ('Hot Melt'), Blu Tack, cork, Styrofoam, clay, pewter, paint, plastic and wood.<sup>3</sup> Often placed grotto-like in a room, these mixed media installations are generally messier and more challenging than the elegantly conceptual wall drawings like *Untitled*, commissioned for UBS. In another instance, Armanious made a work that similarly focused upon working with the wall: during his Moët & Chandon Fellowship to France in 1998, he made figurative drawings based on the pattern of the traditional-style French wallpaper that lined the bedroom of the house where he was living. The artist makes no attempt to separate the various forms of his art, exhibiting all



aspects of his practice together – the plonking of an informational plasma screen therefore, on top of a section of his tape work at UBS was something to be embraced rather than reviled.

The UBS commission plays upon the optical and rhythmic simplicity of black-and-white, the texture and sweeping parallel lines encapsulating motion and direction. Within such clear and narrow confines, just one minute detail can assume unexpected visual force: the intermittent brown flecks – the accidental residue of the adhesive roll – add a new element, a repeating staccato pattern, to the visual experience of tracing the lines along the wall.<sup>4</sup> As spare as the *Untitled* drawing may at first appear, the 'errata' of the brown flecks captures our attention, adding yet another experiential dimension. As curator Wayne Tunnicliffe has written:

*Armanious seems to refer to a common expectation that art will offer a transformative experience when usually what you see is what you get, plus of course a whole new world that may always have been there but which Armanious has opened our eyes to.*<sup>5</sup>

The artist has said that the horizontal flow of lines in the tape drawings suggests energy flow. Like other abstract works of art, the powerful physicality of the wall drawing *Untitled* along with its strange internal logic and structure – is capable of soliciting a multitude of interpretations.

1 Hany Armanious, artist's statement, *Hany Armanious*, Moët & Chandon, Paris 1999.

2 Hany Armanious, 'Notes from the exhibition', Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, April 1996.

3 Michael Desmond, 'Hany Armanious: art nouveau barbecue', *Broadsheet*, vol 32, no 3, Sept–Nov 2003, p. 35.

4 The brown flecks are caused by a mild burning effect that can occur as the band saw makes contact with the adhesive roll.

5 Wayne Tunnicliffe, 'Reality bytes: Hany Armanious', *Contemporary: Art Gallery of New South Wales contemporary collection*, Sydney 2006, p. 388.

## SYDNEY BALL

**24** *Soft orange* 1974  
acrylic on cotton duck  
254 x 274.3 cm

*The strength of the Stain paintings especially Soft orange resides in the tensions created by the release of poured colour both translucent and solid, accentuated by splashes of enamel colour and subtle nuances. This creates the rigour of the painting's spatial relationships and composition.*  
Sydney Ball 2007<sup>1</sup>

In the 1960s the majority of Australians left for Britain to further their careers. Ball, however, as a young artist, went to New York in 1963. There he studied with the abstract painter Theodore Stamos (1922–1997) at the Art Students League for two years, familiarising himself with the paintings of Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning and Barnett Newman, among others. Especially formative were the retrospective exhibitions of American abstract expressionist artists Morris Louis (1912–1962) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1963, Hans Hofmann (born Germany 1880–1996) at the Museum of Modern Art in 1963 and Kenneth Noland (born 1924) at the Jewish Museum in 1964. Ball was excited by the fact that in these paintings colour was released from its usual role of representation to become the subject of the painting itself. In response to what he was seeing, Ball began to paint flat expanses of bright primary colours against backgrounds of contrasting colour. At the time, Australian critic Elwyn Lynn, while on a short trip to New York, described Ball's work as looking 'like nothing else he had seen'.<sup>2</sup> Ball's teacher Stamos, writing for the catalogue of a Melbourne exhibition in 1965, said Ball's paintings made 'a fresh personal statement' and distinguished themselves from the work of other artists through a focus on 'pictorial architecture'.<sup>3</sup> Geometric forms were the basic elements of the paintings in the Melbourne show of his first mature series, the *Canto* paintings (1964–67) which played with variations on the form of a circle set within a square, rectangle or diamond form. Ball had returned from New York in 1965 and would eventually vary his approach in a new group of paintings called the *Persian* series (1967–68) which incorporated rhythmic forms drawn from Middle Eastern art and architecture via the example of paintings by Matisse from 1910–11. The *Modular* paintings (1968–69) juxtaposed pieces of enamel-painted wood with matt-painted shaped canvases that reveal an interest in British sculptor Anthony Caro's use of materials, as well as a debt to the shaped canvases of Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly.

Against the backdrop of such illustrious beginnings in art, Ball broke with hard-edge painting altogether in the 1970s with works like *Soft orange* now in the UBS Sydney collection. Colour is the sole focus of *Soft orange* in the way it was the sole subject of paintings by Hofmann, Louis, Noland and Matisse. Of his connection through colour to Matisse (1869–1954) Ball commented:

*People say that my paintings have changed since the Cantos, but that shows a lack of understanding of what my painting is about. The vehicle changes but that's the licence an artist takes. Matisse is a good example. He ranges through a number of different styles from the early academic, through the Fauve to those Persian paintings (which influenced me) to the cutouts. How*



*different are those. But underlying all is the way he states the line of colour, the specific form of colour.<sup>4</sup>*

Ball's 1970s paintings are restricted to a few basic elements: essentially matt colour, glossier enamel colour, and unprimed canvas, used as a foil to colour, with nothing superfluous to distract from colour as the primary focus. Painting on unprimed canvas was the innovation of the post-war artists of the 1960s for whom immediacy and truth to materials were important qualities. In Ball's hands the unprimed stretches of the painting convey a kind of emotional 'nakedness' and vulnerability and can seem quite literally 'to breathe'. In a 1968 interview Ball said that 'each colour had its own psychological property ... and evoked in us some sort of feeling'.<sup>5</sup> Against the neutral backdrop of the canvas a full-scale visual drama unfolds, through the interaction of thinly-washed colour veils against hard brittle enamel patches. Traces of the creative process – in splashes, drips and pours – are like lines of dialogue, or notations towards a particular mood or sense of story.

Ball moved to the Australian bush in the late 1970s, where he continues to live in a house designed by Australian architect Glenn Murcutt on land containing

numerous Aboriginal sites. Following his move, the presence of such traces of the original owners of the land increased Ball's sensitivity to the plight of displaced Aboriginal people, and in response, his paintings changed for a time, becoming representational to reflect his concerns.

Ball has consistently exhibited his work throughout his career and his various early series have excited renewed interest when reshowed in recent times. For example, the *Modular* paintings were described by critic Bruce James as conveying 'an unmistakable sense of spiritual striving' and as being 'muscular yet delicately calibrated' when they were shown again in 2003.<sup>6</sup> And *Soft orange* looked newly relevant when it was exhibited with other 1970s works last year.<sup>7</sup>

1 Sydney Ball, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 11 April 2007.

2 Elwyn Lynn, 'Leadership challenged by the best show for years', *The Bulletin*, 21 June 1969, p. 56.

3 Theodore Stamos, catalogue note, *Sydney Ball*, Museum of Modern Art and Design, Melbourne, 1965.

4 Sydney Ball quoted in 'Syd Ball talks to Polly MacCallum and Jackie Laws', press clipping from unidentified magazine, Nov 1979.

5 Sydney Ball quoted in Laurie Thomas, 'An artist fascinated by colour and space', *The Australian*, 28 Sept 1968.

6 Bruce James, 'Three generations, one with youth on its side', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 2003, p. 60, review of exhibition held at Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney 2003.

7 Exhibition at Sullivan + Strumpf Gallery, Sydney 9–17 May 2006.

26 *I have come to tell you that i have freed myself, you too can do the same (version 2) ...* 2006  
acrylic, gouache, watercolour and pen on polyester canvas  
180 x 220 cm

*Dichotomy, polarity and paradox remain central truths to my experience of life ...*  
Del Kathryn Barton 2003<sup>1</sup>

The rabbit is a recurring image in Del Kathryn Barton's paintings, stemming from her exposure to Native American mythology and folklore in the course of travels to California as a young artist. Here the rabbit is exaggerated in size and dominates the frame, lending it an '*Alice in Wonderland* quality'.<sup>2</sup>

To dissect the mechanics of the painting, a meticulous rendering of the rabbit's coat is echoed in the obsessive patterning of the blue field surrounding it, so that one form appears to flow unrestrained into the other. Patches of colour ranging from blue, to violet, to green create a flat, abstract effect – like a map charting various depths and intensities – and further destabilise the viewer's sense of orientation. Clouding perception in this way, it's not clear whether we're looking straight ahead, or up or down – at sky or at sea. Overall, forms are rendered with a precision belonging as much to the world of tapestry as to painting. Add to this a certain obsessive attention to detail and the result is a heightened effect that can be disconcerting.

The absence of a girl figure in this particular painting is unusual in the context of Barton's oeuvre, which typically combines plant and animal life with the female form, for which she uses herself as model, with the aim of communicating 'aspects of the self, of myself, that I am most uncomfortable with'.<sup>3</sup>

Even in the absence of the human form, a definite tension arises from the juxtaposition of the various elements in the painting. The lily, for instance, embodies the implicit eroticism of Barton's other works; the rabbit's vulnerability is conveyed through its wide-eyed, child-like stare and frozen demeanour; and a sense of threat is encapsulated in the moment of transmutation of plant stem to snake as it glides along the rabbit's body.

The early 20th-century art movement, surrealism – along with the work of artists Hans Bellmer (German, 1902–1975) and Egon Schiele (Austrian, 1890–1918) – have been evoked as the precedents for the tendency to vividness and the extreme in Barton's work. One could suggest the artist shares a fascination with the unsettling depictions of Bellmer, and a sense of a 'finger-on-the-pulse' that connects her contemporaneity with that of Schiele who, in fin-de-siècle Vienna, promoted modes of expression that, while being chillingly honest, were often considered too disconcerting and even socially unacceptable. Present day influences are also pivotal: especially the total lack of fear embraced by living artists such as Kiki Smith (American, born Germany, 1954) and Louise Bourgeois (American, born France, 1911) who draw attention to making art from a woman's point of view.





As Barton puts it ...

*The obsession with the human form is about me trying to locate myself, ... and it is layered with concerns regarding body politics, sexuality, death, pleasure principles, love, body-boundary confusions ... I could go on. To put it succinctly, I'd say my work is a sort of documentation of my desire to understand what it means to be in a woman's body.<sup>4</sup>*

1 Clare Barker, 'Basic instinct: meet Del Kathryn Barton's menagerie', *Oyster*, issue 43, Dec-Jan 2003.

2 Dominique Angeloro, 'All things nice', *Metro* section, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Metro* section, 19-25 Nov 2004, p. 26.

3 Del Kathryn Barton, correspondence quoted in Natalie King, 'Compulsive beauty: Del Kathryn Barton's composite portraits', *Del Kathryn Barton: thank you for loving me*, exhibition catalogue, Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne 2005.

4 *ibid.*

**28** *Cube #27 (blue)* 2005  
coloured glass coated with Inconel  
132.6 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm

*In my opinion all artwork is stored energy. The art releases its power whenever a viewer becomes a dreamer ... Larry Bell*<sup>1</sup>

Sculptor Larry Bell travels constantly between the natural beauty of Taos, New Mexico and the neon-frenzy of Los Angeles; it's a journey that is the source of his work. The sunrise in a bare landscape in contrast to the electric glow of a vast and sprawling cityscape lies at the heart of Bell's investigations into 'the laws of physics and matter and how they relate to the natural phenomenon of light – the most fundamental and primeval source of energy'.<sup>2</sup> In balancing the natural and the industrial, Bell celebrates the 'miracle of light' and in doing so, the miracle of life. As the artist describes it: 'After many years in the studio I found that the light from the surface was my predominant medium', and while light and surface are technical aspects, Bell's emotional concern is 'how it feels to make the art'.<sup>3</sup>

Light and illusion are key elements. For instance, the *Cubes* – which he began to make in the mid 1960s – are more than minimalist structures. But the fact that, once sited, they operate as markers of a particular space suggests that they are far more interactive than any iconic minimalist work. The *Cubes* absorb their surroundings and physically engage the viewer reflecting, as much as radiating light – as well as being a sculptural presence in space, each surface captures the viewer's presence *within* the cube as well as within the room. The glass of the cube, therefore, acts more like a screen: simultaneously it diffuses light, defines space and evokes an emotional response.<sup>4</sup> Such animation from a seemingly high-tech, inanimate object defies the structural purity associated with minimalist sculpture – it transcends the reductive, sheer materialism of minimalism.

The *Cubes* are finished with a vacuum plating process – a method of depositing thin layers of metals or minerals (aluminium or quartz) on objects placed in a vacuum chamber. The artist came across this process in a factory in New York that coated plastic toys and eventually installed a coating machine in his Taos studio. Bell describes the outcome as 'like the effect of the illusory colour observed when gasoline floats on a puddle of water'.<sup>5</sup> This state of 'suspension', like petrol on water, encapsulates the viewing experience: looking at, and then into the cube, you are able to catch yourself out in the looking – and the colours you're wearing are absorbed into the glass.

It is apparent that the artist is intent on sharing his fascination with optical effects and human perception with his audience. Indeed, by its very nature, the work *in situ* remains in a state of constant flux – an ongoing investigation into the behaviour of light, suggesting that Bell is as much a scientist as he is a visionary and illusionist.

1–5 Bill Gregory, exhibition catalogue, *Larry Bell: cubes*, exhibition catalogue, Annandale Gallery, Sydney, May–June 2006.



## ARTHUR BOYD

30 *Untitled (Wimmera landscape)*  
c. late 1960s–early 1970s  
oil on board  
89 x 120 cm

Arthur Boyd's work reproduced with the permission of Bundanon Trust.

*Arthur Boyd's paintings often express the confrontation of opposites through a tense pictorial division that represents the metaphorical polarities of light and dark, life and death. Grazia Gunn, 2000<sup>1</sup>*

Always an innovative artist, Arthur Boyd first studied with his grandfather, the artist Arthur Merric Boyd (1862–1940), from whom he developed a flair and passion for oil painting. Then, in the early 1930s he mastered a heavy palette-knife technique that was ahead of its time – a method that set him apart from other Australian artists. This approach produced many unique land- and seascape paintings. During the war years of the 1940s, numerous rich and expressive artistic responses emerged amid the terror and turbulence of impending invasion. This was a period in Australian art of 'imaginative introspection', but it forged one of the most important art movements in the nation's history.<sup>2</sup>

The war deeply affected Boyd but from this period of seeming devastation comes some of his best work in the form of disturbing psychological images expressing the horror and suffering in the world. He began to incorporate art historical references but within the local landscape; alluding to the 16th-century Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel, for instance, Boyd depicted a typical day at the beach with all the allegorical underpinnings one would expect to find within a Bruegel painting. He embarked on paintings of the Wimmera and Berwick regions and these landscapes won him enormous critical and public recognition which then continued with his now famous *Half-caste Bride* series based on the style of the great modern Russian artist Marc Chagall (1887–1985) whose work is rich in the imagery of the folklore of his native Russia and Jewish life.

The *Untitled* painting in the UBS collection is a Wimmera landscape and, with reference to the quote above, one detects a symbolic, ominous juxtaposition between the distant mountain and the small pool of deep blue water at which a lone bird feeds. The few dark streaky clouds suggest a scarcity of rain, further hinted at by the parched landscape and rugged, but weary-looking trees.

Throughout his long and prolific career, Boyd incorporated such dichotomies within his work. When he drew heavily on biblical and mythological themes for inspiration – more often than not, mixed with Australian historical events (scapegoats and war) and the landscape tradition – he alluded to the darker side of human nature and our fragile relationship to the universe. Equally, Boyd absorbed a fascination with the quiet heroes of epic tragedy within his work. In suites of paintings, lithographs and etchings, as well as illustrated books, he reinterpreted and redefined particular themes – some, like his *St Francis* and *Shakespeare* series are the most notable of his literary-inspired works. Others, such as a sequence based on Ernest Hemingway's classic, *The old man and the sea*, could be considered autobiographical. One man's battle with the sea and its creatures becomes synonymous with Boyd's battle with the world around him.

On his return to Australia in the 1970s, the Shoalhaven area where he settled soon offered a new source of inspiration and he began to paint the surrounding





landscapes. As he explained to one writer, remembering the power of the place when seeing it for the first time: 'I had done fields before, but I had never seen or touched such rugged terrain before. When I first saw the Shoalhaven it was so foreign that I didn't know how to treat it.'<sup>3</sup> With every image painted, Boyd slowly revealed how deeply involved he was with the land – again, as in the past, he absorbed the realities of the world that encompassed him. The Bundanon and Shoalhaven landscapes – ranging from the naturalistic to the narrative, incorporating the fantastic, the biblical and the mythological – not only re-established Boyd's roots in his country of origin, they now form a distinctive part of the Australian landscape tradition.

1 Grazia Gunn, 'Arthur Boyd', *Monash University collection: four decades of collecting*, exhibition catalogue, Jenepher Duncan and Linda Michael (eds), MUMA Publishing, Clayton, Victoria 2000, p. 118.

2 Graeme Sullivan, *Seeing Australia: views of artists and artwriters*, Piper Press, Sydney 1994, p. 48.

3 Sandra McGrath, *The artist and the river*, Bay Books, Sydney 1982.



*Untitled* 2006  
acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm

*The painting in the UBS collection is one which I consider a starting point for a whole new series of work which I will show this year ... Exploring what I call 'the dot' (because this shape is not strictly a circle or spot) has opened up many fascinating ... permutations for me. It is a formal motif that can be 'manoeuvred' and rearranged endlessly, which is made all the more charged through its imperfect circularity. Angela Brennan 2007<sup>1</sup>*

Angela Brennan's compendium-like painting *Untitled* in the UBS collection, with its many disparate kinds of marks, colours and 'turns of phrase' is an eye-test wall chart of sorts. Like all her works, it embraces the personal – the use of yellow, for instance, recalls her young son's precocious comment (and Mum's casualness and freedom to assimilate his commentary) that she had used the 'wrong yellow' in a painting. Black, another mainstay of her colour arsenal, makes an appearance too, typically to add structure and definition to the work as well as temper the joyful spontaneity. But here it does more: black plays a critical role in the sequencing of colours as they radiate outwards from the centre, creating as they intermingle, a luminescence, like a sort of weather that appears to emanate from within the painting. In this sense, it's not too far fetched to think of the American painters, Mark Rothko (1903–1970) and Arthur Dove (1880–1946) as reference points to this work. While defending the open-endedness and originality of her artistic endeavour – or, as she puts it, 'playing around with universals exemplified in abstract painting' – Brennan, in this instance, would appear to be emulating rather than parodying art history.<sup>2</sup>

Words were included in her compositions following a trip to China in 2002. Soaking up the symbols and signs to be found along Chinese streets, later combined with graffiti back home in Melbourne, led Brennan to explore the possibilities of language within her practice alongside figuration and abstraction. Words and legible phrases congeal into pathways for the eye to follow, creating a form of compositional order. These works are a counterpoint to Brennan's abstract paintings which have been described as a free-floating 'soup' of elemental forms.<sup>3</sup>

*Untitled* is unusual among Brennan's abstract paintings in that the viewing experience is controlled in much the same way as the word paintings dictate the reading. The concentric squares and insistent dotting directs the eye from the inside out, from the micro to the macro, in the largest sense of those words. It's no accident that the application of the paint by dotting alludes to Australian Aboriginal painting – yet another reference made possible considering Brennan's wide-ranging conceptual approach.

A crucial aspect of Brennan's communicative skill is her ability to make the labour of painting, the actual application of dots or words, a palpable experience for the viewer. In this sense the act of viewing is participatory: caught up within the drama, the percolation of the dots is simultaneously disrupted by three randomly positioned, large shocking pink dots that fudge any sense of progression. As is typical of Brennan, a process that at first glance seems preordained or contrived for particular effect, in an instant is stalled, undermined and made playful.

<sup>1</sup> Angela Brennan, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 2 March 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Angela Brennan, 1994 lecture cited by Robert Rooney, 'Angela Brennan, Moët & Chandon touring exhibition', *The Australian*, 25 Aug 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Rowell, 'Angela Brennan's text paintings', *Angela Brennan: every morning I wake up on the wrong side of capitalism*, exhibition catalogue, Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria 2006.





ABOVE LEFT:  
1968/04/04 18:01:42:79 –  
1968/04/04 18:01:42:80,  
*Memphis* 2005  
Bargello needlework  
15 x 81 cm

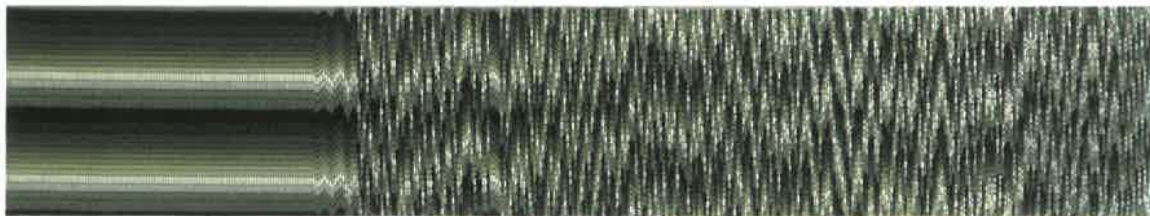
ABOVE RIGHT:  
1994/04/06 12:38:26:64 –  
1994/04/06 12:38:26:65,  
*Kigali* 2005  
Bargello needlework  
15 x 81 cm

*Repetitious patterns of calm disperse almost immediately into waves of chaos and confusion.* Louisa Bufardecì 2007<sup>1</sup>

The two Bargello needleworks by Louisa Bufardecì in UBS's Melbourne collection are from the series *Starter pistols*, a group of six works first exhibited at the Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne in 2006. Each piece depicts a sound wave, one one-hundredth of a second in length, generated by the firing of an anti-personnel weapon at a crucial moment in history.

One of the two works at UBS refers to the night of 4 April 1968 when the black American civil rights activist, Martin Luther King Jr was shot dead on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking city sanitation workers the following day. The other work alludes to the incident on 6 April 1994 when a Falcon 50 trijet carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprian Ntayamira of Burundi was shot down near the Rwandan capital of Kigali. The two presidents were returning from a meeting of east and central African leaders in Tanzania where they discussed ways to end the ethnic violence in Burundi and Rwanda. Bloody feuding between the majority Hutu tribe and the minority Tutsis had plagued both tiny central African states for centuries. In Burundi, up to 100,000 people had been killed since the assassination of the country's first democratically-elected president – a Hutu – the previous October. In Rwanda, by June 1994, the Rwandan military, helped by Hutu civilians, had massacred at least 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the events that ensued subsequent to each of these moments in history proved to be at least as diabolical as the actual shootings themselves. In these needleworks the apparent speed of movement from left to right across the surface can be read as a metaphor for the unstoppable rush of history, and the plodding, repetitive process of stitching, as a reminder of the frequent and regular outbreak of violence and war.



The colours used are the muted greens, browns and greys of military camouflage gear. Out of context – within the rarefied parameter of the artworks and divorced from the data of the titles – the colours and forms can appear pleasing to the eye. The artist accepts that some viewers will access her art on a purely aesthetic level. 'The work can be appreciated without the viewers having to invest too much in the conceptual aspect.'<sup>3</sup>

The work of Bufardecì and fellow UBS collection artist Fiona Lowry can be related to that of American artists Kerry James Marshall (born 1955) and Vija Celmins (born 1938) whose art also represents historical events. In the catalogue *The undiscovered country*, Russell Ferguson describes the technique used by such artists to distance themselves from actual events. Such works, he suggests, evoke a 'melancholic awareness of lessened possibilities ... while the mourning is explicitly for the assassinated, it can be read as mourning for the very capacity of contemporary painting to address such issues'.<sup>4</sup>

Bufardecì is a conceptually-based artist who works with a diverse range of materials, conscientiously taking up new methods in order to effectively represent her ideas. The Bargello technique she uses in the UBS works is a type of needlepoint embroidery characterised by flat upright stitches.<sup>5</sup> An interest in statistics as a way of representing humankind has always informed her art, inspired by the experience of having once participated in an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey. 'I didn't fit into any of the categories on the questionnaire and was often asked to select the "nearest" category, which for me was like asking which colour was closest to red: yellow or blue.'<sup>6</sup>

1 Louisa Bufardecì, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 2 March 2007.

2 'On this day', BBC online service, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) (accessed March 2007).

3 The artist quoted in Ashley Crawford, 'Where the statistical is the political', *The Age*, 28 Aug 2004, p. 7.

4 Russell Ferguson, *The undiscovered country*, exhibition catalogue, Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles 2005, p. 46. The early Celmins painting cited by Ferguson – *Hand holding a firing gun* (1964) – is closely related in theme to Bufardecì's series, *Starting pistols*.

5 The term Bargello needlework was derived from a flame stitch pattern found on a series of needlework chairs in the Bargello Palace in Florence, also known as the Palazzo del Popolo. The word Bargello comes from the late Latin *bargillus* meaning castle or fortified tower. During the Italian Middle Ages, the Bargello was the military captain in charge of keeping the peace in Florence during riots and uprisings. The name Bargello was extended to the Bargello Palace building which was the office of the captain, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), (accessed Feb 2007).

6 Bufardecì 2004, op. cit., p. 7.



*Rocket* 2006  
site-specific light installation  
fluorescent lights and fittings  
4 elements on each of 4 landings  
of stairwell  
dimensions variable

*With painting, I kind of felt limited by the edges ... The sculptural aspects of working with light seemed much more exciting, but without having the weight of the material necessary in sculpture. Bill Culbert 2006<sup>1</sup>*

Bill Culbert studied painting but felt limited by its conventions and turned to making light and kinetic sculptures in the 1960s. His dynamic installation *Rocket* is one of his many distinguished site-specific commissions using light, conceived especially for the stairwell that links the four levels of UBS's Melbourne office.

Culbert's *Rocket* displays all the basic tenets of his preoccupation with light: it's an exploration which, in his terms, can be described as 'light marks in space, light in light, nightlight, daylight'.<sup>2</sup> To enliven the stairwell site, he has bundled together fluorescent tubes on each of the four landings to create a succession of abstract light drawings that can be viewed from within the building, while using the stairs, as well as from outside – either looking up from the street below or from one of the other adjacent high-rise towers. Culbert conceived the work as a sculpture to traverse the full height of the vertical space; by linking the component pieces across all four levels, he has created a 'syncopated architectonic rhythm that mirrors the play of line and light'.<sup>3</sup> Intentionally, the work incorporates numerous viewing positions. It is visible from a distance, and by night especially, the vertical space is totally activated – the fluorescent tubes, their casings and cords severing and bisecting each level as well as flooding the whole column with brilliant light.

The artist has commented that: 'In the 20th century everything has been blown up. Everything freed. Now you can look at something like light.'<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that Culbert's sense of freedom and play extended to the naming of the piece as well – which he called *Rocket*, after UBS art installer, Rocket Mattler, whose name embodied the degree of energy and movement the artist was striving for in the work. For Culbert it is the wonder of small things that ignites his thinking; in this sense, the quixotic nature of light encapsulates many of the qualities and temporal changes that intrigue him. As a site-specific work, *Rocket* is as ephemeral as it is permanent. By day, during business hours, it is less assertive but by night it shines like a beacon.

Black-and-white photography, another aspect of Culbert's practice, also features in the UBS collection. Like his sculptural works, these images represent another manifestation of his ongoing fascination with the magic of light. In the photographs, light is often both the subject (a window, a wine glass, a bulb ... an array of found objects regularly culled from the tip such as bottles, pitchers and other vessels, old wheels and lamps) and the means by which a certain ambience is created through refraction and reflection, light and darkness.

One curator describes Culbert as 'a receiver and conductor ... gently collaborating with what's already there', noting that his photographs 'lift objects that have fallen away from their old functions into fresh arrangements'.<sup>5</sup> Culbert's photographs – like his sculptures and installations – while profound in their



vision are modest in their materials and size and it's this very basic, everyday dimension that appeals. This is a form of art-making which no longer depends on introducing new objects into the world, rather it's about focusing on what's already there.

1 Bill Culbert quoted in Andrew Clifford, 'Culbert sees light in other people's throwouts', *The New Zealand Herald*, 12 April 2006.

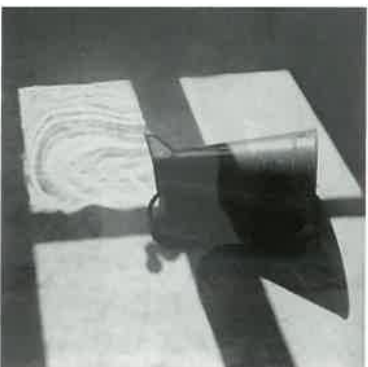
2 *ibid.*

3 Naomi Evans, unpublished text on the artist, April 2007.

4 Virginia Baxter, 'Meeting Bill Culbert', *Realtime*, no 19, June–July 1997, p. 12.

5 Justin Paton, 'Light's touch', *Light wine things: Bill Culbert*, exhibition catalogue, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand 2005.





UBS Melbourne:  
9 gelatin silver prints  
40.5 x 40.5 cm  
Artist's proofs, signed but not editioned

*Sugar, kitchen, France 1981*  
*Bonbonne with landscape, France 2002*  
*Light box, France 1989*  
*Lampshades in sun, France 2002*  
*Wine in perspective, France 1996*

*Jug with sunspot, France 1980*  
*Wine work, France 1992*  
*Fermé, garage, France 2002*  
*Jug, window pane, France 1980*



UBS Sydney:  
9 gelatin silver prints  
40.5 x 40.5 cm  
edition 1 of 25,  
*Bike wheel with wire* 2002, edition 2 of 25

*Stone and brick building, Rustrel, France* 2002  
*Bike, Banon, France* 2002  
*Corkscrew needle, France* 2002  
*Two rabbit corkscrews, France* 2002  
*Bike wheel with wire* 2002  
*Wine glass with oak tree* 2002

*Parasol with 2CV wheel, France* 2002  
*Jetty, Westport, New Zealand* 2002  
*Wineglass with window, France* 2002

# JOHN FIRTH-SMITH

40

*Untitled* 1977  
gouache on paper  
79 x 118 cm



*A lot of artists get a 4-wheel drive and do landscapes. I go out to the ocean ... standing on a boat, you look down, it's pitch black, on the bottom you see things that look like a comet. This phosphorescence, things moving; it's a constellation under the ocean, a milky way, a huge trail of diamonds. There are clouds, mountainous seas, 30 feet down jellyfish the size of the room, they look like the brains of the ocean ... There are a lot of strange phenomena out at sea: those superstitious sailors, I can see how they thought those things. On the land, you look down at the earth and if you're lucky a worm sticks its head out ... I like being on that edge where land and water meet ...*  
John Firth-Smith<sup>1</sup>

Often in a John Firth-Smith painting there is the sense of a distant horizon offset by a floating or vertical anchoring device, a carefully balanced counterpoint between the near and the far. Neither abstract nor figurative – or put another way, more abstract in painterly terms but with figurative elements culled from his environment – the paintings tend towards the lyrical: odes perhaps to John Firth-Smith's long preoccupation with the ocean and all that its depths contain. He draws inspiration from the light and colour, the tonal range and patterns associated with the moods of Sydney Harbour.

He first exhibited marine subjects in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, the shift from acrylic paint to oils led to a greater subtlety of colour and the possibility of incorporating impasto-textured surfaces within the composition. In turn, this created what now has become a distinctive aspect: lines through the paint that suggest journeys past and present – navigational tracings, ropes and moorings, a passage through water, the wake of a departed ship. As well as

playing a key compositional role within a work, these lines are a counterpoint to the bold, often colourful abstract forms that hold everything in place ...

*[A painting] is not always the thing that's happening in the distance, it's the thing that's happening above you and below you and inside you as well ... Randomness is another thing, and chaos – the speck on your glasses, the mark on the wall outside the studio door, that can influence you ... The thing is, you have to put yourself in a frenzy. It's the sum total of a whole lot of ideas that have to work as a picture in the end. You make something and you will destroy it and then you pull it back again and put some other colour on top of another colour.*

*It seems as if you don't know what you're doing but you're actually allowing yourself the freedom to go on a journey with this paint by pushing and tripping over yourself ... stumbling a bit and not being too sure of yourself ... You have to get beyond the limit.<sup>2</sup>*

Whereas some artists abandon deliberate gesture to allow materials to find their own way within carefully controlled experiments, Firth-Smith keeps inscribing his own body into the work. Even in the most abstract paintings that come close to the austerity characteristic of Barnett Newman (1905–1970), it is the broad sweep of the painter's arm which has determined the scale of the composition. As curator and writer Anthony Bond observed:

*[i]f Brett Whiteley painted the harbour from the heights of his Lavender Bay studio from where it is often reduced to a pool of blue dotted with colourful sails and streaked with brilliant white wakes ... [then] Firth-Smith is down among the wharves finding his way past vast rusty hulls of merchant ships, struggling in all weathers, avoiding the grey and green rocks and abandoned, encrusted hulks ...*

*These are the qualities he manages to capture in his canvases. The combed surfaces of paint have something of the ripples and waves of the water but they also suggest the crusted surfaces of ships' hulls. The calligraphy he invariably superimposes on his canvases recalls, characteristically, the sweep of the artist's hand as if he were bringing the vessel around, finding just the right tension between wind and canvas. At times he draws perfect ellipses that demonstrate this idea of dynamic tension ...<sup>3</sup>*

Since the 1980s, bulks and hulls and other dominant abstract masses have been replaced by propeller-like ellipses – ambiguous flourishes that can be read as a shape seen head-on or as a circle tilted in perspective. Tube-like openings, lens-like, the sound hole of a guitar, the ripple left by an object dropping into water<sup>4</sup> ... whatever these shapes gouged into the sensuous surface of paint can be interpreted as, they are markers – a sign in space upon which the eye can focus. Much like something ahead for the sailor to set sail towards.

1 John Firth-Smith with Anne Susskind, 'A pitch black sea for me', a 'My totem' arts feature, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 Jan 1997, p. 12.

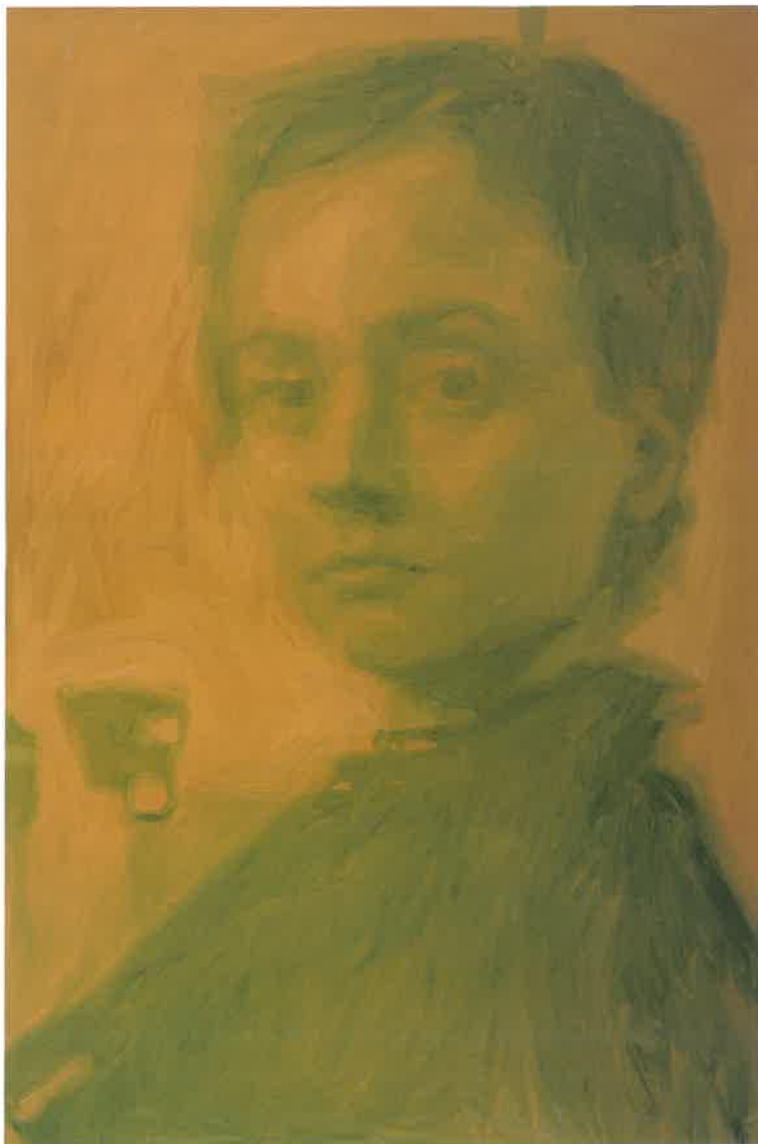
2 *ibid.*

3 Anthony Bond, 'Eclecticism: through the distorting lens of distance', *Points of view: the University of Technology Sydney art collection*, Ewen McDonald (ed), UTS, Sydney 2002, pp. 41–57. John Firth-Smith quotes, pp. 52–53.

4 Terence Maloon, *John Firth-Smith*, exhibition catalogue, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney 1990.

## JULIE FRAGAR

- 42** *Portrait from 89 cm* 2006  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 120 cm



*The title, Portrait from 89 cm refers to my daughter's eye level. She took the photo ... Julie Fragar 2006<sup>1</sup>*

Julie Fragar has always painted from photographs – informal ones, mostly her own amateur snapshots. Her earliest works depicted groups of people drawn from her intimate sphere and engaged in the mundane activities of everyday life. 'I like documenting the banal ...'<sup>2</sup> Later paintings were worked up from holiday snapshots which Fragar overlaid with writing, with the look of a child's first tentative attempts to write or draw, rather than artful graffiti. In these works, portraits fought with words, but subsequently the artist decided to weave a more sonorous 'fabric' of gestural marks and text.<sup>3</sup> This led the Australian painter Imants Tillers (born 1950) to recognise 'that the way the painting oscillates between image and surface is what makes it interesting.'<sup>4</sup>

The most recent works take up the challenge of art critic Bruce James:

*A much tougher transition from mere photographic information to real artistic communication is required from her brush ... Starting from photographs is easy; finishing from them is the very devil ... Has she ever tried painting from the photograph the eye makes when it looks at the world? Many younger artists using photos forget they can.'<sup>5</sup>*

*Portrait from 89 cm* charts new ground. Brushwork carried all the way across the surface erases the standard separation between figure and ground, creating the illusion of a reality in the process of forming (or disintegrating) before our very eyes. According to the artist, the painting began 'as a small sketch on a large scale', lending it excitement, and ended in a finished work 'that doesn't know if it should be big or small'.<sup>6</sup> Fragar keeps her focus, culling anything extraneous from the plot and reducing the work to a small number of elements, figure/ground, yellow/green, flesh/blood. Through such an uncompromising approach, she manages to imbue the subject (herself) with a gravitas befitting the great masters of painting, like Rembrandt, while never sacrificing the frankness and immediacy that make the painting sing and bind it to the present day.

1 Julie Fragar, email to Barbara Flynn, 25 Oct 2006.

2 Julie Fragar quoted in Patrick Watson, 'Profoundly simple', *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 28 Sept 2005, p. 20.

3 *ibid.*

4 Imants Tillers quoted in Sebastian Smee, 'Double take and a silent response', *The Australian*, 16 Sept 2005, p. 16.

5 Bruce James, 'Snapshots of a voyage on very thin ice', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 Jan 2003, p. 13.

6 Fragar 2006, *op. cit.*



**44** *One conversation gambit you hear these days: 'Do you rotate?' An interesting change of tack? No such luck. 'Do you rotate?' simply fishes for information about the extent of your collection. Do you have enough paintings to hang a different one in your dining room every month? 2005*  
varnish on canvas  
200 x 260 cm

*... I can see my work as a life's project and if the course changes, that's fine, in that sense [my] life's work covers every aspect of contemporary art – Monet, Dali, Yves Klein, Lucio Fontana: they were all busy creating cultural memory and refining identity. That's what every important artist has done through history. Dale Frank 1993<sup>1</sup>*

I suspect the American artist Andy Warhol (1928–1987), the German artist Sigmar Polke (born 1941) and the British artist Damien Hirst (born 1965) would be part of any updated Dale Frank hall of fame. Their relevance notwithstanding, it could be suggested that the earliest and most obvious antecedent for Frank's way of painting is the American action painter Jackson Pollock (1912–1956). Like Pollock, Frank avoids putting brush direct to canvas, favouring instead splashing, dripping and pouring substances as a way of creating an immediacy and excitement that was new in painting. In doing so, both artists erase any trace of authorship in the traditional sense.

Though not as overtly 'macho' and theatrical as Pollock, the manner adopted by Frank in his art-making is every bit as physically demanding, earning him the tag 'stoic athlete'.<sup>2</sup> In the making of a painting, temperature and drying time play a crucial role – requiring vigilance, often without a break for periods as long as 24 hours – as the tints and varnishes are applied. The drying time is monitored in order that the tilting and shifting of the canvas, combined with the reapplication of varnishes and colour, work together to create the painting. The process is at once systematic and demanding, gruelling and solitary. While the artist remains firmly in control, at a certain point, chance and process take over. The forces of gravity and chemistry work in tandem to create a particular visual effect – one that emerges from the layering of colours and the small-scale fractures and pictorial incidents that are caused by chemical reactions as one tinted varnish pouring impacts upon another. In this way, Frank shares his love of engineering such material reactions with painters like Warhol and Polke, who have used the oxidation of metals and even urine, to make their paintings. As Frank suggests, it can get quite extreme: 'There are ... paintings where I have used the combination of certain substances and paint with the intention of producing an imbalance in the inner ear of the viewer, causing them to lean on one side or to faint.'<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, varnish was used as the final clear layer or topcoat to protect the 'actual' painting beneath. With knowing irony, Frank exploits this fact. He takes a substance that has been used so blandly throughout the history of painting, tinting it and transforming it so that it becomes the whole story – the very blood and guts of his painting. As critic Paul Groot has commented: '... each painting, evolved over time through the movement of layers of coloured varnish and the chemical reactions between them, contains an internal history like that of the recordable history of our own universe since the "Big Bang"'.<sup>4</sup>

Varnish today is a durable and thoroughly modern material that comes in a range of finishes from matt to ultra-high gloss. Frank exploits this high reflectivity

1 Christopher Chapman, 'The man with two brains', *World Art*, Nov 1993, p. 104.

2 Jane Rankin-Reid, 'Ticket to ride: Dale Frank's conceptual abstraction', *Art and Australia*, vol 42, no 2, summer 2004, p. 214.

3 Dale Frank in an interview with Sue Cramer, 'The painter of these paintings is either Dale Frank, or if not Dale Frank, someone else of the same name', *Dale Frank: ecstasy, twenty years of painting*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2000, p. 12.

4 Paul Groot, foreword, Jane Magon, *Dale Frank*, Craftsman House, Sydney 1992, p. 10.



to the full. This is evident in the suite of monochrome paintings commissioned for the Sydney offices of UBS, effectively making them function like mirrors. Their location along one wall of a corridor means that anyone walking past can only see themselves reflected in the surface; identification with the painting therefore is total, since it is impossible to 'see' anything but oneself immersed in a sea of colour.

For Frank the phenomenon of mirroring is highly resonant in many ways – suggestive of the idea of the double and the split self that is typical of much of his work. Reference to Oscar Wilde's *The picture of Dorian Gray* comes to mind – particularly the movie remake from 1970. Dorian Gray – the subject of the portrait and owner of the painting – lives an extreme, homoerotically charged, detached life, but it is his portrait, not Gray himself, that feels and



ABOVE LEFT:

*Matthew Macfadyen* 2006  
site-specific wall painting  
varnish on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 679 cm overall

ABOVE RIGHT:

*Adrian Grenier* 2006  
site-specific wall painting  
varnish on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 747.5 cm overall

5 Frank 2000, op. cit., p. 4; the theme of the double in Frank's art is also discussed by Paul Groot in 'Dale Frank: with the eye if you are quick enough ...', *Art & Text*, no 17, April 1985, p. 81.

6 Frank 2000, op. cit., p. 12.

7 Fontana's series, *Small theaters or Teatrini* (1964–66) are especially relevant to Frank's work; see Lucio Fontana: *Venice/New York*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York 2006, p. 211.

displays the effects.<sup>5</sup> The installation of Frank's series of paintings plays with a similar effect: walking past them creates yet another layer, an added experiential dimension, but not one that reflects a true image of the viewer – rather it's an effect that reinforces the active aspect of the artist's process. While the work seems complete – in that the pouring and tilting has been arrested – in situ, the painting remains elusive and fleeting, momentarily capturing the attention and movement of the passersby.

What are the mechanics of such a viewing experience and can they be isolated and codified? Frank would say no: 'You are asking me to describe the sensation of a sports car by listing the engine parts. It is the car's look and speed that are important, not how the instruction manual reads.'<sup>6</sup> The reference to a particular look and to speed is telling. At UBS, the high-gloss varnish has been applied in regular patches extending to full human height, helping to establish a clear relation to our bodies, so that we experience the paintings physically. Next, registering that they are red and glossy – precisely like the car of Frank's quip, or a new lipstick – walking the corridor is exciting, even seductive, a bit like a red carpet performance. Those who are familiar with the avant-garde will recognise echoes of Lucio Fontana's paintings.<sup>7</sup>

Also recognisable is the sexiness associated with an artist like Yves Klein whose *Anthropometries* were made in the course of performances featuring female nudes who would dip themselves in paint and use their bodies to imprint the canvas. Considering the performative aspect of Frank's work and the fact that he left Australia for Europe in 1979 at the age of 19, it's not surprising that his monochrome paintings especially, opt for a sensuousness that is closer to Paris and Venice than New York. It could be suggested then, that Frank's true spiritual home is not to so much American modernism but the seductive glamour of 1980s transavant-garde Europe.

Frank has consistently made monochrome paintings throughout the years in a minimum size, 1.8 to 2 metres square, which tends to emphasise their relationship to the human body. Since 2001 he has named them for people: for fellow artists he has admired, and lately, fledgling actors (the sort who inspire clicks to websites by swooning fans) and celebrities who make the Sunday papers – not at all surprising, given the artist's stated devotion to movies and television.<sup>8</sup> The title for the UBS commission illustrates this: *Adrian Grenier* is the name of the 7- plus metre long, 4-panel monochrome painting at the western end of the corridor, and *Matthew Macfadyen*, the 6- plus metre, 4-panel series towards the east. In real life both Grenier and Macfadyen are smart young white males – chiselled, glamorous types, conforming perhaps to Frank's projection of a typical UBS golden boy.<sup>9</sup>

Dale Frank is one of a handful of artists who is represented in the UBS Australian art collection by more than one work. The painting in the Melbourne office – which bears a 47-word title (but conveniently shortened to *One conversation*) reflecting the sort of bitchy sentiment the artist has become renowned for – is distinct from the Sydney monochromes and demonstrates the range of Frank's oeuvre. It is a continuation of the surrealist influence that dominated the pencil and acrylic paintings on paper from the mid 1980s – for instance, *The demon artist's portrait with a question of Siamese success* (1984) which, in turn, is based on the surrealist artist Max Ernst's painting *The world of light* from 1925.<sup>10</sup>

Strangely, the relationship between the UBS Melbourne painting of 2005 and *The demon artist's portrait* from 20 years before is *structural* – the eye form in *The demon artist's portrait* is distended and mimicked at the centre of *One conversation*. It is as if the eye form in *The demon artist's portrait* has been set down – very possibly, subconsciously – as the bare bones on which to hang the new picture. In the 2005 painting, pools of black varnish that have collected at the ends of arm-like forms recall the melting of human limbs in Salvador Dali's surrealist paintings such as *Book transferring itself into a nude woman* from 1929.<sup>11</sup> The mod, 1950s-type colour scheme of *One conversation* harks back to certain earlier paintings of Frank's which similarly make much use of black which critics have described as 'psychedelic' ...

*Camp taste after all elevates a consistently aesthetic experience of the world which, when pushed to its limits, finds success in passionate failure. Frank's work leaves us with a similar sense – the feeling that the work is about to collapse into banality at any moment.*<sup>12</sup>

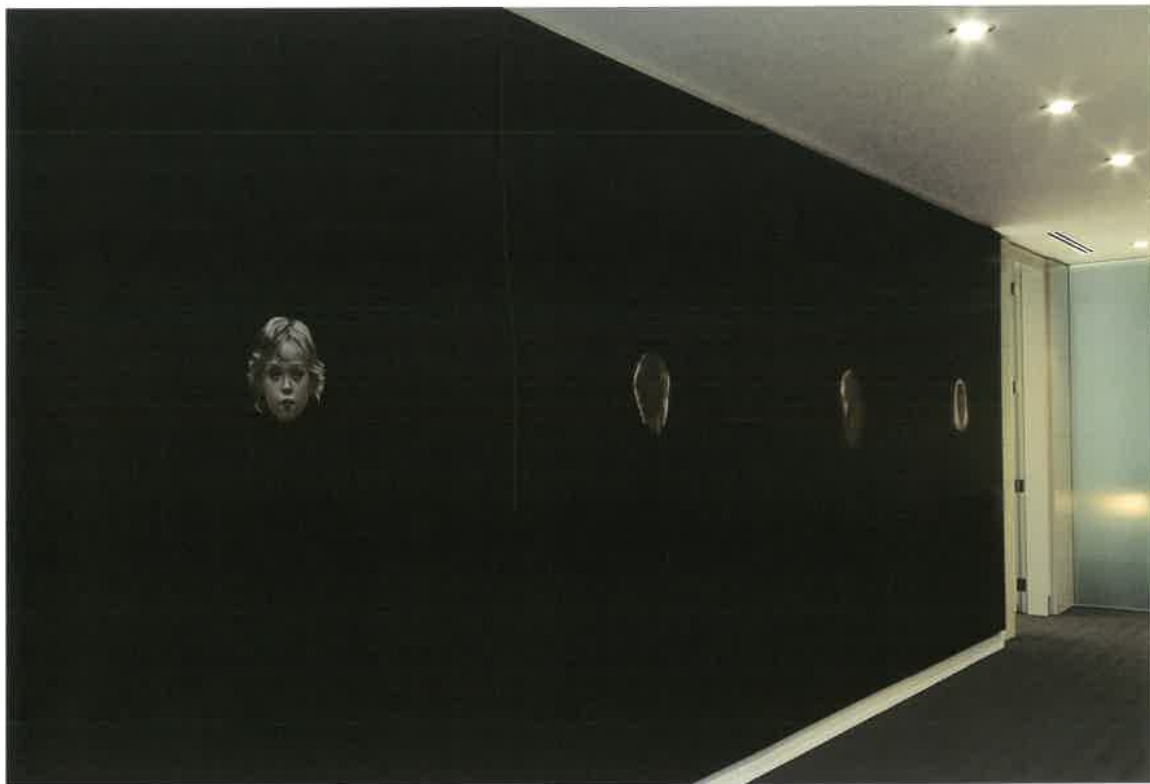
8 'Movies and television have definitely shaped my views about art: about artists, about life, about society, about history, about spending, about relationships. There is no greater influence ... We spoke of *Dorian Gray*, but I could as easily have said *Altered States*, *The Music Lovers*, *The Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*, *The Haunting*, *The Killer Condom*, *Gods and Monsters* and even *Independence Day* ... The list of films that I remember is endless and the fact that I am still involved with them is proof enough of some influence. Many people have one film to make in their life. I have 10,000 to make, like 10,000 paintings.' Frank 2000, op. cit., pp. 16, 19.

9 Grenier (born 1976) is an American actor best known for his lead role as Vincent Chase on the HBO television series *Entourage* and as Anne Hathaway's boyfriend Nate in the 2006 box office hit *The devil wears Prada*. Macfadyen (born 1974) is a British actor, active, like Grenier, in both television and film, and best known for his role as MI5 agent Tom Quinn in the BBC television drama series *Spooks* and for starring as Fitzwilliam Darcy opposite Keira Knightley's Elizabeth Bennet in the 2005 film version of *Pride and prejudice*.

10 Werner Spies, *Max Ernst: life and work*, Thames & Hudson, UK 2006, p. 102.

11 There are resemblances to many paintings by Dali including *Book transferring itself into a nude woman* (1940), *The enigma of Hitler* (1938) and *Autumnal cannibalism* (1936) to name a few. Reproduced in Dawn Ades, *Dali: Die Jahrhundert-Retrospektive*, RCS Libri Spa 2004, pp. 320–21, 304–05 and 266–67.

12 Catharine Lumby, 'Fed-up with art', *Art & Text*, no 35, summer 1990, p. 141.



*Untitled 2006*  
site-specific wall painting  
oil on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 694 cm overall

OPPOSITE:  
*Untitled 2006 (details)*

*I don't think with words, I think with images.* Louise Hearman 1989<sup>1</sup>

An early precedent for the 2006 UBS mural was the in-situ painting from 1986–87 of heads, full figures and atmospheric effects painted directly on the walls and dome of 'The Elephant Room' in the Missions to Seamen building in Flinders Street, Melbourne, where Louise Hearman had her studio in the mid to late 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty years on, the mural for UBS includes a number of the hallmarks of Hearman's mature style, including the dramatic play of dark against light, expressed through the rendering of children's heads on a black background. The fresh, pale to iridescent youthfulness of these faces contrasts with the unmitigated blackness that engulfs them. Physiognomies seem to float to the surface, gradually coming into focus, as if from the mysterious penumbra of a Ouija ball. In this sense, the black background suggests an abyss – an eternal depth, ultimate depth, perhaps the subconscious.



Hearman's protagonists are nearly always children or animals, whom she has referred to as her 'secret people' and as displaying a 'particular kind of look'.<sup>3</sup> One might presume a strong identification between artist and child, as if Hearman is trying to hold on to her own mute innocence, or is, at least, admiring of it in each depicted child.

In the recent commission, the placement of the heads in a line at the head height of a child effectively establishes a human scale for the mural. It creates a physical relationship between the viewer and the painting and in so doing, serves as a forceful reminder that the bodies of the children are all missing. There is a sense of apprehension, of discomfit, looking at these disembodied children. For instance, the subtle shade of mauve used expertly to model the face of an auburn-haired girl in profile seems to place her at a further remove, in another world, as if drawn either from the artist's dreamworld or, because of her pre-Raphaelite look, from the history of painting. A similar brooding tone pervades many of Hearman's paintings, though in this large scale, she explodes the pictorial claustrophobia characteristic of many of her smaller studies.

Critic John McDonald has written that the artist 'sees painting as more akin to music, in the way one can be affected by a piece of music without having any clear sense of what it means or the circumstances in which it was written'.<sup>4</sup> It is true that, over the years, Hearman has added very little to the verbal exegesis of her paintings. The artist's stance in this respect isn't contrary, or perverse, as some critics have alleged, but rather, a legitimate natural defence: a way of constructing a private buffer zone for the painterly imagination – especially for an artist who could easily feel vulnerable, fearful for her vision in all its pure strangeness.<sup>5</sup> In another early quote Hearman described what she wanted to convey as, 'the sensation you get when you are walking down the road and you see a paper bag on the street and it looks like a bizarre face, and for a minute you think, "What is that?"'<sup>6</sup> This level of self-protection afforded by a blanket of shyness is not unlike that surrounding the great French artist Cézanne: it derives from an appreciation of the canniness shared by such artists who know only too well what it takes for them to create. One can imagine a 'keep out' sign tacked on the door to their souls.

1 Anna Johnson, 'Louise Hearman: between heaven and hell', *Interior Design*, Sydney, no 18, 1989, p. 136.

2 The Missions to Seamen building was built in 1917. Walter Butler was the architect.

3 The artist as quoted in John McDonald, 'Daydreamers who bite back', *Spectrum* section, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3–4 Dec 2005, p. 32.

4 John McDonald, 'Mistress of epiphanies', *Australian Financial Review Magazine*, March 2004, p. 16.

5 It's a tribute to the vision of UBS that it would embark on the commission of a large-scale painted mural by an artist of so singular a temperament. UBS's role in such a commission was to optimise conditions for the artist in order to facilitate the creation of a painting singular in the context of her work and Australian art as a whole.

6 Rebecca Lancashire, 'Dawn, dusk and the power of the mystery', *The Age*, 1 Aug 1997.



**50** *Rendering visible* 1987  
oil on canvas  
119 x 200 cm

*I have always worked by adding and subtracting, like an ebb and flow.*  
Robert Jacks 2007<sup>1</sup>

For Robert Jacks, a trip to Big Bend National Park, Texas in 1976 turned out to be a watershed in the development of his art. Big Bend is located on a fault line that has shifted over time, creating a dramatic landscape of jagged cliffs and valleys. Jacks was fascinated by the geometry of these natural forms and discovered that the parkland was considered to be sacred land – the centre of the earth – by the Navajo people who, historically, had occupied the area. Jacks had been deeply impressed by what he saw and felt confirmed by this revelation. He determined to find out more about the Navajo, coming across Navajo abstract rug designs in the course of his trip that were clearly derived from the Big Bend landscape forms. Jacks returned to Australia the following year, commenting that ‘many cultures had found geometry in the landscape’.<sup>2</sup>

*Rendering visible* (1987) in the UBS collection contains the triangles and squares that are the hallmarks of Jacks’s mature style – a reflection of the Navajo designs as much as a response to the dominant geometric shapes and severity of modernist architecture in cities like Sydney or New York. Since 1982 Jacks has applied the paint with a palette knife in thick swathes of colour, then selectively scraping it back again to create a sort of contrapuntal rhythm in his paintings, like music.<sup>3</sup> His works unfold through a complex interplay of forms which seem to change position – to advance and recede – evoking the give-and-take of the knife and the scraper. For example, in *Rendering visible*, a dominant wedge form is painted in a dark tone to make it recede, as other lighter forms come forward. Music is important and, from the world of visual art, the cubist painters and Mondrian (1872–1944). Thus we see that the lighter forms are more variegated than the darker ones, and modelled naturalistically as with Picasso (1881–1973) and Braque’s (1882–1963) paintings of the analytic cubist period. But it is the legacy of Mondrian that predominates, as illustrated by Jacks’s use of destabilising pictorial devices, such as the dark wedge, and of an overall pictorial scheme that hovers precariously between balance and imbalance.

There is a grace and gravitas to Jacks’s work, a mature and considered quality – the ebb and flow he describes in his quote above. As the artist has said: ‘The reductivist thing in Melbourne, and then in New York, went too fast; you were out of something before you went into it. Now, I’m interested in going back and repainting old things, rethinking them.’<sup>4</sup>



1 Robert Jacks, artist's statement dictated to Barbara Flynn, 13 April 2007.

2 Sandra McGrath, 'Home town boom', *The Australian*, Weekend edition, 11–12 Aug 1979, reprinted in Ken McGregor, *Robert Jacks: past unformed*, Craftsman House, Sydney 2001, p. 7.

3 Paul McGillick, *Robert Jacks: the McGarvie Street paintings*, exhibition catalogue, Australian Galleries, Melbourne 1989, p. 8.

4 McGregor, op. cit., p. 42.

**52** *Winny* 1989  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
183 x 244 cm

*It would be great if Australian art could be seen within the context of Aboriginal, Asian and American traditions and still have its own identity. Since this is impossible, one has to work in a symbolic space, perhaps like a Buddhist Pure Land, or the mandala itself, to create an illusory reality or virtual reality in which the space that the artwork occupies is revealed to the audience that reads enough signs to begin to unravel its meanings. Tim Johnson and My Le Thi 2002<sup>1</sup>*

Painting for Tim Johnson is a process of interrogation and interpretation and as a result, he has developed an eclectic and idiosyncratic style that represents his take on the hybrid reality of Australian culture. Seeing Australia as part of Asia, the European legacy of art history is of little relevance – rather, he confronts the problems associated with appropriating from other cultural traditions by tracing connections between diverse spiritual and artistic practices in order to arrive at some ‘pan-universal’ harmony that refuses to be indifferent to difference. As one writer succinctly put it, ‘Tim Johnson works at the mutable edges of contemporary practice.’<sup>2</sup>

From early days as a counter-culture conceptual artist focused on cross-media experimentation – painting just one aspect of his art-making along with sculpture, kinetics, film, installation, photography, music and performance work – Johnson has developed a practice that now focuses on cross-cultural dialogue. Since the 1980s his work has explored and encompassed a diverse range of cultural references and sources – not only inspired by his travelling throughout Asia in the 1970s, but also due to a formative period in the 1980s when he visited and worked in the Western Desert with Aboriginal artists from the Pintupi, Warlpiri and Anmatyerre communities at Papunya. Unlike the earlier generation who tended to impose art-making ideas, Johnson was one of the first Australian artists to work with the Papunya Tula artists, exchanging ideas and techniques. More a pupil than teacher, he worked with senior artists like Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri and Michael Nelson Tjakamarra, and was granted permission to use some non-sacred Aboriginal motifs in his own work.

Some aspects of Aboriginal painting – the dots, for instance – have been used by Johnson to convey a sense of interconnectivity. Optically, like the field of vibrant colour in *Winny* (1989), the dots are a grounding device – a shimmering quality, a luminosity that can be read as enlightenment. As the artist once said, ‘The various landscape styles that include a contextualised use of dots and chance imagery are used to create a field of readable signs.’<sup>3</sup> Amidst the borrowings and allusions that Johnson absorbs into his paintings, there is a suggestion of hope – that cultures can learn from each other. Appropriation in his terms, as illustrated by this layering of meaning, is a respectful acknowledgement of the differences between people and their traditions – an approach further enhanced through collaboration. Recently, Johnson has been working with the Vietnamese-born artist My Le Thi and the Tibetan religious painter, Karma Phuntsok.



Affirming the place of art making in broad, spiritual terms, his paintings embrace all forms of life – Aboriginal culture, Buddhism, transcendentalism, even UFOs and the extraterrestrial. Tim Johnson aims at an all-encompassing interconnectivity: the paintings depict coexistence within pictorial space but the real focus is beyond the frame – on the potential of dialogue between and across widely separated peoples, and (optimistically) the hope of a similar respectful coexistence within the social spaces of the world.

1 From correspondence between the artists and Wayne Tunnicliffe, curator of contemporary Australian art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, quoted in 'The symbolic space of Tim Johnson', *Brought to light II: contemporary Australian art 1966–2006*, Lynne Seear and Julie Ewington (eds), Queensland Art Gallery Publishing, 2007, p. 167.

2 Charles Green, 'Cultural mediation', *Peripheral vision: contemporary Australian art 1970–1994*, Craftsman House, Sydney 1995, p. 132.

3 Tim Johnson, quoted in *Australian art in the National Gallery of Australia*, Anne Gray (ed), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra 2002, p. 429.

**54** *Forewarning* 2006  
oil on canvas  
190 x 172 cm

*While the tower's function is to enable the viewing of fires over a great distance, the metaphor it evokes in regard to my work extends to wider environmental forecasts – in particular, global warming – which have been circulating widely for at least the last 10 years. To date, I have used fire as a metaphor for mankind's burning of fossil fuels. In this painting, the tower is like a watchdog over the situation, engulfed by a vertigo-inducing movement of air and backlit by the sterile sun ... Madeleine Kelly 2007<sup>1</sup>*

German-born Madeleine Kelly arrived in Australia in 1980. She cites a number of artistic influences, including the 19th-century German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) – perhaps the most telling, given the country of her birth. Like the chalk cliffs and ice floes in Friedrich's sublime landscapes, the tower form in Kelly's *Forewarning* is highly charged: it is the central focus or 'protagonist' in the painting. It has 'legs' and appears to be fully anthropomorphic. Remaining with the human reference, the tower is cut off at its base and its lack of 'feet' or sound-footing creates an overriding impression of instability which, in turn, is reinforced by other destabilising elements of the painting – in particular, the spiralling, vaguely menacing, shard-shaped forms in the sky.

Other works by Kelly have incorporated animals to demonstrate certain behavioural tendencies of human beings or as symbolic of the natural world. For instance, there are deer-headed humans and, borrowing from a Brazilian myth, images of deer to represent water.

There is current curatorial interest in the growing number of younger Australian painters who are dealing with the landscape. For many, landscape painting per se is not enough and some, like Kelly, infuse the genre with contemporary – and challenging – issues.<sup>2</sup> Her landscapes convey potent messages. The dependence of the West on energy is a major theme:

*Kelly is a young person with all the usual fears of the young about war, environmental degradation, nuclear apocalypse ... Through a kind of surreal anamorphosis, our current political reality is reflected back to us [in her paintings] to expose its hidden side – dreams, desires, hallucinations ...<sup>3</sup>*

Kelly's work begs the question of whether social issues are fitting content for painting today and whether paint is the best tool to affect change. By using symbols rendered delicately against backgrounds of thinly washed paint, Kelly's approach occupies the middle ground. While her earliest works expressed ecological concerns and took on an activist position, her paintings are curiously devoid of the stridency one would associate with a more heavy-handed manner. In this regard, she is not alone in treading softly – the work of international contemporaries such as Mari Eastman and Silke Otto-Knapp come to mind. Like their work, Kelly's landscapes could equally be described as 'inherently fragile'.<sup>4</sup>





Another influential artist is Luc Tuymans. He has perfected a sort of 'frozen, anaesthetised condition' in his painting of which Kelly may well be aware; her work has a similar sensibility and ambience.<sup>5</sup> Like the elements in a Tuymans painting, the tower in *Forewarning* appears similarly arrested in time, poised on the brink of something which, one can only hope, will unfold without being a catastrophe. In the artist's words: 'I have exaggerated the tower's dominance ... Like a figure looming over a child's bed, its function is at once frightening and parental.'<sup>6</sup>

1 Madeleine Kelly, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 1 March 2007. And additionally: 'The timber fire tower depicted is located on Mount Wolvi, a lush area of forest in Queensland on the way to Rainbow Beach or Fraser Island. Completed in 1977 by Arthur Leis, the tower is supported by three ironbark poles or 'legs', and is the tallest fire tower in Queensland at a total height of 47 metres, the pole length alone measuring 44 metres.'

2 In addition to Kelly, UBS collection artist Fiona Lowry was cited by curator Felicity Fenner as using landscape to convey social and political messages in *Primavera '05: exhibition by young Australian artists*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2005, p. 15.

3 Rex Butler, 'Spooky work by fresh new talent', *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 23 Aug 2003, p. 4.

4 Mari Eastman, *US soldiers dismantling the bust of Saddam Hussein* (2003), discussed in Ferguson, *The undiscovered country*, Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles 2005, pp. 80–83. Description of Otto Knapp's landscapes as 'inherently fragile', p. 99.

5 *ibid.*, p. 43, in reference to Tuymans's painting, *Egypt* (2003).

6 Kelly, *op. cit.*



# MARIA KONTIS

56

OPPOSITE:

*Is there a better example than this?*

2005

pastel on paper

diptych, 30.5 x 34.5 cm each

(image size)

56 x 76.5 cm each (sheet size)

© Maria Kontis 2007

Photo courtesy Gitte Weise Gallery, Berlin



*After Dad told us he'd killed a man during the Greek Civil War, my Mum was sick for months. She wished she'd never married him. 'What about us?' I said. 'You wouldn't have us.' She didn't care ... How could my life depend so much on one young man who bled to death in Macedonia in 1947? I started to wonder about the thousands of details of our friends' lives we won't ever know. What do our family photos hide? Guilty secrets, petty brutalities, breathless pleasures ... the distances between each of us we'll never cross. Maria Kontis 2004<sup>1</sup>*

Maria Kontis finds the potential for an extraordinary level of precision and expression within confines which, at first glance, appear quite narrow. She works exclusively in pastel, drawing on warm grey paper with a palette limited to black, white and subtle tonal shades. Yet within these parameters she has discovered an expressive field which is surprisingly complex – as she has described it, 'The blacks and whites and greys are mixed. Some are cool, some are warm ... A shadow might need some ochre. A highlight might need a hint of cobalt ... This is my own version of photoshop.'<sup>2</sup>

Kontis works from photographs she finds in antiquarian bookshops and flea markets as well as from her own amateur photographs. For instance the three

<sup>1</sup> Maria Kontis, artist's statement, 2004: *mapping contemporary Australian art and new media*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2004, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Kontis, artist's statement, *Chinese whispers: Nicola Brown, Muamer Cajic, Maria Kontis, Li Wenmin, Toshiko Oiyama, Amanda Robins, Deborah Wilkinson*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 31 Aug–30 Sept 2006, p. 12.



drawings in the UBS Sydney collection were made last year from photographs of tourists at Bondi Beach.<sup>3</sup> Kontis takes the snapshots, spreads them out on her table and studies them. Next, she rephotographs them many times – in different light and at different angles, in and out of focus – to make what she terms her ‘reference’ photographs. About this process she says: ‘Occasionally I see something that could be interesting. Something I never saw on the day ... A glimpse of some drama playing out ...’<sup>4</sup> When it comes to drawing she works between the ‘reference’ photographs and the actual snapshot she took, in this instance, at the beach. The drawing therefore, is not a copy of any photograph in particular and when finished, often it no longer resembles the original. This is all part of the artist’s intention; she wants the final drawing to look displaced – more than just a copy of a snapshot.

A drawing by Kontis only really starts to unfold as we approach it. Close up, we recognise that it is not a photograph but rather – impossibly – a drawing made with the same level of precision as a photograph. The method to make such a drawing is painstaking. According to critic Roland Kapferer, Kontis ‘sharpen[s] pencils to ultra-fine points, barely touching the paper or leaving it completely untouched, accentuating some things and hiding others, gently rubbing the pastel powder with her finger tip’ and each mark is testament to a

3 The drawings in the Sydney collection are *Filial duty*; *Spread out across the world* and *The burden of a happy day*.

4 Kontis, op. cit., 2006.



ABOVE (left to right):

*Filial duty* 2006

pastel on velvet paper

30 x 37.5 cm (image size) 56 x 76.5 cm (sheet size)

*Spread out across the world* 2006

pastel on velvet paper

30 x 37.5 cm (image size) 56 x 76.5 cm (sheet size)

*The burden of a happy day* 2006

pastel on velvet paper

30 x 37.5 cm (image size) 56 x 76.5 cm (sheet size)

5 Roland Kapferer, press release, *Maria Kontis:*

*Bondi Beach*, Gitta Weise Gallery, Berlin,

10 April–15 May 2007.

6 Artist Chuck Close quoted in conversation with Vija Celmins. In the same conversation Celmins goes on to say: 'The photo is an alternative subject, another layer that creates distance. And distance creates an opportunity to view the work more slowly and to explore your relationship to it.' In Lane Relyea, Robert Gober and Briony Fer (contributors), *Vija Celmins*, Phaidon Press Limited, London 2004, p. 125.

number of 'choices, selections, decisions'.<sup>5</sup> The artist leaves nothing to chance; every move is planned in advance.

An important precedent for Kontis's work can be found in the art of American artist Vija Celmins (born 1938). In the late 1960s Celmins, then a young artist, switched from painting to making drawings from photographs found in books – much as Kontis does – focusing on subjects like aeroplanes and bombed-out places that clearly had personal resonance for her (Celmins's family had been forced to flee Latvia in advance of the Soviet invasion in 1940 and migrated to USA in 1948). As Kontis has discovered, exploring the range of greys available in photographs, Celmins became conscious of and fascinated by, the artificial layer that was built into the process – 'between you and what you're looking at'.<sup>6</sup>

At the time, Celmins's motivation for working in this way was to achieve a certain objectivity and to escape any possible romantic reading of her work, much in the way that the French writer Alain Robbe-Grillet had done in the *Nouveau roman*. The times may have changed and approaches to art and subject expanded, but still important connections remain between the work of Kontis and Celmins.<sup>7</sup> Further, both artists' work can be linked to the



meticulous still-life studies of the Italian artist Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964).<sup>8</sup> Morandi also used a restricted palette of tones and grey in his paintings with the aim of enabling the most ordinary elements to transcend their intrinsic nature to develop an impact beyond the real. In different ways Kontis, Celmins and Morandi all strive for a quality in the final representation that is even more true-to-life than photography. As Roland Kapferer has said in reference to Kontis's work:

*D. H. Lawrence wrote this about Cézanne: 'I am convinced that what Cézanne himself wanted was representation. He wanted true-to-life representation. Only he wanted it more true-to-life. And once you have got photography, it is a very, very difficult thing to get representation more true-to-life'.*

*I am convinced that this is Maria Kontis's problem, her difficulty. She works, and works continually, on the threshold of the Real – to render the photographic, the digital image more true-to-life – to make drawings by hand recover the photograph or to make drawing achieve itself through the photograph. Kontis liberates the photograph – draws it away from its moorings in mechanical reproduction.<sup>9</sup>*

7 Fiona Lowry and Julie Fragar, two other artists in the UBS collection, share a similar approach of restricting their palette, and Fragar, Louise Hearman, Susan Norrie and Michelle Ussher make use of found photographs and their own amateur snapshots in their work.

8 Celmins has spoken thus of the influence of Morandi on her work: 'I came across a painting that stopped me in my tracks. I was just 21 ... and the painting was by Morandi. This small still life, with its collection of bottles and cans bathed in a milky light and huddled in the centre of the canvas, projected an extraordinary set of greys far into the gallery and into my eyes. On closer inspection, I discovered how strange the painting was, how the objects seemed to be fighting for each other's space ... I was struck by the muteness of the work and by an odd psychological feel about it ... I believe this confrontation with Morandi's work, as well as the influence of object-making pop artists, moved me toward a more focused observed painting, more about the eye and looking, the eye and the object.' Celmins quoted in Donna De Salvo and Matthew Gale (eds), *Giorgio Morandi*, Tate Publishing, London 2001, p. 36.

9 Kapferer, op. cit.

60 *Untitled* 2000  
oil on canvas  
86 x 76 cm

*I use line as a metaphor for the landscape. Ildiko Kovacs 2007*<sup>1</sup>

While writing about Ildiko Kovacs's painting has tended to focus on impressionistic and ethereal qualities, it is important to realise that her work is very much earthbound. Her paintings might evoke myriad associations with nature, such as 'branches as they move, the way they ... taper and lasso space'.<sup>2</sup> But a more obvious concern would seem to be their mass and volume. And titles like *Swell* and *Full moon* reinforce this impression.

Kovacs describes her work as improvisational.<sup>3</sup> In her *Untitled* painting at UBS a succession of broad, roughly rectangular forms are collapsed back into the pictorial space. These forms occupy most of the surface area and suggest an expansive, emerging form – the rectangle, lightest in colour and in the foreground, for instance, appears human-like. The other rectangular shapes are created or coated with lines which bend into curvaceous, half-h forms. These somewhat awkwardly drawn lines recall the work of New York painter Philip Guston (1913–1980) whose similarly drawn figures animate the space in the same offbeat way.

The relevance and reception of painting in the world of art continues to wax and wane in cycles over time. In 2001–02 both the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney held major exhibitions focusing on 'new painting' in this country. In his foreword to the catalogue, AGNSW director Edmund Capon took the opportunity to acknowledge this pattern and suggested that the exhibition reaffirmed certain 'tenacious values' associated with the art of painting. He wrote of the 'compelling instinct of the human nature to make marks ... [which served] as evidence of our existence and our aspirations. Those instincts, allied to the powerful opportunities for individuality and texture in ... painting, have ensured its past just as they ensure its present and future.'<sup>4</sup>

1 Ildiko Kovacs, artist's statement in *Autumn catalogue 2007: Australian, New Zealand and international works of art*, Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney 2007, p. 44.

2 John Peart, 'Ildiko Kovacs: thoughts on her work', *Ildiko Kovacs*, Martin Browne Fine Art, Sydney 2001.

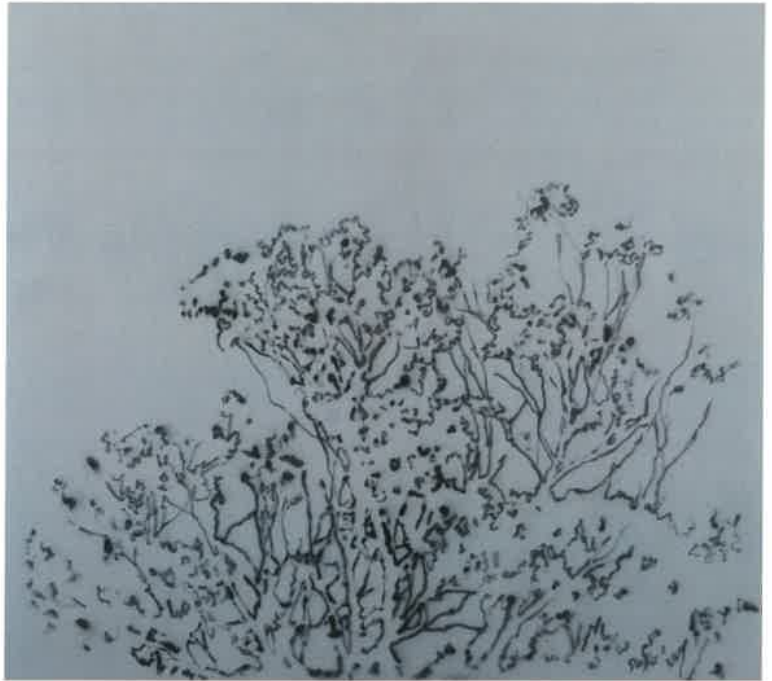
3 Ildiko Kovacs, telephone conversation with Barbara Flynn, 5 April 2007.

4 Edmund Capon, 'Director's foreword', *It's a beautiful day, new painting in Australia: 2*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2002–03, p. 4.





62 *Tall tops of trees behind  
Cinnabar Ave* 2005  
acrylic on canvas  
137 x 147 cm



*One time I was walking past the Coogee Bay Hotel late at night, which is a notoriously violent pub, and I had to step over a shiny pool of blood to get where I was going. It was lit by the bright street lights above and it looked really beautiful against the grey cement but obviously something quite 'full-on' had just happened there. It was the duality of this moment that has informed a lot of my work. Fiona Lowry 2006<sup>1</sup>*

A number of Lowry's paintings have depicted scenes associated with the life and crimes of Ivan Milat, the notorious serial killer convicted of the seven 'backpacker murders' of hitchhikers and tourists, committed in the 1990s in the Belanglo State Forest of New South Wales.

*Tall tops of trees behind Cinnabar Ave* was painted from a private photograph Lowry took in the street where Milat was living at the time of the crimes. News reports from 22 May 1994 describe Milat's arrest following the surrounding of his Cinnabar Avenue home by a police force, 50-men strong. The subsequent search of the home revealed a cache of weapons that included rifles, hunting knives, swords, automatic pistols and a home-made silencer, as well as clothing, cameras and camping equipment belonging to several of the victims.

Compared with the detailed news coverage of Milat's dramatic arrest, Lowry imbues her painting with an air of detachment that stands in marked contrast to the grisliness of his crimes. She manipulates not only the mood but the point of view, focusing our attention instead on the tops of the trees along Cinnabar Avenue. Ironically, the soft and muted rendering of the treetops lulls us into a sense of scenic reverie. But rapidly, our thoughts begin to fill in the blanks, soon imagining what connections there may be between the trees and the crime. Suddenly, any sense of calm is cast aside with the realisation that looking up at the treetops could have been one of the last things Milat's victims would have seen when they lay on the ground in the Belanglo forest. Lowry's painting reveals how our imaginations can be as vivid and brutal as reality.

In these works, the artist restricts herself to a palette of grey – in the tradition of 'grisaille'.<sup>2</sup> Lowry creates an initial sense of calm but evokes an association with newsprint and the world of crime reportage. Lowry consciously establishes this connection to the press: she intentionally conveys the 'paranoia that was communicated to me by the media'.<sup>3</sup> Lowry cites the Dresden-born, Cologne-based painter, Gerhard Richter (born 1932) as a major influence. Internationally, Richter's paintings and photo-based works have played a key role in this approach to art-making.

In particular, the correspondence between Lowry's work and Richter's grisaille paintings from newspaper photographs is plain. In the 1960s and again in the 1980s, Richter pioneered the incorporation of out-of-focus images in grisaille into painting. Such works '... create just enough distance for the viewer to stay with the difficult images in a way that would be almost impossible with the photographs themselves'. As Richter has said, 'the photograph provokes horror, and the painting ... something more like grief ...' His *October 18, 1977* series (1988) 'balances direct addressing of public events with an indirect quality that now seems to be the necessary leverage that painting needs to take on such issues'.<sup>4</sup>

Artists like Richter and Lowry are continuing a long tradition that extends back to impressionism when painters began to absorb the impact of the invention of photography on painting. Stated simply, '... [how do] painters represent the world without chasing in vain after photography. With photography in command of specificity ... painting seeks ambiguity.'<sup>5</sup> Ambiguity, then, is a necessity for those artists who see it as the only possible way to address the real – especially those events and themes too hideous to contemplate yet which, sadly, are all too commonplace in our media-saturated existence.

1 Fiona Lowry, interview published online on the occasion of *Primavera '05: exhibition by young Australian artists*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2006.

2 A technique of monochrome painting in grey tints, used in earlier historical periods to create the illusion of solid bodies in relief.

3 Lowry, op. cit.

4 Ferguson, *The undiscovered country*, Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles 2005, p. 38. Richter quoted in interview with Jan Thorn Prikker (1989), in Hans-Ulrich Obrist (ed), *Gerhard Richter: the daily practice of painting, writings and interviews 1962–1993*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Anthony D'Offay Gallery, London 1995, p. 189.

5 *ibid.*, p. 38.

## JAMES LYNCH

**64** *We were flying, again ...* 2006  
site-specific ceiling painting  
acrylic on gesso on MDF  
205 x 514.5 cm

*As much as we might be in denial about it, we are all born into groups. The first is family. It's those unconscious groupings that lead to a lot of this stuff.*  
James Lynch 2006<sup>1</sup>

James Lynch invests his work with a certain mood and tenor that is derived from the handmade and the everyday. For instance, his earliest drawings in coloured pencil are meticulous renderings of streets and corners from around Melbourne or Los Angeles, and even with the subsequent shift of his work in terms of subject matter and to a larger scale, he manages to retain the feel of the local and the day to day. He does this in the recent works by literally depicting himself and his friends in his animations and by building the backdrops – the sets and trappings – for the whole-room projection works himself. Typically, an exhibition space will be fitted out with bleachers, a picnic or op shop table. For a recent show he even went to the extent of making the projector by hand. As a result the creative process feels less like art-making than preparing to have people over – and to continue with the metaphor, when the ‘guests’ (or viewers) arrive, they tend to respond in kind – recognising the trouble that’s been taken on their behalf by rising to the occasion and readily entering in to the image world of the artist. Add to this mix Lynch’s tapping of



friends' dreams in which he has appeared, and the result is as one writer has described it, like 'a handyman's surrealism'.<sup>2</sup> The tea room location at UBS seemed optimal when proposed, given this familiarity of attitude on the part of the artist. And how comfortably the finished ceiling painting now sits, in a relaxed and informal setting in which, as he says, 'it expresses itself less like "a grand masterpiece" than a familiar exchange of stories between friends'.<sup>2</sup>

When he took up the task, having never previously worked on a ceiling, Lynch immediately thought 'sky'. The imagery of *We were flying, again ...* is taken from a dream the artist's girlfriend had, where the two were floating against the black infinity of outer space. In the painting Lynch gives us a knowing wave and uses bright, clear colour and the dramatic shapes of solar flares and supernovas against the pitch blackness to attract our attention. He and Nadine hold hands, emphasising an essential message of his art: the significance of the real-life connections that exist between people. In our waking life and our dreams alike, he would say, we are inextricably connected, with even the most casual social interactions in the real world resurfacing in the subconscious.<sup>3</sup> His belief in the power and importance of human connection does not stop there – in real life as in art, he energetically pursues communal

activity, through artist collectives that, as critic Ashley Crawford has pointed out, 'undermine the myth of the lone, heroic artist'.

In one instance, in 1997 Lynch helped form Rubik, an artists' collective with Julia Gorman, Andrew McQualter and Ricky Swallow, based on the model of a record label or fanzine. The aim of the collective was to seek out alternative audiences and means of distribution of artists' work through the production of books and the staging of events.<sup>4</sup>



1 Ashley Crawford, 'Back issue: James Lynch', *Art and Australia*, Sydney, vol 43, no 4, winter 2006.

2 Lara Travis, 'Spectacle and the attention seekers: trends in contemporary art at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces', *A short ride in a fast machine*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces in conjunction with Black Inc Press, Melbourne 2005, pp. 182–84.

3 James Lynch, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 29 July 2006.

4 Crawford, op. cit.

66

*Trees, Hanging Rock* 1981

oil on canvas

169 x 214 cm

*The artist-explorer tradition was the foundation of landscape painting in this country. The first artists in Australia, apart from the Aborigines, were artist-explorers. In my view the landscape tradition is the oldest continuous tradition of painting the country has. My own concern with it derives from that tradition, so you just can't paint the landscape without knowing about the painters that work at the same time or came before you and certainly there's an uncontested romance in that.* Jeffrey Makin 1984<sup>1</sup>

Jeffrey Makin's landscapes are usually associated with the massive, the sublime and the heroic. He firmly believes that since European settlement, landscape painting has been the backbone of Australian art – a tradition that began with the convict artist Thomas Watling through to John Glover, Eugene von Guerard and later, the Heidelberg impressionist artists Tom Roberts, Charles Conder, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin. While these artists responded to what was there before them, the real power comes from expressing what can be generated in terms of the national psyche. For Makin, the exploration of colour and pictorial structure became important concerns, reflecting the early influence of Cézanne, Gauguin and Bonnard and his later local mentors, John Passmore (1904–1984) and Godfrey Miller (1893–1964). In 1971 he moved to Melbourne to meet and work with UBS collection artist Fred Williams and together, they made many expeditions into the bush. It was the impact of Williams that led Makin to seek out and express the unique identity of this land.

Studio compositions based on 'en pleine air' studies, highlight the underlying structures of the land: the physicality of the final paintings encapsulated in strong colour, bold forms and expressive brushwork as in *Trees, Hanging Rock* (1981) in the UBS collection. Line and mass work together to capture the ancient power of the landforms. Over the years there has been a growing realism in his interpretations of the Australian continent. Where once he abstracted freely he now records more faithfully, saying that:

*I often feel that I will be one of the last artists to paint in front of this or that landscape, because it will all soon be gone. It's happening already. Forests that I painted 30 years ago, and revisited recently, are simply not there. They've been wood-chipped, built on or eroded away. My recent works are therefore more about painting the beauty and appearance of nature, of what's left, rather than arguing some theoretical aesthetic proposition – time is running out.*<sup>2</sup>

John Olsen, his long-time collaborator in the book *Australia Felix: landscapes by Jeffrey Makin*, said of Makin: 'You are rare, very rare in the way that you have given yourself to landscape and offhand, I know of no other Australian artist that has done so with such singular passion.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Seibert, 'Jeffrey Makin: landscape artist of international significance', *Arts National*, vol. 2, issue 1, Sept 1984, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> 'Jeffrey Makin – en pleine air', art interview, [www.artexhibitionguide.com.au](http://www.artexhibitionguide.com.au) (accessed April 2007).

<sup>3</sup> John Olsen, introduction, *Australia Felix: landscapes by Jeffrey Makin*, Macmillan Art Publishing, 2002. *Australia Felix*, a suite of 10 etchings was launched in conjunction with Australian Conservation Foundation during World Environment Week, Port Jackson Press, Melbourne 2004.







LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Soldier at ease** 2005

patinated plaster

67 x 19 x 19 cm

**Woman with headscarf** 2005

plaster

69 x 25 x 19 cm

**Flapper** 2005

plaster

68 x 15 x 18 cm

*It might seem strange to find her producing sculpture in such a definitely traditional, skilled-up manner ... Following her time in New York a newly articulate body language evolved in her work. A new skeletal structure and uprightness gave her figures the wherewithal to exploit the partly self-conscious partly unselfconscious capacity for posing and deportment that is a distinctly human trait. Amanda Rowell 2006<sup>1</sup>*

Linda Marrinon first became known to the Australian art scene in the 1980s with paintings that referenced popular culture by combining cartoons and lettering within a shallow pictorial space. She earned the moniker of the 'painter's painter' because 'she so self-evidently ha[d] fun with what she [was] doing'.<sup>2</sup> But she also gave voice to the challenges of the time. Her paintings were as consciously subversive as they were (apparently) self-effacing and 'fumbling' in their technique.<sup>3</sup> One of these, called *Sorry* (1983, in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney) expressed the word that was so often on the lips of women of that decade, apologetic for their very presence, whether in the early glory days of the male-dominated Australian art world, or within the larger patriarchal society as a whole.

The new figure sculptures are not the first sculptures Marrinon has made. In 1999 she molded recognisable Sydney and Melbourne buildings from clay, working – typically for her – with modest sources and with what was close at hand. And much earlier, around 1984, she constructed male figures in classical poses 'that gently mock[ed] masculine roles'.<sup>4</sup> The true eureka moment however happened with the chance to study Artistic Anatomy A101 during her Samstag Scholarship year at the New York Academy of Art in 2001. The context was an odd one and perhaps for that very reason, highly suitable for Marrinon. Against the backdrop of an academy so traditional that it regularly bears the brunt of jokes from the 'avant-garde' she undertook the studies of anatomy that included the skeleton, the major body masses and the movement of the joints. The works that resulted are a highly original fusion of the 'truthful' representation typical of Roman Republican portraiture, mitigated by the artist's prescient grasp of the irreverent and the comical that so aptly encapsulates the first years of the new millennium. The figures are still of ambiguous gender, albeit tenderly expressed and there's a subtle humour in the exquisite sense of detail – of button, bustle, gold chain and cloche hat.

1 Amanda Rowell, press release, *Linda Marrinon: figure sculpture*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 6–30 April 2006.

2 Chris McAuliffe, 'Linda Marrinon', in *See here now: Vizard Foundation art collection of the 1990s*, Thames & Hudson, Australia 2003, p. 82.

3 Sebastian Smee, 'Tiers of influence', *The Weekend Australian*, 22–23 April 2006, p. 18.

4 McAuliffe, op. cit., p. 82.



70 6 *Untitled* drawings 1999  
ink on manila folder  
each 22 x 23 cm

*Man cannot understand without images.* St Thomas Aquinas<sup>1</sup>

*What is it about Noel McKenna's work that makes it different from the cultural production of the working class, the untrained and the practical? Maybe there is no difference. Like the cultural producers he paraphrases, McKenna makes pictures because he has to. This is what he wants, and needs, to say. They are celebratory of the ordinary lives of the subjects they depict. A tree seen through a window, a building balanced precariously on a headland. Although nothing here should rise above the mundane they do. They depict the noble poetry of the everyday. Of people going about the business of living extraordinary lives.* Glenn Barkley 2002<sup>2</sup>

The simplicity of Noel McKenna's work should not detract from the profound and very human qualities he encapsulates in his studies of men, women and children just getting on with their ordinary, work-a-day, suburban lives. In the suite of six black ink drawings (now part of the UBS collection), McKenna adopts a pared-back, child-like directness to give prominence to a tricycle, a tiny doorless house, a struggling cyclist, a girl skipping, a boy with a ball, and some strange precarious place and black void that could well be at the edge of the world (a tiny figure standing on a headland as if at the lip of a bottle?). The sequence is relatively understated – at least until the last drawing – when the sudden mood change suggests all is not well in suburbia. The emphasis shifts to solitude: the tricycle has been abandoned; the house floats groundless in the middle of nowhere; the cyclist is slumped, seems defeated; the girl is caught mid-skip, in mid-air forever; the boy stares as if pleading for someone to play ball with; and, finally, a deep black sky and a frail moon ...

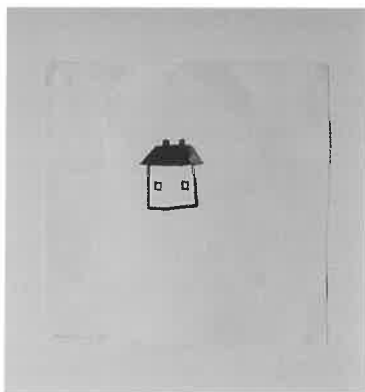
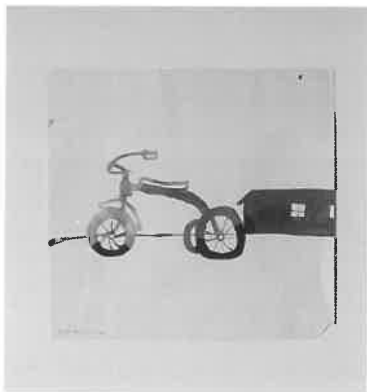
This is McKenna's dry wit and love of irony and whimsy at its very best. If one reads this as a comic strip form, then McKenna is of the same ilk as Gary Larson or the South Park boys.<sup>3</sup> It's a laid-back dark humour aimed at unsettling neighbourhood complacency. Over the years, in paintings, drawings and ceramics, he has taken on many aspects of Australian life and Australiana – from *Racecourse locations* (2002) to *Rugby league and its legends* (2004), from *Suburban homes and 'big things'* (the celebrated Big Pineapple, Big Merino, Big Banana et al of 2003) to *Ken Done's world* (1996) – but with great empathy. Ultimately, and despite their idiosyncratic style, McKenna's ongoing investigations into tourism and small-town kitsch – which one writer has described as 'a grey vision of a post colonial hinterland psyche' – have developed into an engaging and enduring documentation of regional life in Australia.<sup>4</sup>

1 Undated quote. St Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274), Catholic theologian and author of the *Summa theologica*.

2 Glenn Barkley, catalogue essay, *Noel McKenna*, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney 2002.

3 To quote Peter Hill, 'Bird of paradox', *Metro* review, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13–19 Sept 2002, p. 26.

4 Finola Jones, exhibition text, *Getting on Mother's nerves: psychological drama and contemporary drawing*, Mother's Tankstation Gallery, Dublin, Ireland.



**72** *Out of control* 2006  
acrylic and ink on linen  
168 x 153 cm

*Wayward inks swirl and pool across the canvas on the floor. They make their own conclusions, connections and intense colours. I sit back and watch them form in their own time. Slow time. New patterns, boundaries and connections emerge. It's refreshing and liberating not to make all the decisions. My collaborator – paint – is inventive and does things I could never have imagined or repeated. It's a slow process that can't be rushed, only observed ... Everything is interconnected in this mustard light haze. A spilled drop is not an accident, but rather a sign in this world of passages and connections.*

Lara Merrett 2007<sup>1</sup>

As Lara Merrett's quote expresses – like UBS collection artist Angela Brennan and other abstract painters working today – she constructs painted worlds governed by their own internal logic. In this respect, she has not strayed far from ideas first noted by the Russian-born painter and theorist Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) in a discussion on Cézanne: 'It is not a man, an apple, or a tree. All are solely used by Cézanne for the construction of an innermost artistically sound reality which we call a painting.'<sup>2</sup>

Art critics have tended to describe Merrett's colour in terms of taste, employing references to lollies and words like sour.<sup>3</sup> In her paintings, jagged forms in strident synthetic (candy) colours alternate with broad areas of thinly-applied colour – like the lemon yellow in *Out of control* – suggestive of a strong light, which seems to emanate from within the painting. In a typical Merrett painting the pictorial space appears to be an internal one, governed by ambiguous directional markers, making it difficult to find one's bearings. Are we looking down into an invented, subterranean space, or through the byways of the inner body, across its arteries and viscera?

The stains and washes of colour function to connect her work with the recent history of art – in particular, to the signature styles of 1950s–60s New York painting as honed by Morris Louis, Jules Olitski and Helen Frankenthaler. At first glance, *Out of control* also seems to recall Andy Warhol's series based on the Rorschach inkblot test, only to diverge from that possible reading upon closer inspection when we realise that what, at first, had resembled a Rorschach blot is, in fact, lacking the essential symmetry.

The scale of Merrett's works is large and impressive and like others of her generation, she avoids the notion of a 'unified' statement. Her paintings follow no particular pictorial formula or logical form. In lieu of unity, she sets up the impression of movement, creating a drift of forms suggestive of the glacial pace of large ice or land masses. Even these forms are safely fantastical, never real. Her use of a great range of finishes – matt, gloss, pearlescent – and a variety of paint types such as acrylic, fluoro and ordinary house paint, reinforces the impression of an artist who refuses to be pinned down. Similarly, her titles trade the earnestness and faith in 'universals' held by past generations for the topicality of the song lyrics of today. Exhibition titles too, echo an easy sort of Microsoft Messenger girl-speak – 'Upside down you turn me' (Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne 2004) and 'Too soon to tell' (Kaliman Gallery, Sydney 2006).

<sup>1</sup> Lara Merrett, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 19 March 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Wassily Kandinsky, *On the spiritual in art*, Hilla Rebay (ed and trans), Dover, New York 1977, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Alexie Glass, 'Eye candy: Lara Merrett's work is a sight for sore eyes', *Australian Style*, Sydney, no 62, May 2002, p. 48.





# SIDNEY NOLAN

74

## TOP LEFT

*Children's crusade* 1969  
water-based fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): Britten: Children's  
Crusade. 23rd May, 69. Nolan.  
'Leda, Troy, Gallipoli'

## TOP CENTRE

*Untitled (woman and bird)* 1960  
wax crayon and water-based fabric  
dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): 1st Jan. 1960.  
Nolan

## TOP RIGHT

*Untitled (bird)* 1969  
water-based fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): Nolan. 17th June,  
69. Nolan

## MIDDLE LEFT

*Untitled (flowers)* 1968  
water-based fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): 16th March, 1968.  
Personal inscription

## MIDDLE CENTRE

*Untitled (carcass)* c. 1953  
ink and collage on paper  
25.5 x 30.4 cm

## MIDDLE RIGHT

*Mao* 1967  
wax crayon and water-based fabric  
dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): 30th April, 1967.  
Nolan. 'Asia, Mao'

## BOTTOM LEFT

*Untitled (horse and head 3)* 1955  
ink and oil on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): Nolan 3-1-55

## BOTTOM CENTRE

*Untitled (Hydra)* 1956  
water-based fabric dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm

## BOTTOM RIGHT

*Untitled (Prometheus)* 1968  
wax crayon and water-based fabric  
dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
Inscribed (back): 12th Feb. 68.

The nine Nolan works in the UBS collection were included among 139 works in the 1980 exhibition *Sidney Nolan: works on paper retrospective* at the Nolan Gallery outside Canberra which toured to 10 state and regional galleries in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania the following year.<sup>1</sup> A second retrospective of the drawings was organised by the National Gallery of Australia in 1989.

In his early years as an artist Nolan would draw on anything that came to hand – including tissue and blotting paper which, in many cases, have not survived the years. The drawings in the UBS collection all date from the period of extensive travel from 1950 until the mid 1970s when Nolan drew on small, standard-sized sheets measuring 25.5 x 30.5 cm. Together they span the substantial period of 16 years of Nolan's practice as an artist and present a diverse and rounded picture of his art.

*Untitled (carcass)* c. 1953 is the earliest drawing by Nolan in the UBS collection, made just before the artist left Australia to live overseas, basing himself in London from the mid 1950s. In August 1952 Nolan had been commissioned by the Brisbane newspaper, the *Courier-Mail* to record the drought that had destroyed grazing land and severely damaged the cattle industry; 1,250,000 head of cattle had perished in Queensland and the Northern Territory. In the two or three years following that assignment, he recorded the harshness of a horrible death in a number of drought paintings and drawings which 'showed the influence of Pompeii ... seeing that dog there, sort of calcified'.<sup>2</sup> The memory stayed with him – he made *Carcass* paintings throughout his life and in 1971 wrote a poem about the drought also entitled *Carcass*.<sup>3</sup> The originality of Nolan's unorthodox vision of the Australian landscape was recognised early by Sir Kenneth Clark (1903–1983) who remained a lifetime supporter of him. Clark had been director of the National Gallery in London until 1945 and first saw one of Nolan's *Central Desert* paintings in the Wynne Prize exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales while on a visit to Sydney in 1948. 'As I was leaving the exhibition I saw a work of remarkable originality and painter-like qualities. I asked who it was by. "Oh, nobody." "But you must have his name in your catalogue?" "Let's see; here it is, Nolan, Sidney Nolan. Never heard of him."'<sup>4</sup>

Two of the drawings at UBS – *Untitled (horse and head 3)* and *Untitled (Hydra)* – were made in the winter of 1955–56 when Nolan joined his boyhood friend, the writer George Johnston (1912–1970) and his wife, essayist Charmian Clift (1923–1969) on the Greek island of Hydra. The drawings were some of the first by Nolan that did not have an Australian theme. Nolan continued in this direction, working on his series of *Leda and the swan* in the years following while travelling with the support of a Commonwealth Fund Harkness Fellowship in the USA. The UBS drawing *Untitled (woman and bird)* 1960 was made during this time. It brings together the woman and bird of the *Leda* works but inverts their usual order, by placing the woman above the supine bird form, rather than the other way around.



Nolan's drawing *Mao* (1967) is one of many travel paintings he made which, as a group, tend to vary in seriousness and quality. He first travelled to China via Pakistan in 1965, and again in 1972, 1978 and 1983. In 1984 he undertook a large-scale commission which had developed out of the last of these trips, completing a suite of 14 paintings for the head office of corporation Hong Kong Land.

At various times during his career, Nolan was commissioned to do covers for *Time* magazine, including one of his friend and collaborator, the American poet Robert Lowell (1917–1977) for the issue published 2 June 1967. The issue contained an article on Lowell's prose play, *Prometheus bound* which was being staged that month by the Yale School of Drama. *Time* described the Lowell play as 'streaked with images of visceral intensity, as exemplified in the paintings of his friend Sidney Nolan'.<sup>5</sup> Nolan made a number of *Prometheus* works around this time inspired by Lowell's prose, including the *Untitled (Prometheus)* of 1968 in the UBS collection. In the drawing, Prometheus's body appears flattened and nearly off the page – suggestive of the inevitable disembowelment. Nolan's image was the perfect visual equivalent of Lowell's words: 'When you return to this rock, the vulture will join you, an uninvited guest at the banquet. The banquet will be 'you'.'<sup>6</sup>

Nolan illustrated the works of a number of writers and forged intellectual friendships with the Australian author Patrick White (1912–1990) and the British composer, conductor and pianist Benjamin Britten (1913–1976), besides Lowell. Kenneth Clark introduced Nolan to Britten at the Aldeburgh Festival in Suffolk in 1951. Their most important collaboration was the *Children's crusade – Kinderkreuzzug op. 82, a ballad for children's voices and orchestra*, Britten's 1968 setting of the poem *Kinderkreuzzug* by the German dramatist and poet, Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956). Nolan's and Britten's affiliation seemed unlikely, since Britten was known for his ability to write for children's voices while Nolan had rarely portrayed childhood. Yet, perhaps, Nolan – the painter of fringe characters like Ned Kelly, the convict and Mrs Fraser and the idiosyncratic inhabitants of the centre of Australia – quite readily felt at ease with the subject, given the extremity of Brecht's poem:

*In Poland, in that same year  
They caught a dog half strangled;  
A cord hung from round his scraggy neck,  
And from it a Note is dangled.*

*Saying this: PLEASE COME AND HELP US  
WHERE WE ARE WE CANNOT SAY.  
WE'RE THE FIVE-AND-FIFTY.  
THE DOG KNOWS THE WAY.*

*The writing was in a childish hand. Peasants had read it over:  
Since then more than a year has gone by.  
The dog starved: he didn't recover.*

Nolan made many paintings of the ballad and the facsimiles were published in book form on the occasion of Britten's 60th birthday in 1963.<sup>7</sup> One of the drawings of this singular group, made on 23 May 1969, is part of the UBS collection.

In the drawing, five children placed against a scratched-looking sky progress tentatively along a cliff face, each with arms outstretched, as if to feel for the security of the back of the child just ahead. It effectively conjures the feelings of fear and desperation that are evoked by the series. The work is inscribed on the back 'Leda, Troy, Gallipoli' – a reference to other series of Nolan's work, showing the continuum of themes and ideas in which he operated.

1 The tour included: Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, Australian Capital Territory; Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre, Victoria; Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria; Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria; Wollongong City Gallery, New South Wales; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania; Devonport Gallery and Arts Centre, Tasmania; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; Ararat Art Gallery, Victoria.

2 Sidney Nolan quoted in Peter Fuller, *Modern painters*, summer 1988, pp. 41 and 43.

3 The first stanza reads: 'Screwed up by the sun, held together/by maggots, dehorned and castrated anyway/it stands like a rotting ship struck by lightning'.

4 Jane Clark, *Sidney Nolan: landscapes & legends: a retrospective exhibition 1937–1987*, exhibition catalogue, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, and International Cultural Corporation of Australia, Sydney 1987, p. 156.

5 *Time*, 2 June 1967, pp. 35–42.

6 Robert Lowell, *Prometheus bound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 63. First published in England in 1970. Copyright 1967, 1969 by Robert Lowell.

7 Children's crusade – *Kinderkreuzzug op. 82, a ballad for children's voices and orchestra*, music by Benjamin Britten, words by Bertolt Brecht, illustrations by Sidney Nolan: a limited edition of the composer's manuscript (English trans by Hans Keller), Faber Music Ltd in association with Faber & Faber, London 1973.



**78** *Air* 2006  
site-specific wall painting  
acrylic and polyurethane on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 630 cm overall

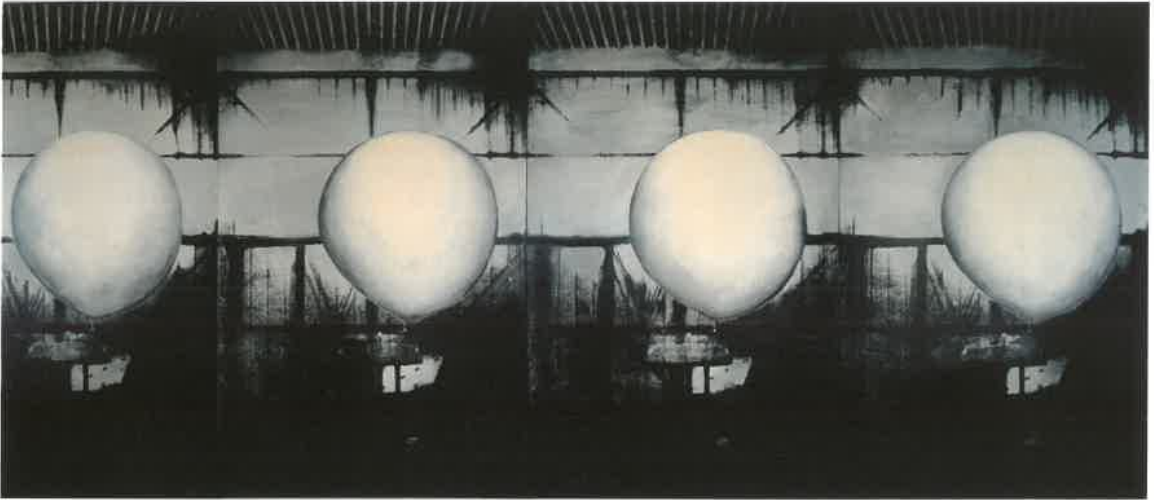
*In a small way artists can slow things down, remind people of an essential humanity that somehow seems to have been lost along the way ... I feel that artists are often a barometer of events in the world and can synthesise both sociopolitical and environmental concerns with powerful visual encapsulations. Blurring the boundaries of fiction and fact, artists can ... deal with the overload of media information and misinformation with a clarity and poetic detachment.*  
Susan Norrie 2007<sup>1</sup>

In the context of her practice, the two paintings by Susan Norrie in the UBS collection are significant works: they encapsulate the depth and diversity of a career that includes video installation as well as painting. During the 1980s Norrie became well-known as a painter in Australia and abroad but by the end of that decade she began to question the relevance of the medium and started to implement important changes in order to address the complex nature of her subject matter. Her practice soon included sculptural objects, reprographic means, photography, video, film and digital media and sound. Curator Juliana Engberg recently summarised the dilemma Norrie confronted around this time by saying: '... the painter extraordinaire ... paused and considered the state of things ... [and] made a quiet choice to be an artist first, a painter sometimes, a person in the world, always'.<sup>2</sup> A succession of highly ambitious multimedia installations followed that since 2002 have been presented in museums in Australia and abroad.

The large-scale, 4-panel painting Norrie completed for UBS Sydney is titled *Air*. And much has been compressed into this one simple word: it's about the air we breathe, from global warming to the possibility of environmental catastrophe, terrorism, even nuclear war – all suggestive, in Norrie's words, of 'a world gone mad'.<sup>3</sup>

Film has long informed the artist's work. This is evident in *Air* through the repetition of forms, the panels resembling frames of a film. One has the feeling looking at the work that the image of the balloon could be continuous, repeated ad nauseum well beyond the conventional edges of the canvas. *Air* in this sense, has neither a beginning nor an end – rather it evokes an ambiguity the artist likes to exploit, as her looped video works so clearly illustrate.

The weather balloon is a key image. It first appeared as a large photographic super-scan within her painting installation *Forecast*, shown in New York in 2001. The balloon then reappeared as a crucial film component within one of her most ambitious installation works to date, *Undertow* (2002).<sup>4</sup> The sequence documenting the launching of a weather balloon was a poignant counterpoint within an installation that included images of oil-drenched birds, active mud pools, a tumultuous sea, a burning forest and archival footage of the dust storm that descended on Melbourne in 1983 – variously scaled large and small projections, each carefully orchestrated and arranged to overwhelm viewers within the museum space. Unlike the projected sequence, the balloon depicted in the 4-panel painting *Air* appears trapped and unable to lift off,



giving cause for alarm. Similarly trapped within the installation *Undertow*, the viewer quite naturally feels powerless when confronted with such catastrophic events – save for the hint of optimism suggested by a short film loop depicting a small girl picking pink-coloured cherry blossoms inserted at eye level into the wall near the exit. Working back and forth across painting and film, Norrie has produced a number of epic, socially-motivated, experiential works since *Undertow*, including the multi-channelled installation *Passenger* (for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2003), and *Black Wind* (2005–06).<sup>5</sup> As with these works, *Air* is a reminder that we are inseparable from our environment – we must be responsible and accountable for our actions if we are to survive.

‘As many painters have remarked,’ it has been suggested, ‘a painting from whatever era is always as present at any given moment as it was in the year it was painted. It is always now.’<sup>16</sup> Such a notion is especially pertinent to the second work by Norrie in UBS’s collection, *Be seeing you (the arrival)*, a painting based on the location of the 1960s British television series, *The prisoner*. In the work, Norrie has used an iconic view of the set that presents a crazy amalgam of architectural styles brought into an unlikely harmony. During the 2-year run of the series, 1966–67, the actual location was a closely-guarded secret, but it has since been revealed as Portmeirion, the architectural ‘township’ designed and built from 1925 to 1972 by Welsh architect Clough Williams-Ellis on the coast of Snowdonia at Portmeirion, Wales. Williams-Ellis purchased the peninsula for £5000 in 1925 and with great passion and dedication, merged his considerable understanding of proportion with the intrinsic qualities of the site to realise what would become a

80 *Be seeing you (the arrival)* 2006  
oil on canvas  
140 x 132 cm

lifelong project. Similarly passionate, the actor Patrick McGoohan not only conceived and starred in *The prisoner* but was also its driving force, the television series soon mirroring Williams-Ellis's passion for architectural experimentation. Ultimately, it is the idiosyncratic vision of both men that is represented by Portmeirion.

Considering Norrie's approach to both subject and medium, it is understandable that she would be attracted to places like Portmeirion which continue to exist long after they have become estranged from their original reasons for being. Such localities inspire not only because of their strange, often portentous quality, but because of the risks taken in the first place by their creators. Tobu World Square near Nikko, Japan proved to be another weird but wonderful utopian world well-suited to Norrie's ironic take on our contemporary condition; it was the ideal location for Norrie's Biennale of Sydney video project, *Enola* (2004).

*Be seeing you (the arrival)* is one of a series of paintings which encapsulates aspects of Portmeirion. Drawing on the notion of an artwork 'multiple', Norrie uses the landscape setting repeatedly, effectively 'mass producing' copies in the spirit of Andy Warhol's Factory. Rather than devalue the status of the sacrosanct 'original', the artist deliberately confuses the categories (and status) of 'original' and 'copy'. Overpainting the photo-screened image by hand, she adds the personal touch, the colourful gestures 'individualising' each painting/copy. In this sense, Norrie would seem to be adding 'aura' to the work – that special quality associated with 'original' works of art that the German writer Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) believed would be lost in the age of mechanical reproduction.

In Norrie's hands the same basic photo-screened view is assigned a unique and predominant colour, applied in broad swathes to the sky, fronts of buildings and the various open spaces in the scene. To date the paintings embrace the spectrum: one in the series is yellow, one red, another green – the version now in the UBS collection. In keeping with her customarily brilliant command of colour, the artist comments, 'The modifications of the standard image reflect my different states of consciousness when I'm making these paintings ... the variations in colour point to shifts in my mood.'<sup>7</sup> Further, the flowering hedge in the foreground is highlighted; it acts as a barrier separating our world from the world within the picture. In each instance, it is this floral mass that establishes the individual mood or ambience of the painting. Hence the 'copy' – as in music – is more a variation upon a theme, the colour suggesting a sort of seasonal shift that changes one's sense of place.

The photograph that inspired *Be seeing you (the arrival)* was found by accident, a revelation that recalls a work by the master risk taker, Marcel Duchamp (born France 1887–1968) with his 'rectified readymade' *Pharmacie* of 1914.<sup>8</sup> He reveals not only the full extent of Norrie's irony and pathos, but also her playfulness when it comes to image making. The raw material for Duchamp's iconoclastic act was a commercial print of a landscape measuring 26 x 19 cm that is every bit as sentimental and 'romantic' as Norrie's views of



Portmeirion. Duchamp added two small red and green marks to his print and called it 'art'; Norrie similarly adds colourful flourishes to a reprographic image as a way of reinvigorating the act of painting in an era when many would consider painting as an effective means of expression to be dead.

1 Susan Norrie, artist's statement, 2007, p. 3.

2 Juliana Engberg, 'As the world turns: Susan Norrie's art history', *Art and Australia*, vol 41, no 4, winter 2004, p. 561.

3 Norrie, op. cit., p. 2.

4 *Undertow* (2002) is a 6-channel video/DVD work presented at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art as part of the Melbourne International Festival and then at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia, Perth; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney and as part of *Face up: contemporary art from Australia* at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin.

5 *Passenger* (2003) is a 5-channel video/DVD installation presented as part of a survey exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, which toured to Art Tower Mito Museum, Japan and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. *Black wind* (2005–06) was first presented as a collaborative multimedia production involving live music, recorded sound, visual projections and a theatre performance. The collaboration between Susan Norrie, the composer Kim Bowman, the percussionist Claire Edwardes and the Amsterdam Sinfonietta conducted by Etienne Siebens was first performed as part of the November Music Festival 2005 in Amsterdam, Groningen and 's-Hertogenbosch. It was then presented at the 2006 Adelaide Festival. Acknowledgements: Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Canberra – Isabell Coe, Ray Swan, Caroline Swan, Maisie and Brendan Cook; Harry Bardwell, *Back to the blast*; Pitjantjatjara people, National Archives of Australia. Camera/editing – David Mackenzie.

6 Russell Ferguson, *The undiscovered country*, Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles 2005, p. 35.

7 Susan Norrie, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 3 March 2007.

8 *Pharmacie*, in Anne D'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine (eds), *Marcel Duchamp*, exhibition catalogue, The Museum of Modern Art, New York and Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania 1973, cat no 95, pp. 270–71.

82 *Plate* 2004  
oil on canvas  
122 x 152 cm

*There is a great consistency in O'Connor's artistic vision – a spiralling vision of gathering intensity.* Sasha Grishin 2005<sup>1</sup>

British-born O'Connor arrived in Adelaide in 1969. Even as a young artist he was particularly interested in colour and the tactility and sensuousness of paint – elements, which he says, were completely out of place during his student days in the mid 1980s.<sup>2</sup> In 1998–99, however, he made his way to Germany to look at abstract painting, especially the work of Gerhard Richter (born 1932). For the youthful O'Connor thriving art centres like Berlin and Cologne (where Richter lives and works) are inspirational places where a passion for abstraction is the norm.

In Richter's work process is evident – a quality O'Connor admires, even if he is disappointed that often Richter's action is played out in just three or four gestures or moves. O'Connor especially likes those Richter paintings in which the forms are large and take up whole areas, where a brushstroke might be magnified to become the entire subject of a painting. O'Connor's painting *Plate* is indebted to Richter's 'oversize brushstrokes' – indeed, he even exaggerates the effect. Whereas Richter will pull the paint in one unbroken stroke to suggest infinity, O'Connor employs a unique, agitated zigzag form, which creates a great visual dynamic capable of holding our attention. Further, he adds white to make the zigzag pulse and shimmer, unleashing a sort of slow time-release effect that continues to captivate the viewer. To achieve such vividness, O'Connor gradually builds up layers of paint to create an upper crust or surface upon which the final brushstrokes will rest. These last touches appear to hover in a different space, an illusory but palpable dimension that, optically, seeps beyond the painted surface and into the world outside the picture.

Such moves or gestures tend to emphasise the self-sufficiency or containment of an abstract painting. O'Connor's process is to react to, and work with, what has been painted the night before: he likes the fact that his paintings reference each other and to nothing outside of themselves. Not surprisingly then, a favourite quote of his is from the Irish writer and dramatist, Samuel Beckett (1906–1989): 'No symbols where none intended', from the novel *Watt*.<sup>3</sup>

O'Connor's work however, embraces a wider range of painterly approaches than might, at first, be apparent. For example, a recent series of green paintings convincingly suggests gardens, and the cool blue of *Plate* (the UBS painting) evokes the freshness of water. O'Connor says that while looking at *Plate*, he imagined the form of a boat in the bottom third of the painting which set in play a progression of thoughts and associations, ultimately leading to the title. The edge of a brushstroke suggested the edge of the world, and a moment in time long ago when the world was thought to be flat. He imagined the sensation of sailing to the edge of the world; it was then that the title struck – *Plate*.

<sup>1</sup> Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, Sept 2005.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Derek O'Connor from a telephone conversation with Barbara Flynn, 5 April 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Beckett's *Watt* was first published by Olympia Press, Paris, 1953 and in the UK as a Calder Jupiter book in 1963. The phrase embraced by O'Connor appears on p. 255 of the 1963 edition, set off by six dashes toward the bottom of the last page of the 'chapter' headed 'Addenda'. This section is fragmentary in character. A footnote (presumably Beckett's) on the page with the phrase says: 'The following precious and illuminating material should be carefully studied. Only fatigue and disgust prevented its incorporation'.







84

**Fork 1987**  
copper and fibreglass  
205 x 37 x 20 cm



*... like the debris that is left by the tide or on the footpath ... those things you pick up and turn over in your hand – you try to work out where they have come from, what their story is. You look at where it has come from, but you try to work out what has happened to it since then. Bronwyn Oliver 2006<sup>1</sup>*

*Copper is a soft metal that warms quickly to the touch. I use the lines of the wire like lines of lettering – laying them down in place of writing them down. In this way there is also a 'hand' apparent in the flow of the forms. Bronwyn Oliver 2001<sup>2</sup>*

Bronwyn Oliver's distinctive sculptures are intricate copper-wire constructions. The woven pieces are based on shapes found in nature – seed pods and plant forms, tendrils, tentacles and fossil shells – not mimetic, but a synthesis of what the eye has seen and the hand has touched. For Oliver, process is important – not the intellectualising of artworks or the extrapolation of meaning but a work's material presence and scale. Turning maquettes or models into large-scale sculptures (usually at Crawford's Casting foundry in Enfield, Sydney) was something the artist found endlessly fascinating – again, it was the process of watching a tiny pod or cell grow and take its place within the landscape, within a towering lobby space, or strung out along a wall.

Oliver's last large public commission was *Vine*, a 16.5 metre work that occupies the vast lobby of the recently refurbished Sydney Hilton Hotel. It connects with two earlier commissions in the Botanic Gardens, *Magnolia* and *Palm*, completed for the City of Sydney 'Sculpture Walk' in 1999. In both instances, the power of the works derives from their ability to blend into, yet augment, their environment – something, one can imagine, that the artist witnessed on many of her bushwalking experiences. As one critic wrote:

*The essence of great artworks is their ability to communicate on many levels. And Oliver's sculptures, two huge seedpods made from wrought metal installed among the trees ... do just that. Aside from their immense visual beauty, they are eminently tactile, demanding to be touched. Touching these works, one is touched in return, stunned by their delicately woven structure.<sup>3</sup>*

Similarly, works that are installed within rooms tend to occupy the wall in such a way that they delineate the space. Their mesmerising, skeletal forms cast shadows – like soft drawn lines – that echo the shape and flow of the sculpture. In this sense, they become more than some careful replication from nature. One writer suggested 'an unveiling of the uncanny'.<sup>4</sup> Another writer suggested their 'tactility and anatomical physicality giving them an animal-like quality'.<sup>5</sup>

*Fork* (1987), the wall sculpture in the UBS collection encapsulates this relationship between nature, observation and materiality:

*... neither organic nor artificial in its form, [Fork] is animated by competing associations. Its hardened fossil-like copper exterior suggests an object rescued from a mythical age – an elemental instrument that sculpts sound with the same elegance as the object's form defines space. At the same time, the*

*tubular lengths and lipped orifices recall human anatomy; oversized arterial valves or strangely sexual openings that remind us of our own physicality. Botanical readings also abound, with the object's inherent duality evoking the eloquent division of stem and leaf or the skewed symmetry of tree boughs.*

*Yet Oliver's sculptures are not mimetic but predicated on a formal and poetic logic. While we recognise in Fork the essential qualities of organic phenomena, we are also transported into Oliver's idiosyncratic world of highly intelligent form. She employs a unique conceptual language that invests her sculptures with a sense of timelessness and 'unplaceability'. Achingly familiar and hauntingly strange this finely-wrought object, made green as though by long exposure to the weather, is rich with metaphoric associations.<sup>6</sup>*

Oliver once commented that she 'set out to strip the ideas and associations down to (physically and metaphorically) just the bones, exposing the life still held inside'. She considered sculpture to be a 'kind of physical poetry' and she constructed her work as if 'constructing sentences, in the sense that I try to exclude associations that add meaning to the core'.<sup>7</sup> At the time of her death, her dealer Roslyn Oxley noted that Oliver's works 'tap into the mystery of life, and there's nothing more timeless – or interesting – than that'.<sup>8</sup> Again, somewhere between structure and meaning, the works resonate. Like *Fork*, each piece is a meditation upon the beauty to be found deep within things – a coil, a frond, a seed ready to spring into life. As the artist suggested, they are fragments which are whole within themselves, but simultaneously refer to a greater whole – order created from disorder – a life, a self-contained but removed presence.<sup>9</sup>

1 Joyce Morgan, 'Bronwyn Oliver: from Gum Flat to grand career', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 2006.

2 Bronwyn Oliver, artist's statement, National Sculpture Prize, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Nov 2001–March 2002, p. 68.

3 Benjamin Genocchio, 'A walk in the park', review, *The Weekend Australian*, 9–10 Oct 1999, p. 23.

4 Bruce James, 'Queen of the uncanny turns up the heat', exhibition review, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 Nov 2002, p. 16.

5 Press release, RoslynOxley9 Gallery, 2004.

6 Olivia Sophia, 'Fork 1987', unpublished text on the artist, 19 April 2007.

7 Artist's statement, exhibition catalogue, Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellowship touring exhibition, 1994, p. 14.

8 Sunanda Creagh, 'Parting gestures from a rare talent', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 Aug 2006.

9 Oliver 2001, op. cit.

**86** *Old men in boats* c.1995  
watercolour on paper  
99 x 95 cm

*Paul Klee's notion of the line going for a holiday is in one respect a flippant remark. But on the other hand it is very profound because the line connects the metaphor, the line contains the energy, the line is the holding together of disparate objects. And importantly, it follows the action of the mind.*  
John Olsen<sup>1</sup>

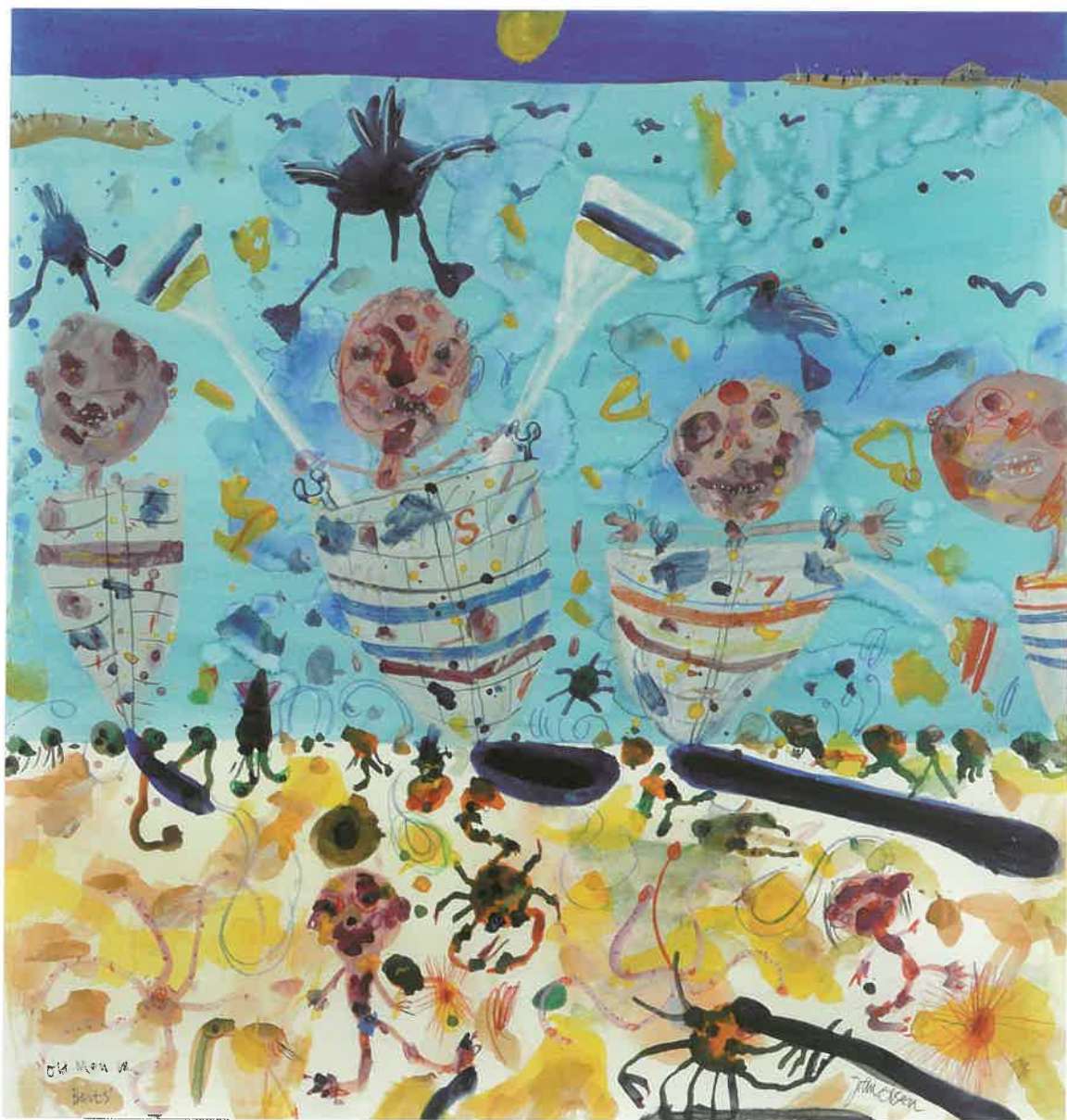
John Olsen once declared, 'I have never painted an abstract painting in my life.'<sup>2</sup> It's the Australian landscape that informs his work, even though the gestural marks and splurges of colour could well be mistaken for abstracted, floating forms. He describes his work as exploring the 'totality of landscape' by which he means an attempt to embrace and convey his personal response, his lived experience of this vast continent.

According to one writer – Robert Berlind, whose review of Olsen's retrospective at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1993 was published in *Art in America* – it was the artist's early formative years in Europe in the late 1950s that laid the foundations of his idiosyncratic style.<sup>3</sup> Painters like Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) and Antoni Tàpies (born 1923) were influential, but equally important was his ongoing interest in literature, particularly the poets W. B. Yeats, Dylan Thomas and writers James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. Berlind acknowledged that the retrospective revealed 'an oeuvre that could only have been produced within the Australian context ...'

*[Olsen] has taken as his chief subject the Australian landscape and he has given expression to aspirations that permeate much of Australian culture. His acute evocations of local wildlife, Aussie lamikins (roguish outlaw types) and the immense, intractable land mass itself constitute an art that is regional but in no sense provincial ...*

*A typical Olsen painting combines an implied aerial view with an ambiguous and seemingly unpremeditated figuration. His characteristically quizzical line and irregular squiggles and dots deftly render countless organisms, large and minute. Their environment is conjured through loosely brushed and stained expanses of colour (on canvas or hardboard) that are keyed to natural light. Even when he is referring to the outback landscape, usually noted for its austerity and inhospitality, Olsen's imagery teems with life. Yet the same lines sometimes read as geological mappings. In Olsen's work there is no foreground/middle ground/background schema, nor any sign of European landscape's concern with 'human scale'. In the end he employs simultaneously the contrary vantages of naturalist and geographer or, to put it another way, the viewpoints of frog and eagle.*

As the two works in the UBS collection illustrate, Olsen is a master watercolourist. *Lily pond* (1995) – a luminous gouache-on-paper triptych – is quintessentially Olsen. Its richness reflects his imaginative experiences and connects *Lily pond* with works from the 1970s when he travelled extensively across the country, giving new insights into Australia's regional and desert landscapes – a natural world which he felt revealed a spiritual and universal







dimension to things. Similarly, the second work, *Old men in boats* (c.1995) combines brilliant colour with whimsy and humour: it recalls the vibrancy of marine life that one associates with Olsen's famous mural, *Five bells*, that for many Australians – as the writer Clive James has suggested – makes him like part of the furniture of the Sydney Opera House because his exultant painting (based on the poem by Kenneth Slessor) was hanging in the foyer 'when the building set sail into the world'. But, as James continues:

*John Olsen's story is bigger and more complicated than a single impact, however glamorous and historically charged. Olsen was prominent among the second wave of Australian painters who put their art on the international map after World War II. To a great extent the first wave – Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd – had already made Australia a world name, putting the Australian landscape into the global picture. The painters of the second wave – Margaret Olley, Jeffrey Smart, Charles Blackman and others – were advancing into conquered territory and did not always feel bound to concentrate on homegrown subjects. It was enough that they were Australians. This applied also to John Olsen, although some of his apparently near-abstract pictures proved, on closer examination, to be teeming with typically Australian life forms. As his graphic work particularly reveals, his open spaces are as full of living things as an outback dry lake after the rains. The vital forms, some of them tiny, are captured with the meticulous draughtsmanship that he learned in three different art schools in Sydney at the beginning of his career.*

Barry Pearce, head curator of Australian art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, suggests John Olsen is 'the one who has defined the continent of his generation better than anyone else'. While there are other great Australian landscape painters like Fred Williams and now William Robinson, Pearce describes Olsen as 'the poet of the brush. He's been brave enough to go out into the interior of Australia and embrace it with love, absorb himself in it like a true poet.' Topography then, combined with what Pearce considers 'the felicity of his brush' is what constitutes

ABOVE:  
*Lily pond* 1995  
gouache on paper  
triptych, sheet sizes,  
100.4 x 69.5 cm (left)  
100.4 x 190.4 cm (middle)  
100.4 x 69.5 cm (right)

a typical Olsen painting. Whether it be on canvas or on paper, his work across media bears this trademark touch.

Olsen believes he has helped steer Australian landscape painting through its youth, supplying some of 'the nouns and verbs' which helped form a landscape language. He was, he points out, the first serious Australian artist to paint the Bungle Bungle or Lake Eyre. 'Can you believe,' he once said in an interview, 'no-one had done any paintings of Lake Eyre? The lowest point on our continent, the plug hole of Australia, shaped like Salvador Dali's bent watch ...' Olsen went on to say:

*European landscape painting has been honed over centuries by great sensibilities. Australian landscape painting hasn't. One of the great contributions Sid Nolan made to landscape painting was to portray the essential untidiness of the Australian landscape. That was an incredible achievement; to make great pictures out of a mess. Australia really is the land God forgot.*

While he acknowledges the contribution of Drysdale, Nolan and Williams to Australian landscape painting, Olsen argues 'the Australian landscape hasn't been artistically defined ... We are a very young civilisation ... in a very, very old landscape.' According to him, Aboriginal Australians have been artistically interpreting the land 'for thousands of years of experiencing and looking and being involved, in a hunter-gatherer kind of way', but non-indigenous Australians fail to identify or understand Aboriginal art in the same way they understand the Western European tradition. Olsen believes it's because of non-indigenous Australians (and artists) that we were intimidated by the interior, particularly after the epic failure of Burke and Wills convinced 19th-century Australians their future lay on the periphery:

*The early visual history of Australia is really just the eastern coastal fringe ... No painting of the desert was done until Hans Heysen went to the Flinders Ranges in 1922. To quote Robert Frost, 'The land was ours before we were the land's.'*

Olsen still goes bush often. Having flown across the Simpson Desert, the MacDonnell Ranges and the Tanami Desert in recent times, he was reminded of a phrase D. H. Lawrence used about the aloofness of the outback in his novel *Kangaroo* – 'It is a landscape which doesn't need people.' Yet Olsen's evolving journey of the mind continues to explore what this land has to offer. Since he began to discover this land in the 1950s and 60s, he has used what he has termed 'a new kind of figuration' to move beyond literal representation but without abandoning images and content. As he describes it: 'The thing which I always endeavour to express is an animistic quality – a certain mystical throbbing throughout nature.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graeme Sullivan, 'John Olsen: seeing life as it is felt', *Seeing Australia: views of artists and art writers*, Piper Press, Sydney 1994, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> The Berliand reference and all other quotes cited have been taken from John Olsen's artist entry: [www.timolensgallery.com](http://www.timolensgallery.com) (accessed April 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Hart, 'John Olsen', *Australian art in the National Gallery of Australia*, Anne Gray (ed), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra 2002, p. 267.



*Vessel #2 (blue)* 2004  
painted steel  
376 x 462.5 x 419 cm

*Vessel is an elusive geometry of minimalist form. A container of 'amusing physics'; scale, perspective and time interact in a transformative play of paradox and intrigue. Vessel is also a reflection on conflict and counterpoise, or the momentary stillness of forces in equilibrium.*  
Robert Owen 2007<sup>1</sup>

*You go through life with its dark moments and black holes ... and geometry was this way to find your way through a crisis, like following Ariadne's thread out of the labyrinth.*  
Robert Owen 2004<sup>2</sup>

As a boy of 13 or 14, after school in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Owen did copies from the watercolours of Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) and frequented a place on the outskirts of town where he felt 'at one with himself'.<sup>3</sup> He left for Sydney at the age of 18 and attended art school. In 1963 at the age of 26 he left for England. He visited Indonesia, Singapore, Bombay and Hydra on the way. He liked Hydra so much he changed his plans, spending three years on the island where he became friends with Australian expatriate writers George Johnston and Charmian Clift. From Hydra he travelled to Italy in 1964, to see the frescoes by Giotto (c. 1267–1337) completed in 1303–05 for the scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua. The experience inspired him to change the course of his art. In 1975 he decided to return to Australia, drawn back by the promise of a range of exciting new developments in art during the Whitlam era.

Looking at Giotto, Owen understood the implicit potential of colour to provoke strong feelings and sensations. The experience of Giotto's fresco would have been a potent one, as philosopher Julia Kristeva has described it: 'One's first impression of Giotto's painting is of a coloured substance ... one is struck by the light that is generated ... such a blue takes hold of the viewer at the extreme limit of visual perception.'<sup>4</sup> Owen has said that Giotto's Arena Chapel had a profound influence on him as a kind of site-specific installation.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, Owen has used ultramarine blue as the colour of his geometric sculptures since the early

1990s, attracted by its luminescence and its abstract quality – described by French artist Yves Klein as 'having no dimensions'.<sup>6</sup>

Owen had been interested in colour and light since his early days in Wagga. Hydra's 'full moon was like a fluorescent light on the island and you could see it everywhere, to say nothing of the glow. The light in Greece reminded me of the light in Wagga.'<sup>7</sup> He arrived in London later that year and began to do research into light using a diffraction grating.

*Vessel #2* (2004) in the UBS collection is one from his series, *Memory and logic units*, begun in the early 1990s. In the early stages of the development of the series, Owen had conducted experiments with stereoscopic effects in works like *Re-vision (melancholia)* (1987) by floating two cubes above each other and manipulating them 'to see them snap into 3-D'.<sup>8</sup> Like other works in the series, *Vessel #2* is composed of lengths of pipe which are joined together in acute angles – in apparently random fashion – to make a closed form. The sculpture is non-representational, engaging us in a finely-tuned perceptual experience that unfolds in real time.

The catalyst for this experience is the ultramarine blue, which seems to reverberate and glow – not unlike the moon on Hydra described in Owen's quote above. Then, as we approach and start to walk around the work, a new triangle comes into view with every step we take, in stereoscopic fashion, ahead of us in space – like a sort of slide show of ever-changing, free-floating drawings in space. And as we continue to circle the work in



search of stasis, the triangles change, everything appears to be in flux.<sup>9</sup> Like many aspects of our experience, the sculpture seems impossible to know in its entirety.

It is interesting to compare *Vessel #2* to another geometric work sited nearby – a wall-relief work by German artist Josef Albers. Albers's *Wrestling* (1976) is sited on the exterior west perimeter wall at the MLC Centre, one of Harry Seidler's key architectural works from 1972–78. At 15 metres high, *Wrestling* is the largest work Albers ever designed. Albers had started making geometric line drawings in 1936, and completed some 18 architectural commissions during his lifetime – murals, windows, fireplaces – that provide a context for the *Wrestling*

work. In the work, two line drawings of cubes in isometric perspective have been cut from white-painted metal to contrast with the dark wall behind. They too are in a constant state of flux, shifting left and right, backwards and forwards, between two states.

From certain vantage points the Albers work seems to 'snap' into three dimensions just as Owen's *Re-vision (melancholia)* had done, but essentially it is played out on a single plane – which Owen considers indicative of the limitations of 20th century sculpture. *Vessel #2*, on the other hand, transcends the earlier work and is more complex and ambitious, in keeping with advances of the 21st century. For example, where the Albers work is flat, *Vessel #2* exists in three- or even four-dimensional space,

through the combination of triangular and polygonal forms that start as flat forms and expand into fully volumetric forms, depending on one's position in relation to them. Standing back from Owen's sculpture, one is struck by the vastness of the city, since *Vessel #2* is sited on an exterior plaza at UBS that is surrounded by the glass towers of Sydney's CBD. In the midst of the density of its environs, the external area functions as a rare open space, a sort of urban oasis. Owen chose to make a *Memory and logic unit* sculpture in response to this particular site and the surrounding environment, placing *Vessel #2* so that it refers to the similar tubular truss- and flagpole-forms of another of Seidler's buildings nearby – Capita Centre. He also oriented the sculpture so that its most pronounced angle would point outwards towards the city – a gesture of openness and solidarity with Sydney's modernist architectural tradition.

1 Robert Owen, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 11 April 2007.

2 Robert Owen interviewed by George Alexander, *Robert Owen: different lights cast different shadows, the second Balnave Foundation sculpture project*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 16 Oct–29 Nov 2004, p. 25.

3 *ibid.*, p. 21.

4 Julia Kristeva, 'Giotto's joy', *Desire in language*, Blackwell, Oxford 1981, p. 224. Reprinted Wayne Tunncliffe, 'Different lights cast different shadows', *Robert Owen*, *ibid.*, p. 8.

5 Robert Owen 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

6 Wayne Tunncliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

7 Robert Owen 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

8 *ibid.*, p. 25.

9 Alex Selenitsch, 'Robert Owen: jumping dimensions', *Robert Owen: flickering light*, exhibition catalogue, Arc One Gallery, Melbourne, October 2004.

92

**Sunset 2006**  
site-specific panel work  
vacuum-formed 3 mm ABS plastic  
40 panels, each 50 x 50 x 10 cm  
200 x 500 x 10 cm overall

*My initial inspiration for the work came from a visit to the site. I was struck by the vista of the 'natural' – if artificially achieved – landscape of the Botanic Gardens that was framed by the architecture of the building. I wanted to make a work that reflected that intersection of the artificial and the natural. I thought it would be interesting to do something traditional, a landscape, but filtered through the actuality of the automotive surfaces that make up my panel works. The panel works are usually completely abstract, but this one is actually representational. While it is far from realistic, the viewer can perceive the flatness of the horizon and the focal point made by the sun as it meets the horizon.*

Patricia Piccinini 2007<sup>1</sup>

Piccinini's panel works are wall reliefs made of vacuum-formed plastic which have been molded in half-metre quadrants and finished by spraying with auto lacquer. Like her *Car nuggets GL* (1998) the high gloss of the panel surface and the smooth perfection of the contour lines suggest the world of the automobile. But while the *Car nuggets GL*, being freestanding objects, easily achieve a sort of trophy status in keeping with the culture of guys, girls, speed and cars, the panels are closer to the erudite world of painting by virtue of being rectilinear and made for the wall. Within a practice dominated by edgy works dealing with subjects often less purely aesthetic and much more topical, the panel reliefs represent a more pleasing form of art, especially when compared with other projects which, in the artist's words, incorporate 'creation, birth, responsibility, babies, the changing nature of the environment and our relationship with it, the increasingly nebulous boundaries between the technological and the natural world'.<sup>2</sup>

For example, beginning with the work *Protein lattice* in 1999, Piccinini's practice has addressed the ethics of biological engineering, expressed digitally or constructed in silicone which makes her works more plausibly life-like and 'strangely believable'.<sup>3</sup> *SO2* (2000), *Siren mole* (2001), *Still life with stem cells* (2002), *We are family* (2003) and *Nature's little helpers* (2005) are some of the transgenic, hybrid animal-human creatures Piccinini has been bringing to life. In the new millennium, these grotesque but lovable creatures challenge our preconceptions and provoke discussion about where our species is headed.

In *Protein lattice* a lab rat that has been made to grow a human ear, sits on the shoulder of a beautiful young woman, creating an impression that is both attractive and repulsive. That same ear – geometrically modified and stylised so as not to cause offense – can be found in *Sunset* and other of the artist's panel works. Many such links abound in the various strands of Piccinini's practice; in this sense, *Sunset* and the other panel works share a common language, even if they speak it more softly.



*Sunset* was made especially for UBS's Melbourne office: it uses the golden glow, the lavenders, pinks and reds of the sky at dusk as a foil to the greens of the Botanic Gardens outside. The artist has noted the irony of attempting to depict the ephemeral beauty of a sunset through the artificial means of a panel-beater's sprayer. The play between 'natural' and 'artificial', a longstanding theme in her art, is again conjured here, recalling works such as *Plasticology* (1999), in which filmed footage of plants in motion – standing in for 'the natural' and the garden – has been artificially boxed within 57 television monitors, the sequence then seductively arranged for our pleasure.

1 Patricia Piccinini, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 26 March 2007.

2 Patricia Piccinini, artist's statement in the form of a press release for the exhibition *Unbreaking eggs*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Sept 2005.

3 *ibid.*

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Kim Napurrula,  
Walangkura Napanangka,  
Doreen Reid Nakamarra,  
Narrabri Nakamarra,  
Lorna Brown Napanangka:  
Pintupi women of Papunya Tula  
Artists Pty Ltd<sup>1</sup>

RIGHT:  
Kim Napurrula  
*Untitled* 2006  
acrylic on linen  
107 x 91 cm



*The abstract and conceptual iconography that lies at the heart of central Australian art, like the rock art of western Arnhem Land or the Kimberley, is undeniably ancient ... but the art has only been in the public domain since 1971.*  
Judith Ryan<sup>2</sup>

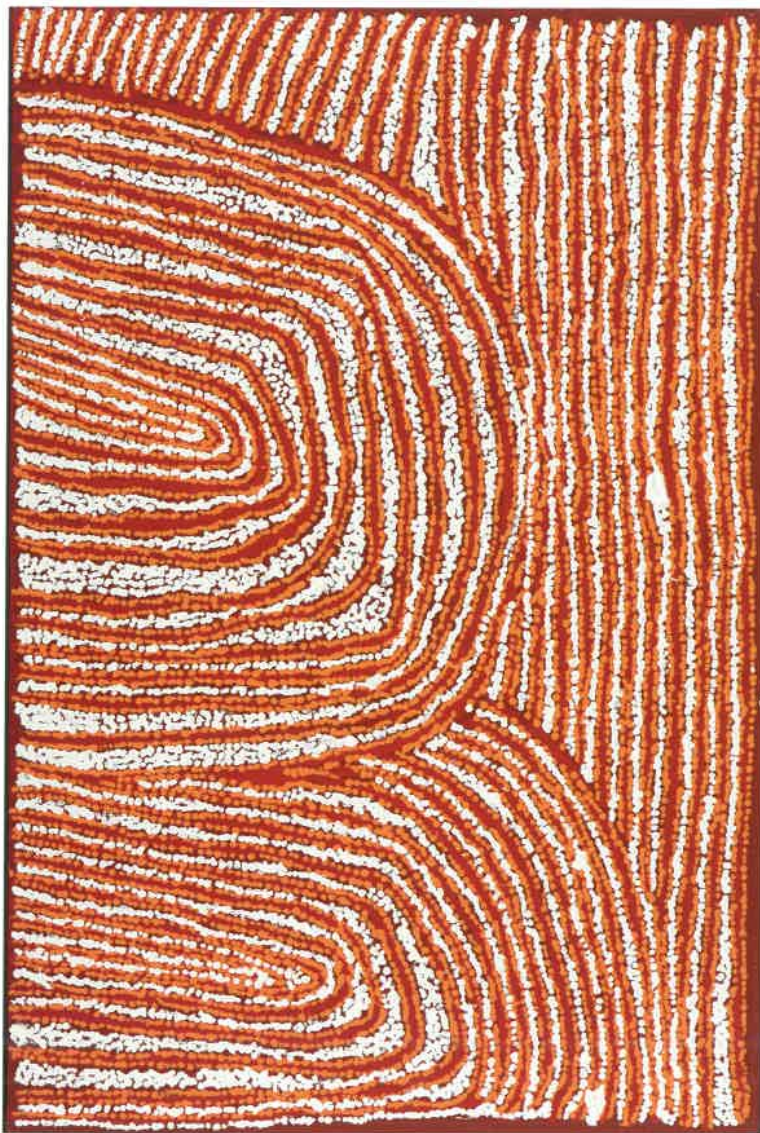
*If I don't paint this story some white fella might come and steal my country.*  
Charlie Tjararu Tjungurrayi c.1971<sup>3</sup>

The UBS collection includes a total of 12 works of Aboriginal art installed in its Melbourne office, representing the regions of the East Kimberley; Arnhem Land; Kintore, Northern Territory; and Kiwirrkura and Mt Liebig, Western Australia. Aboriginal art has long been held by Australia's museums of natural history. In the 1950s and 60s strong early advocates emerged – including Tony Tuckson, deputy director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and a practicing artist himself – to argue for the inclusion of Aboriginal art as part of Australian state gallery collections. But the acquisition of Aboriginal art for state galleries began in earnest only relatively recently, in the 1980s, following the emergence of Aboriginal

art movements at Papunya, Northern Territory in the early 1970s and other desert communities a few years later.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to preface any discussion of Pintupi women artists with the story of the emergence of Aboriginal art generally at Papunya in 1971.<sup>5</sup> Papunya was a government assimilation settlement 250 kilometres northwest of Alice Springs, Northern Territory where over 1400 Pintupi, Luritja, Anmatyerre and Pitjantjatjara people lived in desperate conditions at the time. That year, the senior men took up painting both to combat the ills of a sedentary existence and to save their culture from extinction. The first works they made – with pencils,





ABOVE:  
Walangkura Napanangka  
*Untitled* 2005  
acrylic on linen  
91 x 61 cm

brushes, enamels and acrylics on scraps of pine chip board that happened to be at hand – were radically different in medium and style from the bark paintings, carvings and artefacts that were recognised at the time as Aboriginal art. In their paintings, land was viewed from a bird's-eye or planar perspective and there was no separation between land and sky, showing their closeness to nature and the ground. The painters were supported in their early efforts by the activist and teacher Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2003), who was stationed at Papunya for 18 months in 1971–72. Their first works revealed to all, the symbols that had previously only been expressed in ritual contexts for the knowledge of initiated men, called *wati*. The artists had taken risks in depicting the business of ceremony and soon were criticised by authoritative law men, and so from late 1972 they adopted a less explicit language of painting, employing more dotting to veil the references to ceremony. In the same year the founding artists formed their own company, Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd in order to sell their work and supplement the income they were earning painting for 'sit-down-pay'. The settlement of Papunya was later largely abandoned as a centre for making art but the company has operated successfully ever since and is now based in Alice Springs. It remains a powerful example to other Aboriginal communities intent on breaking the cycle of poverty and displacement through the income that can be generated through art.

In the late 1980s Papunya Tula artists Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri (c. 1930–



1998) and Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula (c. 1938–2001) developed a new form of painting marked by an extreme reduction of forms to a few basic elements of line, tone and texture. Elements such as parallel lines might still relate to particular forms – for example, to the spears or sand ridges of the Gibson Desert in Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula's series, *Straightening spears at Ilyingaungau*, which he began in 1990 – but an important new relationship had been forged to the forms of abstract Western contemporary art as well.

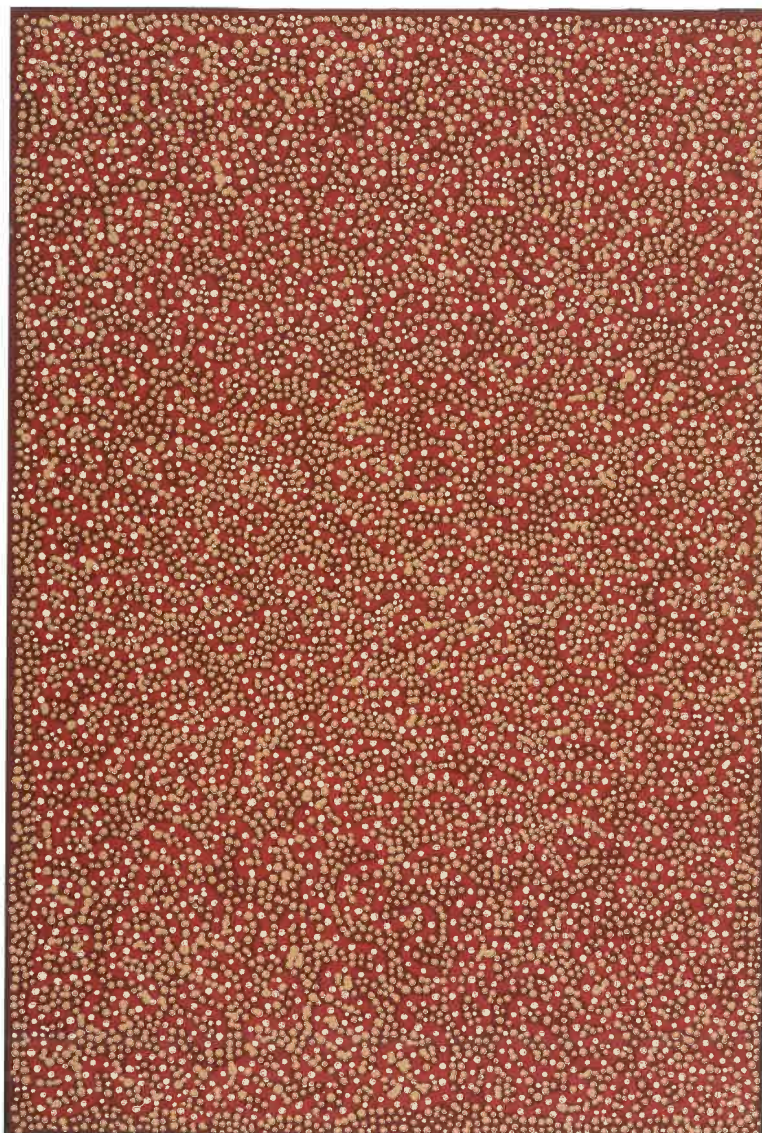
Generally speaking, indigenous women artists first emerged only much later, in the late 1980s and 90s, led by Emily Kame Kngwarraye (c. 1910–1996, Anmatyerre) and other women of Utopia, Northern Territory, who made the transition from batik textile production to canvas in 1988–89.<sup>6</sup> The women of Utopia had been introduced to batik in 1977.<sup>7</sup> In 1979, the inalienable title to the lease of Utopia reverted to its traditional owners following the successful land claim mounted under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. In Aboriginal culture, both women and men share custodial responsibility for the land and hold their own ceremonies to maintain it, and Utopia women had played an active role in the claim, presenting their evidence to the Land Claim Hearing in the form of the painted body designs, dances and ritual objects that belonged to their clan areas.<sup>8</sup>

Pintupi women – such as those represented in the UBS collection – first asserted the importance of their work in painting somewhat later, through the formation of Ikuntji Art



ABOVE:  
Doreen Reid Nakamarra  
*Untitled* 2006  
acrylic on linen  
122 x 91 cm





ABOVE: Narrabri Nakamarra  
*Untitled* 2004  
acrylic on linen  
91 x 61 cm

Centre at Haasts Bluff in 1992. At Kintore the following year, female Ikuntji artists met with their female relatives who, until then, had painted only in the context of assisting their male relatives. With the help of Marina Strocchi, coordinator of Ikuntji Art Centre, the women initiated the Kintore/Haasts Bluff Canvas Project of 1994–95, setting up a bush camp in June 1994 to focus on painting. Soon afterwards, the participants in the project were invited to paint for Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd.

Walangkura Napanangka and Lorna Brown Napanangka use bold and expressive lines combined with a dense build up of paint to create a raised pattern of geometric forms across the surface of their paintings. In Walangkura's painting, the lines represent the sand hills in the area traversed by an old woman, Kutunga Napanangka in her travels from Malparingya, northwest of Kintore, to Muruntji, southwest of Mt Liebig.<sup>9</sup> Walangkura, the most widely exhibited of the five Pintupi women painters represented at UBS, adopted this style in 2004. Her earlier paintings had been composed of smaller motifs and markings and were, as a group, much less confident and assertive. Curator Judith Ryan sees the artist's lineage and family relations as crucial in her development as an artist. Her elder sister, Pirmangka Napanangka (1945–2001) was a talented painter, and their parents, Tutuma Tjapangati (1915–1987) and Inyuwa Nampitjinpa (c. 1922–1999) were both important Papunya Tula artists. The other Pintupi women artists in the UBS collection have also benefited from the instruction

98 and exchange of technique facilitated through the family structure: Kim Napurrula is the widow of former Papunya Tula artist George Tjapanangka (born c. 1938) and the sister of painter Bobby West Tjupurrula (born c. 1958); Lorna Brown Napanangka is married to Bobby West; and Narrabri Nakamarra's mother is Papunya Tula artist, Makinti Napanangka (born c. 1932). Such relationships are especially critical in ensuring the transmission of the designs and stories pertaining to country which are owned by the individual custodians and passed on after their death.



RIGHT:  
Lorna Brown Napanangka  
*Untitled* 2005  
acrylic on linen  
122 x 137 cm

1 The name Papunya derives from a small hill near Papunya, Northern Territory and refers to the mythical Honey Ant ancestor of the inhabitants of the area.

2 Judith Ryan, 'Identity in the land: trajectories of Central Desert art 1971–2006', *Land Marks*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2006, p. 107.

3 Charlie Tjararu Tjungurrayi quoted by Andrew Crocker, *Charlie Tjararu Tjungurrayi: a retrospective 1970–1986*, exhibition catalogue, Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales, 1987, p. 11. The term 'country' is defined by Julie Gough in her catalogue essay, 'Being there, then and now: aspects of south-east Aboriginal art', as a territory of land and waterways for which an Indigenous clan holds responsibility. *Land Marks*, op. cit., p. 131, note 1.

4 Susan Cochrane (ed), 'Introduction', *Aboriginal art collections: highlights from Australia's public museums and galleries*, Craftsman House, Sydney 2001, pp. 10–11.

5 For a discussion of the history of Papunya Tula artists see Ryan, op. cit., pp. 107–114.

6 Utopia is an Aboriginal freehold property approximately 240 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

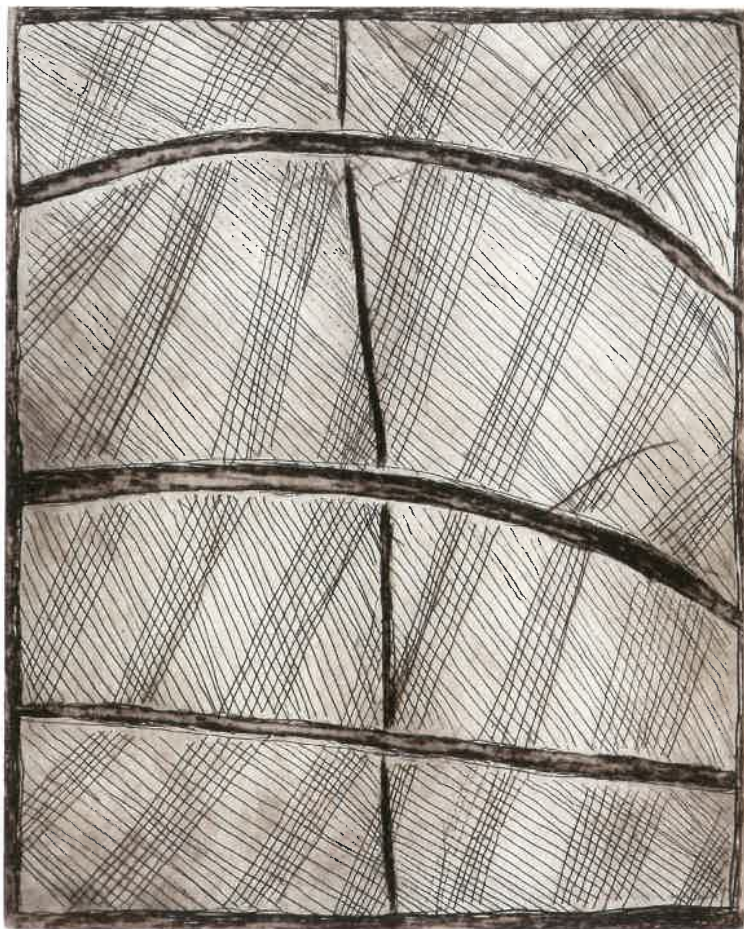
7 Besides at Utopia, Central Desert women had been making crafts and batiks for over three decades at Ernabella and Fregon, South Australia and had later been introduced to the acrylic medium at Yuendumu, Northern Territory. At Ernabella, the weavings produced by Pitjantjatjara women from the late 1940s developed into the making of batik by the

1970s. Yipati Kuyata (1946–c. 1992) and Angkuna Kulyuru (born 1943) were important early makers of batik, which was later taken up by other communities, most notably, at Utopia. See Wally Caruana, 'National Gallery of Australia, Canberra', Cochrane (ed), op. cit., p. 16.

8 Anne Brody, *Utopia women's paintings: the first works on canvas, a summer project 1988–89*, exhibition catalogue, The Robert Holmes à Court Collection, S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 14 April–21 May 1989.

9 Certificate of Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd for the painting by Walangkura, *Untitled* 2005, acrylic on linen, 91 x 61 cm.





ABOVE: Kay Lindjuwanga  
*Wak wak*  
etching  
24.7 x 19.6 cm (platemark)  
edition 7 of 20

Note on iconography<sup>1</sup>: The etching depicts a sacred site at Kurrurildul. The *rarrk* – or cross-hatching – represents the design for the crow totem ancestor, Djimarr<sup>2</sup> used in the Mardayin ceremony, a patrimoiety ceremony.<sup>3</sup> Djimarr exists in the form of a rock which is submerged at the bottom of Kurrurildul Creek. Both the rock itself and the surrounding area are considered sacred.

Charles Blackman  
Kay Lindjuwanga  
John Mawurndjul  
Fred Williams

Printmaking in contemporary art encompasses numerous techniques including etching, aquatint, drypoint, engraving, lithography, screenprinting, woodcut and linocut, among others. Contemporary artists who have

turned to the medium have benefited from the technical advances of our time and have been highly innovative in their approaches, for example, as techniques that utilise digital technology have become increasingly available and popular. In printmaking a metal plate, usually copper or zinc, a stone, a fabric mesh stretched on a frame, or a piece of wood or linoleum is imprinted with imagery and used to strike a certain number of prints on paper, called an edition. Each print is an original work of art as opposed to a copy, though unlike a painting or drawing, a print is not unique. Printmaking allows an artist to disseminate an image widely in multiples and a single print might be the result of multiple techniques. Some artists – including UBS collection artist Fred Williams – have used printmaking as the testing ground for the very development of their imagery which, in Williams's case, might go through as many as 16 stages, or 'states', until an image was resolved and he was satisfied.<sup>4</sup>

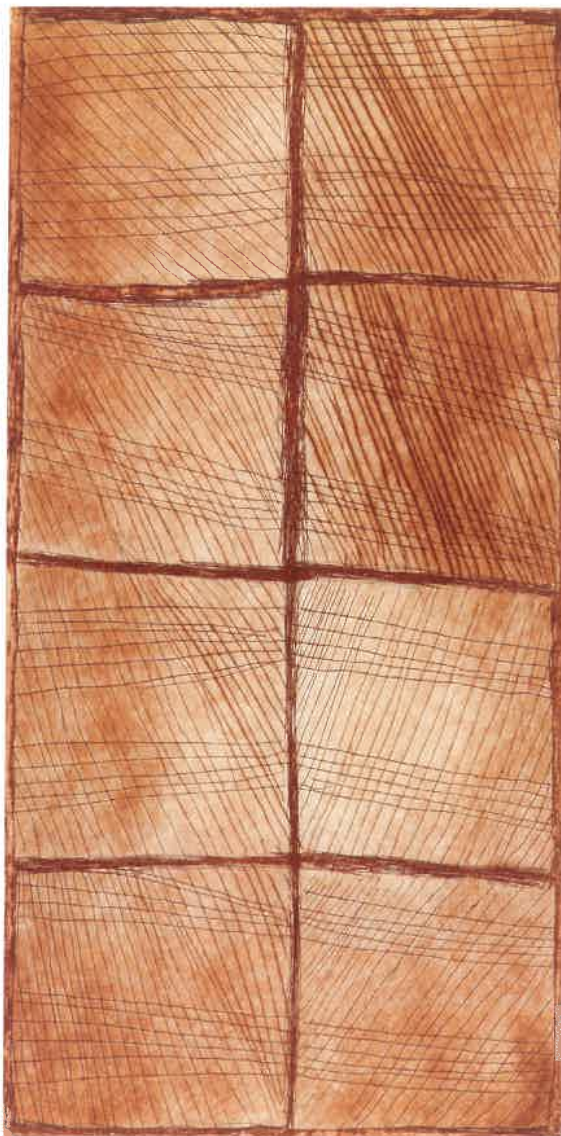
Printmaking as an art form experienced a resurgence of interest in Australia in the 1960s, due in large part to the presence of émigré artists who took up residence in Australia and began to share their technical expertise with local artists.<sup>5</sup> The input of artists from abroad was reinforced by Australian artists such as Williams who had lived abroad and returned to Australia with new experience and a fresh attitude to printmaking. Printmaking facilities were greatly improved, with Gallery A and the Crossley Workshop in Melbourne and Rudy Komon Gallery in Sydney leading the way in print publishing as

## PRINTMAKING IN THE UBS COLLECTION

100 well as in the introduction of more sophisticated techniques. The Print Council of Australia was established in 1966 with Williams as one of its founding members. Commercial printmaking workshops were instituted, with two of the most important of them – the Australian Print Workshop and Port Jackson Press – still operating today. Prints began to be seen as a major art form, competing for space with paintings, and *Australian print survey* – the first exhibition about printmaking to be mounted in Australia – was organised and circulated to every Australian state gallery in 1963–64. In this environment collecting works on paper became a viable activity for museums, universities and corporations as well as individual collectors.

Aboriginal printmaking is a more recent phenomenon, dating from the past 30 years. Surprisingly, given the existence of stenciled handprints found in rock art – which are among the oldest replicated images in human history – there has been no tradition of printmaking among Aboriginal communities.<sup>6</sup> But, as print curator Roger Butler has said, despite the lack of a tradition: 'many Aboriginal artists have nevertheless found printmaking a natural extension to their painting and sculpture'.<sup>7</sup>

The first artists in Arnhem Land to explore printmaking were Kuninjku artist David Milaybuma and Ganabingu artist John Bulunbulun who had travelled to workshops outside of Arnhem Land to learn the medium. It was not until 1996 that printmaking workshops were organised at Maningrida itself, enabling more artists, especially



ABOVE:  
Kay Lindjuwanga  
*Mardayin at Milimilngkan*  
etching  
32 x 16 cm (platemark)  
edition 6 of 20

Note on iconography: This etching depicts the power of Mardayin<sup>8</sup> at a billabong near Milimilngkan which is often depicted by Lindjuwanga and Mawurndjal. The billabong is located about 50 kilometres south of Maningrida in central north Arnhem Land.





ABOVE: John Mawurndjul  
*Mardayin at Dilebang*  
 etching  
 24.5 x 19.6 cm (platemark)  
 edition 9 of 20

Note on iconography: Dilebang is an important sacred site located along the cliff face of an enormous outcrop in the Kurulk clan estate. Dilebang has religious significance as a Death Adder and Rainbow Serpent site. The location encompasses a narrow ravine in the outcrop which runs down to a water spring which is surrounded by a thicket of palm trees and *Flagellaria indica* vines.

women, to explore the medium. Starting in 1997, through the Maningrida Women's Centre, female artists had the opportunity to attend printmaking workshops, and in 1999, Aboriginal artist Judy Watson (born 1959) organised the touring exhibition *Bush colour* with lithographs, etchings, screenprints and drawings by Maningrida-region women artists. Many of the women were weavers

and often employed images in their etchings of the local flora they used as weaving materials as well as the patterns of woven and fibre objects. Whereas male Kuninjku artists will address the subjects found in bark paintings and other traditional art forms in their etchings – land, clan totems and ancestral themes – female artists such as Kay Lindjuwanga are likely to experiment with new themes that are significant to them and incorporate images not depicted in bark painting. Women's etchings, unlike those of their male counterparts, tend to use innovative colour palettes and unusual types of infill also not found in bark painting.<sup>9</sup> This is all the more noteworthy given the fact that, historically, women in Arnhem Land had been denied access to art materials, even as art was being encouraged and becoming an integral part of the economies of Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land starting in the 1960s. The pattern was broken late in that decade by Yolngu leaders of central and eastern Arnhem Land who saw the need to teach their daughters to paint to ensure the preservation of Yolngu culture.<sup>10</sup>

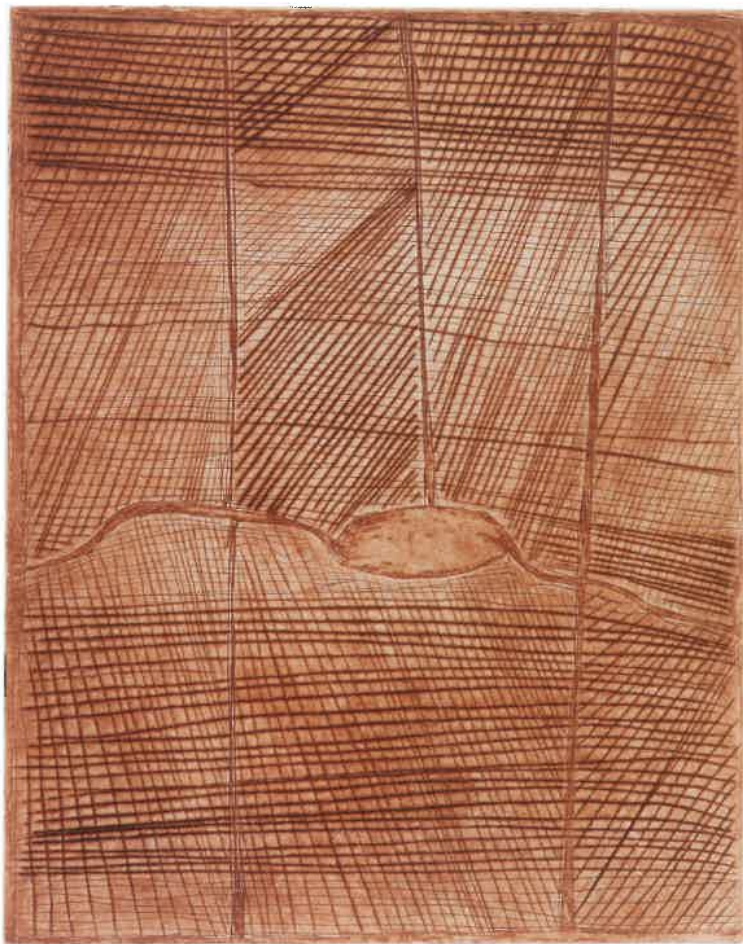
Kay Lindjuwanga hails from a family of highly acclaimed artists including her father, Peter Marrawanga (c. 1917–1987), her brothers Ivan Namirrki (born 1961) and Samuel Namunjda (born 1965) and her husband John Mawurndjul but, even so, among Kuninjku, it was not until the late 1990s that women started to paint independently rather than assisting their husbands and fathers. Around that time Mawurndjul taught Lindjuwanga and their daughter,

## PRINTMAKING IN THE UBS COLLECTION

**102** Anna Wurrkidj to paint, and James Iyuna taught his wife, Melba Gunjarrwanda, daughter of the artist Crusoe Kuningbal (c. 1922–1984), to carve and paint.<sup>11</sup> Times have changed to the extent that, Lindjuwanga is one of the leading women artists working for Maningrida Arts & Culture today.

John Mawurndjul's first works of art were small bark paintings he made at Mumeka under the guidance of his father-in-law, Peter Marralwanga and his brother, Jimmy Njiminjuma (born 1947). His early works conformed in subject matter to the main themes of bark painting of the western Arnhem Land region including Ngalyod, the Rainbow Serpent; other Ancestral Beings; and a range of lesser Spirit Beings such as Namarrkon the Lightning Spirit, Mimih Rock Spirits and Yawk Yawk Mermaid Spirits.<sup>12</sup> The bark medium of Arnhem Land owes its origins to sketches on bark shelters, rock art and to painting on hollow log coffins, ceremonial objects and the body. Its design elements 'encode' complex meanings that have developed over a period of 50,000 years of Aboriginal occupation before white colonisation.<sup>13</sup> Mawurndjul first began to work independently on larger, more complex barks in the 1980s when many artists turned to making big barks in response to new information and opportunities, including a rock art conference held in Darwin in 1988, and to commissions that were being offered for the first time by the National Gallery of Victoria and collector John Kluge, among others.<sup>14</sup>

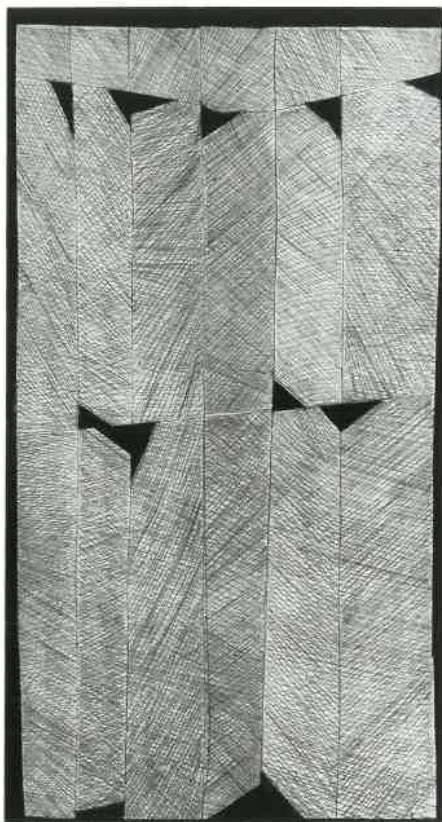
The *rarrk* – or cross-hatching technique used in bark paintings – also appears in etchings by



Mawurndjul and Lindjuwanga. The cross-hatching technique was originally derived from the infilling technique of cave paintings of the western Kimberley region, where the forms of living things, spirit beings and objects had been painted against a plain ground and then filled in. The technique was first translated to bark painting in the 1950s–60s by

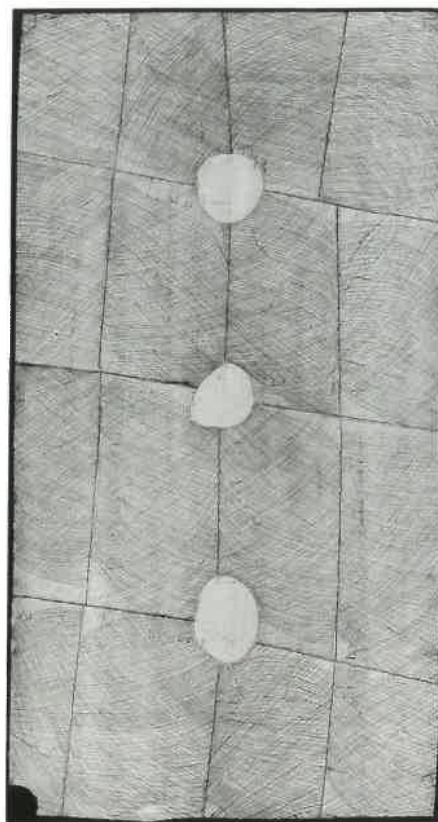
ABOVE:  
John Mawurndjul  
*Wak wak*  
etching  
24.9 x 19.6 cm (platemark)  
edition 9 of 20





ABOVE LEFT:  
 John Mawurndjul  
*Mardayin design 2003*  
 etching  
 64 x 34.5 cm (platemark)  
 edition 2 of 30

Note on iconography: The etching refers to a site at Mumeka, which is an outstation of the Mawurndjul's clan estate in the Mann River region. The meaning of much of the iconography of this etching is not for public release.



ABOVE RIGHT:  
 John Mawurndjul  
*Mardayin at Milimilngkan 2004*  
 etching  
 64.6 x 34.3 cm (platemark)  
 edition 7 of 30

Note on iconography: The circles in the etching represent the water springs on the site, which are surrounded by water pandanus.

the artist Yirawala (1903–1976, Kunwinjku). Mawurndjul's brother, Jimmy Njiminjuma developed a style of *rarrk* in bark paintings in which, by the late 1990s, figuration had become entirely subsumed to the geometric patterns of *rarrk*. Such works led the way for Mawurndjul to develop his own highly personal form of *rarrk*, characterised by masses of cross-hatching floating within a loosely-drawn grid and the achievement of optical effects through the use of angles that are

exceedingly acute. The full trajectory of the development from figuration to abstraction in Kuninjku art can be seen in Mawurndjul's barks and etchings which, like abstract art, aim to reveal the innermost essence of things through the all-over treatment of the surface with *rarrk*.<sup>15</sup>

Two of the etchings by Mawurndjul and Lindjuwanga in the UBS collection are entitled *Wak wak*, for Djimarr, the crow ancestor. *Mardayin* – the subject of three etchings by Mawurndjul and one by Lindjuwanga – is the term for

# PRINTMAKING IN THE UBS COLLECTION

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ABOVE LEFT: Charles Blackman  
*Alice's Shadow and friend*  
lithograph  
62 x 40 cm  
edition 45 of 90

ABOVE RIGHT: Charles Blackman  
*Bouquet orange*  
Lithograph  
36 x 35 cm  
artist's proof



a secret and sacred ceremony – now rarely conducted – associated with the Duwa and Yirridjdja patrimoieties of the Kuningku people. Mumeka and Milmilngkan are locations for the Mardayin ceremony, which was a theme often painted by Mawurndjul's father. The Mardayin ceremony focuses both on the spiritual relationships among the Kuningku people as well as on the relationship between them and their ancestral lands and the creator beings who they believe

made their lands. In the ceremony initiates are painted with designs said to have been made by the creator beings. The designs represent *djang* which are important sacred sites in the country of their clan.

Aboriginal art of Arnhem Land remained little known beyond its immediate communal audience well into the 20th century. Prior to the contact with *balanda* (non-Aboriginal people), the main locus of Aboriginal

art was the particular ceremony for which it was 'made to be seen and used by members of a specific cultural group and then erased and left to the elements'.<sup>16</sup> Bark paintings and etchings that make it to the marketplace today represent the 'deliberate revelation' of ancestral designs that were originally made in closed ceremonial contexts.<sup>17</sup> 'We want non-Aboriginal people to understand our sacred places or *djang* ... to know the names of all these places such as Kubumi, Dilebang, Kurruldul and Milmingkan and to know about our Dreamings.'<sup>18</sup> Mardayin designs are not necessarily considered secret, since initiates wear them in public contexts. But some information may still be restricted: 'We paint the public aspects of the Mardayin ceremony, but there are also "inside" things.'<sup>19</sup>

**Charles Blackman** first took up Lewis Carroll's extraordinary tale of *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* in his art at the age of 28. His first wife, Barbara Patterson was losing her sight and the two listened to the story in a 'talking book' version in 1956. Within the next 12 months Blackman produced 46 paintings on the theme drawing on the details of Carroll's story and his own personal life. The jumbled realities and frustrations of Alice's story paralleled Barbara's as her eyesight worsened, resulting in 'challenging images that are simultaneously amusing and disquieting'.<sup>20</sup>

Blackman rendered schoolgirls in his art both before and after embarking on the *Alice* series. His girl-types are 'raccoon-eyed ... part Modigliani, part Picasso ... the naïve art that passed for modernism in the 1940s and

50s'.<sup>21</sup> Forty-four of the 46 paintings of the *Alice in Wonderland* theme were exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2006, prompting a younger critic to note a 'seething psychological undercurrent of desire' in Blackman's depictions of Alice which 'is part of [their] contemporary appeal'.<sup>22</sup> While many commentators have considered the extent of his attention to be an obsession, few have seen anything unacceptably prurient about it, emphasising instead the artist's unique ability to capture the vulnerability of children.

At the venerable age of 78, Blackman lives in Sydney and still draws, surrounded by etchings, being reputedly 'too poor to own a [bona fide] Blackman painting'.<sup>23</sup>

**Fred Williams** is represented in the UBS collection with four lithographs from his last major print series which was published as a portfolio of 12 prints by the Druckma Press, Melbourne, in 1978. The suite encompasses most of the major landscape themes that were of interest to the artist at the time, including Werribee Gorge and subjects from his late series of paintings of waterfalls. The composition of the UBS print *Lal-Lal Falls*, like that of the waterfall paintings, had been informed by Williams's renewed interest in Chinese art following his visit to China in 1976. The Druckma lithographs were printed by John Robinson (born 1940), a painter and printmaker who first started to work with Williams in 1974, pulling the prints for the *Adelaide Festival Theatre Mural* etchings on Williams's

home press in Hawthorn, Victoria. Williams had only ever pulled prints himself and the decision to engage Robinson was long in coming and difficult to make. Williams was reportedly happy with the results and the relationship became a fruitful one for both artists.<sup>24</sup>

As a young artist Williams sought exposure to a broader cultural offering than what was available in Melbourne at the time and left for London in 1951. In 1954 he enrolled at the Central School of Arts and Crafts to learn etching and made 100 plates over the next two years. Etching soon became the driving force in the development of his art, as indicated by the great number of gouaches and paintings made after his etchings throughout his career.<sup>25</sup> Through printmaking, he identified his preferences for working in series and for maintaining a pace that allowed for review. He took many months to complete his paintings and loved the endless potential for transformation of an image that was possible in printmaking.

Williams returned to Australia in 1957 and immediately turned his attention to rendering the landscape in the works for which he became so well-known. On the way home, following his very first sighting of Australia at Fremantle, Western Australia, he told his friend, the painter, John Brack that he would concentrate on landscape. Brack was skeptical but Williams's no-nonsense, laconic reply was a: 'Well it's just what I'm going to do.'<sup>26</sup> His debt to Cézanne is evident in the Mittagong paintings, his first Australian works, in which space is modelled cubistically and the picture





ABOVE (left to right):  
Fred Williams  
*Acacias* 1976–78  
lithograph  
69 x 50 cm (platemark)  
edition 38 of 50

*Wild Dog Creek I* 1976–78  
lithograph  
65 x 49 cm (platemark)  
edition 38 of 50

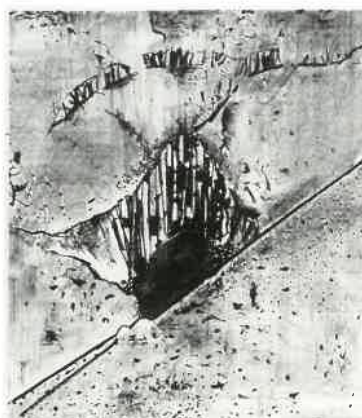
*Dry creek bed* 1976–78  
lithograph  
69 x 50 cm (platemark)  
edition 38 of 50

*Lal-Lal Falls* 1976–78  
lithograph  
57 x 50 cm (platemark)  
edition 38 of 50  
all printed by Druckma Press, Melbourne

plane is tilted forward. In the etchings for the series he reduced the detail and simplified the motif, creating a much more rigorous form of abstraction than he achieved in the paintings. In both his paintings and prints he liked to consider a composition from every possible angle, often inserting a horizon line where it didn't exist. He used a language of strokes and curves in the prints, to describe the monotony and lack of a fixed focal point that he saw as the defining characteristics of the Australian landscape.<sup>27</sup>

In 1968 curator James Mollison published the catalogue raisonné of Williams's prints, the first such publication on any artist in Australia. Williams received many accolades in the last years of his life including appointment in 1972 to the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board which handled acquisitions for the National Gallery of Australia (which Mollison directed) following its

formation. Williams died of cancer in 1982 at the age of 55. In 2003 his widow Lyn Williams donated some 70 etchings and nine major drawings, gouaches and watercolours in his memory to the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. In acknowledging this gift, director Neil MacGregor recalled that Williams had studied etchings by Goya and Rembrandt in the Museum's collection during his years in London. 'I believe that Fred Williams would be pleased to know that his works will now join Rembrandt's and Goya's in the Print Room of the British Museum, to be studied and enjoyed by those who, like him, come here to look at great art at close quarters'.<sup>28</sup>



1 Notes on iconography from certificates of Maningrida Arts & Culture, Maningrida, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory.

2 Wak wak means 'crow' in Bininj Kunwok, the main lingua franca of western Arnhem Land. See 'Glossary', *Crossing country: the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2004, p. 233.

3 Moiety is an anthropological term for the division of society and natural phenomena into two halves, as in the Duwa and Yirridjdja patrilineal moieties of Arnhem Land, *ibid.*

4 Williams's *Echuca landscape*, 1963 went through 16 states over two years. Irena Zdanowicz, 'Fred Williams', *Fred Williams: an Australian vision*, The British Museum Press, London 2003, p. 23.

5 For history of printmaking in Australia see Roger Butler, 'Prints: an aspect of the UTS collection', *Points of view/the University of Technology Sydney art collection*, Ewen McDonald (ed), UTS, Sydney 2002, pp. 31–39.

6 Stephen Coppel, 'Collecting Australian prints at the British Museum', *Fred Williams: an Australian vision*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

7 Roger Butler, essay accompanying the print portfolio *Crossroads*, published by 21C Pty Ltd, Sydney 1999. The portfolio included prints by Johnny Bulunbulun, Robert Cole, Kitty Kantilla, Mick Kubarku, Queenie McKenzie, Ada Bird Petyarre, Gloria Petyarre, Ginger Riley, Rover Thomas,

Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula and Judy Watson.

8 Mardayin is discussed in Luke Taylor, 'Fire in the water: inspiration from country', *Crossing country*, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

9 For history of Aboriginal printmaking see Apolline Kohen, 'Kuninju women and the power of making art', *Crossing country*, *ibid.*, p. 164.

10 Judith Ryan, 'Tradition and transformation: ochre art forms of Arnhem Land', *Land Marks*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2006, p. 100.

11 *ibid.*

12 Margie West, 'Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory', Susan Cochrane (ed), *Aboriginal art collections*, Craftsman House, Sydney 2001, p. 35.

13 Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

14 *ibid.*, p. 101. John Kluge was a German-born American television industry entrepreneur who sold his interest in the Metromedia television studios to 20th Century Fox in 1986 for a reported US\$4 billion. Kluge began collecting Aboriginal art in 1988. In 1997 The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal art collection of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, came into being through his gift of the collection and archives of the deceased Professor Edward L. Ruhe of Lawrence, Kansas.

15 *ibid.*, p. 103.

16 *ibid.*, p. 97.

17 *ibid.*, p. 98.

18 Mick Kubarku quoted in Paul S. C. Taçon and Murray Garde, 'Kun-wardde Bim, rock art from western and central Arnhem Land', *Rainbow sugarbag and moon: two artists of the stone country*, Bardayal Nadjamerrek and Mick Kubarku, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin 1995, reprinted Ryan, *ibid.*, p. 105, note 5.

19 John Mawurndjul, 'I'm a chemist man, myself', *Crossing country*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

20 Internet press release for the exhibition, Charles Blackman: Alice in Wonderland, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 11 Aug–15 Oct 2006, [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/blackman/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/blackman/) (accessed April 2006).

21 Robert Nelson, 'Charles Blackman', *The Age*, 23 Aug 2006, [www.theage.com.au/news/arts-reviews/charles-blackman/2006/08/23/1156012592129.html](http://www.theage.com.au/news/arts-reviews/charles-blackman/2006/08/23/1156012592129.html) (accessed April 2006).

22 *ibid.*

23 Unidentified author, 'Blackman in Wonderland', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 May 2004, [www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/05/03/1083436536748.html?from=storyrhs](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/05/03/1083436536748.html?from=storyrhs) (accessed April 2006).

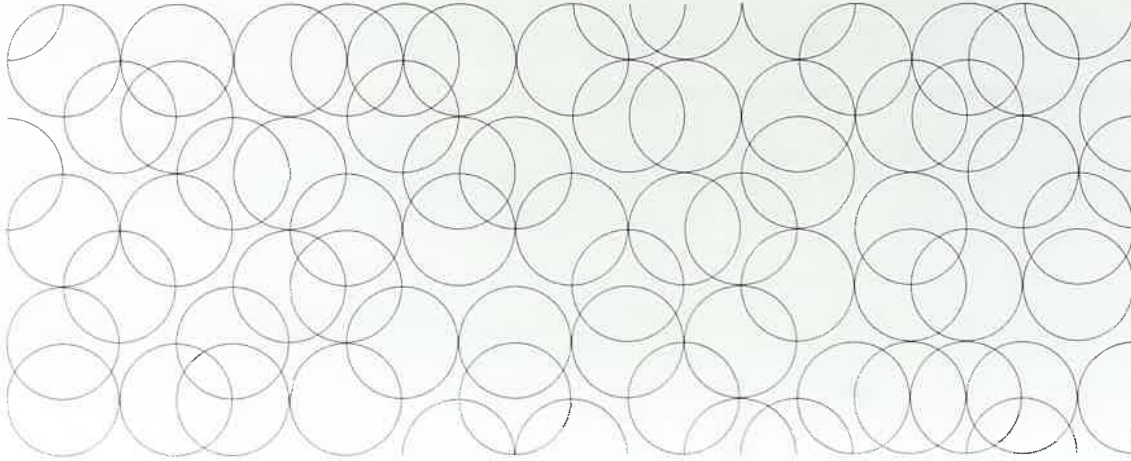
24 Irena Zdanowicz, *Fred Williams: an Australian vision*, *op. cit.* p. 33 and quotes from *Diary of Fred Williams*, p. 41, notes 92 and 93. Williams began to keep a diary in 1963.

25 *ibid.*, p. 15.

26 *ibid.*, p. 9.

27 An impression that was reinforced in 1962 when he began to visit the You Yangs – an outcrop of granite hills 55 kilometres southwest of Melbourne: *ibid.*, p. 24.

28 Neil MacGregor, 'Preface', *Fred Williams: an Australian vision*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.



*Composition with circles 4* 2004  
inkjet on paper  
56 x 252 cm (image size)  
70 x 262 cm (sheet size)  
edition 17 of 25

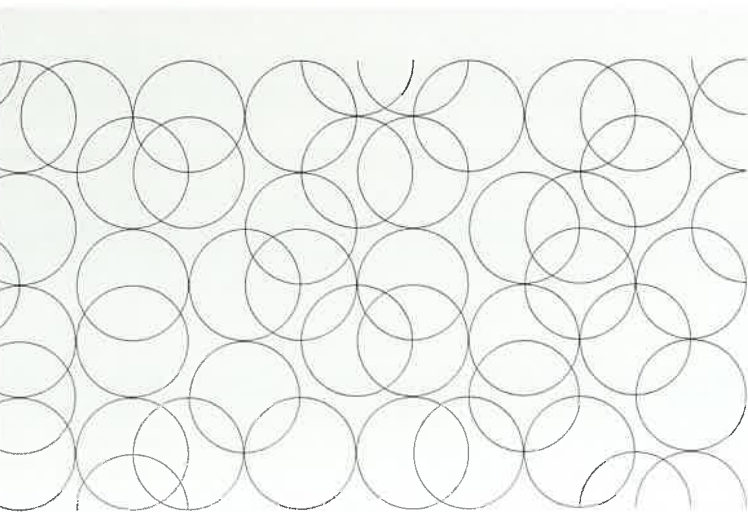
© 2007 Bridget Riley. All rights reserved.  
Courtesy Karsten Schubert, London

*... even if at first glance it may appear as though it is in the colour that the expressive power lies, it is really in the rhythm that its full extent is unleashed and controlled ...* Bridget Riley 1990<sup>1</sup>

*Composition with circles 4* in the UBS Melbourne collection is an inkjet print version of Bridget Riley's monumental, site-specific wall drawing of the same title created especially for her 2005 exhibition at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art.<sup>2</sup> Earlier wall drawings were made at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1998; Dia Center for the Arts, New York in 2000; and Tate Gallery, London in 2003. The wall drawing in Sydney, therefore, was made relatively early on in Riley's series of such site-specific projects.

The Sydney wall drawing was made in acrylic and, like all of Riley's work of the past four decades, was executed by assistants. The wall drawings are comprised of interlocking and overlapping transparent circles painted with a fine, narrow line. As New York-based curator Lynne Cooke has enumerated, there are three key pictorial elements in these large-scale wall drawings – the shifts of the circles both across the wall and back and forth within a shallow space; the brief vertical alignments that develop across the wall as the arcs appear to interlink; and the visual flickers that erupt whenever two lines meet.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to creating the first wall drawing for Bern, Riley had undertaken intensive study of the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) which culminated in an exhibition she co-curated for the Tate Gallery in 1997. In an essay for the catalogue, Riley wrote about Mondrian's penchant for depicting trees – and with



exact dimensions of the original. As unconventional as this purchase may at first appear, there are precedents for the ownership of similar ephemeral works – for instance, the pioneering site-specific works by New York artist Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) completed in the 1960s.<sup>6</sup>

her first wall drawing in mind, her words are revealing of what she was about to borrow from him:

*From very early on there seems to have been a special attraction to trees and to the pictorial problem of how branches, sky, foliage or blossom interact and interpenetrate. Being especially a subject that cannot be treated 'realistically', the tree offers a marvelous pretext for the fabrication of a rhythmic structure of shallow recessions and advances that have little or nothing to do with the void and solid of the original motif.<sup>4</sup>*

In addition to her ongoing preoccupation with the work of Mondrian and Matisse, Riley was further influenced at this time by a re-engagement with the paintings of Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) and the Italian renaissance painter, Andrea Mantegna (c. 1431–1506). She was especially struck by the means by which each artist achieved pictorial rhythm across a flat surface, writing in a letter to Lynne Cooke, that she had studied Pollock's use of rhythm in Hans Namuth's film sequences of the artist at work: 'They showed him building his rhythm (albeit gesturally) by working across and along the canvas. This seemed to me to reveal, perhaps, something of the intrinsic nature of pictorial rhythm. Is it ... most purely expressed in movements that cross the picture plane?'<sup>15</sup>

The wall drawing at the MCA, Sydney, was painted out following the exhibition but the work was purchased by businessman and art collector Kerry Stokes, whose ownership gives him the right to have the drawing made anew in a different location, as long as it is made by Riley's crew and on a wall of the

1 An unpublished text by Riley on Henri Matisse's *The Dance* (dated Sept 1990), cited in Lynne Cooke, 'Around and about composition with circles 2', *Bridget Riley: reconnaissance*, exhibition catalogue, Dia Center for the Arts, New York 2000, p. 52, note 9.

2 *Composition with circles 4* 2004, acrylic on plaster wall, 1671.2 x 392.2 cm, Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.

3 Cooke, op. cit., pp. 51, 57.

4 Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 53 and note 10.

5 Bridget Riley in a letter to Lynne Cooke, 12 Dec 2000 in Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 56 and notes 13 and 14.

6 LeWitt is represented by two permanent wall drawings in Sydney, commissioned in 2003 by the architectural firm of Harry Seidler and Associates for Australia Square and by private collector John Kaidor for his home.

**110** *Ascent* 1993–2006  
hot zinc-coated and painted steel  
113 x 60 x 21 cm

*You carved away all day working with points and as they got blunt ... you chucked them into an empty bag and ... took them to the blacksmith's and hammered them out and retempered them. That was my first experience of working with steel ...* Paul Selwood 2006<sup>1</sup>

Selwood worked in marble as a young artist in Greece in 1965, discovering steel through visits to the blacksmith's shop as he describes in the quote above. From Greece he moved to London in 1966 and was offered a technical assistantship to Bernard Meadows, professor of sculpture at the Royal College of Art. Selwood's first sculptures in steel followed soon after, made from small pieces welded together bit by bit. Since those early days, the welded sculptures of American David Smith (1906–1965) have been an ongoing source of inspiration – long after other influences have faded.<sup>2</sup>

Selwood returned to Australia in 1971 and took up residence in Wollombi in rural New South Wales. Soon his sculptures began to reflect the impact of the landscape surrounding his home and studio. Early sculptures, for example, were developed from his observations of the sun on the surface of rocks, and the darkness of a cave that was just adjacent to them which he translated into works that juxtapose positive and negative space. In other, larger works such as *Ascent* in the UBS Melbourne collection, the profiles of rock forms and hills were cut out of steel and reassembled into new forms which Selwood thinks of as sculptural 'remakes' of the landscape – a synthesis of materials and a sense of place.

Despite the resonance of the Wollombi landscape, Selwood's art is not bound to the bush alone. On a recent trip to Italy, for example, he became entranced by the depiction of architecture in the fresco paintings of the Venetian quattrocento. In 2005–06 he made a series of sculptures based on the various things he had observed, ranging from the depiction of a stair in perspective, to the architecture of the Doges Palace and Italian towns.

In many ways *Ascent* relates to the late painted sculptures of David Smith. While Smith painted a large number of his sculptures throughout his career, it is the late works of 1960–64 that represent the culmination of his long meditation on the subject of colour in sculpture.<sup>3</sup> Selwood's debt to Smith can be seen in a sculpture like *Gondola II* (1964), which is constructed of flat, 'billboard-like' surfaces painted in large areas of black and off-white.<sup>4</sup> Smith's application of paint was direct and unfussy. Similarly, with *Ascent*, Selwood succeeds in personalising his colour. He evokes in his work, the complexity of greens and the hundreds of species of eucalypts alone, to be found in the Australian bush.

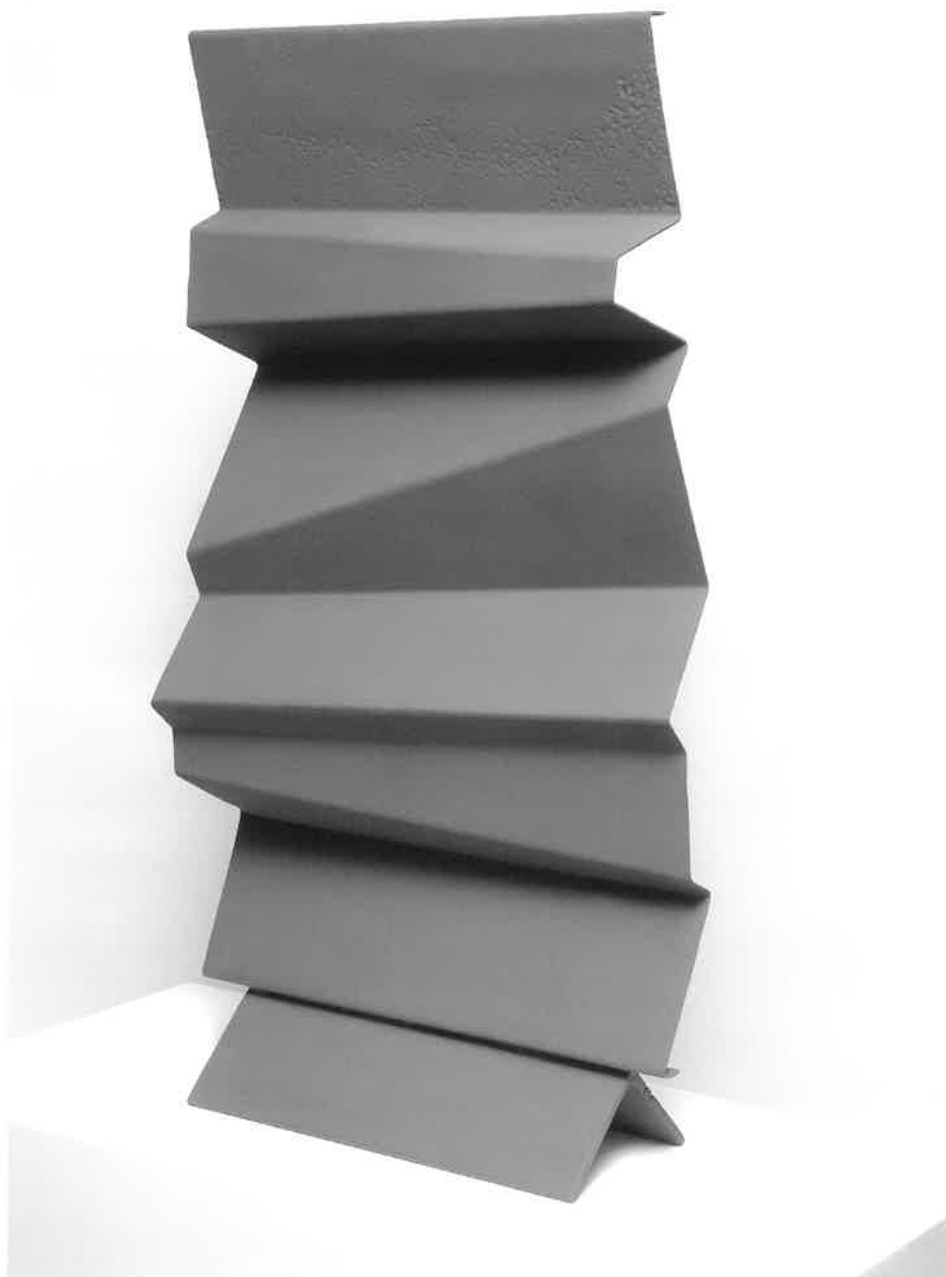
<sup>1</sup> Paul Selwood in an online interview with Harvey Shields, *Seriousart.com*, May 2006, [www.seriousart.org/archive/seiwood\\_interview.html](http://www.seriousart.org/archive/seiwood_interview.html) (accessed April 2007).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Flynn, introduction, *Painted steel: the late work of David Smith*, exhibition catalogue, Gagosian Gallery, New York 1998, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38–41.





## JAN SENBERGS

**112** LEFT:  
*Smelters' landscape no 2* 1983  
oil on canvas  
122 x 153 cm

RIGHT:  
*Scrubcutter* 1986  
oil on canvas  
153 x 183 cm



*Largely self-taught, Senbergs has formulated an expressive style that is highly idiosyncratic and capable of great social and political comment. His subjects range from the dramatic landscapes and cityscapes of Port Melbourne, the mines of Mt Lyell in Tasmania, the Antarctic, to maverick outsider figures in history, such as William Buckley, Wilbraham Liardet and Carsten Borchgrevink. His distorted, map-like views of Melbourne and Sydney are resonant and original images of Australia.<sup>1</sup>*

Latvian-born, Senbergs arrived in Australia by ship at Port Melbourne in 1950 with his mother and sisters. He was aged 10; his father had been killed and the family was one among the thousands of refugees fleeing the European war. Working-class Melbourne had a great impact on the self-taught Senbergs who came late to art having learned some basics while working for a time at a screenprinting factory. Despite the typical autodidact rejection of fashionable 'isms', recognition soon came to Senbergs from the Melbourne art community. In a recent monograph *Voyage and landfall: the art of Jan Senbergs*, the author Patrick McCaughey declares that Senbergs, unbeknown to most, has made a great contribution to Australian art.<sup>2</sup> He outlines the extraordinary stages that Senbergs grew through – from the 'terrible dystopia' that was Australia in the 1960s to a full engagement with city life in the 1980s, beginning with his great series based on Port Liardet. The monograph uncovers an underlying pattern in Senbergs's life and art between the search for experience – the voyages – and its rendering in the studio – the landfalls.



where he has visited or lived, and the work produced, are intimately connected. If we want to know who and where we are, then (echoing the words of one writer) we have no need to read maps, we should just look at the work of Jan Senbergs.<sup>4</sup>

McCaughey considers Senbergs as one artist who with fresh eyes, first looked critically at the Australian landscape and then applied this vision to the city. Senbergs himself admits to an enduring fascination with maps: 'I've always had a strange kind of interest in cartography, going right back to the old maps of the world and medieval town maps and Mexican Aztec maps of villages and so on.'<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, Senbergs paintings can be read as both geographical and sociopolitical mappings of the 1990s and encapsulations of our contemporary industrial condition.

A keen observer of industrial landscapes – sites that often reveal environmental devastation – Senbergs often incorporates into these worlds an anti-war message as well. It was during the 1960s and 70s that he gained critical acclaim as a printmaker for his striking, surreal screenprints of factories and ports and recently he has returned to printmaking, using lithography and etching, and continuing to produce uncompromising commentaries on the landscape and the polluting, industrial elements imposed upon it. In these works, the etched line is both sensitive and strident: similarly, in paintings like *Smelters' landscape no 2* (1983) and *Scrubcutter* (1986), the depiction is harsh – the once pristine environment now contaminated by the steely, sharp, bleached and cluttered forms of human presence.

In many ways, Senbergs's paintings tell a profound Australian story: the places

1 Press release, Melbourne University Press, [www.mup.unimelb.edu.au/catalogue/0-522-857.html](http://www.mup.unimelb.edu.au/catalogue/0-522-857.html) (accessed April 2007).

2 Patrick McCaughey, *Voyage and landfall: the art of Jan Senbergs*, Miegunyah Imprint, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 2006.

3 Rosalie Higson, 'An artist's life with his critic', *The Australian*, 24 March 2006, p. 14.

4 The original quote was 'Never mind using the Melway, just follow Melbourne artist Jan Senbergs', Alison Barclay, *The Herald Sun*, Melbourne, 17 April 2005.

## SITE-SPECIFIC PHOTOGRAPHIC WALL WORKS, UBS MELBOURNE

### 114 Site-specific photographic wall works, UBS Melbourne: photographic panels by Max Dupain, Bill Henson, Vanila Netto, Patricia Piccinini

Photography in Australia is a developing and popular form of expression among artists who often use it in conjunction with other forms of art – painting, drawing, sculpture, and projection. No artist today operates in a vacuum and, not surprisingly, photography as a medium of contemporary art has emerged and developed simultaneously here and elsewhere around the world. In our media-saturated environment, images are easily circulated and connections quick to be made between, for example, the art of Bill Henson and Vanila Netto on the one hand, and American artists like Philip-Lorca diCorcia (born 1951) and Bruce Nauman (born 1941), on the other. Contemporary Australian photography is represented in the UBS collection through the work of Bill Culbert, Max Dupain, Bill Henson, Vanila Netto and Patricia Piccinini. In Melbourne five of the images by these artists were realised in the form of full-height photographic light panels that are set into the walls. The panels were developed for tight spaces on busy floors as a means of carrying the art beyond the public areas and into the working sections of the office.

*I find that my whole life, if it's going to be of any consequence in photography, has to be devoted to that place where I have been born, reared and worked, thought,*



*philosophised to the best of my ability. And that's all I need.*  
Max Dupain<sup>1</sup>

*I'm always wandering around thinking about pictures. The action of someone turning their head in a crowd can bring a recognition of some kind ... But always the subject is a step ahead of you, it's never entirely as you might expect. It's always ahead of your thoughts, always just disappearing around the corner.*  
Bill Henson 2005<sup>2</sup>

ABOVE: Max Dupain  
*Girls on beach, Melbourne 1946*  
photograph interleaved between two sheets of toughened glass  
from digital file of original black-and-white negative

OPPOSITE: Max Dupain  
*Melbourne in the rain (Flinders Street Station) 1946*  
photograph interleaved between two sheets of toughened glass  
from digital file of original black-and-white negative



Max Dupain was a hard-working professional photographer who accumulated an enormous store of negatives of the subjects he found for his lens at home in Australia. He travelled overseas only twice in his lifetime – in 1978 and 1980 – to photograph the Australian Embassy buildings in Paris and Bangkok, by architects Harry Seidler (1923–2006) and Ken Woolley (born 1933). He was aware that his work reflected the relative ease of existence in modern-day Australia and even titled a series

of works *Australia* (1986), about which he commented:

*... the viewer will not find ... melodramatic actions or situations where the power of human survival is pushed beyond its normal limits. Moments of agony are out ... In fact, looking back on so much work, I have to admit that there is a certain serenity ... which probably reflects the rather wonderful life I have enjoyed as an Australian, in Australia.<sup>3</sup>*

He took the majority of his photographs in Sydney, his hometown,

but was commissioned by the Department of Information in 1944–47 to travel the country documenting Australian life in images the department hoped would lure migrants to Australia. His most famous image from this time is *The meat queue* (1946), shot at a butcher's shop in Pitt Street, Sydney. The two photographs in the UBS collection were part of a series of 20 he took in Melbourne as part of this assignment in the same year.

In the 1930s and 40s, Dupain led the way in the development of an Australian modernist vision, using bold form and innovative compositions to break from the sentimentality of earlier 20th-century practitioners. His first architectural commissions came in the 1950s; he shared Seidler's belief in modernism, and was well-suited to capture and record the architect's achievements. Dupain had first been attracted to modernism in the late 1920s through exposure to the New Photography in German and American magazines. Photographers internationally, such as Man Ray (1890–1976), László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946), George Hoyningen-Huene (1900–1968), Walker Evans (1903–1975) and Bill Brandt (1904–1983), were using a variety of approaches and techniques – including asymmetrical, close-up, and bird's-eye views – to create a new way of recording the world. Dupain worked exclusively in black-and-white photography, as did a majority of the international photographers, convinced that 'that's where the depth [was], the meat'.<sup>4</sup> He shared their commitment to pure form and would later say he hoped



**116** that viewers of his work would look beyond its figurative subject matter, in order to see the beauty of the photograph as a photograph.<sup>5</sup> He believed that 'Great art [was] ... impersonal'.<sup>6</sup>

He often chose to shoot a scene from a great height, as he has in the site-specific wall work for the UBS Melbourne office, aptly titled *Melbourne in the rain*. He liked the clarity of the patterns below that would emerge from a bird's-eye view. In this view of Flinders Street, the city has been completely transformed through rain. The wetness of the street reads as a dramatic diagonal form cutting through the centre of the image. And because of the rain, an exciting new factor – reflectivity – has been added to the basic visual equation, making the street function like some funhouse mirror arcade in which every form is doubled or distorted.

Dupain may have been hard-working but he was also well-aware of the 'recuperation of body and mind' to be gained through visits to the beach – one of his favourite themes – once saying that the best work was always done on holidays.<sup>7</sup> The beach allowed for the play of light and shadow on sand which fascinated the abstractionist in him. It also permitted him to let go and leave all to luck and chance. He said of *Nuns on Newport Beach* (1960) that he had considered himself lucky, 'to come across this scene while sunbaking ... with my faithful Rolleiflex close to the chest'.<sup>8</sup> It is revealing to compare *Nuns* to *Girls on a beach, Melbourne* in the UBS collection. Both photographs capture a trio of women who are overdressed for the beach –



the nuns in habits, the girls in jumpers and below-the-knee skirts. In each, the foreground plane is tilted upwards, increasing our feeling of proximity with the subjects – and demonstrating Dupain's characteristic inventiveness of composition. In both photographs the face of the figure at the left is most visible, distinguished from the others by the simple action of looking beyond the frame. That action creates a moment of instant connection between us, as viewers, and Dupain – the man behind the lens – reminding us of uniqueness and individuality despite the similarity of the scenes.

ABOVE: Bill Henson  
*Untitled* 1982  
photograph interleaved between 2 sheets of toughened glass  
from digital file of original C-type photograph  
97.5 x 122.2 cm, edition 1 of 10

OPPOSITE: Patricia Piccinini  
*Aqueous* 2003  
photograph interleaved between 2 sheets of toughened glass  
from digital file of original C-type photograph  
50 x 33.5 cm, edition 9 of 30

Where Dupain might have manipulated a negative in the darkroom to maximise a particular effect, he avoided staging his pictures. **Bill Henson's** work, on the other hand, relies entirely on staging. The *Untitled* work at UBS is one of the early realisations in colour of a series of 220 images that were initially shot in black-and-white in 1980–82. The subject is a crowd, photographed in such a way that one has the feeling of being within the scene. Faces and bodies seem to coexist in an ambiguous proximity as is the case in any day-to-day crowded situation. In the photograph, the faces are like masks, and the crowd like a 'silent forest of people'.<sup>9</sup>

Henson has been making large-scale C-prints since he began the *Paris Opera project* in 1991 that have become increasingly more self-consciously painterly and reliant on chiaroscuro – that renaissance painterly quality of modelling form through subtle gradations of light and dark. In 2003 the book *Lux et nox* presented a selection of such images shot in areas around Melbourne in which an apparently impenetrable darkness is cut by the kind of chilling and invasive electric light found in suburban industrial estates by night. Critics have noted that Henson's photographs operate by 'charging' the distance between the viewer and the image, a state which Henson believes comes 'not so much from love, but longing – the sense of something powerfully apprehended but not fully known or understood'.<sup>10</sup>



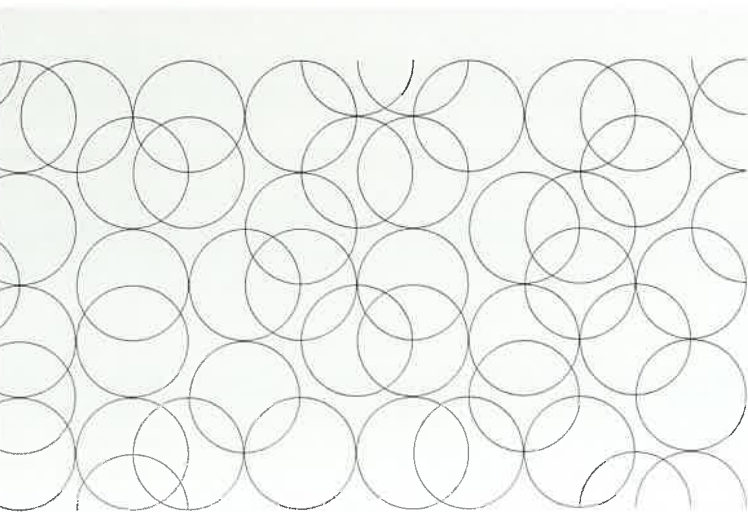
## SITE-SPECIFIC PHOTOGRAPHIC WALL WORKS, UBS MELBOURNE

**118** The subject of Patricia Piccinini's *Aqueous* is an adolescent girl shown sinking in the open sea. The girl is the central character of the encyclopedic series *Sandman* (2002). In earlier sequences of the *Sandman* video, the girl swims and then struggles in turbulent waters and, as she lets go, as here, her face is transformed and she becomes calm. The girl also appears in photographs with her boyfriend and his panel van – the iconic 'Sandman' car marketed in Australia in the late 1970s by General Motors Holden – in an ordinary Australian town. (Piccinini spent one Easter at the Van Nationals in Wodonga, Victoria, while doing research for the *Sandman* work.) The work blurs the line between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary', since the girl in the photographic panel at UBS is equipped with vestigial branchial arches – a birth defect in which structures present in every embryo remain expressed on the neck. In Piccinini's world of ideas, these gill-like forms link the girl back through evolutionary time to the earliest fish-like creatures to emerge from the sea. The melancholy of adolescence is the prevailing theme, as the girl with gills returns to the sea when – like most adolescents – she perceives she has no place in the order of things. Piccinini sees this work as dark, but not hopeless: 'There is always the possibility that the girl is not a throwback, but something new, or just different. There is always the possibility that she will not drown – that she'll keep swimming until she finds something better.'<sup>11</sup>



Vanila Netto's photographs are documents of actions she devises and directs, casting people from her immediate circle as the actors in absurd short 'riffs' that are then dismantled following the click of the shutter.<sup>12</sup> The props are found objects

ABOVE: Vanila Netto  
*The magnanimous beige wrap (part 1 contraption)*  
2006  
photograph interleaved between two sheets of toughened glass  
from digital file of original C-type photograph on aluminium, 133 x 100 cm, edition 2 of 5



exact dimensions of the original. As unconventional as this purchase may at first appear, there are precedents for the ownership of similar ephemeral works – for instance, the pioneering site-specific works by New York artist Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) completed in the 1960s.<sup>6</sup>

her first wall drawing in mind, her words are revealing of what she was about to borrow from him:

*From very early on there seems to have been a special attraction to trees and to the pictorial problem of how branches, sky, foliage or blossom interact and interpenetrate. Being especially a subject that cannot be treated 'realistically', the tree offers a marvelous pretext for the fabrication of a rhythmic structure of shallow recessions and advances that have little or nothing to do with the void and solid of the original motif.<sup>4</sup>*

In addition to her ongoing preoccupation with the work of Mondrian and Matisse, Riley was further influenced at this time by a re-engagement with the paintings of Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) and the Italian renaissance painter, Andrea Mantegna (c. 1431–1506). She was especially struck by the means by which each artist achieved pictorial rhythm across a flat surface, writing in a letter to Lynne Cooke, that she had studied Pollock's use of rhythm in Hans Namuth's film sequences of the artist at work: 'They showed him building his rhythm (albeit gesturally) by working across and along the canvas. This seemed to me to reveal, perhaps, something of the intrinsic nature of pictorial rhythm. Is it ... most purely expressed in movements that cross the picture plane?'<sup>15</sup>

The wall drawing at the MCA, Sydney, was painted out following the exhibition but the work was purchased by businessman and art collector Kerry Stokes, whose ownership gives him the right to have the drawing made anew in a different location, as long as it is made by Riley's crew and on a wall of the

1 An unpublished text by Riley on Henri Matisse's *The Dance* (dated Sept 1990), cited in Lynne Cooke, 'Around and about composition with circles 2', *Bridget Riley: reconnaissance*, exhibition catalogue, Dia Center for the Arts, New York 2000, p. 52, note 9.

2 *Composition with circles 4* 2004, acrylic on plaster wall, 1671.2 x 392.2 cm, Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth.

3 Cooke, op. cit., pp. 51, 57.

4 Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 53 and note 10.

5 Bridget Riley in a letter to Lynne Cooke, 12 Dec 2000 in Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 56 and notes 13 and 14.

6 LeWitt is represented by two permanent wall drawings in Sydney, commissioned in 2003 by the architectural firm of Harry Seidler and Associates for Australia Square and by private collector John Kaidor for his home.

120

LEFT TO RIGHT:

*Adaptable* (dark brown/hot peach)  
2006

*Adaptable* (blue/apricot) 2006

*Adaptable* (lemon/grey) 2006

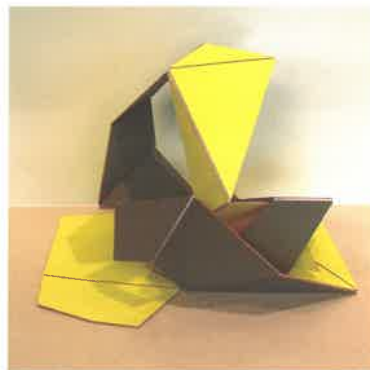
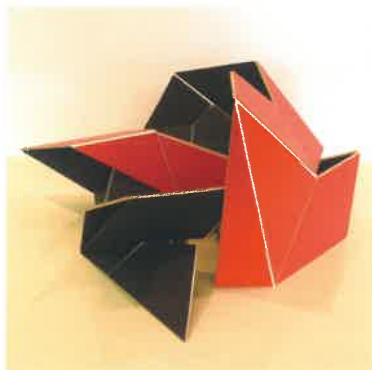
acrylic on plywood  
dimensions variable

*The Adaptables came about as a way of addressing problems I encountered when working with the flat picture plane. As the paintings developed, I became more and more interested in exploring the possibilities of spatial depth and movement within the two-dimensional surface, increasingly relying on foreshortening ... in order to do this. Transposing these concerns into three-dimensional space, I arrived at a kind of adaptable, sculptural painting. Interestingly, I find that the seemingly infinite number of possibilities for configuring an Adaptable echoes the endless possibilities for a work on canvas at the moment I start painting it. Gemma Smith 2007<sup>1</sup>*

Gemma Smith's *Adaptable* sculptures are made of painted planes that have been cut into irregular geometric shapes and bound together with fabric hinges along their edges. Each *Adaptable* is binary, with one colour painted on its face and a different colour painted on its underside – but even 'face' and 'underside' are interchangeable because the sculptures can be shifted around, their configuration altered by the viewer. This orchestration of colour has been described as 'canny'.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, key to the successful functioning of the sculptures is the fact that the two colours are different in hue but close in tone, ensuring, as we manipulate them, that any selected combination of planes remains harmonious. As each piece is reconfigured, the darker tone recedes and the brighter one comes to the fore – similar, in fact (except on a small scale) to what occurs optically when we look at large-scale sculptures. In both instances, what is set in motion is a play of contrasts, between solid and void, dark and light.

Since the advent of the post-war generation of American sculptors – the 'men of iron' such as David Smith (1906–1965), Richard Serra (born 1939) and Mark di Suvero (born 1933) – sculpture making could well be considered a daunting task. These were artists whose factory-scale studio set ups made it possible to transform tonnes of steel into epic works, an approach that has since been tempered by the likes of UK-based artists Richard Wentworth (born Samoa, 1947) and Anish Kapoor (born Mumbai, India, 1954), a later generation who explored lighter, more ephemeral forms of sculpture.<sup>3</sup> It is with this legacy in mind that one can consider the motivation of a much younger woman painter whose work equally draws attention to sculptural processes: Smith's *Adaptables* explore notions of mass, depth and dimension but through subtle manipulations (including the viewer's participation) that reveal the wondrous effects of colour, cast light and shadows upon connected, but shifting planes or surfaces in space.





While sculptures by painters often lack the sculptor's 'touch' or feel for the magic of art making in three dimensions, there are some American painters whose experiments with painting and three-dimensional forms have become inspirational – Cy Twombly (born 1928), Willem de Kooning (born Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1904–1997), and Richard Tuttle (born 1941) – have all worked in both mediums. This context adds further to the history that Smith's *Adaptables* allude to: they share an affinity with the late paintings of de Kooning and his use of jagged, shard-like forms, but equally Smith's sense of ease and play connects with the whimsical structures and installations of Richard Tuttle.

Despite their apparent 'easiness', Smith's constructions are conceptually astute. While she consciously echoes the methods of more traditional larger-scale works, her small-scale adaptations have a sophisticated, 'value-added' component – they are approachable, user-friendly objects that take their place in the work-a-day world. Their immediacy and accessibility encourages viewers to fully engage with the artist's construction process: unlike grand statements in steel, these refined and infinitely operable structures have been given a chameleon-like character quite capable of reflecting any passing mood.

1 Gemma Smith, artist's statement emailed to Barbara Flynn, 15 March 2007.

2 Sebastian Smee, 'Between lines and layers of paint', *The Australian*, 14 Dec 2006, p. 36.

3 The Queensland Art Gallery has had a longstanding interest in Kapoor's work. Smith would have had opportunity to see it in Brisbane and presumably could have felt liberated by his example.

## 122 *Blackfella Creek* 2006 site-specific ceiling painting ochres and pigment with acrylic binder on Belgian linen 3 panels, 205 x 514.5 cm overall

1 Official biography of Freddie Timms, compiled by Frances Kofod and issued by Jirrawun Arts 2007; earlier version published in S Kleinert & M Neale (eds), *The Oxford companion to Aboriginal art and culture*, Oxford University Press 2000, pp. 715–16.

2 *ibid.*

3 See discussion of the characteristics of ochre in Judith Ryan, 'National Gallery of Victoria', Susan Cochrane (ed), *Aboriginal art collections: highlights from Australia's public museums and galleries*, Craftsman House, Sydney 2001, pp. 73–74.

4 For the origins of the Gurirr Gurirr see Marcia Langton, 'Hungry ghosts: landscape and memory', *Blood on the spinifex*, exhibition catalogue, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne 2002, p. 12. See also Wally Caruana, 'National Gallery of Australia', Cochrane, op. cit., p. 17; Stephen Gilchrist, 'Voices in land: art of the Kimberley', p. 119, and note 5, citing Hetti Perkins, 'Rover Thomas', *Tradition today: indigenous art in Australia*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2004, p. 136; 'Artist biography: Rover Thomas Joolama', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2000. [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/rover\\_queenie/rover.html](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/rover_queenie/rover.html) (accessed April 2006); and Ken Watson, *True stories: art of the East Kimberley*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003.

5 Mary Mächa was based in the Kimberley as a field officer for the Department of Employment in the early 1980s, and was influential in raising public awareness of art from the Kimberley through her role in sourcing and marketing artefacts from the region. See website of National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne: [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/iwanttopaint/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/iwanttopaint/) (accessed April 2006).

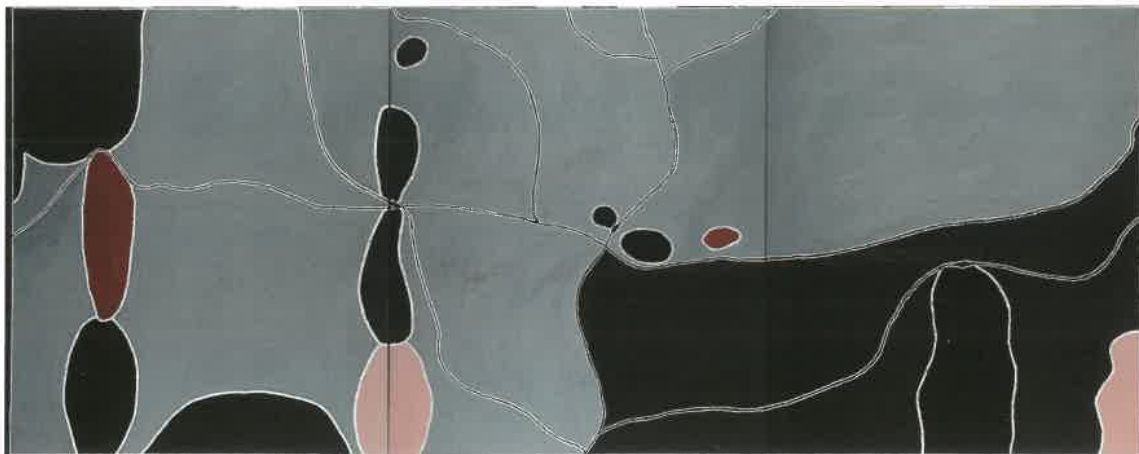
*I think about the country where I was walking and camping, all the main water holes, all the camping areas. I remember the places where I used to go mustering and I follow them up with my painting.* Freddie Timms<sup>1</sup>

Timms would presumably have been working from memory to depict motifs he knew so well and had painted so often, since the country he recalls in the quote above has long been underwater. The Ord River was dammed in the early 1960s resulting in the formation of the Argyle Lake and the flooding of the country around Lissadell Station where Timms had lived from the age of about 12. Many people were displaced as a result and later resettled at the Warmun Aboriginal community which was established in the early 1970s at Warmun (Turkey Creek) in order to cope with the influx.

Timms started to paint in the 1980s while living at Frog Hollow, south of Warmun. When Joel Smoker, arts coordinator of Waringarri Aboriginal Arts in Kununurra at the time, brought canvases to Jack Britten (1920–2002), Hector Jandany (c. 1922–2006), Timms's father-in-law George Mung Mung (1918–1990), and Rover Thomas (1926–1998), Timms asked for canvases as well. 'He has not stopped painting since then'.<sup>2</sup>

Painters from the Kimberley region of northwestern Australia paint with natural ochres which were a quintessential part of Aboriginal art in a ritual context.<sup>3</sup> The use of ochres connects the paintings to both the cave and bark painting traditions of the region. Ochre is an organic material, matt as opposed to shiny, and constituted of gritty particles that make for a tactile and irregular painted surface of considerable directness and visual interest.

The destruction of the city of Darwin by Cyclone Tracy in 1974 led indirectly to a resurgence of ceremonial activity in the eastern Kimberley that eventually gave rise to a school of painting with artists Rover Thomas and his uncle, Paddy Jaminji (1912–1996) as its main practitioners. Shortly before the cyclone struck, Thomas's classificatory mother had died as a result of an accident when a truck she was riding in, overturned. About a month after her death, Thomas was visited by her spirit and presented with a series of dreams which included several sites of sacred and historical importance in the Kimberley, culminating in his mother's account of observing the destruction of Darwin from the vantage point of the afterlife. The dreams 'gave' Thomas the songs and dances of the *Gurirr Gurirr barlga*.<sup>4</sup> After several years of Thomas telling these stories, they evolved in the late 1970s into the *Gurirr Gurirr* ceremony. Jaminji and others painted pieces of plywood with ochre at Thomas's direction that were carried by the dancers on their shoulders in the performance of the ceremony. Thomas had requested that the artists focus on a single verse or subject in their painted boards and as a result, the images were visually simplified stylistic forms. This revival of public ceremony eventually provided a stimulus for the production of art beyond the circle of the local celebrants when Jaminji's boards were discovered by Mary Mächa in 1981 and later exhibited at Aboriginal Traditional Arts in Perth.<sup>5</sup> The sale of Jaminji's boards prompted



Thomas in 1984 to paint his own and these were then also marketed by Mächa. The style was soon dubbed 'minimalist' by the art market. The minimal label facilitated a reading of art of the eastern Kimberley as stylistically akin to contemporary art which, in turn, led to strong market interest.

Paintings by Rover Thomas, Paddy Bedford and Freddie Timms are pared-back abstractions featuring large fields of flat colour outlined with white dots. In Thomas's hands the style was clearly reminiscent of East Kimberley rock art in which figural elements are painted in with solid ochre pigments and outlined in white pipe-clay. Timms's paintings share a relationship to Bedford's through the use of a pink colour that reads to non-Aboriginal viewers as more contemporary and non-traditional.<sup>6</sup> But aside from such relationships, each of the Jirrawun painters has developed a style considered to be recognisably his or her own.<sup>7</sup>

In general terms, Aboriginal paintings cannot be classified as non-objective. Rather, form, colour and line are intended to represent something – such as place and narrative. Sometimes the symbolism behind complex designs cannot be put into words, but wherever possible, any information that is not restricted by the community will be provided by the artists or the community-based arts organisations. In specific terms, Timms's paintings can be read as aerial maps of the country where he spent his life – encompassing all the landscape features of the country where he worked as a stockman mustering cattle on Lissadell Station – such as black soil, red ground, sandy ground, hills, creeks and water holes. Details of the environment built by non-Aboriginal people like roads, stockyards and homesteads might sometimes also be included. And within the 'map', sites of historical and spiritual significance are depicted, the dreaming places and spiritual narratives – the landscape behind

6 Bedford may have seen illustrations of paintings by New York artist Philip Guston (1913–1980) in having earlier adopted the colour. On the other hand, Michiel Dolk characterises the connection Bedford–Guston as one of 'gestural manner' and downplays any borrowings that might be inferred: 'Generally ... his [Bedford's] indifference to European art and limited susceptibility to such influences is remarkable'. *Paddy Bedford*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2007, pp. 22 and 46, note 23.

7 Jirrawun Aboriginal Art Corporation is the arts organisation co-founded by Freddie Timms at Rugun (Crocodile Hole) in 1998. 'Jirrawun' is a Gija word meaning 'in one, all in one, at the one place'. See Frances Kofod, 'Gija Glossary', *Paddy Bedford*, op. cit., p. 137.

the landscape – out of a sense of responsibility for the land that has been transmitted to him by his forebears.<sup>8</sup>

*Blackfella Creek* 2006 was painted by Timms for UBS's Melbourne office, and has been placed above our heads, compelling us to look up at it, as if we were looking at a kind of celestial map. The idea to commission a ceiling painting by Timms was inspired by the example of the ceiling paintings by eight indigenous Australian artists commissioned for the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris in 2006. Timms's painting shows a part of Gija country northeast of Warmun, called Blackfella Creek. There is a big hill there of the type called *manjal* where quantities of quartz are found, used to make spear heads.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, 11 massacres are remembered in the Gija area.<sup>10</sup> Blackfella Creek was one of the locations where Gija people were shot by Europeans at the beginning of the 20th century, an event witnessed by Timms's grandmother.<sup>11</sup>

Aboriginal artists from a traditional background will make an overt political statement through their work. Examples are Timms's painting *Whitefella/blackfella* (1999) and Bedford's *Mt King – emu dreaming* (2004) which represents the area where a large number of Bedford's relations were poisoned in about 1920 in retaliation for the killing of a bullock.<sup>12</sup> In 2000 Bedford and Timms's paternal uncle, Timmy Timms were able to recall a corroboree (or *joonba*) which told the story of the killings. The corroboree became the basis of a performance piece *Fire, fire, burning bright*, presented by the Neminuwarlin Performance Group from the East Kimberley at the Perth International Arts Festival and Melbourne Festival in 2002.<sup>13</sup> Commenting on *Fire, fire* in his capacity as chairman of Jirrawun Arts, Freddie Timms said:

*White people should know what they did to black people, shot them down. Some believe it, some don't. Some people might understand what happened. I think that knowing this story will help Aboriginal people and white people to understand each other so that we will all come to be friends and look after things together. I hope that people will learn to respect our culture, not just walk past.*<sup>14</sup>

Timms has demonstrated a considerable political ability in life outside of painting as well, through the co-founding of Jirrawun Aboriginal Art Corporation with artistic advisor Tony Oliver in 1998.<sup>15</sup> Jirrawun was set up to market the art of an increasingly wide group of Kimberley painters including, in addition to Freddie Timms, Paddy Bedford, Rusty Peters, Churchill Cann, Goody Barrett, Phyllis Thomas and Timmy Timms. The new corporation was based on the premise of fair and equal treatment for Aboriginal artists and aimed to support Gija culture through economic independence and cultural entrepreneurship. In 2004, a new company was formed under the name Jirrawun Arts and registered with ASIC, with Timms being elected chairman the same year. Timms would speak about his paintings:

8 Langton, op. cit., p. 14.

9 For explanation of Timms's imagery in the UBS painting see Kofod, op. cit.

10 Langton, op. cit., p. 13. Kofod cites C. Choo, 'Miriuwung and Gajerrong history report no 2', *Social impacts of pastoralism, 1885–1935*, presented in the Miriuwung and Gajerrong Native Title Claim, 1996: 'Between 1887 and 1917 there were at least 20 occasions on which police and/or their native assistance shot at Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley which were recorded in the police patrol journals.'

11 Timms's grandmother and her older sister were living under the protection of an Aboriginal man known as Major when he was killed by police in 1908. Timms heard many stories of Major's life from his grandmother and older workers on Lissadell Station, and would have relived the details of Major's life as he travelled the country. See description of *Blackfella Creek* 2002, a 6-panel painting with the same title as UBS's, exhibited in *Blood on the spinifex*, in 'Freddie Timms', *Blood on the spinifex*, op. cit., pp. 40–45.

12 Paddy Bedford, *Mt King – Emu dreaming* 2004, earth pigments and composition board, 80 x 100 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2004.

13 Jeremy Eccles, 'Jirrawun: a unique model for Aboriginal art', *Art and Australia*, spring 2006, p. 85.

14 Freddie Timms, *Fire, fire, burning bright*, programme, Melbourne Festival, 2002, p. 3, reprinted Stephen Gilchrist, op. cit., p. 122 and p. 123, note 9.

in terse, single-sentence reports and seemed to feel the weight of his duties, expressed in his work: a close relation mysteriously slain on the roadside; a young favourite niece dead on the disco floor at Turkey Creek. The terrible weight of the Kimberley seemed to rest on Freddie's shoulders – and it was only when I could read the presence of this force that his paintings, with their poised finesse and diagnostic clarity, began to fall into focus.<sup>16</sup>

15 When Timms first met Oliver in Melbourne in 1996 it is said that he showed him the \$300 he had received for one month's painting from an unnamed Melbourne art dealer. Shocked, Oliver introduced him to longstanding Sydney gallery owner, Frank Watters who agreed to show his work on equal terms with his other artists and to sell his paintings on consignment. Subsequently there were three shows of Timms's work at Watters from 1997–99.

16 Nicholas Rothwell, 'Beyond the frontier', catalogue essay, *Beyond the frontier*, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, 7–30 April 2005. Timms's paintings have crossed barriers and hung comfortably alongside the work of non-indigenous artists, including another UBS collection artist, Ken Whisson, at Watters Gallery in 1998 and Richard Woldendorp in the exhibition, *Interesting times* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 2005. The 1998 Watters show with Whisson was described by reviewer John McDonald as 'a wonderfully fertile "compare and contrast" exhibition of landscapes' in 'Painting dead? the picture's not so bleak', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 July 1998. See Kofod, op. cit.



- 126** *Over growth* 2006  
site-specific ceiling drawing  
pencil and watercolour pencil on  
gesso on MDF  
4 panels, 360 x 600 cm overall  
(illustrated inside front cover)

RIGHT:

*Build up* 2006  
watercolour, aquarelle, gouache  
and pencil on paper  
150 x 102 cm

*Growth in a simple sense is cyclic. I was playing with the idea of an economic growth being a natural growth that can no longer exist in the natural world as we know it. In fact the closer it gets to the outside world its existence and vibrancy is threatened. The painted sections make those areas appear 'alive', while the pencil areas make the image appear as if it is also in decay.*  
Michelle Ussher 2007<sup>1</sup>

For UBS's Melbourne office, Michelle Ussher created an oversized canopy depicting lush vegetation in response to the challenge of making a ceiling painting. She had not worked on such a large scale before. Her aim was to introduce the 'relief' of plant forms to the office environment, to create a 'natural' environment through the artifice of art.

Ussher's starting point was a collage resembling a tree house given to her by a friend, artist Nick Mangan, because it reminded him of her work. It immediately fascinated Ussher because it had no decipherable 'top' or 'bottom', leading her to think about possibilities for a ceiling-based work – even before she was offered the UBS commission.

The 4-panel ceiling drawing was made offsite, the imagery built up by adding pictorial elements consecutively, much in the way an artist would make a collage. A woody stem presented in cross-section and a stag-horn fern unfurling out from it function architectonically to stabilise the drawing and relate it to the surrounding architecture. When Ussher initially visited the Melbourne office site she was pleased that the corridor leading to it was covered in wood veneer. Veneer had always fascinated her as an example of something natural that had been altered, a product of manufacturing and social progress and an example of adaptive use. As she puts it: 'I am intrigued by adaptation.'<sup>2</sup> She drew the woody stem to echo the veneer corridor.

The drawing plays with our notions of natural and artificial, and ironically, does the opposite of what we would expect it to do – the growth flourishes and propagates everywhere on the ceiling but then starts to die as it reaches closer to the windows and the 'outside'. Ussher says: 'Rather than a call for all things to be 'natural' it is an expression of how adaptations are an important part of evolution, and within those adaptations deterioration exists as well as growth.'<sup>3</sup>

Plant forms in the ceiling drawing are magnified to gargantuan size in reference to a particular area in Hawaii where a number of plants, because of their isolation, didn't have to use their energy to create defensive mechanisms against insects and other predators. As a result, these plants grew extraordinarily large. In the drawing the plants dwarf the lone human figure – the naturalist – who appears to have pulled himself up onto a clutch of lacy leaf forms we know rationally to be the size of the palm of our hand. Or is the naturalist riding on a cloud? Is he meant to mimic the figure of God, gazing down on us mortals below? Ussher was conscious that the viewer would add the necessary human dimension to the drawing and incorporated the naturalist at a later stage of the work in order to accentuate our role as participants in this grand drama.



of recreational camping in the present. She is aware of the lengths to which we must go to access pristine nature, and of the high-tech paraphernalia – the collapsible cooking gear, tents and other stuff we carry into the bush – that is synthetic in colour and material ... so conspicuously out of sync with the subtle shades and textures of nature.

*Build up* (2006), a second work by Ussher in the Sydney office, depicts a tall modernist building situated above Tamarama Beach in Sydney. Strewn across the slope that drops off steeply in front of the construction are what look like conventionally-designed houses which, in turn, are dwarfed by the height of the modernist building. The houses appear to have been cast off the sort of beachside cliff that has become the local rubbish tip. By using watercolour Ussher allows the forms of the foreground to appear and re-appear – dream-like in a space rendered so sheer that it seems to be non-existent. But there is no mistaking the tall building's dominance and, like fellow UBS artist Madeleine Kelly, Ussher's painting can be read as a critique of important topical issues associated with demographics and urban planning. Like Kelly, Ussher avoids direct confrontation, relying instead on ambiguity and suggestion.

Other works by Ussher have likewise depicted natural places, most often, campsites – which she renders as intrinsically in flux – occupied by humans on nothing more than a temporary basis. She has commented that, 'All colonies begin as campsites.'<sup>4</sup> However, her work is firmly based in her own experiences

1 Michelle Ussher, artist's statement on *Over growth*, emailed to Barbara Flynn, 16 March 2007.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Primavera '05: exhibition of young Australian artists*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney 2005, p. 45.

## DANIEL VON STURMER

**128** *Horizontal hold* 2004  
site-specific corner installation  
synchronised dual channel video in  
DVD format anamorphic ratio 16:9  
Duration: 5 minutes 43 seconds

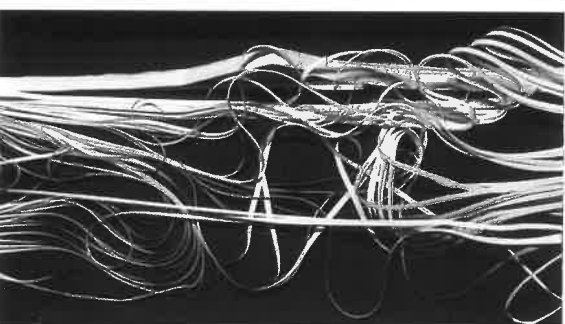
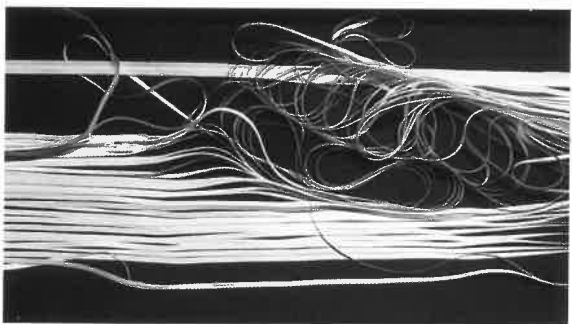
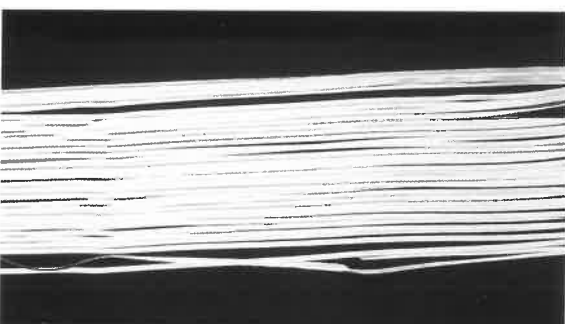
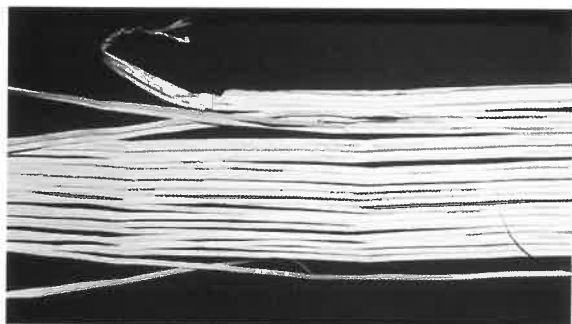
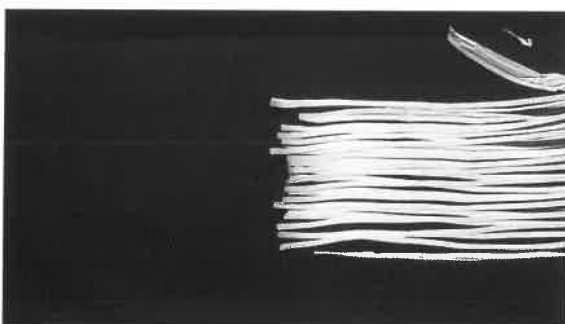
*Horizontal hold* was first exhibited as an outdoor public work as part of *On reason and emotion*, 14th Biennale of Sydney in 2004. Installed high up, billboard-style in the heart of Sydney's CBD, at Phillip and Bridge Streets, it moved across the four corner windows forming a light box at a right angle on the northwest façade of the Museum of Sydney. Clearly conveying an alternative message, the work successfully competed with other advertisements by virtue of its location and position, its imposing size and sheer graphic power. The effect of visual spectacle was further enhanced by the bright, 'magic lantern' effect due to the fact that the work was visible only by night.<sup>1</sup> As curator Justin Paton has commented:

*It was as if, below office towers that contain who knows how many tonnes of 'sensitive documents', one of the buildings had begun to dream of destroying its own contents ... Although the piece didn't 'say' anything (a humility about 'saying' characterises von Sturmer's work, which is filled with many unused pencils and blank pieces of paper), it felt especially pointed in mid 2004, not long before news broke of all the incriminating documents that the Enron corporation had shredded.<sup>2</sup>*

Working to a modest budget and within a confined space, von Sturmer deployed mundane materials – reams of paper and a paper shredder in tandem with gravity, 'a special effect that is free to all'.<sup>3</sup> He created the illusion of dastardly deeds committed in secret. Studio views of the production show mounds of paper, a couple of tripods with camera and lights, and the shredder, which has been affixed to a simple, slanting wooden plane. Similarly, in other works, ordinary supplies – like pencils, Post-it notes, paper clips, polystyrene cups, and rolls of masking tape – roll, slide and unfurl into states of disorder created by the artist, whose deadpan wit and presence as 'tinkerer' is never far from mind.<sup>4</sup>

The peacefulness associated with gardens has been evoked to describe the slow, methodical and mesmerising pace of movement in von Sturmer's video works.<sup>5</sup> *Horizontal hold* – now encased in a similarly contemplative corner within UBS's Melbourne office – quietly goes about its business. Ever present and perpetually in motion, it keeps on beating at the heart of things, like a type of corporate soul.

1–5 All citations Justin Paton, 'Clearings: some times and spaces by Daniel von Sturmer', *Daniel von Sturmer: into a vacuum of future events*, exhibition catalogue, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand 2005.



**130** *City and farm landscape with bomber pilots* 1985  
oil on canvas  
109.5 x 140 cm

*I have a distinct impression when working that the painting takes place at the point where the brush touches the canvas and, I believe, that art is the direct line of communication between the act of creation and a level of our being which is neither the conscious nor the famous subconscious, but which could be called the intuitive faculty, and which has to function without interference from the conscious thinking process. Ken Whisson 1994<sup>1</sup>*

It would be fair to say that Ken Whisson has a particular approach to image making; he celebrates the pleasures of a spontaneous relation between the performative act of painting or drawing and his chosen subject matter. The simple, gestural style suggests a drive to capture the most essential elements, a stripping back as a means of direct communication with the viewer.

From an early age Whisson was interested in places, the people and their socioeconomic and political circumstances. In his late teens he began studying with Danila Vassilieff (1897–1958) whose milieu included artists such as Josl Bergner (born 1920), Joy Hester (1929–1960), Noel Counihan (1913–1986) and others – a vibrant group committed to exploring the power and social implications possible with the visual arts. After World War II, the group dissipated and Whisson began to realise his own personal vision; 'dark conscious statements' gave way to a more light-filled world of open landscapes. *City and farm landscape with bomber pilots* is typical of the floating worlds associated with Whisson's idiosyncratic sketchy but painterly approach.

He is also a traveller who became immersed in a foreign context. Whereas artists like Ian Fairweather (1891–1974) and Tony Tuckson (1921–1973) discovered the spirit within indigenous worlds, Whisson relocated to the hills of Perugia, Italy, nearly 30 years ago. One senses it is the light and colour that drew him away: the later works of simple overlapping blocks and shapes on a white ground – often with figures, trees and planes incorporated into the scene – reveal a graceful ease yet at the same time hark back to those early studies of localities where everyday objects (like a shed, a car, a plane) become imbued with symbolic potential.

These landscapes are not sentimental views. As the dull grey chimney stacks suggest, Whisson's juxtaposition of elements represents the reality of things – an environment where sharp, angular bridge and factory shapes alongside planes and cars, trees, animals and patches of cloudy sky, attest to an ever-encroaching industrial world. As the artist has written:

*One makes art with the idea of demonstrating that, in spite of everything, some sort of sociocultural leaven still persists, and thereby demonstrating the possibility of some sort of future for the planet and the species ...*

*The danger is that the success of the artist – if and where he succeeds – will give the impression that after all, the physical, psychical and spiritual situation of the human race is less disastrous than had seemed the case, and that as a result, instead of giving courage, his work will give comfort.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Ken Whisson, *Australian art in the National Gallery of Australia*, Anne Gray (ed), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra 2002, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Peter and Susan Ward, *In a different light: Australian artists working in Italy*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane 1991, p. 16.





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## 134 JAMES ANGUS

James Angus – born 1970, Perth – lives and works in New York. He completed a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) at Curtin University of Technology, Bentley, Western Australia in 1990, and a Master of Fine Arts (Sculpture) at Yale University, School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut in 1998.

Angus's first popular individual exhibition was held at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1991. In 2000, numerous solo projects were organised by museums, including Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide; and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand. Others followed: 'AGNSW contemporary projects' exhibition series, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2006 (toured to Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2006, and the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, and Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, 2007).

Angus's work was shown in the inaugural *Primavera: exhibition by young Australian artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in 1992, and in two Adelaide Biennial of Australian art exhibitions, in 1996 and 2006. Other important group exhibitions since 2000 include *The age of influence*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois, 2000; *(The world may be) fantastic*, 13th Biennale of Sydney, 2002; *Still life: inaugural Balnaves Foundation sculpture project*, Art Gallery of

New South Wales, Sydney; and *Face up: contemporary art from Australia*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2003; National Sculpture Prize exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; *C'town bling*, Campbelltown Arts Centre, New South Wales; *Wall power*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2005; and *Random access*, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria, 2006.

Angus has successfully completed public commissions for the Public Art Fund, New York in 1999 and Sydney Theatre Company in 2003. He has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies – Australian Network for Art and Technology Grant (1992); Fulbright Postdoctoral Research Award (1996); Australia Council Professional Development Grants (1998 and 2001); the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2003); and was shortlisted for the National Sculpture Prize, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2005). As well as UBS, Angus is well-represented in major public collections including Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales.

## HANY ARMANIOUS

Hany Armanious – born 1962, Ismailia, Egypt – lives and works in Sydney. He completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at City Art Institute, Sydney in 1984.

Armanious's work was first widely-seen in *Australian perspecta* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 1991. He has participated in major international shows including *Aperto '93*, 45th Biennale di Venezia, 1993, and *A tale of two cities*, Busan Biennale, South Korea, 2006. Important solo shows since 2000 include *Selflok*, Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, 2001 (toured to Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2002); *Hany Armanious: the centre of the universe (central core/hard core/soft core)*, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2004 (*central core* component toured to Ocular Lab Inc, Melbourne, in 2005); and *Morphic resonance*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2006 (toured to City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand in 2007).

Group exhibitions include *Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Melbourne, 2002; *Bloom: mutation, toxicity and the sublime*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand, 2003; National Sculpture Prize exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2005; and *Uncanny nature*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and *Adventures with form in space*, Balnaves Foundation sculpture

*project*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2006.

Armanious has been awarded prizes and international residencies including Australia Council Los Angeles Studio (1993); selection as a finalist, *Contemporaria 5*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1998); Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellow (1998); Australia Council Greene Street Studio, New York (2002); Artist-in-residence, Elam School of Fine Arts, International Arts Residency Programme, Auckland, New Zealand (2004); and was shortlisted for National Sculpture Prize, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2005). He is represented in major public collections including UBS; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; Dakis Joannou Foundation, Athens, Greece; Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales.

### SYDNEY BALL

Sydney Ball – born 1933, Adelaide – lives and works in the Hills District of New South Wales. He undertook part-time studies at the South Australian School of Art, Adelaide and the Art Students League, New York from 1963–65 but is mainly self-taught.

Ball's first exhibition was held at the Westerly Gallery, New York in 1964. He has exhibited his work in regular individual exhibitions at galleries in Australia since 1966 and in Korea since 1990. Early shows at South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne in 1966 and 1968, and at Bonython Gallery, Sydney in 1969 were critically acclaimed, establishing Ball's reputation following his return to Sydney in 1965 after three years in the USA. His participation in seminal early thematic shows of Australian art in Australia and abroad served to ratify his importance as one of the most original painters of his generation – *The Mertz collection*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, and Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (toured in North America), 1967; *The field*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1968; *Ten Australians*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (toured to Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart; Palazzo della Permanente, Milan; L'Accademia dell'Arte e Disegno, Florence; Palazzo Braschi, Rome; and Ca' Pesaro, Venice in 1974; and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1975). Other important group shows include

*Visions in disbelief*, 4th Biennale of Sydney, 1982; *Australian perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; and *Twelve Australian painters*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1983, and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1984; *Australian art in our time*, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1985; *Field to figuration: Australian art 1960–1986*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1986; *Surface for reflection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1987; *I had a dream: Australian art in the 60s*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1997; and *Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Melbourne, 2003.

Individual museum shows include Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 1965; Newcastle City Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1976; Contemporary Art Society, Adelaide, 1978; and Wollongong City Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1987. He is represented in all major Australian public collections including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth. International collections include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea; and Auckland Art Gallery, and Christchurch City Art Gallery, New Zealand.



## 136 DEL KATHRYN BARTON

Del Kathryn Barton – born 1972, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney in 1993 and has taught at the College.

Since 1995 Barton has mounted regular solo shows at Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney; Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne; and Kaliman Gallery, Sydney. Her work was selected for a number of prize shows early in her career – the Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and the Blake Prize for Religious Art, Mitchell Library Gallery, Sydney, in 1995; the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship, Sydney, in 1996; and the Fishers Ghost Prize, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales, in 1997. Selected group exhibitions include *Anxiety: the drawn figure*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2001; *Half a world away: drawings from Glasgow, São Paulo and Sydney*, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, New York, 2002; *National works on paper*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria, 2002 and 2004; *Octopus 4: more real than life*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2003; *Del Kathryn Barton, Cathy Blanchflower, Derek O'Connor, Monika Tichacek*, Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne, 2004; and *Girl band*, The Deloitte Foundation, 'New Australian art' exhibition series, Deloitte, Sydney, 2006–07.

Barton is represented in the collections of Artbank, Sydney; Art and Australia, Sydney; BHP Billiton, Melbourne; RACV Art Collection, Victoria; and the Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney, in addition to UBS.

## LARRY BELL

Larry Bell – born 1939, Chicago, Illinois – lives and works in Taos, New Mexico. Bell studied with artist Robert Irwin (born 1928) at the Chouinard School of Art, Los Angeles from 1957–59.

As a young artist in the 1960s Bell participated in several survey shows that defined the era, including *The responsive eye*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (1965); *Primary structures*, Jewish Museum, New York (1966); *1967 annual exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1967); and *14 sculptors: the industrial edge*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, (1969). Four of the early *Cube* sculptures (1966–69) were included in the exhibition, *Larry Bell: the sixties* at PaceWildenstein Gallery, New York in 2005, and other important solo exhibitions have been organised by American museums including Pasadena Art Museum, California (1972); Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin (1982); Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona (1991); and Albuquerque Museum, New Mexico (1997); and in Germany, by Museum Moderner Kunst, Ottendorf, Germany (1999).

Bell was the recipient of the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence and Achievement in the Arts in 1990. UBS joins an impressive list of institutions that hold his work including, in Europe: Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Tate Collection, London; and in USA: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Art Institute

of Chicago, Illinois; Denver Art Museum, Colorado; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

### **ARTHUR BOYD**

Arthur Boyd – born 1920, Murrumbidgee, Victoria, died 1999, Melbourne. Considered to be one of Australia's greatest painters, Boyd has an internationally-recognised reputation. 1959 was a turning point in Boyd's career: satisfying a need to experience more of the world, he moved his young family to London. The move proved to be fruitful with his first London exhibition of his *Lovers* series being widely acclaimed and leading to his subsequent representation in Tate and Whitechapel Gallery exhibitions in the following years. During this time living abroad, Boyd travelled between homes in England and Tuscany.

He returned to Australia in the 1970s, first taking up an artist-in-residence position at the Australian National University, Canberra, then settling at Shoalhaven and later, Bundanon on the south coast of New South Wales. At this time he gave many of his works to the National Gallery of Australia and in 1993 he donated his Shoalhaven and Bundanon properties to the nation. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) and a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

Arthur Boyd is represented in all state galleries throughout Australia, as well as many university, regional and other public gallery collections. His work is held in private and corporate collections in Australia and internationally.

### **ANGELA BRENNAN**

Angela Brennan – born 1960, Ballarat, Victoria – lives and works in Melbourne. She completed a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1981; and a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in philosophy, at the University of Melbourne in 1992.

In 2006 Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria, acknowledged Brennan's achievement with a major individual exhibition *Angela Brennan: every morning I wake up on the wrong side of capitalism*. Her first solo project *Possible worlds* was organised by the George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne in 1989. Group exhibitions include *Exaltate jubilate*, Store 5, Melbourne; and *Room for abstraction*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, in 1991; *High pop*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 1993; *On the brink: abstraction in the 90s*, and *Good vibrations: The legacy of op art in Australia*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, in 2000 and 2002; and The Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize exhibition, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, in 2003 and 2005.

Brennan has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies – Red Gate Gallery, Beijing (2002); the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1998); and the Australia Council Barcelona Studio, Spain (1990). She is represented in major public collections including UBS; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of South

**138** Australia, Adelaide; Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria; Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania; La Trobe University, Melbourne; University of Melbourne; and the World Bank, New York, among other collections.

#### LOUISA BUFARDECI

Louisa Bufardecì – born 1969, Melbourne – lives and works in Melbourne and New York. She completed a Bachelor of Education (Visual Art) at the University of Melbourne in 1991; a Bachelor of Fine Art (Drawing) at Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1998; and a Bachelor of Arts, University of Melbourne in 2001. In 2006 she completed a Master of Fine Arts (Art and Technology) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois. Selected solo exhibitions since 2000 include *Counterplay*, Studio 12, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2000; *The unbearable weight of ordinary things*, 18th Street Arts Complex, Santa Monica, California; *Cold storage*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; and *ColourPhonics*, Spare Room, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, in 2001; *Skin quartet* (with David Young), Melbourne International Arts Festival, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, 2003; and *Starter pistols*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, 2006.

Group exhibitions include *Docklands* (with Elizabeth Boyce), Glass Street Gallery, Melbourne; and two shows, *The pragmatics of inscription* and *A matter of distance*, at Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, in 2000; The Alice Prize Exhibition, Northern Territory, 2001; *When the lake froze over*, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Project Space, 2002; *Reunion: the art of sixteen graduates*, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, 2003; *Cycle tracks will*

*abound in Utopia*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and *Public/private*, the second Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2004; ABN AMRO 2005 Emerging Artist Award finalists' exhibition, Sydney, 2005; *Make it modern*, Deloitte, Melbourne, 2005.

Bufardecì has been awarded a number of international residencies – including selection as a Gertrude Studio Artist, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne (1999–2001); Australia Council Los Angeles Studio (2001); The University of Melbourne Asialink Residency, Sankriti Kendra Foundation, New Delhi, India (2003); and the Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship (2004).

**BILL CULBERT**

Bill Culbert – born 1935, Port Chalmers, New Zealand – moved to London in 1957, and lives and works in London and Croagnes, France. He studied painting in New Zealand and at the Royal College of Art, London for one year, in 1957.

Culbert has been exhibiting sculptures and photographs in the UK, Europe, USA, New Zealand and Australia for over 40 years. Major solo exhibitions of his work have been held by New Zealand public galleries including the 1997–98 touring exhibition *Lightworks*, City Gallery Wellington; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; and the 2003–05 exhibition *Light wine things*, Millennium Public Art Gallery, Blenheim; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; and Whangarei Art Gallery.

Culbert has participated in numerous international shows including, *The readymade boomerang: certain relations in 20th century art*, 8th Biennale of Sydney, 1990; *Toi toi toi: 3 generations of New Zealand art*, Art Museum Fredericianum, Kassel, Germany in 1999; the second Asia–Pacific Triennial of contemporary art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2002 (a collaborative project with Ralph Hotere); and *High tide: currents in contemporary Australian art*, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland and Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006.

Recent major public commissions include *Skyline*, Millennium Dome, London, 2000; *Wallwave*,

PriceWaterhouseCoopers Tower, Auckland, New Zealand, 2002; *Skyblues*, Post Office Square, Wellington, New Zealand, 2006; and *Rocket* for the UBS office, Melbourne.

**JOHN FIRTH-SMITH**

John Firth-Smith – born 1943 Melbourne – lives and works in Sydney and Melbourne. Firth-Smith held his first solo exhibitions at Gallery A in Sydney and Melbourne in 1966 and has continued to show regularly in Melbourne and Sydney since that time. He was Artist-in-residence at University of Melbourne in 1983. He has travelled extensively throughout his career, living in Samoa in 1985 and New York in 1989.

In the 1980s and 1990s Firth-Smith was included in many important survey exhibitions of Australian art including *Survey 16*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (toured to Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, New South Wales, 1981); *Australian perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1983; *Twelve Australian painters*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1983, and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1984; *Surface for reflection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales (toured in New South Wales) 1987; *Paper*, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Gallery, 1992; *The artists of Hill End*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (toured in New South Wales), 1987; *Asia and Oceania influence*, and *Silver*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1995 and 1999; and *Escape artists: modernists in the tropics*, Cairns Regional Gallery (toured in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria), 1998–99.

He has completed a number of commissions in both the public and

**140** private sector including the National Capital Permanent Development Commission for Family Law Courts, Canberra (1980); ANZ Bank, Melbourne (1981); New Parliament House, Canberra (1987); State Bank, Sydney (1988); and Governor Phillip Tower, Sydney (1993). His work has been extensively collected in Australia including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Artbank, Sydney; Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Sydney; Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; National Bank of Australia; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales; Qantas Airways Collection, Sydney; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria; and Townsville City Gallery, Queensland.

#### JULIE FRAGAR

Julie Fragar – born 1977, Gosford, New South Wales – lives and works in Brisbane. She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours Class 1) at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney in 1998, and a Master of Visual Arts by Research at the College in 2002. Currently she is studying for a doctorate in Visual Arts at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane, where she is a lecturer.

Fragar's paintings have consistently been the subject of the serious art press since her first important solo show, at Sydney's Rubyayre Gallery in 2001. Since 1998 she has curated and participated in many group shows at artist-run galleries in Sydney including CBD, Gallery 132, Gallery Wren, Firstdraft Gallery, and MOP Projects. Museum shows include the Portia Geach Memorial Award exhibition, National Trust S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney in 1998 and 2001; *Sharper: 9 x paintings, 3 x artists*, Gosford Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; and *Sebastian: contemporary realist painting*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland, which toured to six regional galleries in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, in 2000; Archibald Prize exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2000 and 2003; *Blur* (collaboration with artist Paul Wrigley), Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland, Queensland; and *Adrift*, 2004, and *Idiosyncrasy*, 2005, at the Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane.

Fragar is represented in public collections including Artbank, Sydney; Australian National Credit Union, Sydney; and Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland. She has been supported through the selection and acquisition of her work by a number of corporations including UBS; The Deloitte Foundation 'New Australian art' exhibition series (*Girl band*, 2006–07); Ferrier Hodgson, Sydney; and ABN AMRO, which awarded her its Emerging Artist Award in 2005. (She also won the Employees' Choice Award the same year.) Fragar has been recognised with other awards including 2nd Prize, Roche Contemporary Art Prize, and The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists in 2001; and The Marketing Grant for New South Wales Artists, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), in 2002.



**DALE FRANK**

Dale Frank – born 1959, Singleton, New South Wales – lives and works in Queensland. The young Frank was precocious, and entered the Wynne Prize competition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 1975 at the age of 15. His first widely-seen Australian solo exhibition was held at the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide four years later, in 1979. He moved to Europe that year and within a relatively short span of time began to be invited to participate in group shows in Lyon and Paris in France, and Rotterdam and Maastricht in The Netherlands. Particularly significant among these were *Panorama della post-critica: critica ed arte*, Museo Palazzo Lanfranchi, Pisa, 1983, and *Aperto: arte e arti: attualità e storia*, Biennale di Venezia, 1984. In New York that year he exhibited in *Australian visions: 1984 Exxon International exhibition*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. He returned to Australia in 1990 and was included in the *The readymade boomerang: certain relations in 20th century art*, 8th Biennale of Sydney later that year. A major solo retrospective of his work was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in 2000.

He is represented in major public collections in Liège, Milan, Zurich, Chicago and New York, as well as every major Australian public collection and numerous private and corporate collections including UBS; Allens Arthur Robinson and ABN AMRO in Sydney; and IBM, Shell Australia, BP, and Philip Morris in Melbourne. In 2005 Frank

won The Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize of the Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria.

**LOUISE HEARMAN**

Louise Hearman – born 1963, Melbourne – lives and works in Melbourne. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1984. Hearman's first individual exhibition took place at Melbourne's City Gallery in 1989, and her work has appeared in many significant survey exhibitions of contemporary Australian art including *Uncommon world – aspects of contemporary Australian art*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2000; *Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Melbourne, 2002; and *Uncanny (the unnaturally strange)*, Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand, 2006. Hearman's works are held by major Australian public collections and by numerous private and corporate collections both in Australia and internationally.

## 142 ROBERT JACKS

Robert Jacks – born 1943, Melbourne – lives and works in Harcourt, Victoria. Jacks graduated from Prahran Technical College, Melbourne in 1960 and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1962. He held his first solo exhibition at Gallery A, Melbourne, in 1966. A retrospective of the artist's works on paper was organised by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne in 1990. Other important museum shows include New York Cultural Center, 1971; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1980; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 1984; Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria; and Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, Victoria, 1994; Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2003; and Tarawarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Victoria, 2005. Jacks has participated in numerous important survey exhibitions including *New generation*, Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 1963; *The field*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1968; *Recent Australian art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1973; *Australian perspective*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1981; *Twelve Australian painters*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1983, and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1984; *The subject of painting*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1985; *Colour and transparency*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1986; *Surface for reflection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, (touring in New South Wales), 1987; and

*Contemporary Australian drawing*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1992.

He has been awarded numerous lectureships and artist-in-residencies including Artist-in-residence, University of Melbourne, 1978; lecturer, Sydney College for the Arts, 1980–83; Artist-in-residence, Prahran College, Melbourne, 1983, and lecturer, 1984–88; Visiting lecturer, Cornwall School of Art, UK, 1987; and Artist-in-residence, Joye Foundation Studio, Sydney, 1988. He is represented in numerous public and private collections in Australia, New Zealand and USA, including Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; BHP Billiton, Melbourne; Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, New Zealand; National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; New Parliament House, Canberra; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Reserve Bank of Australia; Sony Corporation, New York; and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart.

## TIM JOHNSON

Tim Johnson – born 1947, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. He studied at the University of New South Wales, Sydney and the University of Sydney from 1966 to 1970. In 1997–98 he was awarded an Australia Council Fellowship and in 1999 won the Mosman Art Prize, New South Wales, and the SCEGGS Redlands Westpac Art Prize. He held his first solo exhibition in 1970 at Gallery A, Sydney, and was involved with Sydney's experimental space, Inhibadress, at this time. Over the last three decades he has had numerous one-person shows throughout Australia and abroad – in London (1988), Glasgow (1994) and Los Angeles (2001). Recent collaborations have been with My Le Thi and Karma Phuntsok.

Since the 1970s Johnson has been included in many survey exhibitions of Australian art. Recent exhibitions include *Antipodean currents*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1995; *Australia: familiar and strange*, Seoul Arts Centre, South Korea, 1995; *Spirit + place*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1997; *Inside*, University of Kassel, Germany, 1997; MacCaighey Prize exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1997; *Mingling of cultures*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1998; *Bright and shining*, Gallery 4A, Sydney, and Australian Embassy, Tokyo, 1999; *The rose crossing*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong, 1999; the first Asia-Pacific

Triennial of contemporary art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1999; *Flight patterns*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2000; *Absolut L.A.* International Biennial art invitational, Los Angeles, 2001; *Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Melbourne, 2002; *Parallel worlds*, Tim Johnson and My Le Thi, University of Technology Sydney Gallery, Sydney, 2003. Tim Johnson is represented in most public, corporate and private collections in Australia as well as in many collections overseas.

#### MADELEINE KELLY

Madeleine Kelly – born 1977, Freising, Germany – lives and works in Brisbane. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane in 1999 and a Bachelor of Secondary Education at Griffith University, Brisbane in 2001. She received awards for academic excellence from Griffith University in 1998, 1999 and 2000 and is a part-time lecturer in painting at Queensland College of Art.

From 1998 to 2004 Kelly's work was widely exhibited in numerous group shows in Brisbane. In 2003 she presented her first solo project, and her recent individual exhibitions include *Fossiliphilia*, Metro Arts, Brisbane; *Grounds for entropy*, Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland, Queensland; and *Pursuit of the prizefighter*, Soapbox Gallery, Brisbane. She was selected for *Primavera '05: exhibition by young Australian artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in 2005 (toured to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, New South Wales, 2006); *Colonial to contemporary: Queensland College of Art, 125 years, a contemporary overview*, Dell Gallery, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, 2006; and *Voiceless: I feel therefore I am*, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, 2007.

Kelly has been awarded prizes and international residencies including the Melville Haysom Memorial Art Scholarship, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (1998); Churchie Prize for Emerging Art (2004); the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts,

Paris (2004); and selection as a Metro Arts Artist-in-residence, Brisbane, and was selected as a finalist, ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award, Sydney (2006).

## 144 MARIA KONTIS

Maria Kontis – born 1969, Canberra – currently lives in London. She completed a Bachelor of Arts, Australian National University, Canberra in 1991; a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours 1st class) at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1999; and a Master of Art (Fine Art), Chelsea School of Art, London in 2004–05.

Kontis is the only Australian artist to have been selected to participate in the UBS Art Collection exhibitions *Drawing*, at Tate Modern, London, 2007, and *An incomplete world*, touring to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Mori Museum, Tokyo, 2007–08. Museum shows include the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship exhibition, Sydney, 2000; *Love letters to China*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003; *2004: mapping contemporary Australian art and new media*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and *In erster Linie ...* Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, in 2004; *Colour(less)*, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, New South Wales; and *Punkt und Linie, Fläche und Raum: Zeichnung heute*, Overbeck-Gesellschaft, Lübeck, Germany, in 2005; *National works on paper*, Tallis Foundation, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria; and *Chinese whispers: Nicola Brown, Muamer Cajic, Maria Kontis, Li Wenmin, Toshiko Oiyama, Amanda Robins, Deborah Wilkinson,*

Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2006.

In addition to the Sydney and Melbourne collections of UBS, Kontis is represented in the collections of Artbank, Sydney; Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria; and University of the Arts, London. She has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies including Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award, Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales (2001); Australia Council Skills and Arts Development Grant (2002); the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2002); and an Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship (2003).

## ILDIKO KOVACS

Ildiko Kovacs – born 1962, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. She completed the Higher Art Certificate, National Art School, Sydney, in 1980. Museum shows include three at Sydney's Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney: *A century of collecting 1901–2001*, in 2001; *A silver lining & a new beginning*, in 2002; and *Talking about abstractions*, in 2004. Other museum exhibitions include *Working up to yellow*, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1990; *Over east*, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of Western Australia, Perth, 1991; *Up, down and across*, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1995; *Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellowship exhibition* (touring to Australian state galleries), 1996; *Southern Sydney artists and Southern exposure 1*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Sydney, in 2000 and 2001; and *U r in E.U.*, Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney, 2004.

She was awarded the Fishers Ghost Prize, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales in 1990, and her work has consistently been selected and exhibited in the prize competitions sponsored by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, including the Sir William Dobell Foundation Art Prize in 1989; the Sulman Prize in 1998, 1999 and 2006; and the Wynne Prize in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

and 2002. Kovacs is represented in public collections including Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales; Hamilton Art Gallery, Victoria; and in the collections of corporations Allens Arthur Robinson, Sydney; Macquarie Bank, Sydney; and World Bank, Washington, DC, in addition to UBS.

### FIONA LOWRY

Fiona Lowry – born 1974, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours), Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney in 1998.

Her first solo show, *aaaxxx* was held at Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney in 2002. Since 2004 Lowry has mounted regular solo shows at Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney. *Desk job* at Mori Gallery, Sydney in 2002 was an important early project, and since 1999 she has participated in many group shows in artist-run galleries throughout Sydney including CBD, Gallery 19, Herringbone Gallery, Rubyayre Gallery, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Phat Space, Firstdraft Gallery and MOP Projects. Museum shows include *C'town bling*, Campbelltown Arts Centre, New South Wales in 2005; *Primavera '05: exhibition by young Australian artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2005 (toured to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, New South Wales, 2006); and *Flaming youth*, Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales, 2006.

She has been supported through the selection and acquisition of her work by a number of corporations including UBS; the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship (2002 and 2006); The Deloitte Foundation 'New Australian art' exhibition series (*Picturing the landscape*, 2005); ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award (finalist in 2004 and 2006, and recipient of Employees' Choice Award in 2006); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, *Primavera/Collex* Acquisitive Award (2006); Australia Council New Work Grant (2006).

### JAMES LYNCH

James Lynch – born 1974, Melbourne – lives and works in Melbourne. His work was first seen in numerous artist-organised shows held in Melbourne's alternative spaces in the late 1990s, including *Two men with a struggle* (with artist Sean Meilak), 1st Floor Artists and Writers Space; *Going nowhere video show* (curated by artist Julia Gorman), Grey Area Art Space Inc.; *Gathering* (curated by artist Ricky Swallow), Platform 2; *We are electric* (curated by artist David Rosetzky), offices of Arts Victoria; and *Dazzle* (curated by Russell Storer and Andrew McQualter), 1st Floor Artists and Writers Space.

Museum shows include *Nostalgia for the apocalypse*, PB Gallery, Swinburne University, Melbourne, and *Paintings are ace*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, in 2000; *Charley*, PS1 Museum, Long Island City, New York, 2001; *2004: Australian culture now*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, 2004; *New 05*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2005; and Anne Landa award and exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2006.

Lynch has been awarded residencies both here and abroad, including the Australia Council Los Angeles Studio (2001), and a Studio Residency, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces in conjunction with Queens College, Melbourne, (1999–2001).



## 146 JEFFREY MAKIN

Jeffrey Makin – born 1943, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales – lives and works in Melbourne. He has a diploma in painting from the National Art School, Sydney and a Masters Degree by Research from Deakin University, Melbourne. Makin has held numerous senior academic appointments while maintaining a flourishing artistic practice (nationally and internationally with over 60 solo exhibitions, his first in 1967), and is recognised as one of Australia's leading landscape painters. As well as working full-time at his practice, he has been an art critic (*Herald Sun*, Melbourne) and director of Port Jackson Press, Melbourne. During the 1980s Makin exhibited in London and was Artist-in-residence at University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK in 1990. This period enabled him to absorb the rich tradition of Northern European landscape painting.

He has won numerous awards and prizes including Rockhampton Art Prize and the Gold Coast Purchase Prize, Queensland, in 1971 and 1985; Townsville Pacific Festival Purchase Award, Queensland, 1976; Tattersall's Club Art Prize, Brisbane, 1990; and an Australian Government Post-Graduate Research Scholarship, Deakin University, Melbourne, 1995–98. Makin is represented in most national, state and regional, and many corporate collections in Australia including Artbank, Sydney; Banker's Trust, Sydney; BHP Billiton, Melbourne; CBUS Collection of Australian Art, Melbourne; Coles Myer Collection,

Melbourne; Deakin University Art Collection, Melbourne; ICI Collection, Melbourne; La Trobe University Art Museum and Collections, Melbourne; Macquarie Bank, Sydney; Medibank Collection, Melbourne; University of Melbourne, as well as UBS. He is represented internationally in the collections of the Chelsea Art Club, London; University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK; and Rothschild Bank Collection, London.

## LINDA MARRINON

Linda Marrinon – born 1959, Melbourne – lives in Melbourne. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, in 1982, and a Master of Visual Art (Sculpture) at the College in 1999.

The awarding of an Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship in 2001 enabled her to pursue the studies of anatomy that were critical to the realisation of the UBS works, at the New York Academy of Art in New York City. Marrinon has been awarded a number of other international residencies – the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1991); Australia Council Greene Street Studio, New York (1997); and an Australia Council New Work Grant (1999).

Her first solo exhibition was held at the George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, in 1983. She joined the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney the same year, and has had seven solo exhibitions with the gallery. Important museum exhibitions include *Australian perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 1983 and 1995; *Wit's end* and *Word*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in 1993 and 1999, respectively. In 2001 a solo exhibition of her paintings and sculptures was held at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. A monograph on the artist is currently in production as part of the Craftsman House 'New Art' series. Marrinon is represented in all major Australian

public collections including UBS; University of Melbourne; Smorgon Collection, Melbourne; and the Vizard Foundation Art Collection, Melbourne.

### NOEL MCKENNA

Noel McKenna – born 1956, Brisbane – lives and works in Sydney. McKenna studied architecture at the University of Queensland, Brisbane (1974–75), and art at Brisbane College of Art, (1976–78) and Alexander Mackie College, Sydney (1981).

McKenna has mounted regular solo shows at Niagara Galleries, Melbourne since 1985; Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide since 1993; and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney since 1998. Important solo museum exhibitions since 2001 include *Noel McKenna: animal works 1977–2003*, Dubbo Regional Gallery, 2003 (organised by the Gallery but due to fire, not shown in Dubbo; toured to Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria; St George Regional Museum, Hurstville, New South Wales; Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; and Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales, 2004); *Somewhere in the city: Noel McKenna*, Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane, 2005; and *Noel McKenna: sheltered life*, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand, 2005 (toured to Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, New South Wales, 2006).

His work has been exhibited internationally in South Korea and Hong Kong, and he has participated in numerous group exhibitions including *A horse show: horses in contemporary art*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; and *9 x 5 x mail*, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland (touring), in 1988; the state-wide touring *Moët &*

Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellowship exhibition, 1991; *The new metaphysics and Death*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 1992 and 1993; *A face in the crowd*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; and *Cartoons and caricature in contemporary art*, Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria (touring), 1997; *Metamorphosis*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria, 1998; *On the road: the car in Australian art*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 1999; *Parihaka: the art of passive resistance*, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand, 2000; *A century of collecting 1901–2001*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 2001; *Fair game: art and sport*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; *Sport: more than heroes and legends*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney; *A modelled world*, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria; and National Sculpture Prize exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 2003; *Home sweet home: works from the Peter Fay Collection*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2004 (touring); *We are all animals*, La Trobe University Visual Arts Centre, Bendigo, Victoria; and *Moist: Australian watercolours*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (touring), in 2005; and *Getting on Mother's nerves: psychological drama and contemporary drawing*, Mother's Tankstation Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, 2006.

McKenna has consistently been selected for the prize competitions sponsored by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, winning the Sulman Prize in 1994, and The Trustees' Watercolour Prize (Wynne) on five occasions, in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2005. He has been awarded numerous other prizes and grants including the Muswellbrook Acquisitive Prize, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, New South Wales (1995); Australia Council Professional Development Grant (1992), and Australia Council New Work Grant (2001). He was a finalist, National Sculpture Prize, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2003).

He has been supported through the selection and acquisition of his work by a number of corporations including UBS; Allens Arthur Robinson, Sydney; Chartwell Collection, Auckland, New Zealand; and Macquarie Bank, Sydney. He is represented in numerous public and private collections in Australia, including Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery, New South Wales; Dubbo Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Ipswich City Council Art Gallery, Queensland; Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria; Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, New South Wales; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Parliament House, Canberra; Rockhampton Art Gallery, Queensland; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Queensland

University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane; State Library of Queensland, Brisbane; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, New South Wales; Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria; and Wollongong City Gallery, New South Wales.

#### LARA MERRETT

Lara Merrett – born 1971, Melbourne – lives and works in Melbourne. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1996, and a Master of Arts (Painting) in 1997, at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Following her first solo exhibition in 1998 at Crawford Gallery, Sydney, Merrett has shown her work annually in solo shows at Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne, and Kaliman Gallery, Sydney. In 2000 she participated in two group shows at Snow Gallery, London, and has been represented in numerous group shows since her return to Australia including *Something for the ladies*, Penthouse & Pavement, Melbourne, and *Painting now*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney, in 2001; *New painting*, Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; *Even better than the real thing*, Penthouse & Pavement, Melbourne; the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship exhibition, Sydney; and The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists, Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney, in 2002; *Arrival/departure* (with artist John Nicholson) and *Address book*, Bus Gallery, Melbourne, in 2003 and 2004 respectively; *Selekta*, Westspace, Melbourne; and the touring exhibition *A portable model of, curator, Tristian Koenig*, Plimsoll Gallery, Centre for the Arts, University of Tasmania, Hobart, and Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, Victoria, 2005.

Merrett has been awarded grants including The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists (2001); The Marketing Grant for New South Wales Artists, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), in 2001 and 2002; and the Pat Corrigan Artists Grant, National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), in 2003. Merrett was recognised with residencies at Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad, India (2001), and Bundanon Trust Artists Centre, artist-in-residence program, North Nowra, New South Wales (2003). She is represented in the collections of Artbank, Sydney; Bundanon Trust; University of New South Wales, Sydney; and UBS.

### **SIDNEY NOLAN**

Sidney Nolan – born 1917, Melbourne, died 1992, London. Nolan met John and Sunday Reed in 1938 and became a founding member of the Contemporary Art Society, Melbourne, instigated by the Reeds that year. His first significant contribution to an exhibition occurred in 1939 when he exhibited in the Contemporary Art Society Inaugural Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. He moved to Heide, the Reed's farm at Heidelberg, Victoria in 1941, and mounted his first individual exhibition at the Contemporary Art Society Studio, Melbourne, in 1943. He made his series of paintings on the Australian bushranger Ned Kelly in 1946–47, and in 1948 participated in some eight solo and group exhibitions. He settled in London in 1955 and had his first individual exhibition in New York the following year.

He participated in *Modern Australian art, a Melbourne collection of paintings and drawings*, the first exhibition of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art of Australia, Melbourne, in 1958; the important international survey show *Documenta 2*, Kassel, Germany, in 1959; and *Recent Australian painting*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1961. The first retrospective exhibition of his work was organised at the Hatton Gallery, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK in 1961 (toured to Sheffield, Leeds, Hull, Bristol, Liverpool, Wakefield and Edinburgh, Scotland, UK), and the first monograph on his work was published the same year. In 1963

he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the arts. In 1967–68 he was honoured with a second retrospective exhibition touring Australia, to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth. Subsequent retrospectives followed in UK in 1967 and Ireland in 1973. He had exhibitions in Japan in 1973, China in 1975, Sweden in 1976, Singapore in 1982, and in Japan a second time in 1992.

In 1977 the film *Nolan at 60* was produced for ABC Australia; BBC Television, UK; and RM Productions, Munich, Germany. In 1978 his work was exhibited at the Australian Embassy, Paris, and he gave 105 drawings to the Australian nation in memory of his younger brother, Raymond John Nolan (exhibited at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, as well as in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, through the sponsorship of the corporation, Myer). A second monograph on his work appeared in 1979. The retrospective of his works on paper toured Australia in 1980–81, and his Ned Kelly paintings were exhibited as the inaugural exhibition of Heide Park and Art Gallery in 1981 (now the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne). He was made a British Knight Bachelor in 1981 and elected Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York in 1985. He established The Sidney Nolan Trust the same year. After his death in London in November

**150** 1992, memorial services were held in Canberra and London, and memorial exhibitions were mounted in London, Perth, and at The Sidney Nolan Trust, The Rodd, Herefordshire, UK in 1993.

#### SUSAN NORRIE

Susan Norrie – born 1953, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. In the 1970s she studied art at the National Art School, Sydney, and then at the Gallery School, now the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne.

Important solo exhibitions since 2001 include *Thermostat*, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles; and SOFA Gallery, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, 2001; *Undertow*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2002 (toured to Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 'AGNSW contemporary art projects' exhibition series, 2003; and to Max Fischer Gallery, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2005); and *Notes from underground*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2003.

Group exhibitions since 2000 include *Signs of life*, Melbourne International Biennial, Melbourne; and *Trace*, Liverpool Biennial of contemporary art, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK, 1999; *Zeitgenossische Fotokunst aus Australien*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (and touring in Germany), 2000; *Fieldwork: Australian art 1968–2002*, Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia, Melbourne, 2002; *Face up: contemporary art from Australia*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; and *Bloom: mutation, toxicity and the sublime*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand, 2003; *Living together is easy*, Art Tower Mito Museum, Japan and National

Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and *On reason and emotion*, 14th Biennale of Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2004; *World without end*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, 2005; and *A tale of two cities*, Busan Biennale, South Korea, 2006.

Norrie has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies including selection as the inaugural Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellow (1987); Visiting Scholar, University of Indiana, Bloomington (1992); Seppelt Contemporary Art Award, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (1997); Australia Council Fellowship (1996 and 1999–2000); Artist-in-residence, Art & Industry, Christchurch, New Zealand (2000); Artist-in-residence, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2001); APA Scholarship for PhD studies, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney (2004); and Sally and Don Lucas Artist Residency, Montalvo, California, (2006; to be taken up in 2008). Norrie represented Australia at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia in 2007. Her work is held by institutions internationally as well as by all major Australian public collections, in addition to UBS.



**DEREK O'CONNOR**

Derek O'Connor – born 1957, Warwickshire, UK – lives and works in Canberra.

Since completing art studies in Adelaide and Canberra, O'Connor has participated in numerous museum shows including the state-wide touring *Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellowship exhibition*, 1993; *On the brink: abstraction of the 90s*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2000; *It's a beautiful day, new painting in Australia: 2*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2002–03; and *Scratch the surface: recent portraiture*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, 2003.

O'Connor is represented in public collections including the Canberra Museum and Gallery; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. His work is represented in the collections of Art and Australia, Sydney; Artbank, Sydney, and he has been supported through the selection and acquisition of his work by a number of corporations, including UBS; ABN AMRO, Sydney; Austcorp Group Limited, Sydney; and RACV Art Collection, Victoria.

He has been recognised with awards including the Pat Corrigan Award for Exhibition Development, 1995; Individual Artist Grant, Department of Arts and Culture, Canberra, 1998; and the Canberra Contemporary Art Space Inaugural Art Prize, in 2003.

**BRONWYN OLIVER**

Bronwyn Oliver – born 1959, New South Wales, died 2006, Sydney. She completed a Bachelor of Education (Art) at Alexander Mackie College, Sydney, and a Master of Art (Sculpture) at Chelsea School of Art, London. Oliver held her first solo exhibitions at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney in 1986 and with Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne in 1987, and showed regularly with the galleries for 20 years until her death in 2006. Important individual exhibitions were mounted by the Adelaide Festival Centre Gallery (toured to Lawrence Wilson Gallery, Perth), and Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand in 1992; and McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria, 2005–06. Oliver participated in numerous important survey exhibitions including *The new generation*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1998; 4th Australian Sculpture Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1990; *Australian perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1991; Asia-Pacific Triennial of contemporary art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1993; state-wide touring *Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellowship exhibition*, 1994; the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award exhibition, Werribee Park, Victoria, 2001; National Sculpture Prize exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2002; *Fathoming: contemporary Australian sculpture*, Regional Galleries Association of Queensland (touring), 2002–04; Clemenger Contemporary Art Award, National

Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2006; *Strange cargo: contemporary art as a state of encounter*, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales, 2006 (toured in 2007 in New South Wales to Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery; Orange Regional Gallery; Wagga Wagga Art Gallery; and Tweed River Regional Art Gallery; and in Victoria, to Bendigo Art Gallery).

Oliver's many public commissions include Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, Victoria; Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Hyatt Hotel, Adelaide; Queen Street Mall, City of Brisbane; Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (City of Sydney 'Sculpture Walk'); University of New South Wales, Sydney; and Hilton Hotel, Sydney. Oliver was awarded a number of prizes and international residencies during her lifetime including the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1984); Power Institute Studio Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (1989); Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship to Paris (1989–1990); Project Grant, Visual Arts/Craft Board, Australia Council (1990); Artist-in-residence, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand (1991); *Moët & Chandon Australian Art Foundation Fellow* (1994); and was shortlisted for the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award (2001), and the Clemenger Contemporary Art Award, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2006). She is represented in public and private collections in Australia, New Zealand, USA and UK, including Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;

**152** Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; and University of New South Wales, Sydney.

#### JOHN OLSEN

John Olsen – born 1928, Newcastle – lives and works in the Southern Highlands, New South Wales. Growing up between the wars, he had little exposure to the formal traditions of art and culture but always had a passion for drawing, including cartoons. In the 1940s he attended art classes, studying with Godfrey Miller (1893–1964) and John Passmore (1904–84), but it was travelling that had the greatest impact. He had his first solo exhibition in 1955 at Macquarie Galleries, Sydney and his first international solo show in Paris in 1960. Since that time he has exhibited widely both in this country and abroad.

In 1991 a major retrospective was held at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, opening the following year at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Selected group exhibitions include: *Southern reflections: ten contemporary artists*, an exhibition that toured northern Europe, 1998–99; *Private collections*, Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales, 1998; *Escape artists: modernists in the tropics*, Cairns Regional Gallery (toured in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, 1998–99).

In 1977 Olsen was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the arts and in 1993 he was awarded an Australian Creative Fellowship. In 2001 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO). Amongst the many awards received throughout his career, he won the Wynne Prize in 1969 and

1985, and his self-portrait won the Archibald Prize in 2005 (both awarded by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney).

He is represented in all Australian state gallery collections, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and regional galleries Australia-wide. He is also represented in institutional, corporate and private collections in Australia, UK, Europe and USA.

**ROBERT OWEN**

Robert Owen – born 1937, Sydney – lives and works in Melbourne. Owen graduated from the National Art School, Sydney in 1962. He has participated in numerous important survey exhibitions since the 1980s including 1st Australian Sculpture Triennial, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1981; *The seventies and eighties*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1982; *Presence and absence*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1983; *Origins, originality and beyond*, 6th Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1986; *Out of Asia*, Heide Park and Art Gallery (now the Heide Museum of Modern Art), Melbourne, 1990; *Off the wall – in the air: a seventies selection*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 1991; *Inner space*, 5th Australian Sculpture Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993; *Spirit + place: art in Australia 1861–1996*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1996–97; and *Geometric abstraction in Australia 1941–1997*, University Art Museum, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1997.

Recent individual exhibitions include *Between shadow and light: London works 1966–1975*, Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria, 1999, and *Robert Owen: different lights cast different shadows*, the second Balnaves Foundation sculpture project, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004. Owen's many public commissions include Melbourne's Northern Gateway, Craigieburn Bypass,

Victoria Roads Hume Freeway Development (2004); *Webb bridge*, Docklands Authority, Melbourne (2003); *Memory pond*, Grattan Gardens Plaza, Melbourne (2001); *Discobolus*, Olympic Park, Sydney (commissioned for Sydney 2000 Olympics); *Axiom*, New Commonwealth Law Courts, Melbourne (1998); and *Vessel*, Nippon Exhibition Centre, Chiba, Japan (1989).

Owen held the position of Associate Professor and Head of Sculpture at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1988–2001. Owen has been awarded a number of prizes and residencies including artist-in-residencies, at Air & Space Studio, London (1985); Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne (1987); Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne (1988); and Centre Européen d'Actions Artistiques Contemporaines, Strasbourg, France (1988). He was awarded a John Moore's Liverpool Exhibition 7 prize, UK (1969), and Australia Council, Visual Arts Board Project Grants in 1978 and 1983, and a Visual Arts/Craft Board New Work Grant in 1988. He represented Australia at the 38th Biennale di Venezia (1978), and in 2003, received the Australia Council Visual Arts Emeritus Award for lifelong service to the visual arts. He is represented in public and private collections internationally, including the British Museum, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Olympic Sculpture Park, Seoul, South Korea; and the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan.

**PATRICIA PICCININI**

Patricia Piccinini – born 1965, Freetown, Sierra Leone – lives and works in Melbourne. She received a Diploma in Italian Language, Università di Firenze, Florence, Italy, in 1984; and completed a Bachelor of Arts (Economic History), Australian National University, Canberra in 1988, and a Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting), Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1991. Piccinini represented Australia at the 50th Biennale di Venezia 2003 with a group of biomorphic sculptures titled *We are family*. The exhibition toured to the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2003–04, and Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, 2004. She has exhibited in many other international survey shows and had solo exhibitions since 2000 at Centro de Artes Visuales, Lima, Peru, and Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, in 2001; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2002; Wellington City Gallery, New Zealand, 2006; and Des Moines Art Center (Downtown), Iowa, 2007. Piccinini has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies, and her work is represented in major public collections in Australia and internationally.

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### KIM NAPURRULA

Born c. 1960, unidentified location, Western Desert region, Pintupi – lives and works in Kintore, Northern Territory, and Kiwirrkura, Western Australia. Kim Napurrula completed her first paintings for Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs in 2002. She participated in the exhibitions *Rising stars* at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne in 2005, and *Across the board* at Utopia Art, Sydney in 2006. In 2006 she was represented in the Peter Bailie Art Award exhibition at Flinders University City Gallery, Adelaide, South Australia. UBS is the first major collection to acquire her work.

### WALANGKURA NAPANANGKA

Born c. 1946, Tjiturrulinga, west of Kintore, Northern Territory, Pintupi – lives and works in Kintore and Kiwirrkura, Western Australia. Walangkura began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in early 1996. She began to exhibit with Utopia Art, Sydney that year and with Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne in 1997 and has continued to participate in group shows with the two galleries annually, mounting individual exhibitions with Pizzi Gallery in 2003 and Utopia Art in 2004.

Her work was selected for the 14th, 15th and 16th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (1997, 1998 and 1999), and the 21st and 22nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (2004 and 2005). She participated in the first major survey

exhibition of the Papunya Tula artists, *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2000. Other important museum shows include *Mythology and reality*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, and *The inner and the outer*, Stadtgalerie Bamberg, Villa Dessauer, Germany, both in 2004. Group shows since 1996 include the *Desert mob art show*, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, in 1997, 1998 and 2001. She has exhibited her work internationally in Speyer, Germany (2000), Frederiksborg, Denmark (2001), and London (2003).

In November 1999 Walangkura contributed to the *Kiwirrkura women's painting* for the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal. The painting was included in the exhibition *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and auctioned in the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal Art Auction at the Gallery in Sydney in November 2000.<sup>1</sup> She is represented in major public collections including UBS; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands; The Kelton Foundation, Santa Monica, California; and Artbank, Sydney.

<sup>1</sup> *Untitled* 1999, synthetic polymer paint on linen, 257 x 212 cm. Catalogue, Western Desert Dialysis Appeal Art Auction, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 11 Nov 2000, lot 17.

### DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA

Born c. mid 1950s, area of Warburton Range, Western Australia, Pintupi – lives in Kiwirrkura, Western Australia. Doreen Reid Nakamarra completed her first paintings for Papunya Tula Artists in 1996. She participated in her first exhibition, *Pintupi women from Kintore*, at Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane in 2001. She participated in the exhibitions, *New works from the Western Desert* at Indigenart, Perth; *Rising stars* at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne; and *Papunya Tula artists: new works for a new space*, at Utopia Art, Sydney, in 2005; and *Across the board* at Utopia Art in 2006. She is represented in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and participated in the exhibition, *Right here, right now: recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander acquisitions* at the Gallery in 2006.

### NARRABRI NAKAMARRA

Born c. 1950, Haasts Bluff, Northern Territory, Pintupi – lives and works in Kintore, Northern Territory. Narrabri Nakamarra completed her first paintings for Papunya Tula Artists in 1999. She participated in her first exhibition, *Papunya Tula artists: a gift from the desert* at Utopia Art, Sydney in 2003, and has continued to exhibit with the gallery, in *New ideas 2005*, in 2005, and *Across the board*, in 2006. Other group exhibitions include *New works from the Western Desert* at Indigenart, Perth, and *Rising stars* at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, both in 2005. Narrabri was represented in the

SCEGGS Redlands Westpac Art Prize exhibition, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, in 2004, and the Peter Bailie Art Award exhibition at Flinders University City Gallery, Adelaide, South Australia, in 2006. She is represented in the collection of Artbank, Sydney, in addition to UBS.

#### LORNA BROWN NAPANANGKA

Born 1960, near Haasts Bluff, Northern Territory, Pintupi – lives and works in Warren Creek outstation near Mt Liebig, Western Australia. Lorna Brown Napanangka completed her first paintings for Papunya Tula Artists in 1999. She participated in her first exhibition, *All about art* at Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne in 2001, and has continued to show with the gallery annually, mounting individual exhibitions in 2003, 2004 and 2005. She has participated in group exhibitions at Framed Art, Darwin; Indigenart, Perth, Western Australia; William Mora Galleries, Melbourne; Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane; and Utopia Art, Sydney (in *Across the board*, 2006).

In November 1999 she contributed to the *Kiwirkura women's painting* for the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal. The painting was included in the exhibition *Papunya Tula: genesis and genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and auctioned at the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal Art Auction at the Gallery in Sydney in November 2000.<sup>1</sup> She is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and Artbank, Sydney, in addition to UBS.

#### PRINTMAKING IN THE UBS COLLECTION

##### CHARLES BLACKMAN

Born 1928, Sydney – lives and works in Sydney. Blackman has been honoured with two major retrospective exhibitions of his work, both organised by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, in 1999 and 2006. He has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies including two early in his career, the Helena Rubinstein Travelling Art Scholarship (1960) and the George Crouch Prize, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria (1958 and 1960). In 1997 he was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to art. His work is represented in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, all state galleries, and numerous regional galleries and university collections.

##### KAY LINDJUWANGA

Born 1957, Kuninju – Kardbam clan, Yirridjdja moiety, Bulanjdjan subsection – lives and works at Milmilngkan and Maningrida, West Central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory with her husband, John Mawurndjul and their family. Lindjuwanga had her first individual exhibition at the Aboriginal and Pacific Arts gallery, Sydney in 2004 where she continues to exhibit regularly. She exhibited an etching, a sculpture and barks in the important exhibition of the art of western Arnhem Land, *Crossing country: the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2004.

##### JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Born 1952, Mumeke, Northern Territory, Kuninju – Kurulk clan, Duwa moiety, Balang subsection – lives at Milmilngkan and Maningrida, West Central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory with his wife, Kay Lindjuwanga and family. Mawurndjul has been recognised with numerous prizes including the Telstra Bark Painting Award of the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award in 1999 and 2002, and the 2003 Clemenger Contemporary Art Award. He was a major contributor to the exhibition *Crossing country: the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2004, and was honoured with a retrospective exhibition at the Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland in 2005–06. Mawurndjul's art has crossed any line that may still exist between Aboriginal and mainstream contemporary art through the representation of Australia in important international exhibitions including *Universalis*, 23 Bialal Internacional São Paulo (1996), and *Aboriginal art in modern worlds*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, touring to State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (2000).

##### FRED WILLIAMS

Born 1927, Melbourne, died 1982, Melbourne. Williams is said to have changed the way Australians see the landscape and was honoured during his lifetime with every important accolade a contemporary artist of his generation could receive, including the publication of the catalogue raisonné of his prints



156 by James Mollison in 1968. Two later monographs were published, one by Patrick McCaughey in 1980 and, after Williams's death in 1982, a second by James Mollison in 1989.

#### BRIDGET RILEY

Bridget Riley – born 1931, London – lives and works in London. Her work over the past 45 years is documented in a vast body of interviews, articles, books and exhibition catalogues including primary texts by Maurice de Sausmarez, Anton Ehrenzweig, David Sylvester, David Thompson, Bryan Robertson, Robert Kudielka, Lynne Cooke, John Elderfield, Paul Moorhouse and Richard Schiff.

Riley is a prolific writer in her own right whose collected writings have been compiled by Robert Kudielka in the publication *The eye's mind*, published by Thames & Hudson, London, 1999.

Riley's earliest exhibition was held at Gallery One, London in 1962. As early as the mid 1960s she was singled out for a solo exhibition of her drawings by the Museum of Modern Art, New York (which toured to venues throughout USA). She represented Great Britain at the 34th Biennale di Venezia, 1968 (the work later touring to Städtische Kunstgalerie, Bochum, Germany and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam). In 1970–71 a retrospective exhibition of 20 years of her paintings and drawings was organised by the Arts Council of Great Britain (touring to Kunstverein Hannover and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany; Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin; Hayward Gallery, London; and National Gallery, Prague). Three subsequent retrospective touring exhibitions were organised including one by the British Council, *Bridget*

*Riley: works 1959–1978* which was presented at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1979. Museum and curatorial interest in Riley's work has continued to grow exponentially as demonstrated by the realisation of seven fully autonomous exhibition projects since 1999 including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney's joint show with Tate Britain, London in 2005.

**PAUL SELWOOD**

Paul Selwood – born 1946, Sydney – lives and works in Wollombi, New South Wales. He studied sculpture at East Sydney Technical College in 1964–65 and completed a Master of Fine Arts at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney in 1993. He served as technical assistant in sculpture, Royal College of Art, London in 1966–68, and since 1969, has been a lecturer in sculpture in colleges in Australia and abroad, including Bath Academy of Art, UK; Wolverhampton College of Art, UK; National Art School, Sydney; Macquarie University, Sydney; and Newcastle TAFE and Newcastle University, New South Wales.

Since 1972 he has mounted regular solo shows at Watters Gallery, Sydney. Individual museum shows include Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane in 1978, and the Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney in 1998. He has participated in many group sculpture shows including *Preview London*, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1967; 1st Australian Sculpture Triennial, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1981; *Australian sculpture now*, 2nd Australian Sculpture Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1984; *Hunter Valley sculptors*, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1986; *The face of Australia*, Australian regional galleries bicentennial touring exhibition, 1988; *Shifting ground*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1990; *Contemporary Australian drawing*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, 1992.

Selwood was awarded the Armidale Sculpture Prize, New South Wales, 1972; Liverpool Sculpture Prize, New South Wales, 1973; and Townsville Sculpture Award, Queensland, 1977. He has been awarded grants including a Commonwealth Arts Grant, 1975; an Australia Council Artist Development Grant, 1988; and a commission for the Owen Dixon Chambers, Victorian Bar Association, Melbourne, 2002. He is represented in major Australian public collections including Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales; Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland; Griffith University, Brisbane; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; Macquarie University, Sydney; Mildura Art Centre, Victoria; National Australia Bank, Melbourne; and the New England Regional Art Museum and Orange Regional Gallery, both New South Wales.

**JAN SENBERGS**

Jan Senbergs – born 1939, Latvia, emigrated with his family to Australia in 1950, and lives and works in Melbourne. Largely self-taught, he practiced as a teacher from 1967 to 1980 when he decided to work full-time on his painting. He held his first solo exhibition in Melbourne in 1960 and has held regular one-person shows since that time. In 1964 Senbergs was awarded the Commendation Prize, Georges Invitation Art Prize, Melbourne – judged by James Johnson Sweeney (ex-director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York), who purchased the work for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas where he was then director. In 1966 he was awarded the Helena Rubinstein Travelling Art Scholarship and travelled to Europe and England. Following his return, he began teaching at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology School of Art.

He represented Australia at the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil in 1973 and received a Creative Arts Fellowship at Australian National University, Canberra, in 1975. Between 1978–80 he carried out large-scale aluminium etched and anodised relief murals in the atrium of the new High Court of Australia in Canberra. After this, from a studio in Port Melbourne, he began the series of *Port Liardet* paintings, based on the port and its history and the works of its first settler, artist/hotelier Wilbraham Evelyn Liardet (1799–1878). Later series include *Copperopolis*, the *Mt Lyell* paintings based on the remote copper mines of southwest

158 Tasmania (1983); the *Northwest* and *Wittenoom* painting and drawing series, the result of a journey through northwest Australia in 1986; the *Voyage Six-Antarctica* 1988 series based on Senbergs's trip to Antarctica the previous year on the ice-strengthened ship MV Icebird (with the Australian Antarctic Division, as a participant in the Antarctic Humanities Program). He later produced a book *Antarctic journey* in collaboration with two other artists, after the expedition. In 1988 he was Artist-in-residence at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, and visited Aboriginal settlements particularly Balgo to further his interest in Aboriginal art. A collaborative project with Col Madigan and Don Watson – a series of large-scale drawings depicting the sinking of the HMAS Armidale in the Arafura Sea in December 1942 – was organised in conjunction with the Bendigo Art Gallery and toured most regional centres between 1999 and 2000, including Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Maritime Museum, Sydney; and the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. In 1992–93 he completed a large-scale painting and sculpture commission on the historic site of Australia's first Government House, the Governor Phillip Tower in Sydney.

His work is included in international collections including the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Chase Manhattan Bank Collection, New York. His prints are

held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. His work is represented in most Australian state, and numerous corporate collections, including many in Melbourne: Western Mining Corporation Limited, BHP Billiton, Boston Consulting Group, ANZ and National Australia Bank, among others.

He has been a member of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council (1984–87) and Artist-Trustee at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1984–89). In 1989 he was appointed Visiting Professor, Chair of Australian Studies at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he taught until 1990. He was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2003.

## SITE-SPECIFIC PHOTOGRAPHIC WALL WORKS, UBS MELBOURNE

### MAX DUPAIN

Max Dupain – born 1911, Sydney, died 1992, Sydney. Dupain won the Carter Memorial School Prize for Productive Use of Spare Time while a student at Sydney Grammar School in 1928 and made the decision to become a photographer the same year. He left school and joined the New South Wales Photographic Society in 1929. That year he took an apprenticeship to photographer Cecil Bostock (1884–1939), finally setting up his own studio at Bond Street, Sydney with the proceeds of a small legacy from his grandmother in 1934. His clientele was growing and necessitated a move to larger premises in the same building in 1936. He moved studios to Clarence Street in 1941 to amalgamate with the firm of Hartland & Hyde, the leading process engravers in Australia at the time – a relationship that was to last 50 years, until 1991. He was seconded to World War II in 1941–44, with the studio being left in the care of his future wife, photographer Olive Cotton. During the war he worked as a camouflage photographer for the Australian Air Force. Following his return from duty in 1944 he was commissioned by the Australian Department of Information to photograph the Australian way of life to entice potential migrants to Australia. His earliest architectural photographs date from the 1950s when he began to be commissioned by various Sydney architectural firms

and he is well-known for his series documenting the construction of the Sydney Opera House begun even before Stage I when an old tram shed still occupied the site. In 1983 he was made Honorary Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, in recognition of his contribution to the recording of an entire generation of architects' works as well as Australian historic buildings. In 1978 he travelled to Paris to photograph architect Harry Seidler's Australian Embassy building, and in 1980 to Bangkok to document Ken Woolley's embassy building there. He formed Max Dupain and Associates in 1991 at the age of 80, with Eric Sierens and his long-term assistant, Jill White who is now custodian and archivist of the Max Dupain collection. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1992. He died on 27 July that year leaving behind a legacy in excess of 1,000,000 negatives and photographs.

#### BILL HENSON

Bill Henson – born 1955, Melbourne – lives and works in Melbourne. He has exhibited extensively over three decades both in Australia and abroad. In 1995 he represented Australia at the 46th Biennale di Venezia. In 2005 a comprehensive survey of his work was held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney and the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. In 2006 he participated in the exhibition *Twilight: photography in the magic hour* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

His work is represented in every major public collection in Australia

as well as many internationally, including the Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Museum Moderner Kunst, and Sammlung Volpinum, Vienna. Two monographs, *Lux et nox* (2002) and *Mnemosyne* (2005) have been published about his work.

#### VANILA NETTO

Vanila Netto – born 1963, Salvador, Brazil – lives and works in Sydney. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours Class 1) at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney in 2001, and is studying for a doctorate in Fine Arts by Research at the School of Media Arts and Photomedia at the College.

Since 1998 she has participated in many group shows in artist-run galleries throughout Sydney including Maudespace Gallery, Kudos Gallery, Firstdraft Gallery, Blaugrau Gallery and Imperial Slacks Gallery. She has participated in international group shows in Beijing; Baltimore, Maryland; and Madrid, Spain, and mounted her first solo exhibition at Sherman Galleries, Sydney in 2004. She was selected for the Adelaide Biennial of Australian art in 2006, and awarded the Citigroup Private Bank Australian Photographic Prize in 2006. Museum shows include Members only show and Merit

awards exhibition, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, 1996; the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship exhibition, Sydney in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005; *Strange futures*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney; and *Others*, 'AGNSW contemporary projects' exhibition series, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2002; Citigroup Private Bank Australian Photographic Prize exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2003, 2005 and 2006; *2004: Australian culture now*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004; and *Soft opening*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2006.

Netto has enjoyed corporate support through the selection and acquisition of her work from juried exhibitions and prizes including UBS; The Deloitte Foundation 'New Australian art' exhibition series (*Material girls and boys*, 2005, and *Girl band*, 2006–07). Her work was selected for purchase by Deloitte from *Material girls and boys*, and she was named a finalist (highly commended), the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship (2005). She has been awarded numerous academic prizes in the course of studies at the College of Fine Arts; international residencies, including the Moya Dyring Studio Residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2003–04); and an Australia Council New Work Grant (2005).

## 160 PATRICIA PICCININI

Patricia Piccinini – born 1965, Freetown, Sierra Leone – lives and works in Melbourne. She received a Diploma in Italian Language, Università di Firenze, Florence, Italy, in 1984; and completed a Bachelor of Arts (Economic History), Australian National University, Canberra in 1988, and a Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting), Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1991. Piccinini represented Australia at the 50th Biennale di Venezia 2003 with a group of biomorphic sculptures titled *We are family*. The exhibition toured to the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2003–04, and Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria, 2004. She has exhibited in many other international survey shows and had solo exhibitions since 2000 at Centro de Artes Visuales, Lima, Peru, and Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, in 2001; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2002; Wellington City Gallery, New Zealand, 2006; and Des Moines Art Center (Downtown), Iowa, 2007. Piccinini has been awarded a number of prizes and international residencies, and her work is represented in major public collections in Australia and internationally.

## GEMMA SMITH

Gemma Smith – born 1978, Sydney – lives and works in Brisbane. She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Painting) at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney in 1999, and a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane in 2004.

Since 1998 Smith has participated in many group shows in artist-run galleries in Sydney, including Gallery 132, Gallery 19, First Draft Gallery, Imperial Slacks Gallery, Block Gallery, Briefcase Gallery, MOP Projects (Inaugural exhibition, 2003), Peloton Gallery and Loose Projects. Her first solo shows were held at Briefcase Gallery in 2002, MOP Projects in 2003, and the Farm Space, Brisbane in 2004. *Around around*, an McK17 Public Art Project at the McKell Building, Government Architect's Office, Sydney in 2006 was an important early project, and the *Adaptable* sculptures were first exhibited in Smith's individual exhibition at Metro Arts, Brisbane in 2006. Smith joined Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney in 2006 and mounted her first exhibition with the gallery that year. She has exhibited her work overseas at Raw Gallery, Berlin, (*Dead famous: new Australian painting*, 2005), and at P-10 Gallery, Singapore in 2007.

Museum shows include *Stitching: an artisan approach*, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Project Space, 2002; *New drawing: the line fell off the page*, University of Technology Sydney Gallery, 2004; *Nascent*, Queensland University of Technology Art

Museum, Brisbane, 2005; and *Against the amnesiac's lifestyle* at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne in 2006. She has been supported through the selection and acquisition of her work by a number of corporations including UBS; ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award competition, 2004; and Gadens Lawyers, Brisbane (in the exhibition *Top ten*, 2005). In 2005, Smith was selected as the Brisbane NBC Capital – Metro Arts Scholarship Artist and has been recognised with numerous other grants, including the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), Visual and Craft Artists' Grant (2005); Sector Career Development Grant, Arts Queensland (2005); American Australian Association, Dame Joan Sutherland Fund Grant (to undertake colour theory course, Parsons School of Design, New York, 2005); Sector Project Grant, Arts Queensland (2006) and Australia Council New Work Grant (2006).



**FREDDIE TIMMS**

Freddie Timms – born 1946, Police Hole (Ngarmaliny) near Foal Creek on Bedford Downs Station, Western Australia – lives in Kununurra and Frog Hollow, Western Australia. His Gija name, Ngarmaliny, is that of his birthplace. He spent his childhood on Bow River and Lissadell Stations, and subsequently worked as a stockman, handyman and fencer on several stations throughout the eastern Kimberley.

Timms's work has been exhibited in important museum shows in Australia and abroad including *Aratjarra: art of the first Australians*, organised by the Kunstammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany, 1993 (toured to Hayward Gallery, London and Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark); *Images of power: Aboriginal art of the Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993–94; *Land mark: mirror mark*, Mal Nairn Auditorium, Northern Territory University, Darwin (toured to Columbus State University, Georgia; the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; and Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra); *A century of collecting 1901–2001*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2001 (as one of only four Aboriginal artists); *Blood on the spinifex*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2002–03 (in which he was represented by a 6-panel work, *Blackfella Creek*, related to his ceiling painting at UBS); *True stories: art of the East Kimberley*, Art Gallery

of New South Wales, Sydney; and *Kelly culture: reconstructing Ned Kelly*, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2003 (*The Ned Kelly encyclopedia* published the same year featured a Timms's *Ned Kelly* painting on the back cover along with a Sidney Nolan painting of Kelly on the front cover); and *Terra alterius: land of another*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004.

Timms's work is represented in all major public collections in Australia, as well as the Lavery Collection, Sydney and the collection of the Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

**MICHELLE USSHER**

Michelle Ussher – born 1975, Moree, New South Wales – lives and works in Melbourne. She completed a Bachelor of Arts (Industrial Design) at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales in 1995; a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (Painting) at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne in 1999; and a Bachelor of Fine Art Honours, (Drawing) at Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, in 2002.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Paintings and posters*, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne, 2002; *People who need people*, First Draft, Sydney; and *Yakkedee yak yah yah yah* (with artist Rob McHaffie), Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2003; *Everything you taught me is the only thing I know* (with artist Helen Johnson), Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces Stand, Melbourne Art Fair; Room 103, Auckland, New Zealand; and *You make me wild*, Studio 12, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2006. Group exhibitions include *Proud*, Victorian College of the Arts Gallery, Melbourne, 2002; *Nature rubik 14*, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne, 2003; *1+1+1*, Yuill/Crowley Gallery, Sydney, 2004; *It's all about us*, Arts Victoria, Melbourne; *Freedom for prosperity*, David Pestorius Projects, Brisbane; *A short history in a fast machine*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne; and *Primavera '05: exhibition by young Australian artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2005 (toured to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, New South Wales, 2006); *Pictures*,

Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; and *After photography*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne; The Deloitte Foundation 'New Australian art' exhibition series, Sydney (*Figure 8*, 2006 and *Girl band*, 2006–07).

Ussher co-founded the artists' initiative ClubsProject Inc. in Melbourne in 2002. She was selected as a Gertrude Studio Artist, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, in 2005–06, and as a finalist, ABN AMRO Emerging Artist Award, Sydney, 2006, and is represented in collections including Art and Australia, Sydney; Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; and UBS.

#### DANIEL VON STURMER

Daniel von Sturmer – born 1972, Auckland, New Zealand – lives and works in Melbourne. He completed a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, in 1996; and a Master of Arts by Research at RMIT in 1999.

In 2006 the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, showed von Sturmer's *The field equation*, and in 2007 he represented Australia at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia. His first widely-seen solo exhibition, *Science fiction* was held at Penthouse & Pavement, Melbourne in 2001. Other solo shows since 2000 include *Material from another medium*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2001; *Screen test*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2004; and *Daniel von Sturmer: into a vacuum of future events*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, 2005.

Group exhibitions since 2000 include *Blink*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2000; (*The world may be*) *fantastic*, 13th Biennale of Sydney, Video programme; *No worries/mai pen rai!*, Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Victoria; and *Screen life*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (toured to Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand in 2002, and to Max Fischer Gallery, University of Auckland, New Zealand in 2003); *Face up: contemporary art from Australia*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; and *New 03*, Australian Centre for Contemporary

Art, in 2003; *A molecular history of everything*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; The Walters Prize exhibition, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand; *On reason and emotion*, 14th Biennale of Sydney; and *2004: Australian culture now*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, in 2004; *Press pause: recent Australian video installations*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, and *Shadowplay*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand, in 2005; and *21st century modern*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; and *Painted objects*, Center for Contemporary Non-Objective Art, Brussels, Belgium, and Anne Landa Award and exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2006.

von Sturmer has been awarded prizes and international residencies including an Australia Council New Work Grant (2000–01); the Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship, and Tower Studio Residency, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces with Queens College, Melbourne (2001); Australia Council Studio, London; Artist-in-residence, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand; and Arts Victoria Grant, International & Touring Program (2004); and the Helen Macpherson Smith Commission, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2006). He is represented in major public collections including UBS; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria.

**KEN WHISSON**

Ken Whisson – born 1927, Lilydale, Victoria – lives and works in Perugia, Italy. He studied at Swinburne Technical College, Melbourne, 1944–45, and received tuition from Danila Vassilieff in the years 1945–46, providing him with direct contact and influence from the seminal generation of Melbourne expressionists. He held his first solo exhibition in Melbourne in 1952 and has continued to show regularly in Melbourne and Sydney since that time. In 1978 he moved permanently to Perugia but has continued to exhibit regularly in Australia, building a significant reputation.

In the 1980s Whisson was included in many important survey exhibitions of Australian art including *Australian perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1981; *Australian painting and sculpture 1956–1981*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1982; *Recent Australian painting: a survey, 1970–1983*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 1983; *Twelve Australian painters*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 1983, and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1984; *Painters and sculptors: diversity in contemporary art*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1987; and *Creating Australia: 200 years of art*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; *The Great Australian art exhibition 1788–1988* (touring all state galleries); and *Drawing in Australia from 1770s to 1980s*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1988. Recent group exhibitions include: Drawing Biennale, Drill Hall Gallery,

Australian National University, Canberra, 2004; *Penetralia: art and psychoanalysis in Melbourne*, 1940–2004, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Gallery, Melbourne, 2004; *The sense we make: Australian art from the Orica collection*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2001; *Octane: celebrating 80 years of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Global Arts Link, Ipswich, Queensland, 2001; *On the road: the car in Australian art*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 1999.

His work is represented in all major Australian public collections as well as internationally, in the British Museum, London, and the Chartwell Collection, Auckland, New Zealand. Corporate collections include: Allens Arthur Robinson, Sydney; National Australia Bank; and UBS. In 1987 he was awarded an Australia Council Visual Arts Emeritus Award for his substantial contribution to Australian art.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### BARBARA FLYNN

As art consultant to UBS Australia, Barbara Flynn assembled the art collection for the UBS offices in Sydney and Melbourne in 2006. She was an owner of galleries for contemporary and emerging art in New York (1980–1994) and an executive with Gagosian Gallery, New York (1994–98), before relocating to Sydney in 1998. She travelled extensively while at Gagosian to develop new business in USA, Mexico, Europe and Asia-Pacific. She acted as liaison to several gallery artists and secured the representation for the gallery of Douglas Gordon and the David Smith Estate.

Since arriving in Australia, Flynn has drawn on an extensive network of relationships with galleries and artists to assist Australian collectors and corporations to identify and acquire quality art. In May 1999 she founded a company in Sydney to facilitate the global exchange of art and to advance the work of younger Australian artists. Her activities have included organising the first auction of international and Australian contemporary and emerging art, and assisting Australia-based artists to access the audience for their art and to secure museum and commercial gallery representation ex-Australia.

Flynn has been active in the area of public sculpture, including the siting of monumental-scale sculptures in Berlin, Paris, and Seattle, and the management of projects as curator to Sydney Airports Corporation Limited. Her experience extends to the institutional sector through early roles in two of the leading museums in Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, and Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, with funding from a Yale University Murray Fellowship. She acts as curator for the City of Sydney's 'Open Gallery' public banner project. She studied art history at Yale University and New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, and is the author of a book as well as essays and reviews about art.

### EWEN McDONALD

Ewen McDonald is a Sydney-based writer, curator and editor with a specialist focus on contemporary art – and on contemporary Australian and New Zealand art in particular. He has written many essays and artists' texts for exhibition catalogues, magazines and journals both here and abroad. As well as extensive professional experience within the arts industry – including working with public and private galleries internationally, a number of art publications, and with numerous arts festival organisations

– he has an established exhibition and editor profile. He has been the art curator of the Allens Arthur Robinson Collection since the mid 1980s.

Recent curatorial projects include *Public/private*, The second Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2004; and *The wanderer project*; Mike Tyler & et al., an exchange exhibition project between SOFA Gallery, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and Museum De Paviljoens, Almere, The Netherlands, 2003. From 2001 to 2004 he was curatorial advisor for SOFA Gallery which included a programme of exhibition projects and artist-in-residencies for international artists.

Editorial projects include a number of publications for the Art Gallery of New South Wales – *AGNSW collections*, a 288-page book on highlights from the collection and its history (1994); *Painted dreams* (1995); *Kandinsky and the Russian avant-garde* (1996); *Masterpieces of the twentieth century/the Beyeler Collection* (1997) – as well as *What is this thing called photography?* Pluto Press, Sydney (2002); *Points of view: the University of Technology Sydney Art Collection*, UTS, Sydney (2002); and the catalogues for the Biennale of Sydney in 2000, 2002 and 2006.

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**FOLLOWING PAGE:**  
Susan Nornie  
Air 2006 (detail)  
site-specific wall painting  
acrylic and polyurethanes on canvas  
4 panels, 254 x 630 cm overall



