

## RICK AMOR (born 1948)

Rick Amor studied at the Caulfield Institute of Art and the National Gallery School in Melbourne. Amor's first solo exhibition of paintings was with Joseph Brown Gallery in 1974 and he has continued to exhibit annually since then. Widely acknowledged as perhaps the best figurative artist working in Australia at this time, his work is keenly sought by collectors and institutions. In 2004, the National Gallery of Australia acquired a major bronze sculpture, *The dog* 2004, which now stands near the entrance to the gallery. Amor's outstanding success as a contemporary artist is testament to his ability to combine painting, sculpture and printmaking in a continuous exploration of his themes. Later in 2005, McClelland Gallery will mount a major survey of Amor's works, and there will also be an exhibition of related paintings and drawings at Benalla Art Gallery to celebrate their recent acquisition of another iconic bronze, *Walking man (The night)* 2002. A major monograph, *Rick Amor: The Solitary Watcher*, was published in 2001 by the Miengunyah Press.

### Literature/Further Reading

Rodney James, *Rick Amor: The Sea*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria, 2002  
Gary Catalano, *The Solitary Watcher: Rick Amor and his Art*, Miengunyah Press, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001  
Laura Murray Cree and Nevill Drury, *Australian Painting Now*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2000  
Gary Catalano, *Building a Picture: Interviews with Australian Artists*, McGraw Hill, Melbourne, 1997

### 3 The surveyor's dream 2000

oil on linen  
130 x 162cm  
signed and dated lower right 'RICK AMOR '00'  
inscribed verso 'THE SURVEYORS/ DREAM/ JUL 00/  
130 x 162'

### Provenance

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

Rick Amor's landscapes are not straightforward representations of a specific place. They are a combination of views as seen over many years, different sections of the painting drawn from a variety of sources. This process conjures landscapes with a mythic, often heroic dimension. Their impossible existence adding to the mystery and intrigue of the painting.

The unusual cloud formation comes from a sketch Amor did while travelling in Italy. He has repeated this cloud in a number of paintings since, utilising its swirling shape for dramatic effect.

*The surveyor's dream* 2000, is a potent scene. The clouds consume the entire upper half of the image. The rest of the canvas holds allusive elements: oversized architectural ruins, a fugitive figure, a dark green forest and shining river.

The vista in *The surveyor's dream* appears in a number of Amor's paintings. These works include *The eastern view* 1998, private collection, Melbourne.

### 15 Roman lion 2004

oil on canvas  
70 x 63cm  
signed and dated lower left 'RICK AMOR 04'  
inscribed verso ' Roman/ Lion/ June 04/ 70 x 63'

### Provenance

The artist

Museums are places of quiet contemplation, discovery and wonder. However, within the dusty storerooms and distant corners of these buildings there lies a more menacing presence of hidden truths and forgotten worlds. Amor's affinity with the darker side of these curious environs is evident, and similar shadowy imagery has featured often in his work. Using his knowledge of museums from around the world, Amor fuses their interiors into mythic environments of ambiguous historicism.

In *Roman lion*, Amor presents a deserted corridor in the depths of a museum building. A decaying but still imposing statue of a lion guards the passageway. The lone exhibit harks back to the former glory of a powerful empire – the weathered stone now but a relic. Along the hallway, lamps reflect in the polished marble and glass. The play of light and shadow masks the other exhibits from view. In the distance, a faint red glow emanates from an empty vitrina. Amor builds a feeling of tension. The unknown lingers around the corner.

## RALPH BALSON (1890–1964)

Ralph Balson was born in England, migrating to Australia in 1913. From the age of 12 he made his living as a house painter, a vocation he continued in Australia and throughout his career as an artist. He first studied art around 1922, undertaking night classes at the Julian Ashton School. He met Grace Crowley and became involved with the Crowley-Fizelle School as well as the Modern Art Centre in Sydney during the 1930s. In 1960 Balson travelled to New York, London and Paris, his first time outside Australia since migrating in 1913. In Paris he organised a show of his paintings at Galerie R. Creuze. Balson's legacy to abstraction lives on in the collections of all major state galleries.

### Literature/ Further reading

Bruce Adams, *Ralph Balson: A Retrospective*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne, 1989  
*Ralph Balson 1890–1964*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1989

### 39 Constructive painting c.1951

oil on cardboard  
44.5 x 51.5cm  
not signed, not dated

### Provenance

Collection of Grace Crowley  
Private collection, Melbourne

### Exhibited

Spring Exhibition, Joseph Brown Gallery, September 1980, cat. 126

This painting on card is a cool, intimate work from Balson's series of Constructive Paintings. Begun around 1940 and continuing through to 1955, the Constructive Paintings are seminal examples of hard edge painting to be produced in Australia. In his sophisticated exploration of European abstraction, with the influence of Mondrian and Van Doesburg clear, Balson produced sustained philosophical musings through incremental shifts in form and colour.

In the catalogue to the 1981 Balson retrospective, Bruce Adams notes that:

Between 1946 and 1951 Balson maintained his transparency of colour, but abandoned his circular and diagonal compositions for a more disciplined matrix of rectilinear shapes, aligned to the vertical and horizontal axes of the picture plane. By 1950 the colour and tonal relationships too had become closer and more uniform. (p. 24)

This aesthetic was driving towards a more and more disciplined purity which broke only once Balson came under the influence of American Abstract Expressionism and French Art Informel.

This work was originally owned by Grace Crowley, an important artist and close friend of Balson.

#### CLARICE BECKETT (1887–1935)

Born in Melbourne in 1887, Clarice Beckett is renowned for her atmospheric paintings of dawn and dusk. Studying under Max Meldrum, she quickly gained a reputation as a spirited and independent artist, eschewing the standard studio practice in favour of *plein air* painting. She held ten solo exhibitions at the Atheneum Gallery, Melbourne yet received little acclaim for her unique views of modern Melbourne, and her reputation lay dormant for many years after her death in 1935. In 1999, a significant touring retrospective *Clarice Beckett: Politically Incorrect*, curated by biographer, Ros Hollinrake at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, re-ignited considerable interest in her practice. Her work is held in all major state and regional gallery collections including the National Gallery of Australia.

#### Literature/Further Reading

*Clarice Beckett*, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2000  
*Clarice Beckett: Politically Incorrect*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne, 1999  
Rosalind Hollinrake, *Clarice Beckett: The Artist and Her Circle*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1979

#### 14 First arrival c.1924

oil on board  
29.3 x 38.8cm  
signed lower left 'C Beckett'  
Rosalind Humphries Gallery label verso

#### Provenance

Hilda Mangan  
Rosalind Humphries Gallery, Melbourne  
Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

#### Exhibited

*Clarice Beckett 1887–1935*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 2000, cat. 33

#### References

*Clarice Beckett 1887–1935*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 2000, (colour illus. p. 34)

In *First arrival* a hazy apparition of a horse and cart emerges from the early morning mist, marking the first of many visitors to arrive in town that day. This subtle depiction of stirring suburbia is captured in soft, suggestive brushstrokes. The painting appears effortless, yet one can imagine Beckett's sense of urgency as the vehicle advanced towards her.

Some critics of the time claimed that Beckett's grey and misty landscapes misrepresented the colour and vibrancy of Australia. However, as *First arrival* portrays, Beckett's delicate, tonal palette captures a cold Melbourne morning with unparalleled sensitivity and beauty.

This work is closely related to the painting *First Sound* c.1924, which was exhibited in the important survey exhibition *Clarice Beckett: Politically Incorrect* at the Ian Potter Museum of Art in 1999.

#### 43 Carnations c.1930

oil on board  
44 x 34.5cm  
signed lower right 'C Beckett'

label verso 'THIS PAINTING WAS PART/ OF THE ESTATE OF THE/ LATE BETTY OLIVE DAVIES'

#### Provenance

Rosalind Humphries Gallery, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

#### Exhibited

*Clarice Beckett: Idylls of Melbourne and Beaumaris*, Rosalind Humphries Gallery, Melbourne, 1972

One of very few still-life paintings produced by Beckett, she has captured the delicate softness of the pink carnations with remarkable sensitivity. This is a superbly executed tonal work, given incredible depth by the wonderfully fuzzy shadows on the wall. The stems of the flowers are distorted through the water in the glass vase and the arrangement seems entirely natural and real. This beautiful painting glows with colour and light.

#### PAUL BOSTON (born 1952)

Studying at Preston Institute of Technology in the late-1960s, Boston set his own path by travelling through Asia in the mid-1970s. During this period he developed an ongoing interest in Eastern mysticism. When he returned to Melbourne in 1980 he began producing paintings and reliefs that had a distinct style, a unique vision in the Australian art world. His first solo exhibition at Reconnaissance Gallery in 1983 began a long and distinguished period of exhibiting that still continues. His work features in numerous public collections, he has been the recipient of many awards including the John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize in 1991 and the Mornington Peninsula Works on Paper Award in 2004.

#### Literature/Further Reading

Roger Taylor, 'Engaging the world', *Asian Art News*, March 2001  
Laura Murray Cree and Neville Drury, *Australian Painting Now*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2000  
Gary Catalano, 'A culture like nature: an interview with Paul Boston', *Art Monthly Australia*, no. 62, 1993

Michael Wardell, 'Paul Boston', *Art and Australia*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1986

17 **Torso (skyscape)** 2001

oil on linen

145 x 107cm

not signed

inscribed verso 'TORSO (skyscape)/ PAUL BOSTON 2001/ oil on linen'

*Provenance*

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

*Exhibited*

*Paul Boston: New Paintings*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 2001, cat. 14

*References*

*Paul Boston: New Paintings*, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2001

Paul Boston's work has always had a meditative dimension. Contemplation is key to composition. Shifting tones of colour and ambiguous perspective are connected to the working of the mind. Thought is given shape through biomorphic forms that slip in behind and between each other.

In interview, Boston commented that, 'the more abstract pictures tend to be pictures that are more exclusively meditative. They are never entirely abstract because they are meant to hint at things in the world.' (*The Age*, 2 October 2004). *Torso (skyscape)* fits this description. Ostensibly abstract, a loose torso shape has been drawn just inside the edges of the canvas. This interplay of abstract and figurative elements allows the viewer's imagination to enter the image and negotiate a response and understanding of the ambiguities in the work.

**JOHN BRACK** (1920–1999)

John Brack produced some of the most recognisable images of Australian art. The iconic *5 o'clock Collins Street* is certainly a centrepiece of the National Gallery of Victoria's Australian collection. Brack both studied and taught at the National Gallery School and was

Head of Art at Melbourne Grammar School. A large number of retrospective exhibitions and survey shows of his work have been mounted including the National Gallery of Victoria (1971, 1987), RMIT Gallery (1971), Monash University of Art (1981) and the National Gallery of Australia (1999). His work is included in all state gallery collections, regional galleries and the National Gallery of Australia.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Ted Gott, *A Question of Balance: John Brack 1974–1994*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2000

Sasha Grishin, *The Art of John Brack: Catalogue Raisonné*, vols I & II, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990

4 **Duet** 1961

oil on composition board

91.5 x 112cm

signed lower right 'John Brack'

inscribed verso 'Duet 1961'

*Provenance*

Estate of John Brack, Melbourne

*Exhibited*

South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne, August 1961  
*John Brack: A Retrospective Exhibition*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1987, cat. 54 (label verso)

*References*

Robert Lindsay, *John Brack: A Retrospective Exhibition*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1987

Sasha Grishin, *The Art of John Brack: Catalogue Raisonné*, vols I & II, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990 (illustrated in black and white, vol. II p.117)

*Duet* looks at the indelible human desire for romantic happiness, the merging of souls in perfect harmony, redefining the romanticised version of love perfectly expressed in the duets of Nelson Eddie and Jeanette McDonald during the 1930s and 1940s. It develops the idea of pure unadulterated young love contained in *The tram* 1952, and in *The new house* 1953, also

linking with the impasto *Wedding Series* 1960–61 that further describes the myth of love, a dream that everyone colludes with in the uniting of male and female, a series that finished with the picture of intimacy outside of this, *The golden embrace*. The idea was compressed again in the final of the *Ballroom Dancing* pictures, 1969, where there is the romantic ingénue girl and the richly mature and worldly woman, high in sexual allusion. This is the communal yearning for perfect union and harmony, a forever happiness that is unattainable, does not bear rupture, a yearning that survives.

In *Duet*, John used the manipulation of painting pigment – of impasto – as a language for the sensuous, and abstraction as a tool for implication. The golden ringlets of her hair and the golden cloud of happiness unite with the golden waves of his hair, all totally stylized, to frame, with the red curtains, 'the Duet', but at the same time his head is a structural support of the picture rectangle, of the union. The two arms belong to one, as well as to each, with ownership in his hand, but also define the embrace of a bountiful bosom with both male and female allusion. The red curtain is painted in one way, on her side, and a different way on his, with masculinity implied as protection, strength and status by the army-officer references; the prince, the knight in shining armor, rephrased. At the same time, looking at the picture rectangle as a whole, the fringed round of the epaulet configures with the two heads to suggest a third head, fringed, given credibility by the raised arm joined to it, surely referring to the family. This makes sense both of the nurturing image formed by her convoluted dress that overtakes the lower part of the picture, and the breast-like roundness delineating her neck to shoulder, bordering the epaulet/infant double image. One legacy from French modern art was multiple imagery. At the same time there seems a savagery about the setting of the two sets of teeth so arranged as to form one mouth, the male side configuring with the decorated protective collar – and the red curtains, in front of which is the scene, have a sexual connotation, the folds of her golden hair relating to the curtain red folds behind him.

*Duet*, at one level, depicts professional singers performing in a theatre, on a stage: this floor that had further significance in later pictures. Perhaps the picture construction reference to modern art is a comment on the unsustainability of modern art, similar to unsustainable ideas of love.

John's focus on our dreams of happiness, from youth, was a statement concerning human immortality, implying the adult drama of male/female roles without which there would be no human future, where banality cannot disrupt.

Helen Maudsley, 2005

### GUNTER CHRISTMANN (born 1936)

A reclusive artist, Christmann came from Germany to Australia in 1959. He has produced an extensive body of work, creating paintings that traverse stylistic boundaries. Initially associated with the Central Street Gallery in Sydney in the 1960s, he has continued to produce abstract paintings alongside more representational pieces. Christmann was included in *The Field* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1968 and the Sao Paulo Biennale in 1971. His work features prominently in most Australian public collections, including the National Gallery of Australia. Recent visitors to the National Gallery of Victoria would have seen several pieces of Christmann's work from the permanent collection hung alongside Dick Watkins and Jenny Watson, showcasing his strength as a permanent force in contemporary art practice in Australia

#### *Literature/Further Reading*

Christopher Heathcote, Bernard Smith and Terry Smith, *Australian Painting 1788–2000*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001

Joan and Peter Clemenger *Triennial Exhibition of Contemporary Australian Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1996

*Australian Perspecta*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1981

27 **North** 1987  
oil on canvas  
168 x 137cm  
signed and dated lower right 'G.C. '87'  
signed verso 'G.S. Christmann'  
inscribed verso "'North" 1987 OIL'

#### *Provenance*

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Adelaide

#### *Exhibited*

*Christer Guntmann Paintings: Utakaw ta Burbes nda Forton*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, September 1987, cat. 6

Gunter Christmann's career has been marked by stylistic diversity and potent symbolism. The painting *North* 1987, features the motif of an outlined figure, a recurring image that first appeared in 1986. When first exhibited, the outlined figure was said to be Tiresias, the soothsayer of classical mythology. Tiresias was blind caused by the oppositions of male/female characteristics. There is another complimentary origin of this figure-symbol. Christmann would trace the outline of his own shadow on the canvas, making a skewed but certainly human-scaled portrait of the artist.

In *North*, orange-red brushstrokes loosely outline an ambiguous and allusive figure on the left half of the canvas. The expanse of the painting is taken up by a bright hot streetscape. Christmann has lived in Darlinghurst, Sydney for much of his life and this anonymous corner is most likely from an area in that suburb.

Christmann has been known to paint over earlier works, using the previous painting as a ground for his next response to the shifts of contemporary culture. This makes works from earlier periods particularly rare. This major example of his work from the second half of the 1980s has remained in the one collection since its original purchase.

### JARINYANU DAVID DOWNS (c.1925–1995)

Born in the Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia, David Downs spent much of his early years leading a traditional lifestyle. He moved to Halls Creek, drove cattle and fossicked for gold, then converted to Baptist Christianity around 1965. His art reflects his interest in both traditional Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity. He was included in the exhibition *Images of Power* at the National Gallery of Victoria and *Crossroads* which was shown in Kyoto and Tokyo in 1995.

#### *Literature/Further Reading*

Judith Ryan, *Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993

Sylvia Kleinert and Margot Neale (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2000

18 **Kaningarra** 1989  
ochre and acrylic on canvas  
152 x 106cm  
signed verso 'jarinyanu David Dowzs'  
inscribed verso "'KANINGARRA"/ 60" x 42" 028/89/  
COMMISSIONED BY/ DUNCAN KENTISH'

#### *Provenance*

Commissioned by Duncan Kentish, 1989  
Private collection, South Australia

#### *Exhibited*

Roar 2 Studios, Melbourne, 1989, cat. 27

*Kaningarra* is a storm spirit from the *Ngarrangkarni* (Dreaming). He is responsible for the weather around the site of Kaningarra, at Well 48 on the Canning Stock route, also known as Godfrey's Tank. In the Dreamtime, various storm spirits travelled all over the country, visiting each other and giving or receiving important items to take back to their homelands.

The large cloud formation, which floats behind *Kaningarra*, signifies the advent of *Miljilauru*, when the long, hot dry season abruptly ends with the arrival of dense clouds, dramatic displays of lightning, dusty wind and rain. On *Kaningarra's* headdress and body are crescent shaped markings, which represent *Wirilan*, the clouds first seen on the horizon when the storm spirits are about to manifest into rain.

David Downs began painting figurative works in the early 1980s, using natural ochres on paper, shields and canvas boards. From the mid-eighties he started to combine acrylics with natural pigments and painted on stretched and un-stretched canvas.

His distinctive figurative paintings tell a charming narrative in the great Kimberley tradition.

#### IAN FAIRWEATHER (1891–1974)

Leading an itinerant existence throughout Asia for much of his life, Fairweather, was born in Scotland. He completed his formal studies at The Hague Academy, Amsterdam and the Slade School of Art, London, but a far greater influence on his work was his observations of Chinese calligraphy. He eventually settled on Bribie Island, near Brisbane, in 1953 at the age of 62, leading an ascetic and reclusive life in conditions his infrequent visitors found appalling. Despite no running water or electricity, Fairweather continued to produce powerful paintings and drawings of extreme beauty and profound sensitivity. Along with Tuckson, he was also one of the first to embrace indigenous culture into his own art, and stands with Williams, Brack and Nolan as one of the greatest Australian artists of the modern era.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Murray Bail, *Fairweather, Art and Australia and Craftsman House*, Sydney, 1994

Ian Fairweather: *Paintings and Drawings 1927–1970*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1985

Murray Bail, *Ian Fairweather*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1981

Nourma Abbott-Smith, *Ian Fairweather: Profile of a Painter*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1978

Ian Fairweather, *The Drunken Buddha*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1965

#### 32 Fish traps 1941

pencil and gouache on paper

40.6 x 36.9cm

signed lower right 'I Fairweather', not dated  
Queensland Art Gallery, National Gallery of Victoria  
and National Gallery of Australia labels verso

##### *Provenance*

Collection of Lina Bryans, Melbourne

##### *Exhibited*

*Fairweather: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Queensland Art Gallery and touring, 1965–66, cat. 76

*Ian Fairweather Centenary Commemoration Exhibition*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1991

*The Drawings of Ian Fairweather*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1997

##### *References*

*Fairweather: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 1965

*The Drawings of Ian Fairweather*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1997 (colour illus. p.28)

In 1940, after hearing that Germany had invaded Norway, Fairweather set off from Australia on a period of travel through Asia. After attempting to enlist in Singapore, which he was denied due to his age, he continued on through Hong Kong, Saigon, Bangkok and then spending an extended period in Calcutta. It was in Calcutta that he produced the beautiful painting *Fish traps* 1941. This highly calligraphic, rhythmic work employs a classic Chinese scene of people working fish traps in a river. Strongly influenced by the pattern-like, vertical composition of Asian painting, it reveals Fairweather's remarkable sense of balance and form.

The distinguished scholar Murray Bail has noted that *Fish traps* relates closely to a Chinese oil study held in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. *Landscape near Peking* 1935, is one of the few works the artist completed in situ and shares a similar subject matter and composition as *Fish traps*. In the forefront of this work, Fairweather captures a group of fishermen guiding their boat through traps.

Included in the Queensland Art Gallery retrospective in 1965, the National Gallery of Victoria centenary exhibition and the National Gallery of Australia works on paper survey show, *Fish traps* 1941, is a fine example of Fairweather's gentle and delicate handling of this medium.

#### SAM FULLBROOK (1922–2004)

Fullbrook, born in Sydney, travelled the length of Australia numerous times, living and working in Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and the country around. His work reflects his diverse travels, covering rural and industrial landscapes, sweet still-lives and portraits of the rich, poor, prominent and anonymous. His delicate palette was encouraged by studies with William Dargie at the National Gallery School in Melbourne in the 1940s, yet his typically dusty soft colours spoke confidently for the apparently harsher elements in outback Australia. He owned racehorses and often painted works along racing themes: speeding thoroughbreds, gnarled and quirky jockeys. In 1974 he won the Archibald Prize with a portrait of legendary jockey, Norman (Whopper) Stephens. The National Gallery of Victoria organised a major retrospective of his work in 1995.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Felicity St John Moore, *Sam Fullbrook: Racing Colours*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1995

#### 5 (Mother and child) c.1960

oil on canvas

50 x 60cm

signed lower right 'Fullbrook', not dated

##### *Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

During the 1950s, Fullbrook spent time in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. This experience led directly to a number of paintings of Aboriginal subjects. These works, begun in the second half of the 1950s, continued into the 1960s with some of the most forceful and eloquent being produced between 1960 and 1964. The influence of Roy Dalgarno and his circle of Sydney social realists is apparent in Fullbrook's decision to portray indigenous people.

(*Mother and child*) shows an Aboriginal woman and child fishing beside a creek. It is an intimate picture, sympathetic and warm. It is likely to have been executed c.1960 and is an important early example of the artist's style. The fresh brushstrokes show Fullbrook at his most lyrical. Displaying a distinctive painterly touch, the oil paint has been applied thinly. The fishing line has been scraped into the surface of the paint, a definite and inventive technique.

A number of closely related works are included in prominent public collections, including *The head stockman* 1957–60, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and *River idyll* 1964, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

#### LOUISE HEARMAN (born 1963)

Louise Hearman is one of Australia's most prominent contemporary female painters. Born in Melbourne in 1963, she grew up in an artistic family and began drawing and painting as a child. From an early age she was fascinated by the magical qualities of drawing and went on to study at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne. Hearman gained fast recognition and was selected for the *Australia Perspecta* exhibition in 1993, and short-listed for the prestigious *Contemporaria 5* award in 1999. In recent years, her paintings have appeared in a number of significant survey exhibitions of contemporary Australian art including *Fieldwork* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2002 and *Uncommon World* at the National Gallery of Australia in 2000. Hearman is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

#### Literature/Further Reading

Karen Hall, 'Louise Hearman', *Depth of Field*, Shepparton Art Gallery, Victoria, 2003

Charles Green, 'Into the 1990s: the decay of postmodernism', *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968–2002*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002

Elena Taylor, 'Louise Hearman', *Uncommon World*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2000

Courtney Kidd, 'Louise Hearman', *Australian Painting Now*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2000

- 41 **Cloud, tree, hill** 1995  
oil on board  
91.5 x 68.5cm  
inscribed verso '28.1.98 LH0002/ Hearman 95/  
Cat 439'

#### Provenance

Mori Gallery, Sydney  
Private collection, Melbourne

#### Exhibited

Mori Gallery, Sydney, 1996, cat. 439

Louise Hearman's paintings play with drama, intrigue and ambiguity. *Cloud, tree, hill* 1995 is a classic example of her work. Scumbled brush marks describe a blurry landscape. Green and white vegetation fill the foreground. A black-green tree floats beneath a prominent cloud. A rainbow is part-seen, part-lost in the foreboding sky.

Hearman's use of light and shadow has often been commented upon. Elena Taylor, curator at the National Gallery of Australia, has noted that 'for Hearman, light does not serve to illuminate her subjects but rather render them even more dark and mysterious.' (*Uncommon World*, p.24) This can be seen in *Cloud, tree, hill*. The blue-white light outlining the landscape only emphasises the darkness of the foreground. But there is something unusual about this sombre scene. When studied closely, the fluffy cloud formation floating over-head appears shaped like a teddy-bear. It is like a sighting observed from a car window, when your imagination takes over and shapes and colours in the landscape start turning into familiar objects and fantastical creatures.

#### JOY HESTER (1920–1960)

The only female member of the Angry Penguins, Joy Hester holds a distinguished position in Australian art history. Born in 1920, she married Albert Tucker and became closely involved with John and Sunday Reed and their circle at Heide. She produced intimate figurative works, strongly expressionistic. She died at the age of 40 after suffering a relapse of Hodgkins disease. Her work has become integral to the narrative of Melbourne modernism, finding a place alongside

her male counterparts such as Sidney Nolan, Charles Blackman and Albert Tucker. Retrospective exhibitions of her work were held at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1981 and both the National Gallery of Australia and Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2001.

#### Literature/Further Reading

Deborah Hart, *Joy Hester and Friends*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2001

Kelly Gellatly, *Leave No Space for Yearning: The Art of Joy Hester*, Heide Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2001  
Janine Burke (ed.) *Dear Sun, The Letters of Joy Hester and Sunday Reed*, Minerva, Melbourne, 1997

Janine Burke, *Joy Hester*, Greenhouse Publications, Melbourne, 1989

Janine Burke, *Joy Hester*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1981

- 38 **Lovers** 1956  
brush and ink and watercolour on paper  
49 x 36cm  
signed and dated 'Joy Hester 56'

#### Provenance

Private collection, Melbourne  
(acquired directly from the artist's studio)

Love and lovers was a recurring theme in Joy Hester's art. A passionate personality, this subject inspired the artist to make her most powerful and accomplished work. The ink drawings, now referred to as the *Lovers Series*, were created between 1955 and 1956. Although the drawings were not exhibited collectively, it is likely that several were shown in Hester's solo exhibition at the Gallery of Contemporary Art, Melbourne in 1957.

These later works seem to emanate the intense and overwhelming power of love, at its most difficult and tragic. The dense background is a metaphor for the depth of emotion implied in this work. It isolates the figures, allowing them to dominate with dramatic effect. Many scholars compare this period of Hester's work to the Norwegian expressionist painter Edvard Munch.

**PADDY JAMINJI (JAMPIN)** (c.1912–1996)

Born on Bedford Downs Station in the Kimberley, Jaminji was a pioneer of the modern Kimberley painting movement. By the early 1980s, Paddy Jaminji and Rover Thomas had developed the classic style of modern Kimberley painting – their works utilised strong bold shapes delineated with white dots on flat, usually ochre backgrounds. His first works were painted for the Gurirr Gurirr dreaming and its accompanying corroboree. These works were in many ways a collaboration with Rover Thomas, who was responsible for the Gurirr Gurirr dreaming. Jaminji was a senior figure in the Warmun community, and his work reveals important religious and cultural knowledge. A major influence on the art of Rover Thomas and subsequent Kimberley artists including Queenie McKenzie, he is a seminal figure of the contemporary Aboriginal art movement.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Bernard Lüthi, *Arafjara Art of the First Australians: Traditional and Contemporary Works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, Germany, 1993  
Judith Ryan, *Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993

19 **Palms at Bedford Downs** 1985

natural earth pigments and bush gum on plywood panel  
121 x 120cm  
inscribed verso 'RG 1198/ MM/ 60'  
The Holmes à Court Collection label verso

*Provenance*

Mary Mácha, Perth  
The Holmes à Court Collection, Western Australia  
Private collection, Sydney

Bedford Downs, the subject of the work, is a cattle station that employed a large number of local indigenous workers many of whom were artists. This work focuses on simplified palm forms, their irregular bulges create a striking design. The reduced palette of

white, yellow and red ochres and a dense black arrests the eye. A related work of the same size and subject matter was painted at the time and is now in the collection of the State Library of Western Australia; the colours, however, are in reverse.

*Palms at Bedford Downs* 1985, was purchased by Mary Mácha directly from the artist at Warmun the same year it was painted. This is an outstanding and important work, superbly executed and it is rare to have such a significant work by Jaminji become available to private collectors.

**JOHN KELLY** (born 1965)

One of Australia's most challenging contemporary artists, Kelly has a wide following for his distinct take on Australian modernism. Known for his images of 'Dobell's cows', the combination of humour, whimsy, technical skill and serious conceptual intent have made these paintings some of the most intriguing works of the last fifteen years. In 1999 he was the only Australian artist to participate in *Champs de la Sculpture II* in Paris for which he produced the major bronze *Cow up a tree*. This sculpture now resides at Docklands in Melbourne. Such was the acclaim received from this event that he was invited to create a new sculpture for *Parade des Animaux*, the International Festival of Sculpture in Monte Carlo. *Trois vaches en pilée* showed alongside works by Botero, Calder, Haring and Niki de Saint-Phalle. Kelly continues to show regularly in Australia, the United Kingdom and Europe. A winner of the prestigious Samstag award in 1995, he has pursued an international career, currently living and working in Europe, but remaining resolutely Australian in his outlook.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Laura Murray Cree, *Awesome! Australian Art for Contemporary Kids*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2002  
Neville Drury, *Images 2 – Contemporary Australian Painting*, Craftsman House Press, Sydney, 1994  
*Anne and Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship*, exhibition catalogue, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 1996

8 **Cow depot III** 1993  
oil on marine plywood  
45 x 60cm  
not signed, not dated

*Provenance*

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

*References*

*John Kelly*, exhibition catalogue, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne 1993

The image of the cow came to Kelly while he was researching the Australian modernist artist William Dobell. Kelly read that during the Second World War, Dobell had been commissioned to paint papier-mâché cows to disguise airfields and army bases as benign farmland. Kelly saw this commission as a lost chapter of Australian art history. In his work, Kelly has given the cows their distinctive style of Dobell's notorious and iconic portraits. Their heads small, their limbs thin and long, the body out of proportion.

The cows first appeared in Kelly's work in 1992 and have featured in a variety of ways in the ensuing years. The idea of the camouflaged cows being stacked up, ready for deployment at the first sign of enemy planes was one which engaged Kelly for many years. *Cow depot III* is a particularly fine example from the keenly sought early period of Kelly's oeuvre.

**ROBERT KLIPPEL** (1920–2001)

Widely recognised as Australia's greatest sculptor, Robert Klippel was born in Sydney in 1920. After studies at the East Sydney Technical College, he spent time in London and Paris exhibiting at the Nina Bausset Gallery in Paris and made contact with the founder of the Surrealist movement André Breton. After a period of teaching in the United States, where he also continued to exhibit his sculpture, he returned to Sydney. He was the subject of a major monograph by James Gleeson in 1983 and a full-scale retrospective exhibition was held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2002.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Deborah Edwards, *Robert Klippel*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2002

Deborah Edwards, *Robert Klippel: Large Wood Sculptures and Collages*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1995

James Gleeson, *Robert Klippel*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1983

16 **Opus 160** 1963

brazed and welded steel, found objects  
39.4 x 43.2 x 17.2cm

*Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

*Exhibited*

Clune Gallery, Sydney, 1963

Australian Galleries, Melbourne, 1963

Gallery A, Melbourne, 1964

*References*

James Gleeson, *Robert Klippel*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1983, (illus. pl.142)

Between 1957 and 1963, Robert Klippel worked in America. After time in Europe, where he had close links with the Surrealists, America provided direct exposure to Abstract Expressionism. During this period, Klippel's sculpture underwent a number of changes. Around 1960 he began to introduce found components to his sculptures, bringing a new wildness to the work. The challenge of resolving balance and proportion with irregular, machine fragments gave Klippel's work greater complexity and originality and set the course of much of his art for the next forty years.

*Opus 160* 1963, was produced in New York from objects found in Minnesota and near his studio in New York. It was brought back to Australia and exhibited at Clune Gallery, Australian Galleries and Gallery A, all within the space of a year. In his substantial monograph on the artist, James Gleeson discusses the work's 'strange overtones of crustacean menace' (p. 248). Its off-kilter balance, set on three thin legs, typifies the intricate, animated nature of Klippel's best work from this period.

Klippel was one of few Australians to fully capture the energy of Abstract Expressionism in three-dimensions. Related works by Klippel from this period feature prominently in the best collections of Australian art including the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

**RICHARD LARTER** (born 1929)

Richard Larter emigrated to Australia from the UK in 1962. In 1965 he held his first solo exhibition at Watters Gallery, Sydney, introducing his particular brand of vibrant pop to the Australian scene. His work embraced abstraction, pornography and politics, giving vibrant expression to the mood of the 1960s.

A significant figure in Australian art for some forty years, he won the Clemenger Triennial Award for Contemporary Australian Art in 1996. His work is included in all major public, private and corporate collections in Australia. Undeniably one of Australia's most innovative and provocative artists, Larter's influence continues to inspire young artists today. Living and working near Canberra, he is still actively painting and exhibits annually.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Kelly Gellatly, *Stripperama*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2002

Terence Maloon, *Richard Larter: A Survey*, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1985

30 **For Eliza** 1984

acrylic on canvas  
178.5 x 103cm

signed lower left 'Richard Larter./ 12.1984.'

inscribed upper centre 'FOR ELIZA LARTER'

*Provenance*

Private collection, Sydney

Richard Larter's psychedelic medleys of twentieth century iconography were a direct reaction to the socio-political issues of the times. Larter started to produce these painted collages in the sixties, and they became central to his practice in the ensuing decades. This body of work featured prominently in the innovative survey exhibition of Larter's figurative

work, *Stripperama*, staged at Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2002. Curator Kelly Gellatly outlines the significance of these works in the accompanying catalogue:

Richard Larter's collage paintings reached their political zenith in the 1970s. Increasingly large in scale and more complex in their overlaying of imagery, the artist's very pointed juxtaposition of borrowed images from the media and popular culture, along with painted reproductions of politicians and porn stars, were both constructed and meant to be read as a huge indictment of contemporary society. (p. 20)

The artist's disillusion with public interpretation of his figurative paintings, led to a decision to exhibit purely abstract works in the 1980s. However, he continued to paint figuratively, confronting the social mores of the 'power decade' in paintings such as *For Eliza*. Twenty years on, this painting still demands attention.

In keeping with the satirical nature of these works, subjects from all sectors of society are well and truly mixed up. Cult film stars and musicians sit alongside portraits of Pat, the artist's long-term partner, model and muse. Larter rejoices in his role as paparazzi, placing politicians and pin-ups side by side.

The portraits are reproduced in various borrowed styles of cross-hatching and dotting – reflecting the media and printed sources from which they originate. Bold graphic patterns decorate the work's surface and frame the individual figures. The images and colours clash and contrast, yet are held together through the underlying strength of composition.

**TIM LEURA TJAPALTJARRI** (c.1939–1984)

Tim Leura was a pivotal member of the first group of Papunya artists and brother of Clifford Possum. The late Geoffrey Bardon stated that he was 'the most suitable man for a position of "leader" or "spokesman" for the painting group.' (Johnson p.128). His work was included in the *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* exhibition held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2003.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya: A Place Made After the Story*, Miengunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004

Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (eds.), *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003.

Vivien Johnson, *Aboriginal Artists of the Western Desert: A Biographical Dictionary*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1994

21 **Camp scene near Napperby** c.1973

synthetic polymer powder paint on board  
52.3 x 44.7cm  
inscribed verso 'TL 730628'

*Provenance*

Papunya Tula Art Pty Ltd, Alice Springs, 1973  
Private collection, Melbourne

*Camp scene near Napperby* dates from the early beginnings of the Papunya Tula Artists movement and is an important example by one of the groups' leading figures. Tim Leura was the only artist to paint left-handed amongst the original group of artists and Geoffrey Bardon often made special mention of his 'gentle and exquisite technique' (Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, p.195).

Painted in delicate ochre colours, the scene represents a woman searching for yams while a man hunts kangaroo. The kangaroo tracks divide the picture into two distinct halves, while the pattern of surrounding motifs and figures is arranged to give an overall equilibrium.

This striking work exemplifies the masterly simplicity of design and symmetry associated with Tim Leura's paintings. Two of the artist's greatest works are held in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria: *Rock wallaby dreaming* 1982 (120.8 x 179cm) and the monumental *Napperby death spirit dreaming* 1980 (207.7 x 670.8cm) painted with his brother Clifford Possum.

**KEVIN LINCOLN** (born 1941)

Born in Hobart in 1941, Kevin Lincoln moved to Melbourne and aligned himself with the Social Realists group. As he matured however, poetry rather than politics became his inspiration. Self-portraits, still-lives

and dark abstractions reflect the strength of character built over a forty year career. A respected and important artist, his paintings, prints and drawings are held in the collections of regional and state galleries including the National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Australia. A comprehensive monograph of his work is currently being prepared by curator, Hendrik Kolenberg.

Lincoln has been curated into several important touring exhibitions in recent years, including *Phenomena – New Painting in Australia:1* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and *To Look Within: Self Portraits in Australia* at the Queensland University Art Museum, and his work will also feature in *The Sound of Painting* at The Arts Centre, Melbourne later this year. He will hold a solo exhibition of new works at Niagara in May 2005.

**Literature/Further Reading**

Jeffrey Makin, *Kevin Lincoln: Selected Works 1994–99*, catalogue essay, Australian Galleries, Sydney, 2000

D Dunbar, C Tassell, C Eagle, *Kevin Lincoln – Paintings and Drawings from the 80s*, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 1990

40 **Frailty** 1992

oil on canvas  
102 x 224cm  
signed upper left and verso  
dated verso '10-12-92'

*Provenance*

The artist

*Exhibited*

*Kevin Lincoln*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1993, cat. 6

*References*

*Kevin Lincoln*, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1993, cat. 6 (colour illus.)

Kevin Lincoln's still-lives are made all the more intimate by the personal nature of what he includes in his tableau – the brushes and paper lying on his studio table, a stack of books or an invitation to an exhibition. Yet despite the introspective nature of these objects, Lincoln's belongings take on a heightened

significance when presented in his paintings. They speak of things outside themselves. They become universal symbols of composition and form.

This important painting is a key work in Lincoln's exploration of the still-life genre. In his paintings from the 1980s and 1990s he often made reference to Cubism, through the presence of musical instruments and manuscripts. In *Frailty* a flute and mirror are observed in visual counterpoint. The mirror is a recurring motif in Lincoln's still-life imagery, and is inextricably linked to his ongoing relationship with self-portraiture. In this depiction, a heavy outline reduces the object to a formal square. Nothing is reflected. Instead, the void seems to offer a threshold to dreaming and self-reflection.

The artist's sensitivity is poignantly conveyed in the pale tones and achingly thin paintwork of this canvas. Lincoln flattens the overall perspective dramatically, allowing the objects to simply exist in space. The delicacy with which they are painted is in sympathy with the tremulous, lingering notes last breathed by the flute. However, it is the fragile inscription of 'Frailty' that strikes the most melancholy chord.

**HELEN MAUDSLEY** (born 1927)

Helen Maudsley is one of the most consistent and committed Australian painters working today. Her abstract compositions are closely linked with the tenets of psychology and philosophy which she uses to explore the non-material realm of thought. Her training at the National Gallery School and the Victorian College of the Arts gave Maudsley a high appreciation of the formal qualities of painting and drawing. Structure, composition and tone are carefully planned and regarded. She is an engaging art educator, currently conducting a course at the Centre for Adult Education. Her work is included in a number of public collections including the Art Gallery of South Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Gallery of Australia.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Arthur McIntyre, *Australian Contemporary Drawing: Resurgence and Redefinition*, Bowens Hill, Boolarong, Brisbane, 1988

- 37 **The atavism is the rhetoric, is the desire, is the need; to be maintained.** 1987  
oil on canvas  
50 x 75.5cm  
inscribed verso "THE ATAVISM IS THE RHETORIC IS THE DESIRE IS THE NEED TO BE MAINTAINED" / OIL ON CANVAS 1987, H. MAUDSLEY/ EXH. STANDFIELD GALLERY 1987/ CAT. NO. 16'

*Provenance*

The artist

*Exhibited*

*Penetralia: Art and Psychoanalysis in Melbourne, 1940–2004*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2004  
Standfield Gallery, 1987, cat. 16

The titles are always important, and here this title hopes to exactly match both the content of the picture and the common human experience that the picture refers to, that is the picture's subject; that which the artist is regarding. What is described, depicted, does not refer to our concrete physical or perceptual experience but to our behavior, our underlying agendas that can only be perceived in others, never in our own selves. The language used in this picture is by visual implication, there is no 'key', no password, no deciphering. The work is not intended to be aesthetic – to give pleasure – it is meant to describe this extraordinary phenomenon of the subject, the title, which does not seem to be generally accounted for in our understanding of ourselves and others.

The picture's construction is tightly meshed with the rectangle and each component is dependant on all others. This work is for an engagement with the viewer, it expects the held gaze and attention of the viewer, the delving of the viewer's mind in interaction.

*Helen Maudsley, 2005*

**NOEL MCKENNA** (born 1956)

Noel McKenna has emerged as a major Australian artist, his quiet achievement recently recognised through a touring survey exhibition mounted by Dubbo Regional Gallery. McKenna's enduring popularity with both collectors and curators is due in part to the curious and often humorous subject matter he paints. Birds, horses, cats, dogs and everyday objects are revealed by McKenna as anything but ordinary. A

seemingly naive style is actually a careful and sophisticated rendering of shape and colour. Few contemporary Australian artists can compare for a humble and sincere artistic vision.

McKenna has been awarded the Trustees' Watercolour Prize from the Art Gallery of New South Wales on four occasions and in 1994 won the Sulman Prize. McKenna has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas and in 2005 will show at Yamaki Gallery, Japan. His work is included in all major Australian public collections as well as numerous important private collections.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Felicity Fenner, *Noel McKenna: Animal Works 1977–2003*, Dubbo Regional Gallery, New South Wales, 2003

Laura Murray Cree, *Awesome! Australian Art for Contemporary Kids*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 2001

Felicity Fenner, 'Noel McKenna: Artists' Artist', *Australian Art Collector*, Issue 9, 1999

Nevil Drury, *Images 2: Contemporary Australian Painting*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1994

- 12 **Indoor aviary** 2004

acrylic on canvas  
60 x 70cm  
signed and dated lower left 'N McKenna 04'

*Provenance*

The artist

Birds have become something of a trademark for McKenna. The budgies, owls, canaries, sparrows and pigeons form their own expanded series in paintings, drawings, watercolours and ceramics.

In *Indoor aviary*, the interior room and aviary are presented in a cool, grey monochrome. The three birds and two bowls of water are bright spots of colour. They exist as the precious points of life in this otherwise cold interior.

Outside the window is darkness – a void, and despite their captivity, the viewer is left to wonder if life inside the cage is perhaps more enjoyable than if they were flying free and uncared for in the wide world.

**MILINGIMBI (ARTIST UNKNOWN)**

A long tradition of art-making exists on Milingimbi, a small island off the coast of Central Arnhem Land. A Methodist mission had been established on the island in 1923 and during the 1950s the missionaries encouraged the making of bark paintings and artefacts for sale. In the early 1960s a number of significant artists painted there including Djawa, Bininyuwui, Lipundja, Buranday, Dawidi and many others. This was a particularly dynamic period in Yolgnu art.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Susan McCulloch, *Contemporary Aboriginal Art*, Allen & Unwin, revised edition, Sydney, 2001

Jennifer Isaacs, *Spirit Country: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art*, Hardie Grant Books, Sydney, 1999

Judith Ryan, *Spirit in Land Bark: Paintings from Arnhem Land*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1990

- 20 **Morkuy spirit figure** c.1963

natural earth pigments on carved softwood  
height: 85cm

*Provenance*

The Barnett Collection, Columbia University, New York  
Private collection, Melbourne

A *Morkuy* is a wooden figure that is carved when a man or woman dies. The figure is painted with clan symbols and provides a home for the deceased persons spirit or 'shade'. Without the safe-keeping of the *Morkuy* it is believed that the spirit will wander and cause damage to the community. One year after the death, the spirit is released from the *Morkuy* and 'sung' into the deceased persons bones, which are then placed in a hollow log or *Lorkon*.

This work was originally in The Barnett Collection, formed in the 1960s by American Ted Barnett. The indigenous artefacts were commissioned and collected by Dorothy Bennett, who lived among the communities during her extended field trips in Arnhem Land. The entire collection of over 300 pieces was donated by Barnett's family to the Columbia University and subsequently sold at auction in Australia in the late-1990s.

Early aboriginal sculptures are of enormous interest today, particularly works of such quality and craftsmanship as this outstanding *Morkuy* figure. Similar spirit figures are held in all significant collections of indigenous art.

#### **GODFREY MILLER (1893–1964)**

Born in Wellington, New Zealand, Godfrey Miller studied at the Slade School of Art, London in the 1930s. He travelled through the United Kingdom, Greece, The Philippines and Japan before returning to settle in Australia. His delicate paintings, built up with thin dabs of oil paint, are key images of twentieth century Australian art. His status as one of the most important Australian modern painters was confirmed when the Art Gallery of New South Wales mounted a major retrospective exhibition in 1996.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Deborah Edwards, *Godfrey Miller 1893–1964*, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1996  
John Henshaw (ed.), *Godfrey Miller*, Darlinghurst Galleries, Sydney, 1965

#### **2 Trees and Mountain Series 1961–63**

oil and pencil on canvas  
46.5 x 62cm  
signed lower right 'Godfrey Miller', not dated  
inscribed verso 'C34'

##### *Provenance*

Mrs Robin Cooke, New Zealand  
Private collection, Melbourne

##### *References*

John Henshaw (ed.), *Godfrey Miller*, Darlinghurst Galleries, Sydney, 1965, (illus. pl.173)

Godfrey Miller drew upon a vast reservoir of influences and ideas from both his travels and study of Greek and Indian philosophy. He took careful note of Muslim art, his mature painting technique deriving much of its style from the dense patterning in Muslim architecture.

John Henshaw notes that as early as 1933, Miller was discussing the idea of, 'a notion of world unity, an embracing immaterial Platonic Form that was arising

from unconsciousness' (p. 96). This belief in the connectivity of all things, united by the human psyche, formed the basis of his art. Throughout his paintings, there is a process of breaking down form into its constituent parts, revealing the common matter all objects share.

*Trees and Mountain Series* 1961–63, is a refined expression of Miller's philosophical and artistic vision. The work is spare, areas of canvas have been left untouched. The shapes in the work have been created through small, perfect brushstrokes of thinned grey/blue oil paint. The trees, four vertical shapes at slight angle on the left and right edges of the canvas, have been reduced to totemic forms. The mountain, an abbreviated pyramid, has been placed in the centre of the work, focusing the gaze of the viewer.

Despite its apparent simplicity, the subtle shading and delineation of the forms are remarkably complex. Miller's ideas have been given expression with both brevity and depth. As Deborah Edwards notes in her 1996 catalogue on the artist's work, 'the *Trees and mountain*, *Red earth forest* and *Summer* paintings are among the most important landscapes produced in Australia this century' (p. 70). This work is a remarkably fine example from one of Miller's most significant series.

#### **26 Still life: Comport and fruit c.1957–60**

oil and pencil on canvas  
44.5cm x 54.5cm  
signed lower right 'Godfrey Miller', not dated  
A label of authenticity is attached verso, signed by the executors of Miller's estate (Lewis Miller, John Henshaw and John Kaplan).

##### *Provenance*

Darlinghurst Galleries, Sydney  
Private collection, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

The still-life genre dominated Miller's oeuvre and in a discussion of these works, Deborah Edwards comments that Miller had used a quote from Dante to explain his approach and interest in still-life: 'All things are arranged in a certain order and this constitutes the form by which the universe resembles God' (p. 38).

This quote reveals Miller's interest in an underlying universal connection, order and pattern of all things. The still-life became a metaphor and expression of this idea.

This work is a fine example of Miller's paintings in the still-life genre. The composition has been constructed around an intricate grid of ruled pencil lines, balancing and dividing the canvas through a complex application of geometry. The elements of the still life have been thoroughly abstracted. Three pieces of orange-pink fruit have become highlights of colour in a field of bright greens and grey-blues. The geometric structure reveals Miller's debt to both Cezanne and the cubist works of Braque and Picasso.

A closely related work, *Still-life no.1* 1957–60, is reproduced in John Henshaw, *Godfrey Miller*, pl. 4.

#### **GEORGE MUNG MUNG (JAMPIN) (c.1920–1991)**

A member of the Warmun community, George Mung Mung was a great cultural leader, artist and teacher. Painting alongside Paddy Jaminji, Rover Thomas, Queenie McKenzie and Jack Britten, his output has a significant place in the cultural history of the Warmun community. He won the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award in 1990 for Paintings in Introduced Media and his work has been included in important group exhibitions including *Images of Power* and *Beyond Belief* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1993 and 1998 respectively.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Judith Ryan, *Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993  
Sylvia Kleinert and Margot Neale (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2000

#### **29 Texas country 1985**

natural earth pigments and binders, pencil and crayon on plywood  
54 x 124cm  
inscribed verso '22010/4'

##### *Provenance*

Gifted by the artist to private collector, Western Australia  
Private collection, Sydney

The title of this work, *Texas country*, refers to Texas Downs Station, where George Mung Mung worked for most of his life. A crocodile is drawn in great detail, swimming through a river full of delicate fern-like plants and water birds. The remarkably luminous and distinct colouring in the work is the result of pencil and crayon overdrawing, outlining and infilling areas around the earth pigment painting. Blue, green and a very subtle aqua give a superb life and vibrancy to this distinguished work.

This painting was originally gifted by the artist to a nursing sister who served at Warmun between 1984 and 1989. *Texas country* 1985, is an important piece from a pivotal moment in the development of contemporary Aboriginal art.

#### **OLD MICK NAMARARI TJAPALTJARRI** (c.1926–1998)

Serving on the Papunya Council when Geoffrey Bardon arrived in the area, Mick Namarari soon made it known that he was interested in painting. Bardon obliged and in the early days Namarari painted on any piece of prepared timber available. Although staying at Papunya for a number of years, he eventually moved to Kintore and continued to paint. In 1991 and 1992 he held solo exhibitions at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, as well as winning the Telstra Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Award in 1991. His work can be found in all major public and private collections throughout Australia and many overseas collections.

#### *Literature/ Further reading*

Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya: A Place Made After the Story*, Miengunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004

Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (eds.), *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2003.

Vivien Johnson, *Aboriginal Artists of the Western Desert: A biographical dictionary*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1994

- 7 **(Marnpi)** 1988  
acrylic on linen  
90 x 44cm  
inscribed verso '80315 MICK M.N.880315 P.T.A.'

#### *Provenance*

Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd, Alice Springs  
Private collection, Western Australia

Mick Namarari was at the forefront of the Papunya Tula Artists movement and was instrumental in maintaining its innovative edge. His extraordinary artistic range and the unusually large number of sites that he was responsible for, allowed him to experiment with many stylistic changes. Over time Mick Namarari transformed Papunya Tula art, heralding a move away from grid locked patterns and commanding ancestral epics to the ethereal minimalism of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Two stories central to Mick Namarari's work at this time was the *Tjunginpa* (mouse) dreaming and *Bettong* (wallaby) dreaming, both intricately connected with the important site of Tjunginpa, a small hill to the north-west of the Kintore community. The artist describes his stories with meticulous carefully overlaid dotted colour. The overall patterning represents the footprints of the animal, and also the *Kampurarrpa* (bush food) and flowers for which they forage in the area.

This painting is rare and the dotting is amazingly intense for a work of this size by Namarari.

#### **JOHN OLSEN** (born 1928)

John Olsen first came to prominence within the milieu of 1960s Sydney abstraction. His fellow artists had studios at Potts Point in Sydney and showed at Clunes Gallery and the Hungry Horses gallery. This vibrant group of artists encouraged Olsen's strong sense of mark making, an element which has helped make his combination of figurative and abstract imagery into some of Australia's best-known and most highly regarded pictures. A survey exhibition of his work was organised by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1991 and in 2001 he was awarded an OBE for services to the arts. Olsen continues to work and exhibits regularly in Melbourne and Sydney.

#### *Literature/Further Reading*

Deborah Hart, *John Olsen*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1991

John Olsen, *Paintings and Drawings by John Olsen*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1984

Virginia Spate, *John Olsen*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1963

#### 23 **Goya's dog: Life escaping a void** 1985

oil on canvas  
140 x 156cm  
signed and dated

#### *Provenance*

Australian Galleries, Melbourne  
Private collection, Melbourne

#### *Exhibited*

Australian Galleries, Melbourne, September – October 1986, cat. 8

Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne,  
August – September 1986, cat. 22

*The Jack Manton Prize*, Queensland Art Gallery,  
Brisbane, 1987

#### *References*

Deborah Hart, *John Olsen*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1991, p.180 (colour illus. pl.123)

In 1966 Olsen travelled to Spain and it was there that something clicked and his mature painting style emerged with meandering, abstracted lines of oil paint, spread across the surface of his paintings. Almost twenty years after his first visit, Olsen returned to Spain in 1985 and was reintroduced to the treasures of Spanish art, focussing his attentions on Picasso and Goya.

This large oil painting *Goya's dog: Life escaping a void* 1985, refers to a late work by Goya called *The Dog* c.1820–23. Goya's painting features the dog as a lowly, soulless creature looking towards heaven. For Olsen, this image became the basis for a series of drawings and oil paintings he produced on his return to Australia. Deborah Hart describes Olsen's painting in her major text on the artist. She comments that:

In *Goya's Dog: Life escaping a void*, a dark, sombre painting, the composition is dominated by a large black void. The dog rising up is enmeshed in a network of lines over the umber ground. The idea of the dog as a shadow on the earth 'connected to the earth's pulse' recurred in a number of brush drawings, where the integration of the animal with the myriad of lines recalls Olsen's idea of the landscape as a nervous system. (p. 180)

*Goya's dog: Life escaping a void* is an important work from the 1980s. A number of other Spanish works from this period are included in major public collections. *Calle Estrecha* 1986 is held in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria and *El Delor no.2* 1987 forms part of the Chartwell Collection in New Zealand.

#### JOHN PASSMORE (1904–1984)

John Passmore worked largely in isolation, dedicating himself to an ascetic existence centred around his art. He studied with Julian Ashton and George Lambert before traveling for 17 years in Europe between 1933 and 1950. There was considerable interest in his work when he returned to Australia and he was awarded a Helena Rubenstein Scholarship in 1959. A major influence on the second generation of Australian abstract artists such as John Olsen and Yvonne Audette, his importance as an artist was recognised with a retrospective exhibition of his work at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1985.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Barry Pearce, *John Passmore*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1984

#### 9 **Untitled** c.1958–59

oil on board  
92 x 122cm  
signed lower right 'JP', not dated

##### *Provenance*

Rudy Komon Gallery, Sydney  
Private collection, South Australia

After a long dedication to Cezanne, Passmore expanded his interests and influences in the mid to late-1950s, feeding an increasing passion for abstraction from European artists such as Viera da Silva and Alfred Mannesier. Barry Pearce mentions the support and encouragement of Russel Drysdale during this period and commented that the paintings he produced:

...are a summation of Passmore's highest gifts as a painter. His fine sense of tone, handling of pigment, and his innate ability to juxtapose colours so that their resonant qualities are enhanced, are brought

into play with a tremulous, almost awkward use of line and shape, to capture the landscape elements he was drawn to. (*John Passmore*, p.118)

This large painting can be compared, in both size and quality, with what is probably Passmore's most significant work, *Jumping horse-mackerel* 1959, held in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

#### MARGARET PRESTON (1875–1963)

On her first visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, at the age of twelve, Margaret Preston set her sights on becoming an artist. A talented and ambitious young woman, she soon began painting lessons and later enrolled at the National Gallery School in Victoria. Like many artists of the period, Preston completed her studies in Europe. Travel became a life-long passion for the artist and had a profound affect on her career. Ultimately, she used her experiences of different cultures to evaluate her perceptions of Australian identity. This manifested in her work and she embarked on a quest to create a national art form, based on the teachings of Aboriginal art. She will be the subject of a retrospective exhibition later this year at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Roger Butler, *The Prints of Margaret Preston*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1987  
Ian North, *The Art of Margaret Preston*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 1982

#### 31 **Aboriginal design of fish and lizard** c.1945

woodblock print  
edition unknown  
18.8 x 19.2cm  
signed in image lower left 'P. (in reverse) M.P.'  
signed below print lower left 'Margaret Preston'

##### *Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

##### *References*

Roger Butler, *The Prints of Margaret Preston*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1987, p.215  
Elizabeth Butel, *Margaret Preston: The Art of Constant Rearrangement*, Penguin Books in association with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1985

Margaret Preston was undoubtedly one of the most accomplished Australian printmakers of her generation. She embraced many forms of printmaking, however wood engraving held a particular interest for the artist. The simplicity of materials and speed of execution appealed to the artist and she went on to produce more woodcuts than any other printmaking process.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Preston travelled to many Aboriginal sites throughout Australia to study indigenous art and culture first-hand. *Aboriginal design of fish and lizard* was inspired by two bark paintings she photographed on one of her visits. In Preston's adaptation, the design is confidently scored into the wood, describing the rough outline of the barks and the patterning of the adorning motifs. The stark contrast of this print gives the work a bold, primitive feel.

The original woodblock, from which this impression was taken, was displayed in the 1985 retrospective exhibition *Margaret Preston: The Art of Constant Rearrangement* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. The printing block made from four pieces of end-grain Pacific maple wood, carefully joined together, has been held in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales since 1977.

#### GINGER RILEY (1937–2002)

Ginger Riley first wanted to become an artist after seeing the work of Albert Namatjira in the 1950s. This impulse lay dormant until 1987 when Riley undertook an art course provided by the Northern Territory Education Department. The figurative paintings he produced after 1987 are renowned for their vibrant colour. His work received a large amount of exposure in the 1990s through solo exhibitions initially at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi and then later at Alcaston Gallery, a survey show at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1997 and international group shows including *Aratjara* (touring London, Dusseldorf and Humlebaek). His work is featured in most state collections and in the National Gallery of Australia.

##### *Literature/Further Reading*

Judith Ryan, *Ginger Riley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1997

6 **Sea eagle at Limmen Bight 1989**

acrylic on canvas  
83.5 x 92cm  
not signed, not dated  
Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi label verso

*Provenance*

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne  
Private collection, New York

Ginger Riley painted his country in bright acrylic colour. He once tried ochre, but was dissatisfied with the results. Acrylic paint gave Riley something of the luminosity and intensity with which he saw his land. Although a distinct departure from the usual expectations of Aboriginal art, Riley's work still centred on his land and his dreamings. He often made the comment that, 'my mother country is in my mind'. It was this understanding of the land that he came from and lived in that was portrayed on canvas.

*Sea eagle at Limmen Bight* is an important early work from the very beginning of Riley's exhibiting career. In 1987 he had been included in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards at the Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery, then in 1988 in a group show at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne. His work, with its remarkable colour, inventive composition and unself-conscious brush strokes, instantly stood out as something very special.

*Sea eagle at Limmen Bight* features a key motif of Riley's art – the *Ngak Ngak* or sea eagle, who is said to have created an island near the mouth of the Limmen Bight River. In his later work, the *Ngak Ngak* is almost exclusively white, but there are a number of examples in Riley's work where he has painted it yellow, brown, grey, charcoal or green. A closely related work, *Ngak Ngak*, sea eagle, 1988, held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia features the sea eagle painted in green.

**EVELINE SYME (1888–1961)**

Eveline Syme was born in Melbourne, moving to England in her twenties to study at Cambridge University. After completing her degree, she pursued her interest in art, moving to Paris in 1923 to take 'criticism' from Maurice Denis. In 1929 she enrolled at the Grosvenor School of Art in London, where she studied linocutting under Claude Flight. She moved back to Australia in the late 1930s and combined her art making interests with an involvement in women's education.

*Literature/further reading*

Stephen Coppel, *Linocuts of the Machine Age: Claude Flight and the Grosvenor School*, Scholar Press in association with the National Gallery of Australia, London, 1995

Hendrik Kolenberg and Anne Ryan, *Australian Prints: From the Gallery's Collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1998

Roger Butler, *Melbourne Woodcuts and Linocuts of the 1920s and 1930s*, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria, 1981

Chris Deutscher and Roger Butler, *A Survey of Australian Relief Prints 1900/1950*, Deutscher Gallery, Melbourne, 1978

11 **Skating 1929**

colour linocut  
edition 5 of 50  
13 x 16cm  
signed lower right 'E.W. Syme.'  
title and edition number lower left 'Skating. 5/50'

*Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

*References*

*Modern Australian Women: Paintings and Prints 1925–1945*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003 (colour illus. p.52)

During the 1920s and 1930s linocut excited artists with its ability to produce bold, minimal designs. It was seen as a thoroughly modern medium, appropriate for the spirit of the age. A number of Australian artists, including Dorrit Black, Ethel Spowers and Eveline Syme, studied linocut under

Claude Flight at the Grosvenor School of Art in London. It was under the tuition of Flight that they learned experimental print-making techniques and new directions in contemporary art.

This work by Syme, *Skating 1929*, is an important piece from the period. Its simplified figures and lyrical curving lines produce a highly abstracted image. The flat perspective further reveals Syme's interest in form, shape and movement rather than representational image making. An association with Futurist compositions can be seen in the work, although this is likely to be a relatively distant influence.

*Skating* is one of the most radical of all Syme's prints. It holds close relation to Ethel Spowers important group of prints from the beginning of the 1930s which includes *The Gust of Wind* 1931 and *Swings* 1932. *Skating* was reproduced in colour in the catalogue to *Modern Australian Women: Paintings and Prints 1925–1945* a touring exhibition mounted by the Art Gallery of South Australia. An edition of this print is held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia.

**EDWIN TANNER (1920–1980)**

Tanner was born in Wales and emigrated with his family to Australia when he was a young child. Beginning his working life at the age of 14 at the steel works in Port Kembla, Tanner quickly showed a prodigious skill in mathematics and draughting and he went on to obtain formal qualifications in mathematics and engineering. Based in Hobart working as an engineer for the Hydro-Electric Scheme, Tanner attended part-time the University of Tasmania, studying logic, scientific method and the history of philosophy and had a life-long passion for literature, especially poetry. Holding regular solo exhibitions throughout Australia from 1959, Tanner was the recipient of several awards including the Victorian Government Captian Cook Bicentenary Acquisitive Prize in 1970. His work features in the collections of all major public collections and many private and corporate collections in Australia and overseas.

*Literature/Further Reading*

*Edwin Tanner: Works 1952–1980*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne, 1990

*Edwin Tanner Retrospective 1976*, The Age Gallery, Melbourne, 1976

13 **Iron monarch** 1957–70

oil on composition board  
179 x 121cm

signed and dated lower right 'EDWIN TANNER.  
1957–70.'

inscribed verso 'IRON MONARCH/ OIL PAINT/ (artist's  
name and address)'

*Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

*Exhibited*

*Edwin Tanner: Works 1952–1980*, Monash University  
Gallery, 1990, cat. 26

*Edwin Tanner Retrospective 1976*, The Age Gallery  
1976 cat. 39

*References*

*Edwin Tanner: Works 1952–1980*, Monash University  
Gallery, Melbourne, 1990 (colour illus. p.18)

*Edwin Tanner Retrospective 1976*, The Age Gallery,  
Melbourne, 1976 (colour illus. on cover)

In 1944, while working as a structural engineer, Edwin  
Tanner was stationed in Whyalla, South Australia.  
Based close to the shipyards he became fascinated by  
the launchings he would view from time to time. It is  
from the memories of these experiences that he later  
created what is widely regarded as one of his finest  
works, *Iron monarch*.

This painting featured prominently in both the  
retrospective exhibition at The Age Gallery in 1976 and  
the survey show at Monash University Gallery in  
1990. The title pays homage to a mining area in South  
Australia, and this name was also chosen by BHP to  
christen a new steel liner in 1973.

Tanner made no attempt to disguise his engineering  
profession in his paintings. On the contrary, it formed  
the very fabric of his art. In *Iron monarch*, Tanner's  
mathematical mind meets with imaginative  
extravagance, transforming the industrial liner into a  
majestic giant. The plotted figures are reminiscent of  
the overwhelming difference in scale that exists  
between this mighty invention and its creator.

This magnificent painting is a true Blue Chip offering  
and one of the most significant and iconic of Tanner's  
distinctive oeuvre.

**NEIL TAYLOR** (born 1945)

Melbourne sculptor Neil Taylor has been practising for  
more than twenty years, refining his technique and  
conceptual framework with remarkable dedication and  
consistency. Working from his studio he has  
undertaken commissions for public and private  
collections, including a major piece for the Heide  
Museum of Modern Art sculpture garden funded by  
the Victoria Commissions Program in 1999. His work  
has been included in numerous group exhibitions in  
Australia and overseas and is included in the  
collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, the  
National Gallery of Australia and Tarrawarra Museum  
of Art. In 2005, Taylor will exhibit at Niagara and also  
in Chicago at the cutting-edge Suburban Gallery.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Robert Nelson, 'Working with metaphor', *The Age*, 9  
April 2003

*Volume & Form*, Andres Contemporary Art, Singapore,  
1999

Roger Taylor, 'From the inside out', *World Sculpture  
News*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1999

33 **Late picking** 2004

galvanised wire and oil based enamel  
27 x 37 x 26cm

*Provenance*

The artist

Neil Taylor's work feeds off an ordered chaos. The  
materials have been configured with an eye for rhythm  
and movement, with cohesion formed through  
patterning. At the joining points, Taylor has dabbed an  
electric-orange paint. Moments of connectivity have  
been highlighted. The sculpture, although patterned,  
never perfectly repeats, it utilises a structured  
improvisation.

Neil Taylor has commented that the piece derives  
some of its inspiration from organic structures. He  
likenes the unfolding, expanding nature of the piece to

the growth of plants. There is the sense that it repeats,  
though with infinite variation. Another way to relate to  
Taylor's work is to see it as a diagram of abstract  
thought. Its complex interweaving of short lengths of  
steel describing the way ideas come in and out of  
contact, creating activity or remaining separate,  
networking, tangential.

**ROVER THOMAS** (c.1926–1998)

Rover Thomas began painting on a regular basis in  
1981. His first works were painted as ceremonial  
objects for the Guirr Guirr corroboree, Rover Thomas'  
own dreaming. His work has become synonymous  
with the art of the East Kimberley people and he has  
gained international recognition as one of Australia's  
most important landscape painters.

Along with Trevor Nickolls, he was the first Aboriginal  
artist to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale in  
1990. A retrospective of Thomas' work curated by  
Wally Caruana, was held at the National Gallery of  
Australia in 1994. In 2003, a definitive exhibition of  
Rover Thomas' works from the Holmes à Court  
Collection was shown at the National Gallery of  
Victoria and toured nationally. His works are in all  
major state galleries, and prominent private and  
corporate collections in Australia and overseas.  
Thomas died in 1998, having become one of the most  
widely known and respected contemporary Aboriginal  
artists.

*Literature/Further Reading*

*Rover Thomas: I Want to Paint*, National Gallery of  
Victoria, Melbourne, 2003

*The Eye of the Storm: Eight Contemporary Indigenous  
Artists*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1996  
Rover Thomas with Kim Akerman, Mary Mächa, Will  
Christensen and Wally Caruana, *Roads Cross:  
Paintings of Rover Thomas*, National Gallery of  
Australia, Canberra, 1994

Judith Ryan, *Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the  
Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,  
1993

Bernard Lüthi, *Arajara: Art of the First Australians:  
Traditional and Contemporary Works by Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Artists*, Kunstsammlung  
Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, Germany, 1993

- 22 **Telegraph Creek country** 1994–95  
 natural ochres and binders on canvas  
 80.5 x 160.5cm  
 inscribed verso 'WARINGARRI.ABORIGINAL/ ARTS/  
 160 x 80cm/ S700/ AP0571/ ROVER THOMAS'

*Provenance*

Private collection, Sydney

*Telegraph Creek country* is a classic minimalist painting. Thomas has used traditional dotting techniques to describe shapes and a combination of profile and planar views of the land around Telegraph Creek. Dividing the canvas almost in half, the strong black vertical line depicting a road or creek gives distinct structure to the composition. This museum quality work is in excellent condition and also has great aesthetic appeal.

**TIWI ISLANDS (ARTIST/S UNKNOWN)**

Located north of Darwin, the Tiwi Islands refer to Bathurst Island and Melville Island. The indigenous communities of these islands developed distinct cultural expressions; the burial ceremony associated with the Pukamani poles is a prominent example. European settlement came to the Tiwi Islands in 1825 with Fort Dundas, a British military post. Researchers including Hermann Klaatsch and Baldwin Spencer spent time on the Tiwi Islands recording traditional customs. In 1969 the Tiwi Design Aboriginal Corporation was established, providing a formal outlet for textile printing, pottery, material culture and limited edition prints.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Margaret K.C. West, *Declan: A Tiwi Artist*, Australian City Properties, Perth, 1987

Margo Neale, *Yiribana: An Introduction to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collection*, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1994

- 35 **Pukamani poles** c.1970s  
 natural ochres and binders on wood  
 heights: 180cm, 197cm, 133cm

*Provenance*

Mary Mácha, Perth

Private collection, Perth

Pukamani refers to the burial ceremony conducted by the Tiwi Island people. These heavy wood posts, painted with ochre and natural gum binder, form a central part of the ceremony. Carved by middle-aged men of high status, the poles represent aspects and characteristics of the deceased. The different motifs painted on the poles represent hair, fingers, eyes, clan and body scarification. In the ceremony, the poles are placed around the burial site of the deceased.

These three poles were originally purchased from the official Government marketing outlet in Perth in the late-1970s. They were purchased on behalf of a private collector by the art consultant and Government adviser Mary Mácha. A related set of Pukamani poles, commissioned by Tony Tuckson, are a centrepiece of the Aboriginal collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The simple forms of the Pukamani poles are recognised as some of the most elegant in contemporary Australian sculpture. Early poles of this quality are rarely available on the market, most having been curated into public collections.

**LONG TOM TJAPANANGKA** (born c.1930)

Working as a stockman and police tracker for much of his life, Long Tom began painting in 1993. Originally from the Kimberley, but now settled at Haasts Bluff, he began painting at the Ikuntji Women's Centre. In 1999 he won the prestigious Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. After producing his contribution to the 2000 Adelaide Biennale exhibition *Beyond the Pale*, Long Tom declared he would stop painting. Despite much demand for his art, he decided that his eyesight had deteriorated to the extent that he could no longer produce paintings to the standard he would like. His work is included in all important state collections as well as the National Gallery of Australia. The cover of the recent Art Gallery of New South Wales publication, *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art in Australia*, features a major Long Tom painting from their collection.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Hetti Perkins (ed.), *Tradition Today: Indigenous Art in Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004

Brenda L Croft, *Beyond the Pale: Contemporary Indigenous Art*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000

Jennifer Isaacs, *Spirit Country: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art*, Hardie Grant Books, Sydney, 1999

Marina Strocchi, *Ikuntji Paintings from Haasts Bluff 1992–1994*, IAD Press, Northern Territory, 1995

- 10 **Irantji, Ayres Rock** 1995  
 acrylic on linen  
 152 x 183cm  
 inscribed verso 'IK95LT101 LONG TOM  
 TJAPANANGKA 60" X 72"'

*Provenance*

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne

Private collection, Melbourne

*Exhibited*

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1998

Long Tom's minimalist paintings are some of the most important examples of Western Desert painting to be produced in the 1990s. *Irantji, Ayres Rock* 1995 is a superb example of his large, clean, expansive landscapes. The ground of the canvas has been painted in a rich brown-ochre colour. Four clear topographical locations have then been outlined with a dense, clotted application of white paint. The features of the landscape: rocks, hill, bluffs and mountains are always revealed in this way, by painting in the background or negative space.

Long Tom most often depicts the area around Haast's Bluff, but also painted his father's country. On occasion he included more figurative elements like camels, snakes, camp dogs, goannas, trees, waterholes and even people, however rather than using complex symbols, Long Tom's work was resolutely representational. Hetti Perkins has commented that, 'his artistic tendency towards the figurative is anomalous to classic Western Desert painting.' (*Tradition Today*, p.152)

## ALBERT TUCKER (1914–1999)

Born in Melbourne in 1914, Albert Tucker was an intimate of the Heide circle, a member of the Angry Penguins and a key figure in modern Australian art. Working closely with John Perceval in the 1930s and 1940s he produced his famous *Images of Modern Evil*. A controversial figure throughout his life, Tucker passed away in 1999, leaving a significant body of paintings and drawings. A retrospective exhibition of his work was conducted by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1990.

### *Literature/Further References*

Janine Burke, *Australian Gothic: A Life of Albert Tucker*, Knopf, Milsons Point, 2002

James Mollison and Jan Minchin, *Albert Tucker: A Retrospective*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1990

James Mollison and Nicholas Bonham, *Albert Tucker*, Macmillan in association with the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1982

Christopher Uhl, *Albert Tucker*, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1969

*Albert Tucker: Paintings 1945–1960*, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, 1982

### 25 **Antipodean head** 1963

oil on board

34.3 x 24.5cm

signed lower left 'Tucker 63'

Bonython-Meadmore Gallery label verso

### *Provenance*

Bonython-Meadmore Gallery, Adelaide

Private collection, Melbourne

From the outset, Albert Tucker produced raw, rough paintings, capturing extremes of emotion. He developed specific iconography for a range of social and moral concerns. These symbols developed a weight and force as they were repeated and varied in different paintings, and so came to form a recognised series.

While in Europe, Tucker displayed an interest in both national and personal sentiment and created a new symbol. The antipodean head is a totemic image that speaks with a personal tone about national character.

In an interview with James Mollison, Tucker discussed the way he understood this motif to function in his paintings:

What I hope I succeeded in doing when I finally managed to metamorphose the crescent into the antipodean head was to endow it with a certain kind of fortitude or dignity. I was unloading the demons.

It is humanized, in a sense, almost Christ-like. A figure of fortitude and sorrow, built up from the texture of the landscape itself.

With the head I felt I succeeded in making a form that was humanized and was facing life with some kind of hope, if not of winning at least surviving. I was ready to settle for a minimum of optimism. (Albert Tucker quoted in Mollison and Bonham, pp.60–61)

## SAVANHDARY VONGPOOTHORN (born 1971)

Savanhary Vongpoothorn has emerged over recent years as one of the meteoric talents in Australian art. Born in Laos, she came to Australia at the age of eight. In recent years she has travelled widely, living for a time in Singapore and undertaking studio residencies in Scotland and Japan. Always her environment, and the culture in which she is immersed, is reflected in her work. She has featured prominently in publications such as *Art and Australia* and *Australian Art Collector* and her work has been collected by major institutions including the National Gallery of Australia.

### *Literature/Further Reading*

Deborah Hart, *Uncommon World: Aspects of Contemporary Australian Art*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2000

Tanya Paterson, 'Liquid Light', *Art and Australia*, vol. 40, no. 3, 2003

### 42 **Untitled (sorry/compassion)** 2004

acrylic on perforated canvas

180 x 120cm

inscribed verso 'Savanhary Vongpoothorn "Untitled (sorry/compassion)" 2004 acrylic on perforated canvas'

This work is special, but for reasons not immediately apparent. The canvas is perforated by hand from behind and paint daubed on the raised surface. The fine thread-like filigree in the red bands is actually the words 'sorry', 'compassion' repeated over and over in Laotian script. The alternating bands seem to have a wonderful panoramic landscape within. The work's political dimension is subtle, almost disguised, but its poetic expression has a strength all its own.

The sentiment in this work is certainly heartfelt. As a migrant to Australia herself there is a sincerity with which she takes up the issue of the current refugee experience. Like so much of her work, personal experience informs the subject matter and its expression.

Work by Vongpoothorn was included in the exhibition *Isle of Refuge*, a touring group show organised by the Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney. This exhibition focused on the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australian detention centres, a topic that is at the heart of *Untitled (sorry/compassion)*.

## WESTERN ARNHAM LAND (ARTIST UNKNOWN)

Western Arnhem Land has a long, perhaps the longest, tradition of painting in the world. The rock paintings are now known to pre-date those of the Lascaux Caves in France. The barks of Western Arnhem Land were collected as early as 1882, but in the 1950s a stylistic change occurred in the way figurative images were patterned with the cross-hatched *rarrk* designs. The Kunwinjku artists distinguish the figures infilled with the elaborate *rarrk* work as 'dreaming' works. They have mythical importance and must be painted in with strict regard to the ritual sequences of colour and detail. Often the young artists may be taught to paint a design before he has been initiated into the full meaning of the dreaming. In the 1970s, art became a significant source of income for some communities, but the sale of this work did not affect the value of the cultural and ceremonial context of the art and they remained integral to sacred Kunwinjku ceremonies. Early bark collections are an integral part of every major collection of indigenous art in Australia and overseas.

*Literature/Further Reading*

*Crossing Country: The Alchemy of Western Arnhem Land Art*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004  
*Kunwinjku Bim: Western Arnhem Land Paintings from the Collection of the Aboriginal Arts Board*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1985

28 **Mimi hunting** c.1970

earth pigments on bark  
48 x 34cm

*Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

This rare early bark is a potent image of male virility, typical of figurative work from this area. The dramatic dark background brings the mimi figure into striking relief. Fine lines of brown and white ochres run vertically down the body and horizontally across the face, suggesting ceremonial body-paint designs.

**KEN WHISSON** (born 1927)

Born in Lilydale on the outskirts of Melbourne, Whisson studied at Swinburne Technical College before taking classes with Danilla Vassilief, a Russian-born painter associated with the Heide circle. He moved to Perugia in Italy in 1977 and continues to live and work there, maintaining close links with Australia through regular visits and annual solo exhibitions. A distinguished senior painter, his work is represented in all major Australian public collections as well as the British Museum, London and the Chartwell Collection, New Zealand.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Ken Whisson, *Ken Whisson: Paintings and Drawings 1947–1999 with Writings and Talks by the Artist*, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2001  
Ken Whisson, *Ken Whisson: Paintings 1957–1985*, Broken Hill City Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1986

36 **Recollection of Southern Queensland** 30/9/83,

18/10/83, 21/6/98, 24/6/00

oil on linen

90 x 92cm

not signed

inscribed verso 'Ken Whisson/ Perugia 30/9/83 + 18/10/83/ + 21/6/98 + 24/6/2000/ Title:

'Recollection of/ Southern Queensland'/ Dimensions: c.90cm x c.92cm/ Oils on Belgian linen'

*Provenance*

The artist

Whisson will often work on a painting over a long period, making small additions until he feels he has accurately evoked the feelings, memories and sensations of his subject. He will often keep unfinished paintings for a number of years, going back to an image and only calling it finished when he feels it has come to full gestation. *Recollection of Southern Queensland* is an extreme example of this process. Largely completed in 1983, he returned to the work some fifteen years later, making minor alterations to the sheds. The work was completed only in June 2000, the elapsed time providing Whisson a fresh perspective on both his memories of the area and the production of the artwork.

As is intimated by the title of this work, Whisson's paintings are often reconstructions of ideas, places and even people from memory. Whisson has produced a number of related works. The drawing *Landscape as seen from the train no. 3, Queensland* 1973 takes the same subject and features houses with similar form, while *Vivid recollections of South Australia* 1996 produces a related image through the same process of 'recollection'.

The psychological and physical appearance of a person or place is distilled through the artist's remarkable memory to become intuitive marks, lines, shapes and forms on the canvas. Dense fields of colour, abbreviated sketching and a web of lines produce a mindscape and landscape combined.

Whisson is a truly unique Australian artist whose work would stand with the best anywhere in the world. He is a regular visitor to the Venice Biennale and many look forward to reading his very personal reckoning of the event in *Art Monthly*. It is surprising that no curator has yet put him forward as Australia's representative at Venice.

**BRETT WHITELEY** (1939–1992)

Brett Whiteley was a remarkable talent, his ability to draw and paint catapulted him to star status in the art world from an early age. In the late 1960s and 1970s he lived in England and travelled through Europe and America, exhibiting at prestigious galleries including the Stedelijk in Amsterdam. His

work was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Tate Gallery in London. Renowned for his paintings of Sydney Harbour and intimate interiors, his influence from Asian art allowed him to indulge his skill with fluid brushstrokes and fast elegant lines. He passed away in 1992 in tragic circumstances.

*Literature/Further Reading*

Barry Pearce, *Brett Whiteley: Art and Life*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1995  
Sandra McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1980

34 **(View from the kitchen table, Arthur Boyd's house, Tuscany)** 1977

ink and acrylic on silk

62 x 50cm

signed and dated lower right 'brett whiteley 77'

*Provenance*

Private collection, Melbourne

In 1977, Brett Whiteley spent time at Arthur Boyd's residence in Tuscany with his close friend, the sculptor Joel Elenberg. Executed in ink and acrylic on silk, this work takes as its subject Boyd's garden. Framed by an archway from the house, the vines have been rendered with a dense, detailed array of ink marks and vibrant lines. They seem to sprout with new life. In the foreground the table shows the sparse outline of a teapot, a vase with flowers, and five extraordinary olives, carefully picked out in soft green paint. They give this essentially black and white ink painting a curious and intriguing focus.

The second half of the 1970s was a highly productive period for Whiteley. He enjoyed relative stability in his personal life. This mood of comfort allowed Whiteley to be more relaxed and at ease with his painting practice. The air of self-consciousness that hampered his work from the early 1970s evaporated. His drawings became more fluid and sensuous, the impact of Matisse and Japanese calligraphy bore fruit in his paintings, drawings and lithographs. This beautiful work gives a brief sense of Whiteley's settled and content existence at this moment in his life.

## FRED WILLIAMS (1927–1982)

Born in Melbourne in 1927, Williams studied at the National Gallery School and also attended classes with the early modernist painter George Bell. In the 1950s he spent time in London, before returning to Australia and beginning his long association with the Australian landscape. Williams exhibited regularly with the Rudy Komon Gallery in Sydney. His paintings of the You Yangs, Fern Tree Gully and later the Pilbara have featured in numerous books, catalogues and exhibitions, including a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1977. In 2001, Rio Tinto Limited gifted Williams' *Pilbara Series* to the National Gallery of Victoria where they were placed on prominent display then toured to regional galleries.

### 1 Fern Tree Gully 1966–67

oil on canvas

122 x 152.7cm

signed lower right 'Fred Williams'

label verso 'FRED WILLIAMS/ LW939 Fern Tree Gully, 1966–67/ Oil on canvas/ 122.0 x 152.7cm'

#### *Literature/Further Reading*

James Mollison, *A Singular Vision: The Art of Fred Williams*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1989

Robert Lindsay and Irena Zdanowicz, *Fred Williams: Works in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1980

Patrick McCaughey, *Fred Williams*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1980

#### *Provenance*

Estate of Fred Williams, Melbourne

#### *References*

Patrick McCaughey, *Fred Williams*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1980 (colour illus. pl.4)

Fred Williams must be regarded as the most important Australian landscape painter of the twentieth century. His paintings revolutionised the way the Australian bush was perceived. He approached the landscape with a vertical or topographical perspective. He used careful brushmarks to express the intense richness of

colour and texture in apparently barren expanses of Australian bush. Not since the Heidelberg School had the Australian landscape been so completely rethought.

*Fern Tree Gully* 1966–1967, is a very large oil painting from what is Williams' most significant period. Combining the influences of European abstraction, American Abstract Expressionism and a classic modernist emphasis on colour and form, Williams articulated the bush with dramatically reduced, and surprisingly sensuous marks of oil paint. Looking through the blur of a parched landscape, Williams highlighted and took note of its rich reds, deep charcoals, white inflections and subtle grey-greens.

Patrick McCaughey, whose seminal monograph on the artist was first published in 1980 has written extensively on this work:

*Fern Tree Gully* was substantially painted direct from nature and uses the hillside in a landscape motif where the curving line of the hillside is held against the straight horizon line. He wanted to establish, firmly and clearly, middleground and background and this is precisely what the juxtaposition of curved and straight lines achieves. Even when working directly from nature, Williams reached out for a clear pictorial structure to carry observation to the viewer. (*Fred Williams*, p.16)

This work has never before been offered for public sale. It is a rare and important example of William's landscapes from the 1960s. Related works include paintings from the *Upwey Landscape Series* and the *You Yangs Series* which are held in the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and all significant corporate and private collections.

## YIRRKALA (ARTIST UNKNOWN)

Yirrkala was a Methodist mission set up in 1935. Since its inception it has been an important area for the production of barks and carvings. Encouraged by individuals involved with the mission as well as a number of important collectors, including Ronald and Catherine Berndt and Swiss anthropologist,

Karel Kupka, art has been an important cultural and financial aspect of the Yirrkala community. An art centre was established in the 1970s under the direction of art advisor, Michael O'Ferrall. Today Yirrkala continues a proud Yolgnu tradition of fine award-winning contemporary art.

#### *Literature/Further Reading*

Susan McCulloch, *Contemporary Aboriginal Art: A Guide to the Rebirth of an Ancient Culture*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001

Sylvia Kleinart and Margot Neale (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2000

### 24 Carved bird c.1976–79

natural ochres on wood

height: 65cm

inscribed on base 'YN'

#### *Provenance*

Mary Mächa, Perth

Private collection, Perth

Carved from a single section of wood, the bird has a particularly clean and precise finish. Its surface is smooth and the beak, belly and head have been carved with careful consideration to form. The forehead is quite severe and square and the beak is slightly open. The intricate designs, on the body of the bird and the lower totem on which it stands, have been highlighted by shallow carvings cross-hatched into the painted surface.

This very beautiful bird carving was produced some time during the 1970s, around the time that the Yirrkala Art Centre (Buku-Larrnggay Mulka) was founded. It is in excellent condition and a particularly elegant example. A related work by Yirrkala artist Baluka Maymaru, *Marrngu* (Possum), in the collection of the National Museum of Australia and featured in the exhibition *Aratjara: The Art of the First Australians*, exhibits similar incised cross-hatching on the surface of the wood.

This work was originally purchased from the official Government marketing outlet in the late-1970s by Mary Mächa on behalf of a private collector in Perth.