

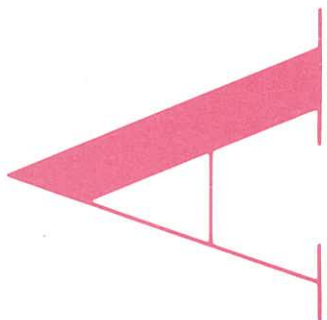
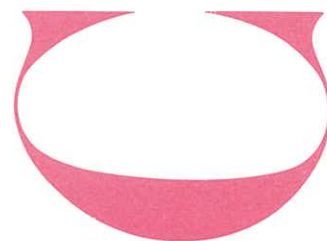
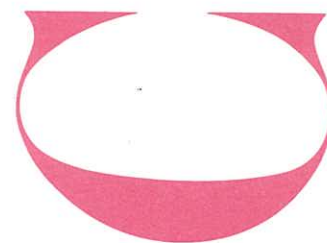
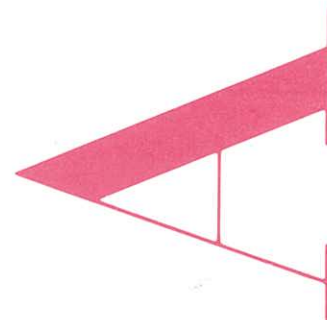
SCOTT REDFORD

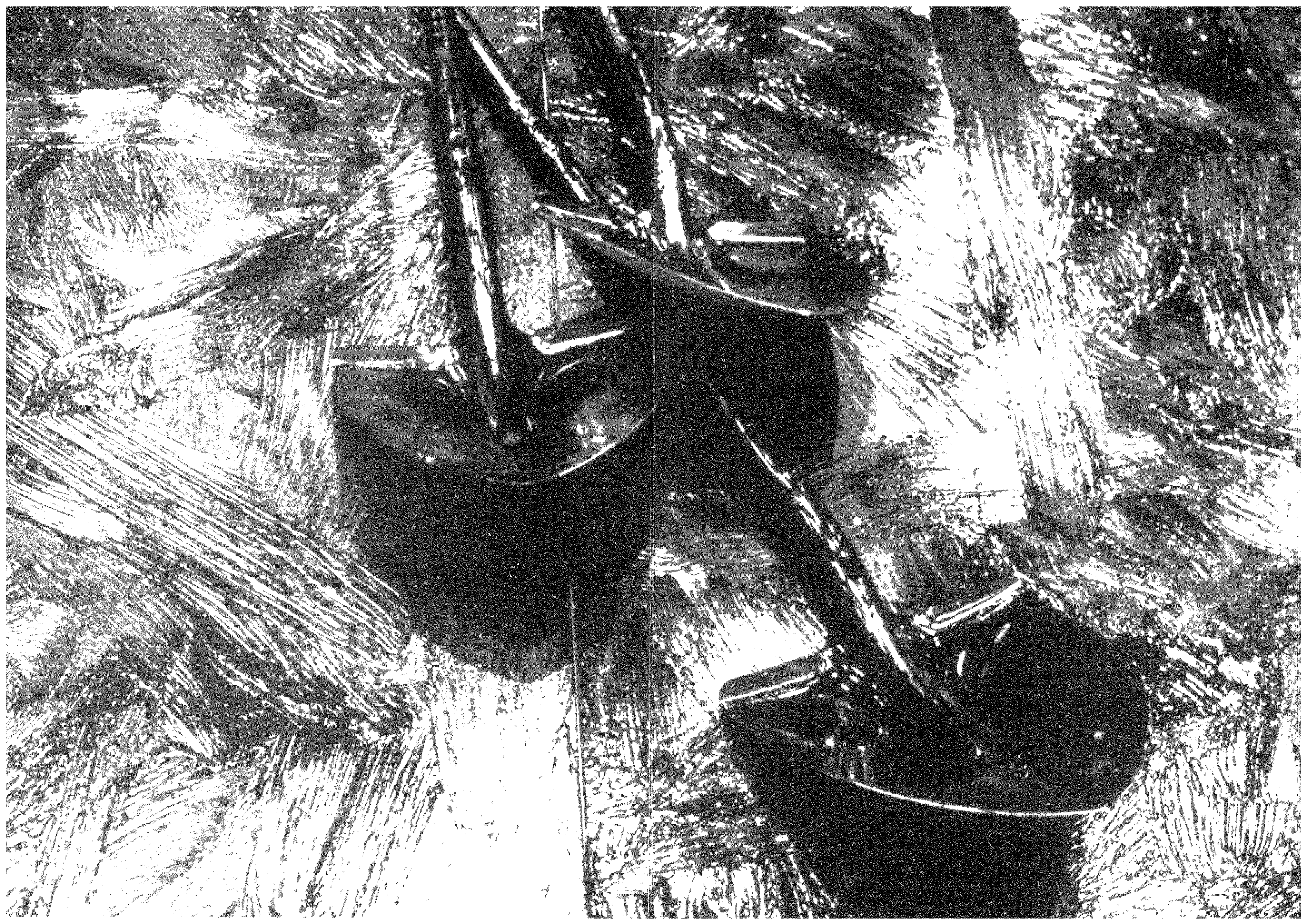
Painting As Phenomena



DANTE'S INFERNO: HOW TO CREATE A STORM OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE (A SHOWER OF PETROL WOULD NOT WORK. IT ONLY FELL IN SHEETS OF FLAME. SMALL INFLAMMABLE PELLETS, ENCASED IN DROPS OF LIQUID WERE USED INSTEAD). HOW TO CONVEY THE ILLUSION OF NUDE TRANSPARENT BEINGS (AN X-RAY PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS WAS USED). HOW TO MAKE A LAKE OF ICE: A SEA OF BOILING PITCH; CLOTHES THAT WOULD BE FOREVER IN FLAME AND YET NOT HARM THEIR WEARERS. NOT TO MENTION ALEXANDER CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT AND MEDUSA WITH HER COIFFURE OF WRITHING SNAKES.

May 19 to June 19, 1988





PAINTING AS PHENOMENA

"A great pleasure arose from seeing all those incoherent structures. This site gave evidence of succession of man-made systems mired in abandoned hopes."

ROBERT SMITHSON

Standing before one of Redford's floor pieces one cannot help but be struck by the immediacy of the strewn surface. Confrontation is not only visual but also physical, with scale and texture functioning as dominant characteristics. The use of black not only unifies the surface but also subsumes and neutralises the different origins and uses of the littered objects into abstracted formal codings of shape, texture, line, space and mass.

Glossed over and seemingly emptied of meaning, the conglomerate surface draws associations and evokes memories. The format and interchangability of parts recall the floor pieces of Carl Andre; the use of materials and consideration of a three dimensional surface as an extended painting are not far removed from the concepts of Richard Serra's early projects, while the dramatic expanse, the sense of saturation and scale, the dominant presence and apparent emptiness recall the tenets of Abstract Expressionism.

Like lines of battle, lines of descent can be drawn from Redford's work. Sometimes tricky, memory and association are an enjoyable game to play. Included in Redford's more recent exhibition at Bellas Gallery were large wedge-shaped paintings. Hung low to the floor, the flat unblemished black surfaces became purely a function of edge and space. Almost sculptural reliefs by virtue of the sheer depth of the stretchers, the paintings were a startlingly clear rearticulation of minimalist concerns.

It is against a background of appropriation, replication, quotation, loss or originality, simulacrum etc. that Redford's work may comfortably and conveniently be situated. In a curious way, Redford's insistence on the inclusion of the Gold Coast City (a town of fabulous proportions, excess and transparency), as a biographical detail acknowledges, though somewhat indirectly, the triumph of the empty category. In a not dissimilar way Redford used the liner notes from Roxy Music's first album as catalogue notes for his exhibition LOVE + PRIDE at the Institute of Modern Art in 1986. Not only did the lengthy association of seemingly random phrases describe Redford's work, but also offered such an apparent luxury of meaning and pure quotation that they could be read as purely blank.

However difficult it is to pinpoint the shifting categories of Redford's work, it is to the category of Abstract Expressionism that Redford consistently returns. The ideas of a field, the use of scale, the ambivalent intimacy, the possession of a site and the almost technical indifference are recurring characteristics of his work. In placing his origins, it is without too much effort and with a little humour that one could imagine Redford echoing Serra's statement, "if my origins as a painter culminated in anything they culminated in Pollock!"

Although the game of memory is enjoyable and provides much liberty, it is rather Redford's association of, approach to and use of ideas that is far more relevant. For Redford, as for Serra, "the phenomenological implications of Pollock's Action Painting needed not repeating but extending"² It is by this extension that Redford deliberately turns everything 'on its head'.

When discussing his and his contemporaries' approach to their art, Barnett Newman once wrote, "we are making it of ourselves". In making abstract ideas real, Redford takes recourse to the familiar, and through his literal use of everyday objects, brings the real back into the abstract. It is in re-examining the closed phenomenology and metaphors of Abstract Expressionism and its legacies that Redford presents one with PAINTING AS PHENOMENA.

Bronwyn Clark-Cooler

May, 1988

FOOTNOTES

1 Michael Auping, "Beyond the Sublime" in "Abstract Expressionism the critical development", general editor Michael Auping (Thames & Hudson, 1987) p.152.

2 *ibid.*

SCOTT REDFORD

Biography

Born Gold Coast City, 1962. Lives in Gold Coast City.

Solo Exhibitions

- 1986 LOVE + PRIDE, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.
- 1987 THE FLAG OF CONVENIENCE, Bellas Gallery, Brisbane.
- 1987 LOVE AND SADNESS, Gold Coast Community Entertainment and Arts Centre, Gold Coast City.
- 1987 MACHINE, Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane.
- 1988 COLD WAR, Bellas Gallery, Brisbane.
- 1988 PAINTING AS PHENOMENA, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

Group Exhibitions

- 1983 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.
- 1985 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.
- 1985 VISUAL TENSION, (Brisbane insert), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
- 1985 Watters Gallery, Sydney.
- 1985 QUEENSLAND WORKS 1950-1985, Queensland University Art Museum, University of Queensland.
- 1985 EXCHANGE 4 ARTISTS, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1986 DIE BRUCKE, Blunt Report No. 11.
- 1986 YOUNG CONTEMPORARIES, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
- Bellas Gallery, Brisbane.
- 1987 LINES OF FORCE, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.
- 1987 LINES OF FORCE, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.
- 1987 BELLES LETTRES, John Mills National, Brisbane.
- 1987 Bellas Gallery, Brisbane.
- 1987 ONE DAY SHOWS, Series, Bellas Gallery, Brisbane. (Conducted with Mark Webb).
- 1988 THE STUDIO ARTISTS, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.
- 1988 A SYSTEM OF DIFFERENCES, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.

Publications

- Exhibition Catalogue - NO NAMES, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1983.
- Bronwyn Clark-Cooler - EXCHANGE 4 ARTISTS, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985.
- Peter Cripps - PETER CRIPPS INTERVIEWS ARTISTS, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1986.
- Exhibition Catalogue - LINES OF FORCE, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, May-June 1987.
- George Petelin - "SCOTT REDFORD: FLAG OF CONVENIENCE" Eyeline No. 1, 1987.
- Michele Helmrich - THE GLOSS AND THE VEIL: A SUBLIME WASTING IN THE BLACK "PAINTINGS" OF SCOTT REDFORD. Eyeline No. 4, 1988.
- Peter Anderson - SCOTT REDFORD: COLD WAR. Eyeline No. 5, 1988.
- Exhibition Catalogue - IN SEARCH OF GOLD, The Centre Gallery, Surfers Paradise, 1988.

Grants

- 1986 Visual Arts Board Special Project Grant.

Collections

Art Bank, Griffith University, Gold Coast City Art Collection, Churchie Boys School Art Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, James Baker Collection.

Prizes

Churchie Boys School Emerging Artists, 1988.

Acknowledgements

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Work courtesy Bellas Gallery, Brisbane.

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