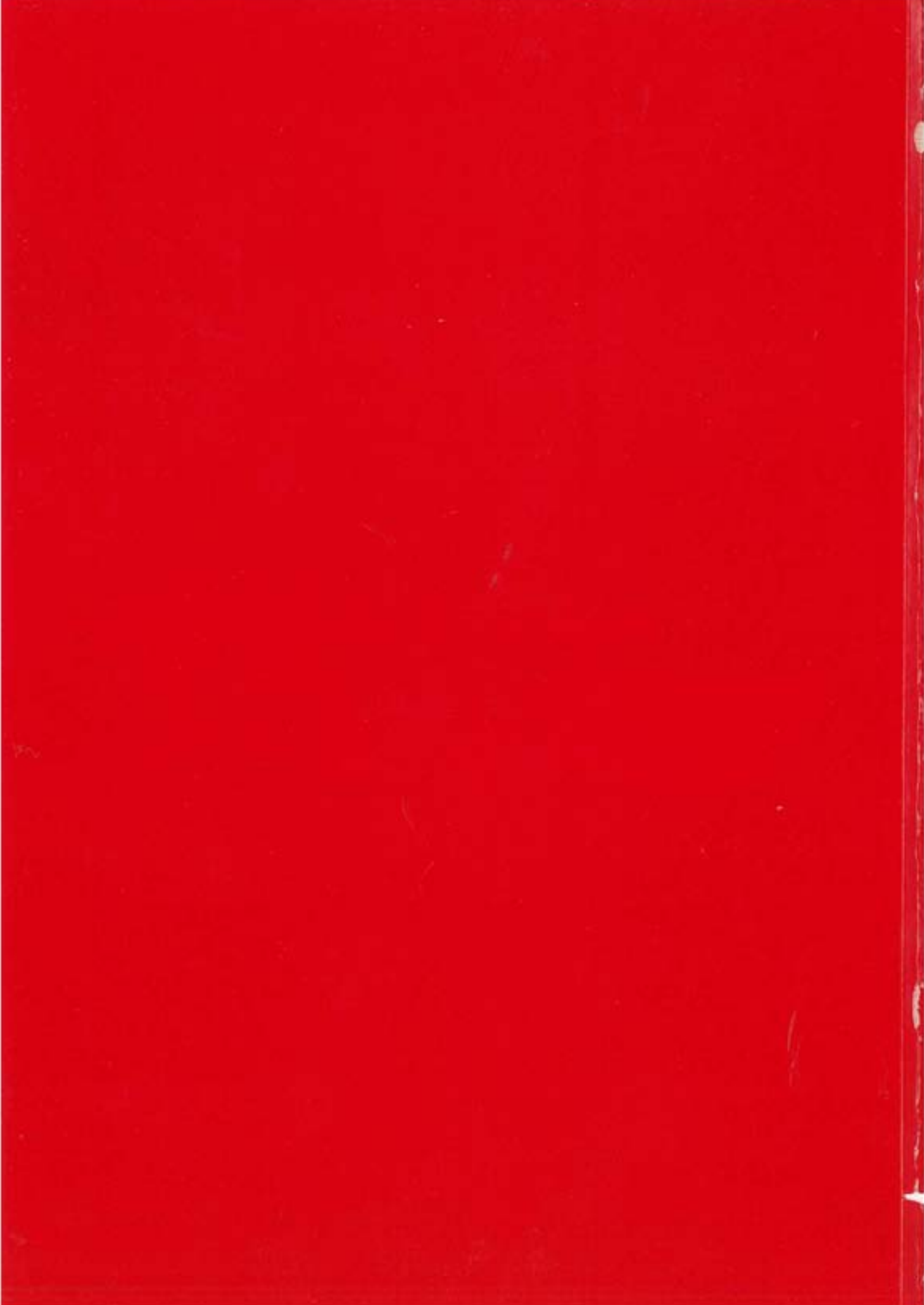


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# ICI Contemporary Art Collection





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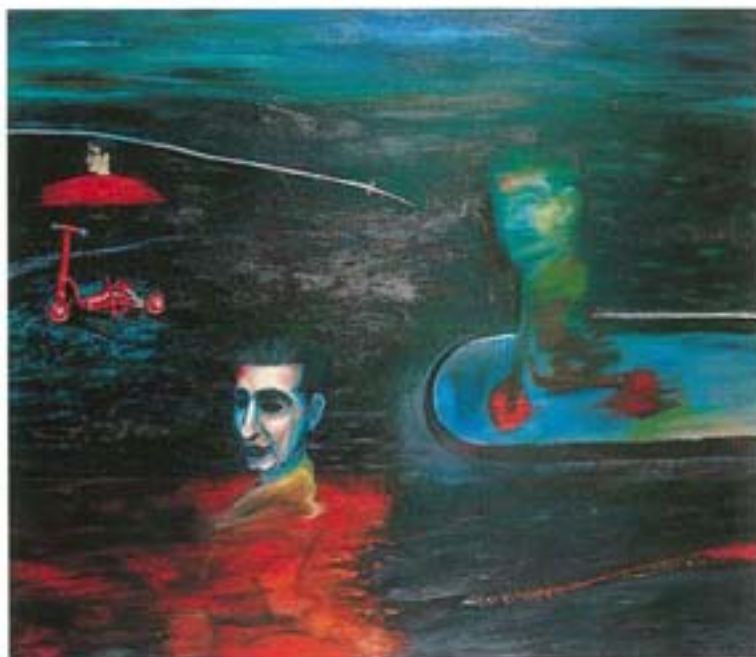
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Cover Inset  
John R NEESON  
*Late 20th Century painting, no. 1* 1988

Title-page  
Jon CATTAPAN  
*Scooter faith*, 1986

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# ICI Contemporary Art Collection



The ICI Contemporary Art Collection was assembled mostly during 1988 to document changing moods within Australian contemporary art practice during the late 1980's.

The touring Collection was first exhibited at the City of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery in May, 1989

ICI Australia  
Melbourne 1989



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## FOREWORD

The ICI Contemporary Art Collection is a new initiative in ICI Australia's continuing support of the visual arts in this country.

ICI began its first collection of Australian art in 1954. This collection now represents a sketched view of the history of Australia, reflected through its major art developments, from convict days through to the 1970's.

The Company was the first corporate buyer of Australian works of art on a significant basis and an important aspect of the collection's early involvement was the patronage provided to then promising, but relatively unknown, artists like Arthur Boyd, Sidney Nolan and John Perceval. Today the collection is regarded as one of the finest corporate collections of Australian visual art, and a number of pieces have been loaned for public exhibition.

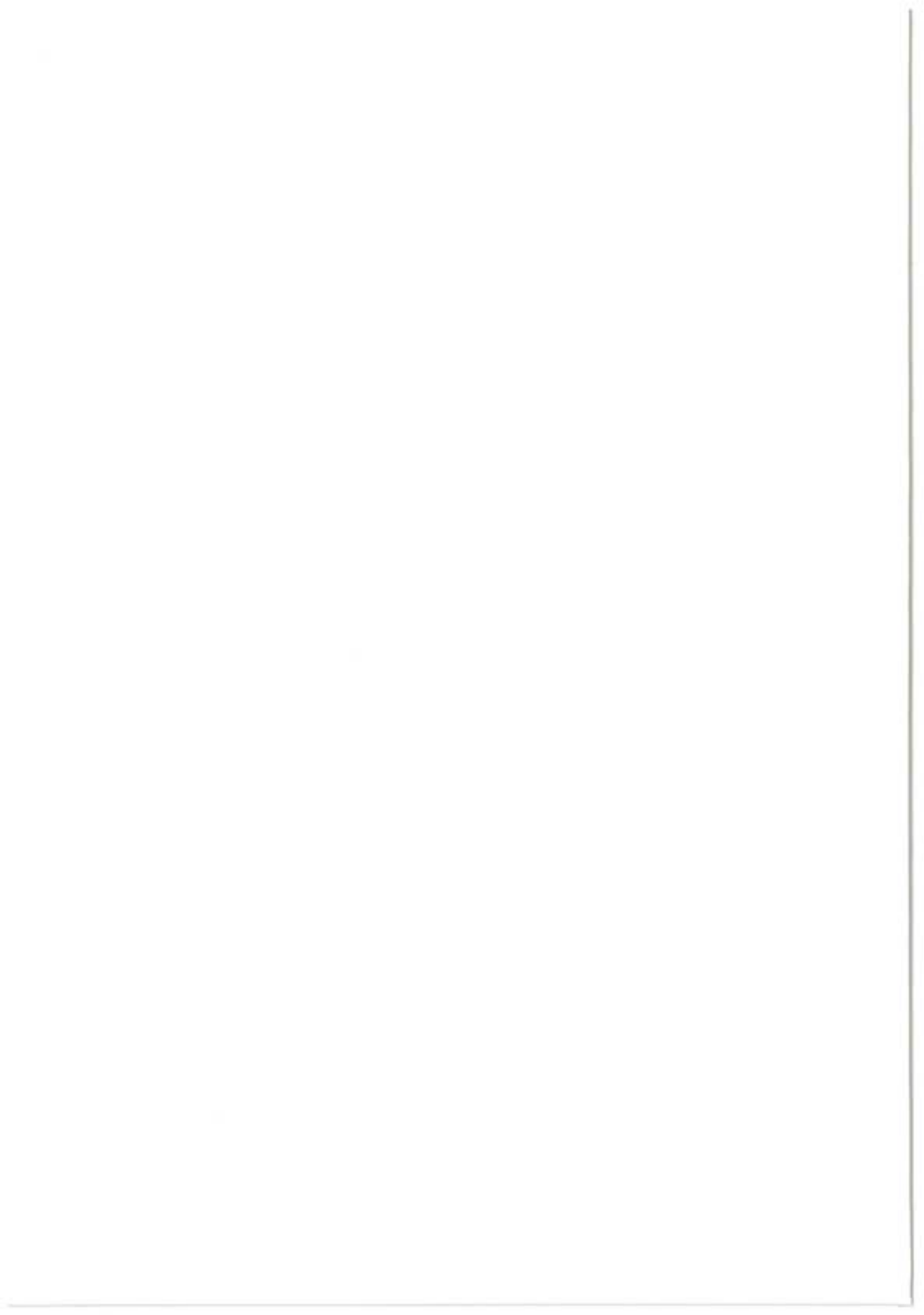
It was from this background, and with a wish to assist once again younger artists, that ICI Australia in 1987 initiated its collection of contemporary art. Works in the collection are by established artists who have been exhibiting for at least five years and have a reputation as major exponents of their chosen style and medium.

Selection of contemporary art requires a particularly discerning eye and a detailed knowledge, and the Company acknowledges with gratitude the advice and direction provided by Mr Robert Lindsay, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, and Mr Bill Wright, Assistant Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. As they say elsewhere in this catalogue 'there was encouragement to acquire the best. Seek out the best and that is what we did.' We thank them for their enthusiastic involvement.

Similarly I would like to thank Mr Russell Browne, Exhibitions Co-ordinator at the Victorian Ministry for the Arts, who has guided us in the planning and execution of various facets of the tour. Russell's work with the collection has been partly supported by the Australia Council and we thank the Council and the Ministry for their assistance.

The aim has been to provide an opportunity for people in many parts of Australia to see, understand and enjoy a major collection of Australian art as it is in the late 1980's. I hope that you find the collection stimulating and enjoyable.

Dr Michael Deeley  
Managing Director  
ICI Australia  
April 1989





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## INTRODUCTION

The ICI Contemporary Art Collection contains 42 works representing 37 artists from throughout Australia. Principally assembled in 1988 the Collection was selected by Bill Wright, Assistant Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and Robert Lindsay, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

The following discussion was recorded in Sydney in January 1989.

**Bill Wright:** Robert, given that you've advised on a number of collections, I think what would be interesting to talk about is the difference between this collection and others you've done.

**Robert Lindsay:** I think the main difference is chronological, that is, the period in which the Collection was put together. It has been assembled over the last few years and it reflects the re-emergence of abstraction after the earlier figurative style of Neo Expressionism, with some artists looking towards Neo Geo (new geometric abstraction) while others are pushing off in independent directions. Another point to be made is that we were working together, you in Sydney and me in Melbourne, and this is reflected in the selection of works which provides a balance of artists from these two cities. Melbourne has a large number of corporate collections and consequently a substantial amount of patronage is focused on painting and sculpture — on object makers, whereas in Sydney some of the best art is post-conceptual and installation work, a result perhaps of the patronage and the exposure associated with the Sydney Biennale, which locates art more easily in an international context. Sydney artists are more inclined to use an international vocabulary if you like.

**BW:** That's been an important factor in the Sydney development. In a sense artists have been very conscious of the presence of foreign art here. And it's really now quite a long term development. Though I feel it's misleading to think purely in terms of Melbourne figuration/Sydney abstraction, because obviously there are works in both areas that really don't hold to that mould. But one was aware in selecting the Collection that there was a tendency within Melbourne art towards figuration which tends not so much to be a reflection of international trends of the Germans and the Italians and so on, but a reinforcement in the development of previous Melbourne perspectives. Because obviously there is a very strong figural tradition in Melbourne, and there is obviously an abstract tradition in Sydney. But neither is really exclusive of the other tendencies.

**RL:** One hundred years ago Marcus Clarke made the observation that there were obvious differences between the styles of art produced in Sydney and Melbourne when the majority of the artists in Sydney were doing black and white illustration work for the publishing industry which was their main source of income, while in "Marvellous Melbourne" art patronage flourished and supported painters. That tradition has continued. I know it's an arbitrary thing, especially when you think about the various centres within Australia. In the 1940s Melbourne artists like Boyd and Nolan painted figuratively, and the 1980s have seen a return to figuration, so this is a revival of tradition, if you like.

The main thing about the ICI Collection however, is that it doesn't focus blindly on either figuration or abstraction. I like its pluralism, and the way certain works are an ensemble of parts. It contains a variety of styles.

**BW:** The original brief was open and what interested me in the first place was that we were being asked to put together a collection of the best works, simply the best works, by the best young artists. Those people we thought were the best artists on a very broad base and it was interesting in that it was an attempt to give a general overview of the scope of the activity today. I think if it has succeeded it is because of that original premise, of providing a representative overview. We haven't developed the Collection with any particular artist in depth: but I think what we have achieved is to locate and acquire representative examples of the artists included, and within the Collection as a whole there are clearly sub-groupings, tendencies which emerged in the process.

**RL:** We had restraints which were implied, not overt. Basically, the overall size of the collection, the number of artists, and how much we could spend on each particular work dictated that the selection had to concentrate on young artists who had established a reputation, but were yet to consolidate their careers. So they belonged to the category of emerging artists. There were no restrictions regarding style or media.

**BW:** We did create contexts within a context.

**RL:** Yes, so each person in a sense has to carry the bag for the whole context. We couldn't collect everybody, so we have one artist whom we judged at the time to be doing the most interesting thing, in say, new abstraction or urban realism. They are the representative for that style or subject matter.

**BW:** Of course there is another factor despite the Sydney-Melbourne difference, as it's a time when more artists from Sydney than ever before show regularly in Melbourne, and more than ever artists from Melbourne show in Sydney. So many of the people in the Collection have some connection with the other place and with other parts of Australia.

**RL:** I suppose it's the maturity of the commercial gallery scene. Back in the 1960s when commercial galleries were just evolving there were only one or two particular galleries showing whole stables of artists, now you have a network throughout Australia. One artist can be seen in a number of locations and contemporary art isn't as focused on two centres as it was. The selection of the ICI Collection did come down to specifics and, as with all collections, it starts with the artist. You look at the artist and you make a value judgement about their work. And it is a value judgement, about which artist and which work you think is best. It's that interest, that focusing, that gives you a context which you build upon with experience and knowledge. I think it should be emphasised that although you obviously consider those artists whose works you already admire, you don't commence with preconceived notions of what to acquire. It's the work of art that attracts your attention first.

**BW:** It was an interesting process. In fact we spent our early days making endless lists and exchanging views and considering the various people we thought might fall within this collection. And then the process, which I found the most stimulating part, of the time spent in the studios and galleries, going through endless examples of the various people's work and in some cases waiting, because in some instances the works were not available and we had to wait until relevant works came up by those particular artists, until we found a suitable example. I think it's really quite remarkable that within the short time span we actually had to realise the collection, we were able to gain access to really quite different and marvellous works by each of the artists.

**RL:** You have to ask yourself, is that the work or should I wait for another example? Because you may have an intuitive feeling that this artist in their next show will produce something better. Sometimes we went back in time a little, for instance we were fortunate to get Part 1 of *Our Faith*, which is a major Stieg Persson work. So we did go back in time, sometimes we waited. The decision making process is very interesting. Which work do you choose? The one that typifies the artist at that particular time, or the work which appears atypical, yet may allude to an important future direction in the artist's work? You're looking for a work that encompasses the most characteristic qualities of the artist, and one which also slightly breaks what he or she is doing and gives you the idea that out of this something else might happen. So that's where the leap of faith is, you believe in the artist and you believe in this work. There is always this fine balance and hopefully in retrospect you look back and say we were right. Of course, occasionally you believe that the next work will also be the right one and that is why people continue to collect.

**BW:** I think the limitation I felt most in doing the Collection, which, I think as it turns out is right, was the idea that we were really quite limited in terms of trying to create a developed spectrum of activity, we were not really concentrating on developing any particular artist in depth. So in a sense the edge is a little towards democracy of representation and of course the priorities you are talking about are doubly important when you are doing a collection of that limitation.

**RL:** The knowledge that the ICI Collection was to travel as an exhibition to a number of venues did have an influence on the choice of works. Basically the only condition we actually applied was that the works in a physical sense must be able to survive an

exhibition tour and possible installation later in a corporation's headquarters. Obviously there are works, like those on paper which don't stand up to high light levels and couldn't be shown in normal offices, which therefore weren't acquired. So the limitations were practical. There weren't ideological limitations. In fact there was just encouragement to acquire the best. Seek out the best and that was what we did.

January 1989

**Artist's Statement**

"For some time I have been interested in creating an interplay between geometric and organic forms in sculpture, as the piece *Easy when you know how* demonstrates.

This 'abstract' concern of mine is juxtaposed with the figurative or narrative aspects of a piece, each element being of equal significance.

Also:

The actualness of the thing  
What it means  
What can be said about it  
The larger meaning which lies outside its form  
I feel like rounding it off somehow."

Bruce Armstrong, 16 February 1989.

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Bruce Armstrong was born in Melbourne in 1957. He held his first one person exhibition in 1986 and has been included in numerous group shows including the Third Australian Sculpture Triennial, 1987.

His monumental carved animals through their massive scale and graphic simplification, allude to past civilizations where mysterious creatures evoke half-forgotten narratives. Armstrong's animals and totemic figures are metaphors for human behavior which symbolize rather than overtly state their meaning.

Bruce Armstrong attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1978 to 1981. His early sculptures were non-figurative wood constructions influenced by the formalist works of his lecturers, Tony Pryor and Geoffrey Bartlett. These early works were small in scale with separately carved abstract elements carefully fabricated and assembled in formal, geometric configurations. In 1984, Armstrong, influenced in part by the ambience of Neo Expressionist figuration desired a more immediate and spontaneous technique. He adopted the chain saw as a method of carving his monumental animals with dramatically increased scale. The rough, expressive surfaces and the stylized, ambiguous identities add to the impact and visual potency of these works.

*Easy when you know how*, 1988, retaining the original form of the trunk of the redgum, is typical of Armstrong's recent work, which is carved with a chain saw but now finished with a wood rasp. The female figure with her face hidden is partially disguised behind an animal mask. She tilts forward, her precarious balance symbolising the tension between her human and animal forms — a seductive trap between figuration and the visual sensuality of the timber.



**Bruce ARMSTRONG**  
*Easy when you know how.* 1988  
carved redgum figure on cyprus base

### Artist's Statement

"Our relationship with nature has been one of destruction, and *Totems* pays homage to the surviving landscape, whilst deploring our continued abuse of the environment.

The sculptures are the result of experiences within, and responses to, the landscape around us. The work evokes ghosts of trees past and spiritual reminders of the raped environment.

The cross-like figure suggests the human presence as being an integral part of the landscape with nature being a profound spiritual entity in itself.

Painted white, the sculptures have a purity and a meditative quality associated with the untouched environment."

Lauren Berkowitz, 1989

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Lauren Berkowitz, born in Melbourne in 1965, studied sculpture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1983 to 1985, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts.

Her early works using cast plaster and cement have a surrealistic, organic quality showing the influence of Jean Arp. After leaving RMIT, Berkowitz worked independently in a studio before enrolling at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1988 in the Post Graduate Diploma course in sculpture.

During the two years of studio work Berkowitz' sculpture became more open and biomorphic. She adopted welding as a technique which could provide an open lineal armature which she covered with *papier mache* to give an expressive, tactile surface, an effect that was often enhanced by the addition of colour.

At the Victorian College of the Arts her work became more abstract, with elements such as totems and tall-backed, chair-like constructions formed from numerous fragments of timber, becoming entities within a total room-like environment.

Her present work has an empathy with the ecology conscious environmental artists, Richard Long and Robert Smithson. Also with the spirituality and totemic qualities of aboriginal burial poles, and with the reductive abstraction of Brancusi, in particular his *Endless Column*, which for the artist "links the elements of the earth and sky".

*Totems*, 1988, combines an abstract geometric purity and bleached white surface emphasising the patterns of light and shadows, with the feeling of a tribal ghost spirit of a now desolate landscape. The materials which comprise *Totems* were collected from the bush, fallen branches and twisted dead limbs of trees selected for their inherent organic qualities. As an installation which allows people to move between each element it also captures the essence of the open Australian landscape and the psychological impact of sacred and spiritual sites.





Lauren BERKOWITZ  
*White totems*. 1988  
synthetic polymer paint on five carved wood poles

**Artist's Statement***Some Thoughts on Painting, Voyeurism and Feminism*

During the realization of the painting *Odelympia* much of my present understanding of the role of voyeurism in painting crystallized. Part of this understanding was the admission of my own voyeurism. That in fact being a visual artist gives me a rationale and licence to be one. This perhaps explains to a degree my reluctance to take on board hard line feminist injunctions on the treatment of sexual icons. That I do try to communicate ideas and philosophy often called feminist is important to me but almost beside the point to the voyeuristic viewer. For example, a 1988 work called *Entanglement Landscape-Libido* features largely the figure of a woman masturbating. Despite my intention and even in the presence of other legitimising imagery such a forthright description may indeed 'sail too close to the rocks of male voyeurism for some sensibilities.' \* In *Odelympia* the intention was to represent the bodies of women I know in a realistic manner as opposed to the idealized version often represented. Using Manet's *Olympia* inverted within the painting to support my objective. 'The hard stare of Manet's working class prostitute is widely accepted as a counter attack on the possessive and lustful male gaze.' \* But again becoming aware that I was providing nude bodies for others to look at. The destruction of the image through sanding and random splatters of paint is an acknowledgement of this and acts as a veil to the viewer. The goldfish can be taken many ways but is symbolic of many levels of voyeurism and the awareness and vulnerability of being constantly exposed from all sides."

Annette Bezor, Adelaide 1 February, 1989

\* Quotes from John Neylon, *Adelaide Review*, August 1988

Annette Bezor was born in Adelaide in 1950, and attended the South Australian School of Art from 1974 to 1977. She was a co-founder of Round Space Artists Collective, Adelaide, and began full-time painting in 1983. She has been included in numerous exhibitions including Australian *Perspecta* 1983, and the Biennale of Sydney, 1984.

Annette Bezor's work is concerned with focusing a feminist perspective onto images from the past, especially images of women. She appropriates and role-reverses images placing them into a contemporary context, thereby confronting the traditional male view of women, male voyeurism and gender type casting. By role-reversing familiar art images she strives for liberation in a non-sexist future.

The title of Bezor's *Odelympia*, 1988, refers to the tradition of depicting a reclining female nude as an 'odalisque': an Eastern female slave or concubine in a Turkish or exotic setting. One of the most famous of such paintings is Ingres' *Odalisque*, 1814. This genre was continued by Edouard Manet in his painting *Olympia*, 1863, which was exhibited in the Salon of 1865. Although Manet's painting refers in pose to Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and that, in turn, to Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus*, it caused a scandal when first exhibited because of the contemporary treatment of its style and subject matter. Bezor's choice of Manet's *Olympia* is most apposite, for modern art is often seen as beginning with Manet's works. It is an image that symbolizes both an end of a tradition and the beginning of another. The inversion of this icon of art history by Bezor symbolizes her challenge to, if not a reversal of, past male orientated aesthetics. This confrontation with the past and with 'high art' traditions, is further emphasized by her addition of Walt Disney's cartoon image of Pinocchio's fish, Figaro, as a symbol of the popular and innocent art of the twentieth century. This fish continues an aquatic reference from Bezor's previous exhibition *Heads Above Water* 1986, in which she combined images of female bathing with late 19th century Symbolist art.

*Odelympia* was shown in Bezor's 1988 exhibition *Beyond the Veil* in which many of the images were distanced, partially obscured behind veils of paint.



Annette BEZOR  
*Odelympia*, 1988  
oil on linen canvas with wood frame

**Comment**

"To comprehend the 'abstract' in Borgelt's recent paintings one must observe the function of surface, which is crucial. This is not as a formal pictorial attribute but as a layer of resistance. It is best understood in terms of equivalency, as a metaphysical layer, of mediation between the internal and its expressive externalisation.

The paintings are essentially a poetic means of disclosure; they are both visceral and tranquil, a tenuous skin that constantly fractures and reforms, sequentially inducing and liberating unfolding layers of insight. This fragmenting rippling edifice of marks and striations both interrupt and reform in gradually transforming stages of provisory flux, and the point at which 'abstraction' takes on meaning is at a point of concealment, of paradoxical resistance to completion or revelation. That is, the work is completed in the consciousness of the perceiver".

(Extract from 'Change within Constancy: on the recent painting of Marion Borgelt' William Wright, 1988.)

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Marion Borgelt was born 1954 in Nhill, Victoria, in the wheat belt of the Wimmera. She studied at the South Australian School of Art from 1973 to 1976, was awarded a Diploma of Painting, then studied at the Underdale College in 1977, and received a Diploma of Education. In 1978 she was awarded the Peter Brown Memorial Travelling Scholarship and studied at the New York Studio School from 1979 to 1980. She held her first one person exhibition in 1976, and has been in numerous group shows including: Fourth Biennale of Sydney: Vision in Disbelief, 1982; Australian Perspecta, 1985; the Sixth Triennale of India (with Jenny Watson) in 1986.

Marion Borgelt's early paintings were concerned with landscape, with the textured surface of the paint emulating the open fields of wheat stretching to the horizon in a golden haze of dryness, heat and intense sunlight.

When she was living in New York her work changed radically. The open horizontal spaces were replaced by the claustrophobic vertical spaces of the city's architecture. Single female figures were silhouetted, enclosed, framed, and trapped within doorways or windows. Reflecting the cosmopolitan urban nature of New York, particularly the decadence of its night life, discos, and its dislocated street dwellers and 'crazies', Borgelt's figures were clad in fetish clothing — male/female boots and thigh-high striped stockings evoking associations with the pre-war works of the German Expressionist, Max Beckmann, and the satirical social realist works of George Grosz.

After Borgelt returned to Australia the image of the figure continued to feature in her paintings until late 1982, but with the associations of New York disintegrating, the imagery also disappeared inward into an organic linear patterning. This shift in perception was from external imagery to abstract concepts of endless space, infinity. A web of endless lines moving in an organic, ever-flowing rhythm of energy evolving and dissolving.

Marion Borgelt wants to 'paint from inside infinity, to liberate the imagination and allow the viewer to personalize the images'. As metaphors for Nature the paintings are simultaneously both macro and micro images — cells, fibres, creases of skin, tendons, landscapes, analogies for the universe, diagrams for patterns of thought.

Into the topography of her recent paintings Marion Borgelt has introduced nodes of focus, eyes which punctuate the space pushing forward and back from the surface. They are the eyes of the painting, 'Imagine the painting looking back at you while you look at the painting.' The eyes are the window of the soul allowing you to look into the beyond, behind the veil into yourself.



Marion BORGELT  
*When the dust settles*. 1987  
oil on cotton-duck



Julie BROWN-RRAP  
*Propositions: Secret Strategies/Ideal Spaces*  
Moreau/Moreau Museum. 1987  
three photographic prints, three canvas panels  
(detail)

#### Artist's Statement

"I walk through the Museum. I am in search of a specific image; the masterpiece. As I round the corner I come eye to eye with the glittering gold edge of a large frame, and inside this frame, trapped in a pose distorted by my angle of view, a woman reclines, frozen by the master's hand. Being offside, off centre to this ideal beauty, my eyes seem to capture the vulnerability of that form; to become part of that constructed space within the painting, rather than the spectator who gazes at and into that vision of opulence. My camera is the only means to record that fleeting impression, that moment of conspiracy, of conjunction. Like the tourist, like the thief, I capture an image that later, when I glance at it in the privacy of my own space, becomes not so much a copy, but the record of my own experience and memory. My intervention as an artist begins the moment I re-enact that image, that memory within my own studio space and later, when my image is exhibited on the Gallery walls, within another Institution, with another audience.

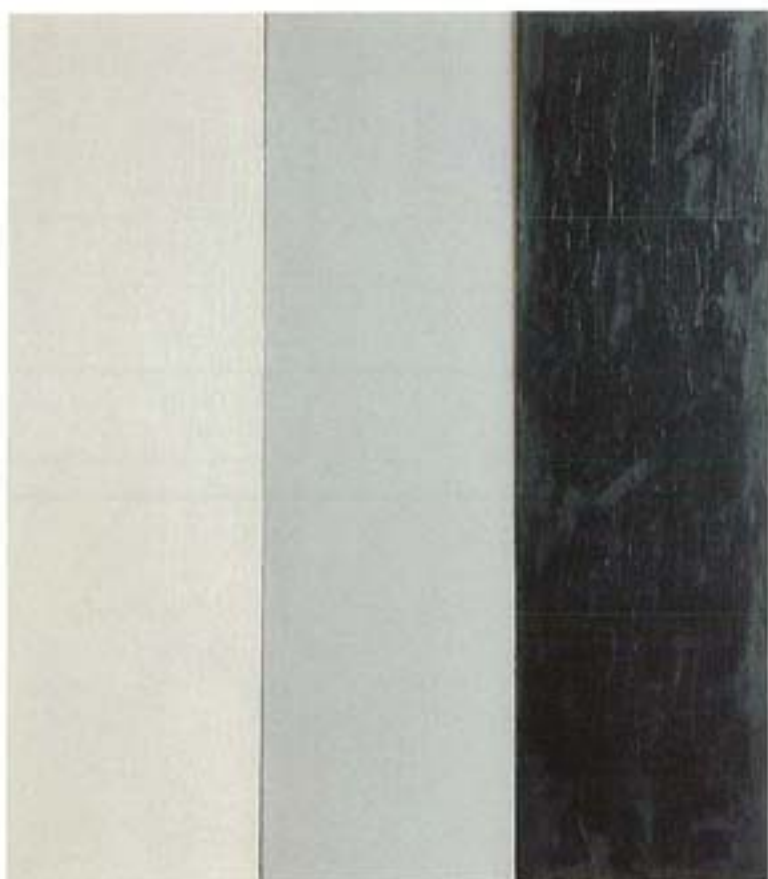
To stand before my image is to recall the original, the masterpiece, that other place; but the spectator now occupies a viewing position that distorts the ideal. To re-experience the original, the viewer is forced to re-orientate, to consider that, within the collapse of the ideal lies the possibility of chaos.



A disenchantment with figurative space and narrative, rejection of the ideals of one-point perspective, ideals to an assertion of the basic claims. Colour is overlaid by black, white and grey — a return to the minimal, the photographic reproduction, the simple observation of the framed wall of the Gallery itself.

Between the idealized space of the old masterpiece and the idealization of the Institutions that house that art, the position of the artist continues to remain untenable; and for a woman artist who is burdened further by the historical use of the female form subjected continually to these idealizations, that place is even more untenable. *Secret Strategies/Ideal Spaces* is an attempt to deal with the neuroses of that position."

(Quoted from *Edge to Edge: Australian Contemporary Art to Japan*, 1988, p. 28-29)



**Julie BROWN-RRAP**

*Propositions: Secret Strategies/Ideal Spaces*

*Moreau/Moreau Museum. 1987*

three photographic prints, three canvas panels

(detail)

Julie Brown-Rrap was born in 1950 in Lismore, New South Wales, attended the University of Queensland from 1969 to 1971, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts. From 1972 to 1979 she worked as a general assistant participating in a number of films, video works and performances by her brother Mike Parr. During 1974 she attended East Sydney Technical College studying painting and drawing part-time. In 1975 she worked with the Sydney University Fine Arts Workshop (the Tin Sheds) and in 1976, in the Photo-Media Department of the City Art Institute. From 1979 to 1984 she was a partner in a free-lance photographic business, and from 1981 to 1983, she also worked at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney.

In her first one person exhibition, *Disclosures (Surrogate 1) — A Photographic Construct*, at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Central Street Gallery Sydney, in 1982, (later shown at the Australian Perspecta 1983), she used photographic images of herself as the protagonist in works which presented ancient legends in a contemporary vernacular.



For her next major exhibition *Persona and Shadow*, 1984, Julie Brown-Rrap again used photographs of herself which were reworked and rephotographed. Each work represented an easily recognised, almost clichéd pose which as female inversions of traditional male images, commented on stereotyped social roles in art and society.

In *Thief's Journal*, 1986, she continued her feminist appropriation from art history. The centrepiece of this show was a large folding screen, titled *Philosophies of the Boudoir/Dangerous Relationships*, in which Brown-Rrap combined brief extracts from Jean Genet's novel *The Thief's Journal*. These writings, which describe a thief's thoughts when robbing a house, parallel her own feelings of being an interloper, a thief, in appropriating, stealing, and transforming the images of women depicted within the patriarchy of art history by artists such as Magritte, Delvaux, Degas and Balthus.

*Secret Strategies/Ideal Spaces*, 1987, evolved during a period spent as artist-in-residence at the Power Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris as a response to the overwhelming impact which the art in French museums had on her. It also continued her theme of subverting the male stereotypes in art. Selecting seven female images (by Moreau, Degas, Manet, Mategna, and three unknown artists) from five galleries (Moreau Museum, L'Orangerie, Jeu de Paume, Le Louvre and La Brera), she used time-lapse photography to capture fleeting images of herself, over and behind drawings on screens and transparent sheets of plastic. Her drawings and the superimposed images echoed the nude poses of the original paintings. Thus in *Moreau/Moreau Museum*, 1987, the erotic and exotic details which typify the original Symbolist paintings by Moreau have, through the processes of photography and drawing, been distanced and deconstructed.

**Artist's Statement**

"... I see myself primarily as an installation artist. When I do an installation around photography [such as *Temptation to Exist*, held at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, 1986] those sort of problems are engaged [ie the relationship of photographic imagery and film]. In other installation works not directly concerned with photography those problems may be subsumed to other ends. In either case I'm not concerned specifically with photographs but with the whole arsenal of photographic techniques — screenprinting, airbrush, computer generated images, video — in that most mediums can mimic the look of the other image repertoires. But there is always a slight gap in this imitation. I work in this area — believing that by doing so I can highlight certain tensions between materiality and concept. That's why I call my method of working 'material conceptualism'. For me, a video image carries quite a different effect to, say, a film image. They often seem to employ different methods of framing, for one thing. My work doesn't employ narrative effects or theatrical effects — unlike many artists working with film and photography. I use gesture and stasis but try to separate them from any narrative speculation. I also use photography as an expedient shorthand for 'content' — when I needed a body in my piece 'the chained woman', in *Famous Last Words*, I set it up and photographed it. When it is simply one element among many in an installation photography can be used for its conventional connotations."

(Extract from *Interview with Janet Burchill* by Peter Cripps, edited by John Barbour, 1988)

Janet Burchill was born in Melbourne in 1955, attended the Sydney College of the Arts from 1981 to 1983 and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts). In the early 1980's she worked as a video and film artist, participating in Super 8 Festivals in Sydney and Melbourne in 1983 and 1984; Anzart in Auckland, New Zealand, 1984 and 1985; and in Australian Super 8 Image Forum, Tokyo Japan in 1985. Janet Burchill held her first one person exhibition, *Temptation to Exist etc* at the Union Street Gallery, Sydney in 1986.

There are a number of separate works with the category title *Temptation to Exist*. In the first, *Temptation to Exist 1 (Clouds)* Janet Burchill used a professional spray painter to reproduce on an aluminium sheet a section detail from a photograph of a painting by Richter, thus creating associations with dot-screen process reproduction, art history (Romantic cloud studies and the 'original' Richter work) as well as the history of photography. "Much of my work has a propositional element which is, if you like, 'post-conceptual'. I use whatever is available to me financially to get the effects and industrial finish I want — signwriters, scanning processes etc. I want the work to look as impersonal as possible — as if it just arrived on the wall. In this I aim to make the viewer feel excluded from the work. To get that look I need to use industrial skills and equipment. I also rely on the skill of others to actually make the work. That makes me more of a director than an artisan."

In *Temptation to Exist 3 (Tippi)* the double-portrait image, separated by a crisp vertical line, is of Tippi Hedrin, the cool, frigid heroine of many of Alfred Hitchcock films. The work has a cool, impersonal mechanical quality with a high degree of industrial finish. The choice of materials used, as a portrait-image taken from the movie *The Birds*, is intended to be a deliberate comment against a literal reading of the image as a 'victim' and a feminist denial of voyeurism and identification with the image.

In *Temptation to Exist (Famous last words)* the images exist as discrete entities in their own right, literal and devoid of overt narrative meaning. This stance, reading the work in terms of surface and materiality is aligned with the linguistic theories of the 1980's in which words (and signs) are units to be analysed in terms of their structure. The central section *Le ultime parole famous* refers to Structuralist theory. Ferdinand de Saussure in his book *Course in General Linguistics* referred to actual speech as *parole*. His concern was more with *langue*, the objective structure of signs which made speech possible in the first place, and it is this structure that concerns Burchill.



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ether. One can b  
did, or one can c  
— but no longe

Janet BURCHILL

*Temptation to Exist (Famous last words)*. 1984  
vinyl letters on enamel on galvanised iron,  
laminated type C photographs on aluminium

### Artist's Statement

"The materials used for the painting were dry pigments mixed with heated beeswax. The surface was covered from the base upwards, thus allowing any incidence inherent in the process to remain visible. Working within this paradigm, each panel was covered with numerous layers, until the desired resonance of colour and surface was reached. By the elimination of illusionistic pictorial devices, I can clearly explore the act of painting, and the potential of paint as an emotive vehicle.

The brush strokes, or evidence of application, carry a major load of significance. Rather than serving another intention, they are the intention-forming, a part of the subject matter of the painting as a whole. Meaning or content, is thus closely related to the act of painting.

The physical materiality of painting becomes an active subject in creating a visual language, with which I can investigate the primordial states of my relationship to Nature.

The painting is abstract in the sense that it is not a representation of Nature. But at the same time, it is not abstract, as it is intended to be read in the same way that one would [read] any other experience of reality."

Timothy Burns, 1989

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Timothy Burns was born in Sydney in 1960. He attended the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education from 1979 to 1981. Awarded the Basil and Muriel Hooper Scholarship in 1981 and the New South Wales Travelling Art Scholarship in 1982, he travelled to Scandinavia, Europe and Great Britain. From 1984 to 1985 he studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in painting, and held his first one person exhibition at Reconnaissance, in Melbourne, 1987.

Timothy Burns is concerned with the 'pure act of painting', that is, the manipulation of paint for its inherent qualities rather than as a medium for pictorial illusion. His lecturers at art school, Syd Ball, Fred Cress and Alun Leach-Jones, all abstract painters, gave him a sense of the 'nobility of painting' as an act beyond pictorial representation. He relates to the existential immediacy of applying paint to canvas and to the inherently personal process of painting which is unique to each individual.

As a non-figurative artist Burns sees the content of his works located within the materiality and the internal relationships of his paintings. It is the perception of the infinite variations of surface textures and types of brush strokes, colour and tonal variations, the arrangement and the relative sizes of panels within the work, that are perceived over a period of time, and for the artist give a 'narrative quality' to the work. This, and his 'purity to materials' is the *raison d'être* of Burns' painting.



Timothy BURNS  
*Untitled*. 1987  
oil on three cotton-duck panels

### Artist's Statement

"My art is about people, and our relationships to one another, physically and emotionally. Images are drawn from my own experiences and what I see around me day to day. I'm more interested in capturing the essence of a situation or portrait, than making it naturalistic. I aim to do this as directly and freshly as possible. I want my pictures to confront and entertain, so the viewer can get involved with them and hopefully respond to them. I'd rather people love or hate my pictures than say, 'gee, they're nice!' The three youths, in my painting, stare at you blankly from the canvas, bored in the city, hangin' out on the corner. What are they thinking about?"

Jon Campbell, February 1989

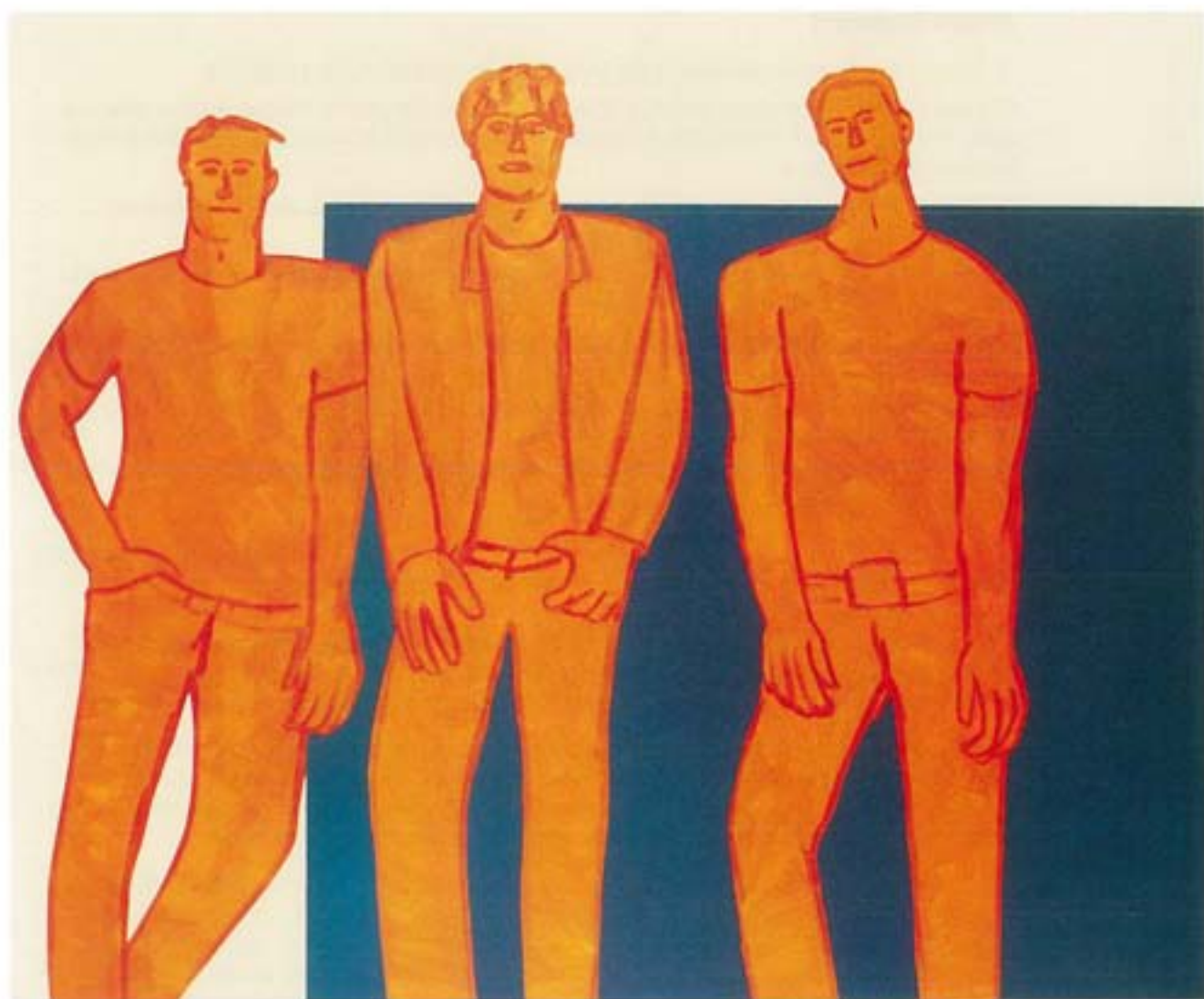
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Jon Campbell was born in 1961 in Belfast, Northern Ireland and arrived in Australia in 1964. He attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1980 to 1982, was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts), then attended the Victorian College of the Arts from 1984 to 1985 where he gained a Graduate Diploma (Painting). His first major exhibition in 1986, *Suburban Stomp*, was a two person show with Peter Walsh, at 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.

In the early 1980s Jon Campbell abandoned the abstract style which had characterized his work at art school and began painting images from his immediate environment. These images of the beach, nightclubs and discos, and the old peoples' home next to his studio in St Kilda were outlined in black and painted in a rough expressive style.

In the mid 1980s Campbell's approach to painting altered radically. Adopting the procedure of working through an extended series of preparatory drawings for each painting, he concentrated on stylizing his figures down to simple calligraphic notations and outlines. These preliminary drawings allowed the final painting to be more spontaneous and immediate in execution, and as Campbell experimented with enamel paint rather than oil paint, his surfaces became thinner and more direct. "I wanted to keep the painting as fresh as possible."

His subject matter became more personal and autobiographical with images from his teenage years, of growing up in Altona — bike riding, going to the footy, drinking and fights. *Three youths*, 1987, with its schematized images of youths casually lounging against the stark background, is about boredom, 'just hanging around, just being there.' The *Three youths* are in a cold impersonal urban setting, a Saturday afternoon with nothing to do.



Jon CAMPBELL  
*Three youths*. 1987  
enamel on cotton-duck

### Artist's Statement

1. *Scooter faith* is an examination of the links between childhood and adulthood.
2. It was made in 1986 after a period of time in Italy. While living there I began a close personal study of ex-votive art in Padua. Also in Padua, is the Scrovegni Chapel containing Giotto's most famous cycle of frescos.
3. Structurally *Scooter faith* is built around the idea of a large recessive, dreamy, nocturnal landscape with images of childhood and adulthood superimposed.
4. A self-portrait image in the foreground, the scooter in the background, a remembered toy, to the right the adult artist is blurred, in motion — still riding a scooter.
5. These superimposed images form a narrative that deals with an introspective self-assessment.
6. The scooter itself becomes a symbol of passage and continuity from childhood to adulthood. It also serves as a comforting reminder of innocent times past. There is an implied threat in the paper dart-missile.
7. *Scooter faith* was one of three key pictures from 1986 that signalled the forthcoming use of an overt diaristic narrative in my paintings."

Jon Cattapan, January 1989

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Jon Cattapan was born in Melbourne in 1956. He attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1975 to 1977, and was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting). During 1978 he worked as a studio assistant in the printmaking department of Melbourne State College.

Many of the early themes in Cattapan's work were taken from literature. Like Sincinnatus, the outsider in a surrealistic world in Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, images of alienation thread with a confrontational passion through the work of Jon Cattapan. His paintings have an empathy with Dada, its anarchy, energy and irreverence for convention.

Whilst travelling in Europe in 1979 Cattapan found that he had little affinity with the dominant forms of contemporary art, but was inspired by the masters of the angst — Hieronymus Bosch, Edvard Munch and the early Picasso whose works seemed in resonance with his themes of pessimism. On the road he followed the development of New Wave music across Europe, its punk, nihilistic attitude, violence and shock values echoing the spirit of his paintings and the idea of communicating strongly through the emotions.

Cattapan also made a pilgrimage to Belgium to seek out the works of James Ensor, whose use of masks, puppets and skeletons fed Cattapan's interest in animism, the idea of attributing living souls to inanimate objects.

After 1984 he abandoned the aggressive social commentary and animism of his early work with its dominant image of a donkey that had transmogrified into an equine self portrait, for a series of 'reactive studies'. Initially separate works on paper, creating intensity through colour and detail, these sheets when completed were then arranged together into one piece, their disjunction allowing the viewer to individually interpret them visually and intellectually. The imagery, with a cast of characters disguised behind masks, dealt with interpersonal relationships.

In his recent works Cattapan has been more concerned with the 'after image', the lasting memory, than with shock value. His colours have become sombre, his figures inhabiting a dream-like space, a diaristic narrative about self within suburbia. They are highly personalised interpretations from his immediate environment and are all based on actual events, "they belong to Melbourne or more properly Melbourne via St Kilda".





Jon CATTAPAN  
*Scooter faith*, 1986  
oil on linen canvas

Chris Dyson was born in Melbourne in 1952 and attended the Victorian College of the Arts from 1981 to 1984. He held his first one person exhibition at 70 Arden Street, Melbourne, in 1986.

Chris Dyson is a painter who experiments with different qualities and effects in paint. An intuitive mark-maker, he often combines a variety of materials, paint textures and surfaces using a format of multiple canvases. His art is not about emotions. He is not an Abstract Expressionist looking for graphic equivalents to emotional states and feelings. Rather, he is searching for intuitive yet logical connections between paint colours, surfaces, patterns and texture. He strives for the atypical and the unusual, for different effects and combinations of elements. In his preliminary drawings which tend to be figurative, Dyson refines and purifies his images down to their strongest patterns and elements. From these his eye is attuned and the "process of making" his paintings begins. From thin spontaneous marks and surface textures, Dyson builds and improvises until personal intuitive patterns start to emerge from the painting, suggesting a logical organic development.

Although it is subliminal during the creation of a work, a literary content often emerges towards its completion, a composition often reflecting the circumstances of its making and the cultural ambience of the time. *Submarine*. 1986, began with the blue, watery left-panel to which was added the textured right-panel, evoking associations for the artist of marine imagery, as well as the idea of a flag, thus becoming for him a mild protest against pollution and the French atomic tests in the Pacific.



Chris DYSON  
*Submarine*. 1986  
oil on two cotton-duck panels

### Artist's Statement

"This painting derives its origin from a small line drawing of an 'automatic nature'. It shows a woman reclining on a sofa, lost in high reverie. She thinks of a man, her comfortable support, undergoes an 'anthropomorphic' change then metaphysically transforms again. I enjoy the disquieting atmosphere where meaning and irrationality co-exist. It is the transformation of the thought process itself that interests me in this particular work."

Peter Ellis, January 1989

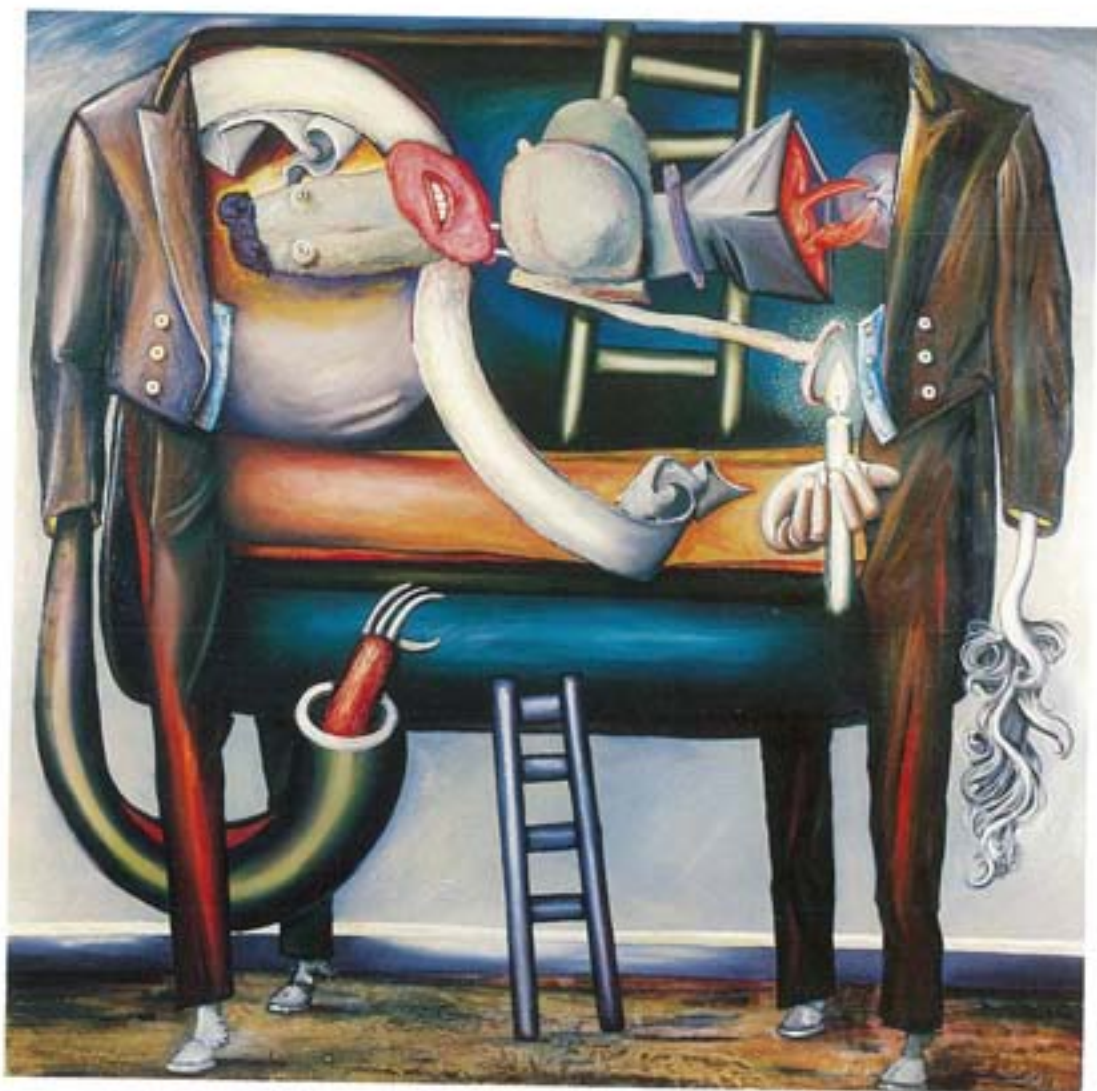
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Peter Ellis was born in Sydney in 1956 and attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1975 to 1976, returning after a year's deferment for major spinal surgery to complete his Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) in 1978. This year of intense medical treatment and its associated pain and trauma deeply affected his view of life and became a major source for imagery in his early painting. "I became obsessed with operations and the aspect of an innocent, harmless creature being manipulated. The pictures of this time contain animal images: bears, rabbits and ducks being boiled or stretched. . . The animals find themselves in totally absurd conditions and situations. It's never an attempt to horrify or moralize. I think it makes one feel like a detached voyeur to an act of futility. I think I enjoy the tension." Thus the tortured animal became a metaphor for the human condition within Peter Ellis' highly personal autobiographical imagery.

Ellis' interest in Surrealism, in the subconscious and automatic imagery was influenced by his reading of Apollinaire, Andre Breton, Lautreamont and Alfred Jarry, and the Symbolist writers Arthur Rimband, Stephane Mallarme and J.K. Huysmans.

By the mid 1980s, the spontaneity of his early style and the emphasis on the automatic subconscious creation of images — animals as victims and animism (the attribution of a living soul to inanimate objects) changed. His animals became hybrids living in a pseudo world, their graphic detail, high colour, surface textures and precisely drawn outlines adding to the authority of Ellis' images giving a bizarre reality. Gone was the violence and aggression of the earlier works, replaced with a concern for relationships.

In *The sofa*, 1985/86, the reclining woman is surrounded by a large masculine coat creating the profile of the sofa, and a Picabia-like elephant, which are isolated in an open surreal landscape that stretches into infinity. The figure is framed on either side by a candle, a Gothic symbol of life, and a cascade of cloth scrolls — an 18th century symbol of reverie. *The sofa* encapsulates Ellis' dictum, "painting is the act of making something that does not exist, exist."



Peter ELLIS  
*The sofa*, 1985/86  
oil on linen canvas

### Artist's Statement

*Oil and Water* is part of the range of work called *CONDUCTING BODIES*, a series of different works including multi-panelled paintings, drawings and various installations.

The title *CONDUCTING BODIES* comes from a novel by the French writer Claud Simon. In the novel, Simon weaves different narratives together, the strands individually are loose and open, but collectively they present a taut and coherent matrix, where focus and privilege are blurred to jar any expectations of hierarchy. The structural montage which Simon utilises allows for a multiplicity of readings within the work. Applied to visual art the methodology of Simon's work provides a platform through which to explore differences in technique, media, strategy, representation, and meaning. Like an aphorism, the flexibility of the title *CONDUCTING BODIES* offers the opportunity to explore further subtitles and resonances of language through an open framework of inversions and transpositions in the (multi-panel) imagery of my current series of work.

There are several layers of reference embedded in this short-hand title: the suggestion of transmission of impulse or power, in electrical and non-electrical senses; the implication of forms of behavior, as in 'good' conduct; the possibility of orchestration in musical sense; and the rich presence of corporeality and materiality.

The title is therefore generic and not specific, the 'body' of the work, and the 'body' of meaning it engages, is open to change and alternation, both as a series, and within the individual works.

Generally, the idea of the body (as well as real bodies) is central to an aesthetic and cultural project like *CONDUCTING BODIES* which attempts to invoke the 'feminine' in our thinking, and in our systems of thought. The body is the site of tension, a meeting place of nature and culture. The complexities produced by the fusion and interpolation of the familiar images in new combinations is a gambit of enticement by fascination with the unknown. The precise selection and combination of images creates the possibility of surprise, where entirely new and unexpected reflections may question, frame or articulate the labyrinth of elements and tangential dislocations of the 'feminine.'

Meryl yn Fairskye, 24 January 1989

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Meryl yn Fairskye was born in Melbourne in 1950, and attended the National Art School, Sydney, from 1970 to 1972, completing her art course at Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education between 1974 and 1975. During 1977 and 1978 she travelled to Europe and America.

On her return to Sydney in 1979, she became interested in art for public spaces and in partnership with Michiel Dolk concentrated on mural painting. The largest of their many murals was the Woolloomooloo Mural Project painted from 1980 to 1982, which represented the history of the area and the 'working class politic'. With an ideology which was critical of many social and political values of the time, these murals reflected a politicalization of the arts.

*CONDUCTING BODIES* was Fairskye's response to the impossibility of representing feminism, except by its absence. The title not only made reference to bodies conducting and controlling behavior and biological responses, but also conducting social activities — music, art, drama. Within the format of the triptych are three categories: the image, the text, and optical illusion or in later works a painterly textured surface. Independent on separate panels, each act in 'a dialogue of parts'. The text, a 'dream text', anonymous from a psychoanalyst's journal, is a record of a woman's subconscious, the meaning lies elsewhere.

The dialogue of the three images in *CONDUCTING BODIES / Oil and Water*, 1986, centres on a simple diagram of 'non equivalents', an optical illusion illustrating perceptual ambiguities. Just as there are inherent differences both real and perceptual, between male-female, oil-water, there are equivalents within the apparent differences in the images of Jane Fonda as Barbarella from the 1967 movie, and the army of Chinese women on Mao Tse Tung's Long March.



Marilyn FAIRSKYE  
*CONDUCTING BODIES/Oil and Water*. 1986  
oil, oil-crayon and synthetic polymer paint  
on three cotton-duck panels.

**Artist's Statement**

"There is no story behind my paintings, only a flow of feelings. I consider my art a bridge over an abyss of boredom and emptiness."

Question: "In your earliest work, above all in the black and white drawings, this kind of web [a psychological space] was visible. How is it then that you began covering the canvas with another pictorial structure?"

Answer: "The spider's web has always been there and is still there. The drawings in black and white were self portraits, the security net had the function of defining the feelings I had. I was interested in myself not as an object but as a recipient of feeling and the structure helped me avoid myself in painting. It was a way to avoid falling into an apparently limited cavern which seemed to overshadow the structure."

Question: "You sometimes use different materials in your work. What role do they play? Would they perhaps have the job of contrasting with the real one?"

Answer: "The islands of pictorial material and other material I use, are a prop to avoid falling into the painting. The islands of colour are also directly connected to the process of painting. I mix the colours on the palette then place them onto the painting. It is like a floating island in the sea. It is an island on which you can stand and all the paint around has something to which it can cling."

(Extracts from an interview with Dale Frank by Helen Kontova, *Flash Art*, July 1984)

"All generalisations are dangerous, even this one. But, the golden rule is that there are no rules. And, every exit is an entry to somewhere else . . . someone once said. A fly that does not want to be swatted is most secure when it lands on the fly-swatter. The exception proves the rule. A reputation grows with every failure.

It was said, Art is a lie that makes us realise the truth. But, what then is the last resort, are truths? — they are irrefutable errors. (A)rt lies in concealing art. It's the last straw that breaks the camel's back. How then: how to paint a great and wonderful painting — Make yourself great and wonderful and then just paint naturally . . ."

(Extracts from *Trusting in the Pipe-Dream*, Dale Frank: New Paintings, 1988)

Dale Frank was born in Singleton, New South Wales, in 1959. He briefly attended and rejected a number of art schools preferring to follow his own direction for his art. From his early performance art to his recent mixed media works he has always sought to challenge the accepted notions of what constitutes art. His early performances were highly personal. Frank often provoked a feeling of ill ease and tension in the audience with his enigmatic trance-like utterances and private intimate monologues which, coupled with benign but threatening use of props such as a rifle or a whip, projected his complex introspective psychological state of mind.

In the early 1980s Dale Frank produced an extended series of self-portrait pencil drawings. These large compulsive drawings were created in one continuous session. Starting from an arbitrary selected central point, Frank drew a single continuous spiralling line evolving a pattern of eye and mouth-like vortexes to fill the entire sheet of paper.

By the mid-1980s Frank had begun to translate the psychic energy fields of his drawings into thick textured painting, with an accompanying gradual dissolution of the portrait image into more open and ambiguous linear patterns. These evoked associations with sublime landscapes — open rolling seas, waterfalls and cavernous underground interiors. As these swirling images subsided, Frank emphasized the flat surface of his paintings with an accumulation of objects that floated on a film of paint. In his most recent paintings a deliberate, uneasy tension exists between his brilliant, sensuous use of coloured resinous surfaces and the overt use of non-art materials and kitsch objects which visually attempt to overwhelm and dominate the composition.





Dale FRANK

*The Masterpiece with a diddle  
worthy of a fly.* 1986

enamel on wood blocks, polyvinyl acetate glue  
and synthetic polymer paint on expanded and  
carved polyurethane foam, on linen canvas

**Artist's Statement**

"Since 1982 I have been working with the balance between pleasure and pain. An initially beautiful image of an object on closer inspection becomes threatening, or reveals a totally opposite aspect, a red shape could be a flower or a wound.

In 1982 I performed in Perth 'A Fine Line', a performance about pain to achieve beauty, eg. foot binding/corsets. It was also about the history of women in Western Australia. The title of the performance came from the song by The Divynals, 'There's a fine line between pleasure and pain'. Other titles I have used indicate similar themes: 'Balancing Act', 'A Balance of Power'.

More recently I have been less literal in my use of titles because the work has become less literal. I am pleased about this. My areas of interest remain the same: pleasure/pain, power/oppression, feminism/ sexuality/ identity. My method of working has changed. I used to start with 'the idea', now I accumulate things and respond on a more intuitive level to my choice of 'things' and placement!

The red work was made from things I had collected, the tail I found at an Aboriginal music festival in WA. I thought it was a special, powerful thing. When I jammed it into the end of a red lacquered spear it became very sexual. The red lacquer is for glossy lips and nails, a threatening invitation. The razor strop was my grandfather's, he was the opposite of the glossy red lips; also a black leather razor strop has so many connotations — the glossy red can become blood. I found the metal weight in the park — it seemed like a hidden weapon used in a crime, a cosh, the glossy red became the bud of a fuchsia flower hanging down."

Anne Graham, 11 November 1988

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Anne Graham was born in Buxton, Derbyshire, England in 1949. She studied at the Manchester Polytechnic from 1968 to 1971, was awarded a Diploma of Art and Design and attended the Royal College of Art, London, from 1971 to 1973, where she received a Master of Arts. She arrived in Australia in 1975 and studied at the Western Australian Institute of Technology from 1982 to 1983, where she was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma of Art. She has worked as a performance artist and exhibited sculptures in numerous shows including *Australian Perspectives*, 1985 and the *Third Australian Sculpture Triennial*, 1987.

At art school in Manchester Anne Graham studied painting, but the focus of her interest soon turned to sculpture and to performance art.

At the Royal College she became increasingly interested in constructing environments and sets with backdrops as props for performances. She continued this interest in Australia photographically recording her tableaux so that the photo-documentation became the form of public presentation. Later however, her performances became theatrical presentations with the objects used as props becoming highly crafted and sculptural entities in their own right.

The iconography of her sculptures revolves around themes of sexuality, balance and aggression. She often employs phallic shapes with highly polished and sensual surfaces, their erotic power enhanced by her choice of materials and by her use of colour. Her works are both evocative and alienating with familiar objects dislocated from known situations by changing their size and finish; with a precarious balance between male and female entities.



Anne GRAHAM

*Red spears: strop, hung, queue.* 1988  
carved and painted wood, horse-hair, leather strop,  
galvanised and rusted steel in three sections

### Artist's Statement

*"Painting. 1988, is obviously abstract, it does not represent anything outside itself, other than art like itself. With this painting I was thinking of Mondrian and how I could use his art to extend my own notion about what can make a painting and what can make a painting work. The scale is much larger than any of Mondrian's paintings but uses similar elements, flat areas of paint not making any illusion of space.*

*This painting ultimately became about balance, using these simple elements to strike an emotional balance, a certain order that would make it hold together as a whole, abstract painting."*

Brent Harris, 1989

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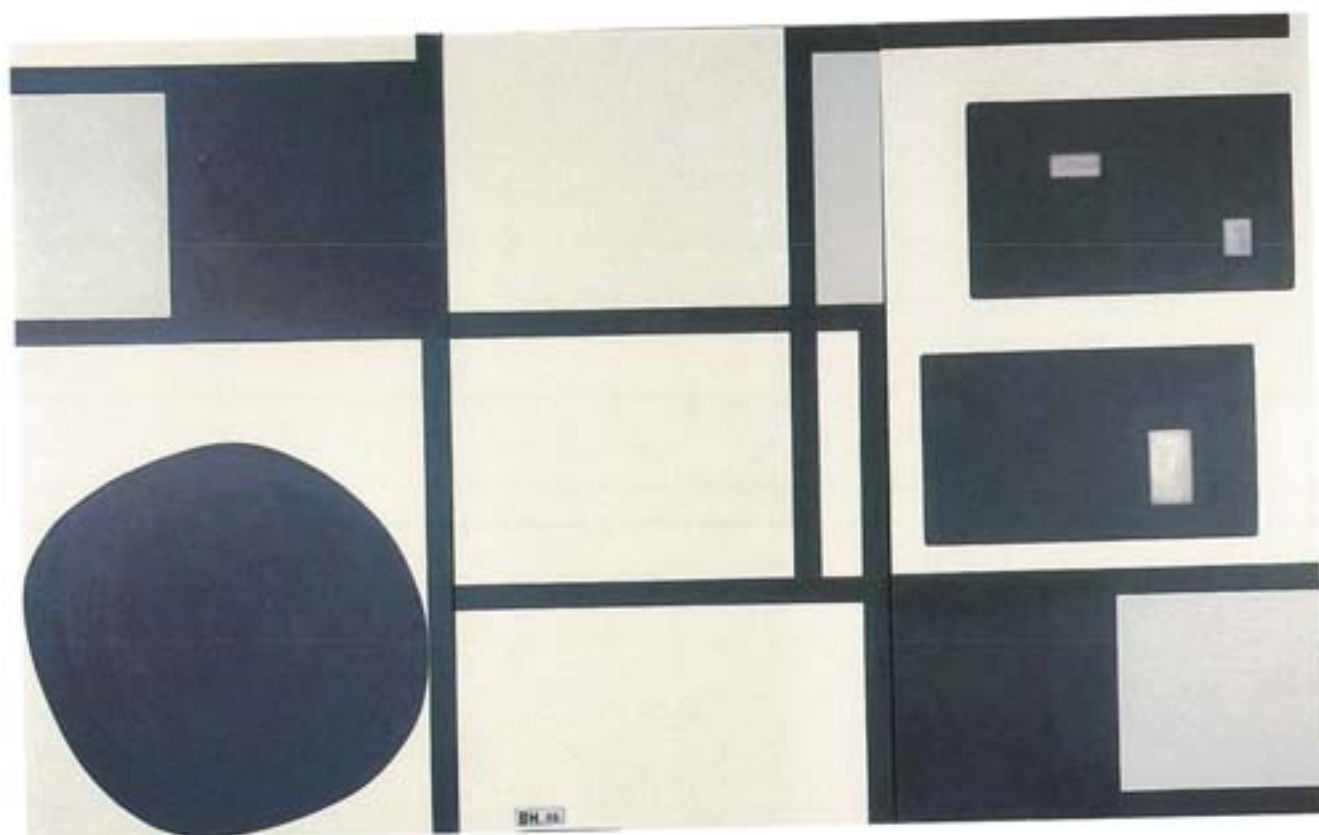
Brent Harris was born in New Zealand in 1956 and emigrated to Australia in 1981. Previously self taught, he attended the Art and Design course at Footscray College of Technical and Further Education in 1981 and the Victorian College of the Arts from 1982 to 1984, and holds a Bachelor of Arts (Painting).

He held his first one person exhibition at 13 Verity Street, in 1988, which established him as one of the most interesting, young, abstract painters in Melbourne. His work has a spirituality and purity which, although drawing upon the pioneers of abstraction, retains a personal and unique quality epitomizing the spirit of New Abstraction.

The restless, eclectic mood of art in the late-1980's has been marked by a rejection of the styles that opened the decade, which for many artists had become an easy substitute for content. Neo Expressionism, the dominant figurative movement with its painterly impasto surfaces and intuitive figurative imagery, aimed to appeal direct to the emotions. Some artists moved towards a cool detached Symbolism with a more universal allegorical narrative, while other artists gravitated towards the New Abstraction with its cool, contemplative mood, spirituality and purity. Within this ambience Brent Harris sought to discipline the expressive intensity of his early figurative works, adopting an abstract mode, his colours becoming sombre and almost monochromatic within hard-edge, geometric configurations.

Harris admires the purity and harmony of the geometric abstractions of Piet Mondrian, in which the universals of nature are reduced to a dynamic balance of verticals and horizontals. Harris has developed a similar black and white grid structure for his paintings, but has eliminated the primary colours often associated with Mondrian's paintings. In spirit, Harris is closer to Kasimir Malevich's painting of the white square on a white ground. Harris' quest is for a similar purity and spirituality in his work. "I want my paintings to be abstract and contemplative, I don't want to hang depictions of nature on my wall".

Another major influence on Harris has been fellow New Zealand artist Colin McCahon. His large black and white text paintings, taken from wide ranging sources such as The Bible and Maori poems, have a religiosity in both their visual impact and their content, enhanced by McCahon's uncompromising reductive purity. Harris' paintings pay homage to the masters of abstraction and his quest is to touch upon the timeless thread that runs through all abstract art.



Brent HARRIS  
*Painting*, 1988  
oil on three cotton-duck panels



BILL HENSON  
*Untitled 1985/86,*  
*image 107, print 3.*  
type C colour-print, ed. 3/20

**Comment**

"*Untitled 85/86* draws into complex arrangement a series of apparently disparate motifs. There are portraits which bewilder and tantalise, especially the faces of the children in uncompromising light. These are set against Henson's eerie definitions of suburban houses and descriptions of the landscape of the suburbs. His control of angle and line, with his luscious and explosive use of colour, is awesome in the images, something at once restrained and prodigal. In Henson's previous work the colour was all but refined out of existence. Here he creates some astonishing mannerist effects using the light of dusk and sunrise in counterpoint to the lurid blues and reds of shopping-centre neon. More spectacular still are Henson's baroque studies of cloud and sky which, as they gesture at the infinite bestow a sort of grandeur on the buildings and the people they also render insignificant."

Michael Hayward

(Extracts from catalogue, *Contemporary Australian Art to China 1988-89*, 1988, p.34)



**Bill HENSON**  
*Untitled 1985/86,*  
*image 71L, print 3,*  
type C colour-print, ed. 3/20

Bill Henson was born in Melbourne in 1955 and attended Prahran College of Advanced Education from 1972 to 1975, discontinuing in the second year of his photography course to follow his own independent direction as a photographer.

He held his first one person exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1975, which consisted of portraits and figure shots of dancers, caught at the "indecisive moment", the gap between the gentle intrusion, recognition and the confrontation with the camera lens; between normal activity and the wooden pose. These works were an attempt to subvert the conventions of 'catching the moment' with its contrived candid reality, and the journalistic social narrative.

In 1978 Henson exhibited *Untitled sequence 1977*, the first of his ensembles of images that build a deliberately ambiguous visual and emotional ambience. For Henson, the potential of photography resides in its ability to animate the speculative capacities of people. Photography can present to the viewer all the details of reality as the unchallenged visual evidence of the world. Therefore, what is left out, or eliminated, by shadow and soft focus, is as important as what is seen.



Bill HENSON  
*Untitled 1985/86,*  
*image 124, print 3.*  
type C colour-print, ed. 3/20

The subject of *Untitled sequence 1977*, with its dark, soft focus, ethereal images of a languid and androgynous naked youth, is not the reclining figure lost in shadows of uncertainty, or the extreme close up with details etched in highlights. Rather, it is the ambiguous mental state of the individual and the interpretive gap between the viewer and the image that forces the viewer to speculate.

Bill Henson's next group of works *Untitled sequence 1979*, (32 images in a linear progression of five groups) and *Untitled 1980/82* (220 images) focused on the external texture of crowds — urban figures and groups waiting at intersections, others caught in motion, faces made anonymous because their eyes and faces are lost in shadow, individuals partially obscured and adrift in crowds. All captured within the grey oppressive monumentality of a city where the architecture intimidates with its visual authority and confronts their autonomy. Photographed in eastern Europe in 1979, the emotional timbre of these sequences is punctuated by gaps, deliberate breaks in sequence, which dislocate and change the viewer's pattern of expectation. Within the sequence there are abrupt changes of focus, from sharp to blurred images, from intricate detail to generalized impressions, variations from close-ups to distance shots, and changes in the density and texture of the image. These images, like those of Henson's following works, are about alienation and anxiety, the symptoms if not the disease of the 20th century.





Bill HENSON  
*Untitled 1985/86,*  
*image 150, print 3.*  
type C colour-print, ed. 3/20

Henson's next group of photographs also evolved from the theme of architecture and its relationship to people. In *Untitled 1983/84* he establishes a disturbing dialogue between opulent, heavily ornamented Baroque interiors, and images of sex and drugs in the exploitive world of young, homeless children. The contradictory nature of intimacy and impersonal detachment of these almost black and white images resonates a feeling of unease, of haunting disquiet and poignant beauty.

In producing his series *Untitled 1985/86* which concentrates on suburbia, Henson was aware of the numerous clichéd approaches that he wished to avoid, such as the social essay or the satirical commentary. Living in the suburbs he was aware that they are an expression of the desires and the dreams of the average person. They represent a suspension of reality and the wish fulfillment of the materialist ideal. With their new brick houses, neon signs, supermarkets, service stations, they are the dormitories of the industrial age. *Untitled 1985/86* highlights the introspection, the acceptance of the prosaic, and the banality which characterises the suburbs, while also capturing the beauty of Romantic sunsets and children playing on green lawns between the patterns of tiled roofs.

Bob Jenyns was born in Melbourne in 1944 and attended the Caulfield Institute of Technology from 1961 to 1964 where he was awarded a Diploma of Art. Although initially an abstract painter Jenyns' interest moved to sculpture while teaching art in secondary school. During this time he fabricated three wooden, full-sized 1930's style cars complete with passengers as 'teaching aids'. The first major work which he exhibited was a boxing match, with combatants carved out of wood, inspired by the extravagant media billing for a Mohammed Ali prize fight as 'The Greatest Sporting Event In The History Of The World'. This was Jenyns' first of many satirical comments on contemporary culture.

Bob Jenyns is a sophisticated folk artist who has maintained a consistency of style, a commitment enhanced in the 1970's by his growing knowledge and admiration of folk and tribal art. His figures are devoid of any sculptural pretensions of realistic carving, yet they retain a basic honesty. The simplicity of their rigid columnar bodies and unarticulated arms, their elementary paintwork — pink for flesh, black for hair, belies the complexity of his parody and comic wit.

The Plane Show, his first one person exhibition at Watters Gallery, Sydney, in 1973, had a *Boy's Own Annual* quality. It consisted of six large early model Fokker aeroplanes fabricated in wood and cloth with 'plane' lettered on one side and 'picture' on the other — a joke on the concept of the 'picture plane' as an aspect of contemporary abstract painting. In his next exhibition *The Tit and Toe Show* Jenyns parodied the conventions of depicting female nudes in well known classical paintings, with his own versions of Botticelli's *Venus rising from the waves*, Ingres' *Odalisque* and Rubens' *Three Graces* — as simply stylized figures, painted in bright pink.

*A Star seen somewhere*, 1988 comes from *The Prickle Show* in which Bob Jenyns used tableaux of carved figures against evocative backdrops to parody the personalities and pretensions of present day politics. One work showed a drover's dog with its leg cocked over the the Australian Labor Party flag, while in another, a cowboy Ronald Reagan rides into the sunset through a desert of cacti. In *A Star seen somewhere*, an artist stands expectantly in front of her paintings waiting to hear that she has been awarded an art-prize.



**Bob JENYNS**

*A Star seen somewhere*. 1988

carved and polychromed wood, synthetic polymer  
paint on four canvas boards

### Artist's Statement

"My paintings arrive due to the physical act of painting what I interpret to be the correct organization of colour, line, and form, on the right scale.

This I find very stimulating because, with an ever increasing group of images and through the use of line, areas of colour, texture and shade, the combinations are infinite."

(Quoted from the *Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition* catalogue, 1989)

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David Larwill was born in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1956. After travelling through Europe and America for two years from 1975 to 1977, he returned to Australia with a strong conviction of wanting to be a painter and consequently enrolled at Preston Institute of Technology in 1980. However, dissatisfied with art school, he again travelled overseas from 1980 to 1981, before returning to Melbourne where he became a founding member of Roar Studios.

Roar Studios was established in 1982 as an artist's cooperative, in inner urban Melbourne. It proclaimed its role as providing a venue for young artists, and for raw, aggressive art that would challenge the accepted values of contemporary art. It is a role that David Larwill's art exemplifies in many ways.

Avoiding the floodtide of contemporary Italian and German Neo Expressionism, Larwill and many of the Roar Studio artists looked back to the innovations of the American Abstract Expressionists; to the early work of Jackson Pollock, particularly his semi-figurative paintings such as *She wolf* (1943); to Willem DeKooning's *Woman* series; to the painterly innovations and pictorial distortions of Pablo Picasso; to the totemic tribal paintings of Aboriginal art, and to the calligraphic expressionism of Ian Fairweather and Tony Tuckson.

The principal themes of the Roar Studio artists were urban and suburban narratives drawn directly from their inner city lifestyles, but by the mid 1980s Larwill had established an independent identity separate from Roar Studios. His imagery, as in *Bungedore-type welcome*, 1988, was drawn from his country life style. Larwill's schematized reductive images, drawn with an almost graffiti-like rapidity records with diaristic simplicity, his social encounters and relationships layered within a pattern of expressive painterly lines.



David LARWILL  
*Bungendore-type welcome*. 1988  
oil on two linen canvas panels

### Artist's Statement

"... to me it makes no difference whether I paint from nature or from another artist's work. I paint only because I've seen. Thus by using 'iphers of the visible' I can add or subtract from the accumulation of meaning that this style of painting acquires over periods of time. That is, by concentrating on certain gestures and casting it in a different format I can make the image my own and invest it with a whole new set of values. In my work I do not wish to make a fetish of the original or compel the viewer to read off a set of historical references"

(Quoted from *Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition* catalogue, 1987)

"A current form of personal expressionism has imagery roots in German Expressionism and American Abstract Expressionism. Things must have their context, but this idealized context provides only ready-made techniques, thick brushstrokes, for proving 'authentic' — 'personal' — 'experience'. This veneer of integrity can be, on closer examination, more like an unknowing parody of Expressionism's 'style'. Singular allegiances to style sabotages any broader consideration of specific intent and content. Such a regime would also be antithetical to eclecticism's 'spirit of enquiry'; making forays into artistic practices, general modes of communication, into the currency of ideas and meaning, while at the same time evoking strong responses in the viewer.

Some fear that such sophistication leads to a codification of the unconscious and the consequential eradication of the metaphysical. But it cannot be said that the unconscious and the metaphysical exist without any relation to the operations of the material world or the acting/viewing subject. An appeal to metaphysics is not the sole province of personal expression. Awe-inspiring phenomena don't necessarily occur just within the depths of subjectivity but can also be suggested by the manipulation of images and phenomena produced by the material world. Art that draws upon a bank of already existing imagery can be a departure for demonstrating the metaphysical."

(Quoted from 'Empty Gesture', *ON THE BEACH*, No 6, Spring 1984, p.1)

Lindy Lee, born in Brisbane in 1954, attended the Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education, Brisbane from 1971 to 1973, and was awarded a Diploma of Education. In 1979 she attended the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada and the Università Per Stanieri, Perugia, before completing the first year of a Bachelor of Arts degree at the Chelsea School of Art, London, between 1979 and 1980. Returning to Australia she studied at the Sydney College of the Arts, 1983 to 1985 was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) in 1984 and a Post Graduate Diploma in painting in 1985. She held her first one person exhibition in 1985, entitled *Black is not as Black as all that*, at the Union Street Gallery, Sydney.

In the 1980's climate of Post Modern 'appropriation', of quoting directly from the original, of an art about art, Lindy Lee's early conceptual work was located within two main areas of art practice — Zerox photocopied images presented in the form of magazines, and painting. In both, the images were selected from pre-existing art sources — "I see so many reproductions of paintings, they are more familiar to me than nature. I live in a city, it's a natural phenomena, art about art, it's the 'synthetic culture'."

Lindy Lee's painting method consists of coating the canvas with a uniform black oil and wax surface into which she etches her images, scraping back the black wax to reveal the underlying coloured ground, the colour giving body to the image. The image in *This heart*, 1988, is a detail from Eugene Delacroix's painting *Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople* (1840). For Lindy Lee black is a silent colour, its aura adds to the pathos of her paintings. This black ambience in *This heart* helps amplify an intimate moment that is a detail in the vast panorama of Delacroix's original painting.



Lindy LEE  
*This heart*. 1988  
wax and oil on cotton-duck

### Artist's Statement

"My work has had its own momentum and urban vision since before I entered Art School at sixteen. I have not felt my task is to find a new form of style of art. In this way I have not felt or seen myself in the role of a painter concerned only with formal elements of painting, and the problems they created.

Although I may not see the whole story or fully understand my motivation I am excited and compelled to crystallise images from the everyday world. Perhaps I align myself more to the point of view of a film maker or story teller than that of a painter.

Extremes in normal situations often spark my initial ideas. Spirituality and sexual eroticism are both elements that inspire and hopefully imbue my work.

To keep my work uncompromised by political or social climate is essential. I want the work to be of the decade, the year, that it is painted in and of the the artist, urban, male and a traveller"

(Quoted from *Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition* catalogue, 1989)

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Stewart MacFarlane was born in Adelaide in 1953. He attended the South Australian School of Art from 1970 to 1974, was awarded a Diploma of Fine Arts (Painting), then in the following year travelled to New York where he attended the School of Visual Arts from 1975-77, and was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting). Returning to Australia in 1983 MacFarlane attended the Victorian College of the Arts in 1984 where he was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma.

An early influence on MacFarlane was David Dridan, an academic, realist landscape painter, who as his high school art teacher, encouraged MacFarlane to paint realist compositions of street demonstrations and bar room tableaux. This choice of genre has continued in his work to the present. His paintings are concerned with the unexplained story, drama within suburbia, with an ambiguous subtext of sexuality, intimacy, violence and aggression — "the choice of subject matter always seems automatic".

During the five years MacFarlane lived in New York he worked as a studio assistant for various artists. This allowed him to observe the working methods of Alex Katz, Janet Fish and Chuck Close at close quarters. Impressed by the technical virtuosity of these New York realist painters, MacFarlane abandoned the reliance on photography which had been the basis of his technique, preferring instead to paint from real life.

Other major influences on his work during this period were the tonal realist works of Edward Hopper, with their 'revival of the anecdote' within common place and banal settings, and the film works of Alfred Hitchcock with their ability to create drama and psychological suspense through sinister detail in a normal setting.

In *The boarder*. 1987, the subtext is an integral part of the narrative and creates a double-entendre. Who is the interloper in the intimate environment of the house, the girl or the old man?





Stewart MACFARLANE  
*The boarder*, 1987  
oil on cotton-duck

**Comment**

"It is an illusion, of course, that lasting things seem first and what is most superficial is, experientially, essential in Hilarie Mais' sculpture. I am referring to the paint, the colour. It is so exactly adapted to the size, shape and character of the wooden construction it covers that it seems to fuse with and saturate the form, as if colour was a primal substance and the sculptures were hewn out of it. Mais' work also makes strong claims to be considered as painting in its own right, in the tradition of the shaped canvas. Indeed, they have a remarkably direct connection to the 'father' of the shaped canvas: a lot of the colours she uses were inherited from Barnett Newman's studio, a gift from the great American painter's widow. Those clarion cobalts and midnight blues, fire-engine scarlets and blacks are, therefore, precious substances and Mais is virtually obligated to tend the sacred flame when she dips into them.

Are the struts of Hilarie Mais' grids and the gauges of her spirals Barnett Newman 'zips' which she has re-trained in other directions? Maybe, but her four or five variations on the theme of interlaced spirals also appear to come directly out of a sculptural tradition. They seem to me magnificent tropes on the subject of Brancusi's *The Kiss*. The interference pattern where spirals overlap create the shape of a mandorla such as frames of the Virgin and Child in Medieval art. The double helix of DNA is also implied. The close-up vortex of the lover's staring eyes, the labyrinths of the inner-ear (regulating a sense of balance and also, presumably, assuring an 'equality of the sexes' in these configurations), and even a pun on the artist's name ('maze') are distilled in these exquisite inventions."

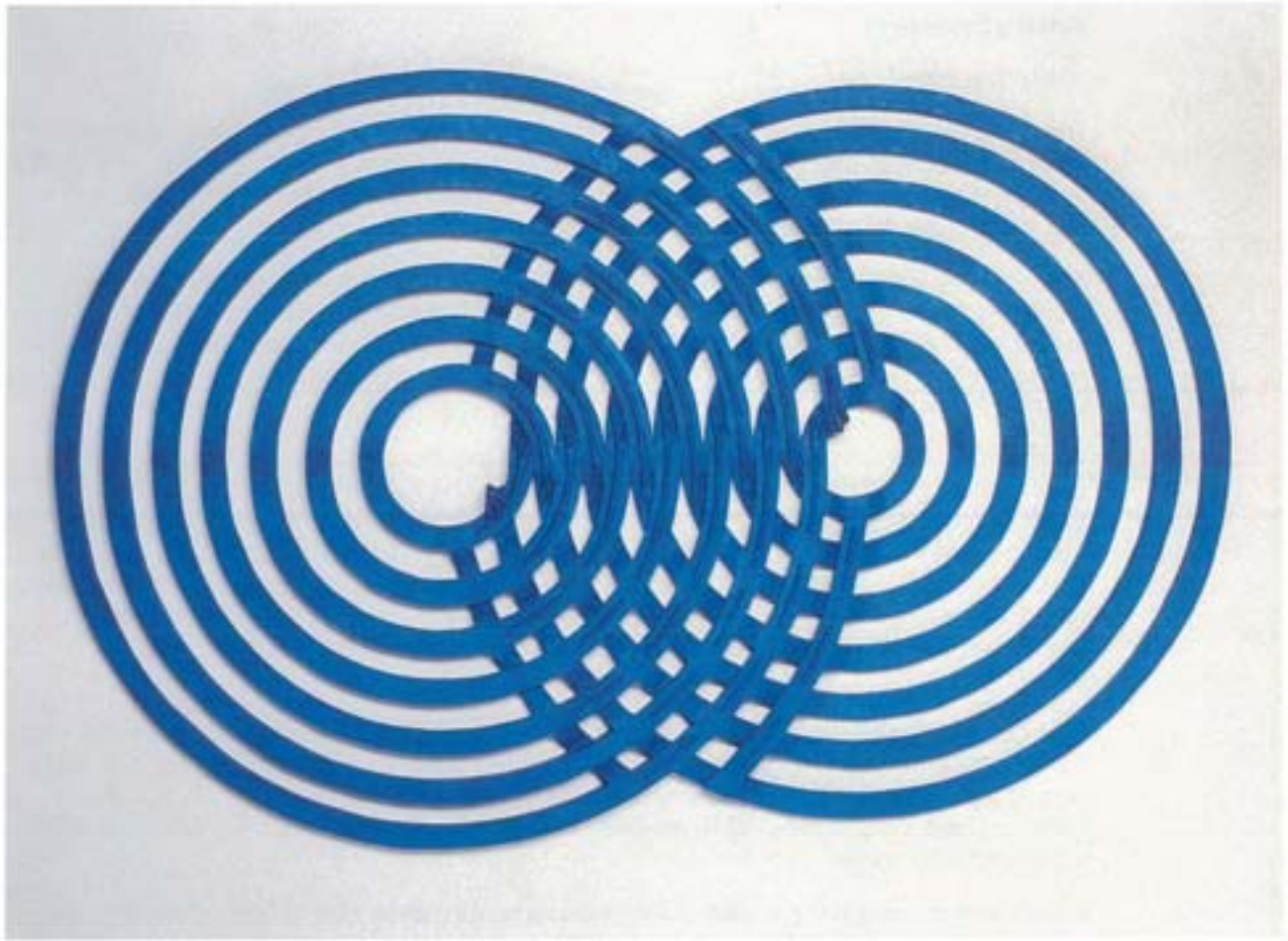
*Hilarie Mais by Terence Maloon, 1989*

Hilarie Mais was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England, in 1952. She studied at the Bradford School of Art, England, from 1970 to 1971, the Winchester School of Art, England, from 1971 to 1974, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts. She then attended the Slade School of Fine Art, London, from 1975 to 1977, where she was awarded a Slade Higher Diploma. She then travelled to America where she held a fellowship to the New York Studio School, New York, from 1977 to 1978. After two years as a visiting artist at the State University of New York at Purchase, Hilarie Mais arrived in Australia in 1981. She held her first one person exhibition at the Cunningham Ward gallery, New York, in 1977 and has participated in numerous group exhibitions including the Second Sculpture Triennial in 1984, the Third Sculpture Triennial in 1987, and the Biennale of Australia in 1988.

Hilarie Mais' early sculptural works have a three dimensional drawing quality. They are carefully and elegantly constructed linear wall pieces which exploit cast shadows as part of their architectonic nature. She quotes her early influences (mainly architectural), as "English vernacular styles, early modernism, William Morris . . . My early work was a kind of lyrical construction, somewhat between gesture (bodily rhythmic) and emotive form . . . from '74 on I had a strong interest in the Russian Constructivists, particularly the Stenberg brothers, Rodchenko and Tatlin".

The cool precision of her early steel works gained a hand crafted quality after her arrival in Australia in the early 1980s. Parallel with the emergence of expressionism in painting and the renewed appreciation of the painterly mark, Hilarie Mais used timber, finished with a textured *papier mache* surface, to enhance its expressive potential.

In the mid 1980s, after a series of small semi-abstract wall pieces consisting of stylized phallic images and schematized Guston-like cartoon images of heads, eyes and ears, Mais' sculptures became intricate non figurative wall pieces in which she created optical effect through the use of overlapping and interweaving patterns, intense monochromatic surfaces and interplay of shadows. The *waiting — anon*. 1986 comes from a series of spiral works in which interconnecting circles pay homage to tribal sand drawings, and medieval Celtic decoration with its intertwining snakes as symbols of the cycles of time, regeneration and death.



**Hilarie MAIS**  
*The waiting - anon. 1986*  
sawn and carved wood, plaster,  
synthetic polymer paint

**Artist's Statement***Pau preliminary*

I can't find one single post-card of a junk-yard anywhere. I've spent most of the day searching. Plenty of Madonnas and Christs and sweeping views and soft furry animals — but no junk. (And it lends itself so well). Have you ever tried reclining on a sheet of corrugated iron? Rather than a soft, comfy, nice, cushioned couch.

Yesterday (my first day in Pua) I went up to the Rue Des Pyrenees for its much heralded view of those mountains. Instead of mountains of rocks and soil and trees and (almost) snowcaps, I saw, in the best junk-yard ever, mountains of scrap-metal. Warmed my heart and made my nose bleed — I was so excited. I got there quickly, and it had everything. Without doubt, the top art-shop in town.

What a marvellous offer of riches on my arrival. Four cascading mountains of discarded metal — plenty of corrugated iron and thin, flat, black tin (burnt), shaped like car doors; loads of domestic waste (squashed petrol cans, bicycles, prams, children's toys), the ubiquitous motor-car piled high, crushed and flattened, about fifty in all; industrial rejects, strange machine cogs and whirly-gigs, thick coils of copper wire, and metal (Shirley Temple curled) shavings-peels of metal apples; roof spouting — everything scarred and twisted and corroded and far out! Gave me another blood nose. I wanted to make twenty-five sculptures in five minutes flat. I had to calm myself down.

Who has seen this? Who can I talk to about this? Everthing's OK! Everything's OK. You know what it's like to be in the countryside viewing a magnificent sunset (cinema). What can you do? Go on back to the farmhouse. Sunsets have been happening for quite a while — often, in fact. Go on back and have a cup of tea — calm yourself — exultation and sound habits — you'll come apart at the seams otherwise!

It was timely bringing along a scarf. It doubled as a handkerchief. How to ask somebody (in very inadequate French). 'Do you have some tissues? You see, I've got this blood nose . . . I was standing in the junk-yard and . . . I was meant to see the Pyrenees, but I saw Henri Baradat's scarp-metal yard . . . and I was a goner.'

Victor Meertens, 17 September, 1988

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Victor Meertens, of Dutch extraction, was born in 1952 in Seymour, Victoria. The earliest influences on him were his family's strong religious beliefs, European Christian traditions, the forms of church architecture, its music and rituals, and, almost as a contrast, the open grassy paddocks of the dry Australian landscape. As a young artist Meertens greatly admired the passion and spirituality of Vincent Van Gogh's paintings, but at art school was drawn to the strong intellectual non-objective approach of Kasimir Malevich and the abstract purity of the Russian Suprematists. Using found objects he created sculptural assemblages following the Constructivists' method.

From 1977 to 1979 Meertens attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and was awarded a Bachelor of Art (Painting). He taught at Dimboola in 1981 before returning to Melbourne enrolling at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1984, and was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma. He held his first one person exhibition at Rhumbarallas, Melbourne, in 1985.

Gradually, the crisp architectural geometry of Meerten's early sculptural entities constructed in corrugated iron changed, taking on humanoid figurative qualities. Their surfaces, like Rodin's sculptures, became broken and fragmented, catching light and creating shadows, increasing their visual drama and emotional impact. In *Pau preliminary*, 1988, Meertens has enhanced this surface vitality by his expressive addition of paint.



Victor MEERTENS  
*Pau preliminary*. 1988  
corrugated galvanized iron, synthetic enamel  
over a timber frame

### Artist's Statement

"*Late 20th century painting, No 1*, 1988, is one of a group of works under this title. Generally these paintings have two parts, an interior space defined by archetypal still-life elements, side by side with an exterior space, represented by an expanse of sky.

When composing these paintings I consider the harmony in the matching of these two, primary spaces.

In all the compositions, the interiors represent combinations of observed and constructed elements, and, it seems to me, become metaphors of reasoning and deliberation.

The exteriors, on the other hand, being fluid and vaporous, allow for mediation and liberate the imagination.

Formally, the still-life, drapery, and the artificial light sources of the interiors are symbolic of European painting, while the expanse of sky and infinite space of the 'Landscape' are uniquely Australian."

John R. Neeson, January 1989

John R. Neeson was born in Melbourne in 1946, and attended the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology from 1963 to 1967, was awarded a Fellowship Diploma (Painting), and attended the Secondary Teacher's College, Melbourne in 1970. He held his first one person exhibition at Pinacotheca, Melbourne, in 1973. A retrospective exhibition 'Ten Years in Black and White: 1977-1987' was held at the Chameleon Gallery, Tasmania, in 1987.

During the 1970s John R. Neeson worked within the idiom of Pop Art progressing through a series of abutting canvases, which incorporated an actual object, such as a door, to a final abstracted image of that object. In later works Neeson refined this reductive progression, edging it towards abstraction. The rectangular formats of his paintings were divided by grid structures formed by overlapping squares which echoed the structure of the canvas. Within these divisions there were minimal surface variations and subtle shifts in colour created by his use of wax crayons over blackboard paint. These tactile surfaces gained an additional illusion of space by the incorporation of architectural elements, ranging from ellipses — derived from round table tops — to triangular perspective projections of room corners, which were then ambiguously and obliquely overlapped dividing the surface and creating a sense of pictorial depth. When Neeson was living in London in 1981, through necessity working in small scale in black and white on paper, he was inspired by the fragmented space and the compositional arrangement of images in Picasso's *Guernica*. His works evolved an illusionistic space with shafts of light and cast shadows giving a solidity to images which began to move and inhabit a 'cinema screen' panorama.

By the mid-1980s, these theatrical associations with the proscenium arch had become a structural device within his compositions, framing in Baroque pictorial conventions his increasing interest in the landscape. The interior spaces, curtained off from the open exterior landscape, which feature in Baroque Art, receded in importance in Neeson's paintings as the open rural landscape was balanced with the interiors, effectively dividing the composition into two discrete sections.

Neeson was artist in residence at the Paretaio studio near Florence in 1983/84 and his interest in including the landscape within his paintings as an equal partner was initially inspired by Italian art and scenery. Later, while living in Tasmania, he was inspired by the rugged majestic Tasmanian wilderness, its dramatic sunsets and cloudscapes, and became interested in the sublime with its associated Romantic pictorial traditions.

The beginning of modern art is often attributed to Paul Cezanne and his approach to analysing and abstracting landscape into patterns of colour and shapes — an approach which is encapsulated in his statement, "treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone". Neeson's inclusion of these three objects in his work *Late 20th century painting, no 1*, 1988, pays homage to the source and traditions of early 20th century art, coupled with a contemporary reevaluation of 19th century landscape traditions.



John R. NEESON  
*Late 20th Century painting, no 1, 1988*  
oil on cotton-duck

### Artist's Statement

"I understand Art as an institution in the same way that Law, Nature and Humanity are, they are socially constructed notions, not real or natural things in the world. Being 'constructed' their function contributes to maintaining existing social structures. In this way I see Art as an oppressive and reactionary tool used to intimidate people and maintain class division. Of course the things that people make — art products — aren't in themselves oppressive — it is the ideology surrounding them I object to.

Conversely, making and viewing art can be a liberating and power-giving activity. In my work I hope to give power to the viewer in terms of some pleasurable experience. As well, I don't believe that you can be 'wrong' when responding to art — any response is correct. This is because one's experience with art is determined by class and education — when you 'get it' it is not because of some special sensibility particular to that person only. Instead I believe that when you are moved by a picture, what you experience is your own desire (libido). This experience is ultimately available to anyone but unfortunately whole groups of experts are founded upon such experiences.

As well, such experiences tend to be interpreted as spiritual. I see them as being very much located 'in the body'. To see it this way is to privilege the viewer (rather than some 'thing' in the painting) and allow for many different and varied responses. For me it is important not to privilege one reading over others, such as the spiritual interpretation of 'one truth' or 'universal truth'."

(Extract from artist's statement 1988)

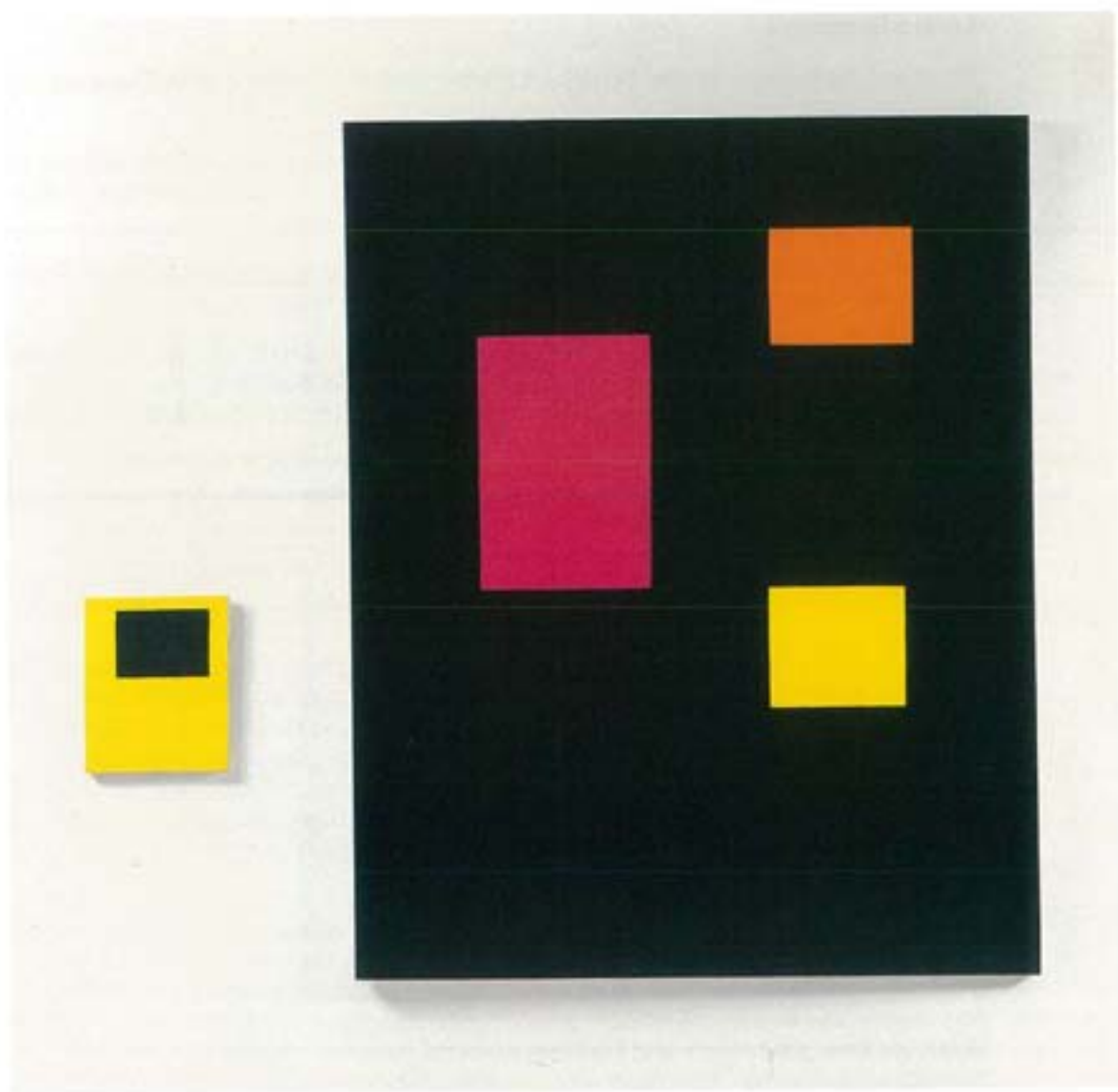
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Elizabeth Newman was born in Melbourne in 1962. She attended the Victorian College of the Arts from 1981 to 1984, was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in 1983, and a Post Graduate Diploma in 1984. The following year she worked in Besozzo, Italy at the Visual Arts Board studio. She held her first one person exhibition, Elizabeth Newman: New Paintings, at the George Paton Gallery, Melbourne University Union, in 1986.

Elizabeth Newman's early figurative works were concerned with investigating the problems of depiction within the conventions of Art. She explored this theme in some works through the overt manipulation of the pictorial convention of easel painting, such as the incorporation of a frame within a picture as part of the composition to remind the viewer that the painting was an illusory depiction of a scene. In other works she included the graphic, almost illustrative depiction of a painting within a painting, blurring the distinction between her depiction and the original work, and a large blank Minimalist canvas propped against a wall which occupied almost the entire composition. While in moody nocturnal landscapes void of pictorial imagery, she employed close tone-on-tone relationships to engender a sense of spirituality in the work.

The paintings in her 1988 exhibition were all abstract — rectangles and squares within variously sized rectangular formats. Each work had its own internal arrangement of the rectangles which was echoed in the overall placement of the paintings on the gallery walls. Thus the small separate works could be seen as units of the larger ensemble, as well as extensions which echoed the internal rectangular units of the larger works.





Elizabeth NEWMAN  
*That's entertainment, I and II, 1997*  
oil on two cotton-duck panels

### Artist's Statement

*Heart and Instrument* might be the relics of another time and another culture. These remains provide the clues to this world.

They are both built 'by hand', using simple tools and construction methods. Their construction indicates they were made to fulfill a specific function — a utilitarian function perhaps? A ritual function? A metaphorical function?

They are open ended — as if once connected to a greater whole. And perhaps filled? Almost certainly they were involved in a transference — a flow from one place to another.

*Heart* is bound with tight bands — constrained and tight around what is hollow. For protection? Or restraint? It has a soft form, but, a metal skin. The emptiness swells the metal out. The openings develop in opposite directions, but, entwine as they do so. The title *Heart* suggests that it was once the centre of life.

*Instrument* may be scientific: for measuring, probing, cutting, containing, or it maybe musical; for communicating the spirit of time."

Bronwyn Oliver, January 1989

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Bronwyn Oliver was born in 1959 in Inverell, New South Wales, attended Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education from 1977 to 1980, and was awarded a Bachelor of Education (Art). The following year she was awarded the New South Wales Travelling Art Scholarship and from 1981 to 1983, attended the Chelsea School of Art, London, where she was awarded a Master of Arts. The following year she was awarded a Fellowship in Sculpture at the Gloucester Institute of Arts, Cheltenham, then a Residency at the Moyra Drying Bequest studio, in the Cite International Des Arts, Paris. She held her first one person exhibition in 1986 at the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

Bronwyn Oliver is a formalist artist concerned with space, volume, form, patterns of planes, intersecting points and lines. These dynamics are dictated by her choice of materials, and in part predetermine the form best used to exploit the inherent physical characteristics of that material. As a sculptor she exploits the inherent qualities of the materials and engineering principles that dictate the form of the object, and it is these structural dynamics coupled with a philosophical commitment to 'low-tech' fabrication which are the subtext of her work.

While at art school Oliver experimented with casting domestic items such as taps and teapots in paper. These paper impressions carried both the positive and negative form of the object allowing her, as in the case of the teapot, to simultaneously show both the interior and exterior views of the object. Prior to her departure overseas, her sculptural works which employed paper as a flat surface located parallel to the wall, demonstrated a formalist interest in plane, line and point — the sheets of paper being pierced with both wood to emphasis their flatness, and string to draw attention to line.

In England she abandoned her earlier use of thick, white, opaque paper and experimented with tissue paper. An inexpensive material, its membrane-like thinness and delicacy demanded a design which could make it structurally self-supporting. Casting thousands of separate cones and cylinders, she experimented with building cellular structures, often hung from the ceiling, which were analogous to simple cell marine micro-organisms which lack skeletons and have to contend with the forces of gravity.

After returning to Australia in late 1984 Oliver began incorporating fibreglass with paper, cane and dyes into her sculptures. She then turned to new materials, such as flat sheets of copper, which could be cut and bent into a variety of shapes while still retaining an allegiance to their original state. The green patina which resulted from oxidation also evoked in these works additional associations with the archaeological totems of the Celts and other ancient cultures.



**Bronwyn OLIVER**  
*Instrument*, 1987  
patinated copper rivets and strip

**Bronwyn OLIVER**  
*Heart*, 1988  
patinated copper strip and rivets

Ian Parry was born in 1947 and studied at the Prahran College of Advanced Education from 1966 to 1969. After graduation he worked as a professional fisherman from 1970 to 1972. He lectured in art at the Gippsland Institute from 1975 to 1977, and then returned to professional fishing. From 1980 to 1982 he lectured in painting and printmaking at Prahran College of Advanced Education, and from 1983 at the Victorian College of the Arts. He held his first exhibition in 1974 at Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne, and in 1982 a retrospective exhibition, *Ian Parry: A 10 Year Survey*, was held at the Burnie Art Gallery, Tasmania.

Ian Parry works within the tradition of Romantic painting which evokes feelings of awe and wonderment at the beauty and terror of Nature. His main subject is almost exclusively the ocean. Within the open expanse of sea and sky, light is reflected in the fragmented patterns off the choppy surface of the ocean, caught and diffused within the panorama of clouds and sky — the effects of light which reach out to the distant horizon.

His early, small-scale seascapes of the 1970s, of painterly atmospheric vistas, had a Turner-esque quality. Each brushstroke captured the shimmering transitory effects of light which Parry then dissolved into an almost abstract pattern of tightly controlled colours and delicate feathery paint strokes.

He still retains close links with the sea through sailing which has, with its abstract navigational points theoretically plotted within an open featureless sea, become the subject of his more recent paintings.

*Refuge Cove, full moon*, 1988, with its graphic use of black and its play of dramatic changes of light and dark, demonstrates the mystery and enigmatic effects which characterize the Neo Romantic movement of the 1980s. Each side of the painting is framed in the manner of the picturesque conventions of 18th century Romantic landscape painting. However, instead of the customary trees, Parry has used black edging to emphasize the allegorical content of the work, for the bay depicted here with its narrow often-missed entrance, was once the only refuge for early sailors on the storm ravaged south-coast of Victoria.



Ian PARRY  
*Refuge Cove, full moon*. 1988  
oil on cotton-duck

### Artist's Statement

"The overall title of the show is 'Our Faith' — I've been thinking about this one for a long time. It was more or less conceived in the sense of a poem, an epic poem like Pound's Cantos that continue through one's life, that you begin and then add to as various things happen. It's nothing to do with Pound per se, it's the structural aspect, it's the idea of creating the one work over an entire lifetime . . .

The second part of the title is 'The Case For and Against Colour (Part 1)'. Colour is used as a metaphor for that theoretical position. The paintings are divided into two areas, firstly the small panels which are black with colour, often subdued but nonetheless colour. The larger paintings are just paintings with black and white . . .

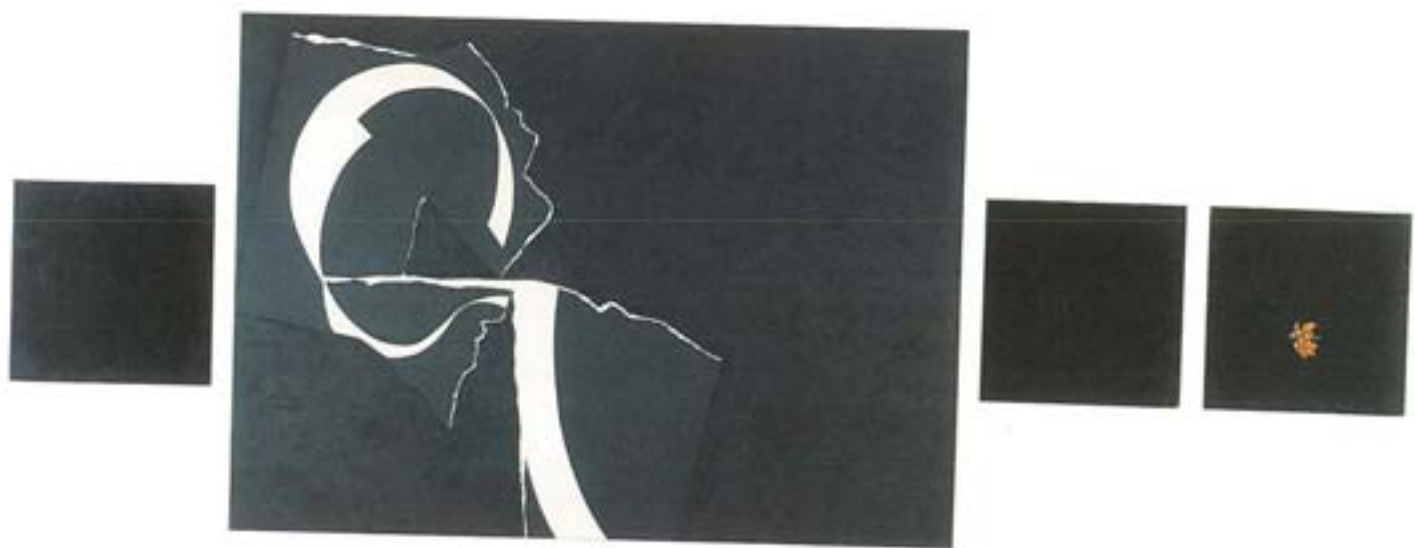
So when I started constructing the ideas for this I was interested in what oil painting can and can't do, and one of the things that it can do — and do remarkably well — is mimic surface and that mimicking of surface adds the richness to the work, sometimes but not all the time, [it] almost becomes as important as the supposed content of the work . . . My work has always been reductive in that sense."

(Extracts from an interview, 'Our Faith — Stieg Persson', *Tension* # 11, Jan/Feb 1987, p13)

Born in Melbourne in 1959, Stieg Persson attended the Victorian College of the Arts from 1979 to 1981, and was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting). He held his first one-person show at United Artists, Melbourne, in 1983, by which time the political edge of his early work had been tempered by a sophisticated manipulation of ambiguous, monochromatic images appropriated from low-art sources: wallpaper patterns, Chinese political posters, 19th century tourist prints and steel engravings of coyly posed animals. These works thus negated high-art references and with a restricted palette suggested an infinite variety of interpretations between the layering of absolutes, of black and white, light and dark, positive and negative.

Persson's multi-valent imagery later became analogous to his negation of concepts of absolutes. Knowledge was thus opposed by belief, chemistry by alchemy, astronomy by astrology, philosophy by sophistry. Images of hypothetical stellar constellations of the goat or the centaur were used to trample under foot ideological symbols such as the sickle. While still maintaining his allegiance to black, through the use of oil paint, acrylic and blackboard paint stained directly into the raw canvas, Persson was also able to create a variety of matt and gloss surfaces and graphic effects within the reductive Minimalist aesthetic.

In *Our Faith part 1: The Case For and Against Colour, no 1*, 1985/86 Persson has replaced his earlier compositional device of layering images with a 'dialogue of parts', a strategy where each unit comments and adds meaning to the other. The contextual reading is more precise and less literal. For example, the white calligraphic swirl on the large canvas is derived from the shape of the bunch of grapes and the line of the table on the small realist panel. It is like a tracery in a stellar constellation, a diagram of the focal points and major compositional lines within the still-life panel. At the same time the variety in the different treatment of the black painted surfaces of the other small panels serves as a reminder or as an index to the fallacy of mono-perception.



Stieg PERSSON

*Our Faith, part 1; The Case For and Against*

*Colour, no. 1, 1985/86*

synthetic polymer paint and blackboard paint  
on canvas, oil and varnish on three composition boards

### Artist's Statement

"On a good day within the workings of my studio there may be a TV, radio, chess computer and stereo running simultaneously. Along with randomly opened books, magazines and numerous small sketches scattered on the floor, making available several levels of information at the same time.

This seems to keep my process activated and in a fluid state, including being able to move freely from painting to working sculpture.

My best sculpture is drawn out of complex imagery within my paintings the vitality of the image is then articulated into three dimensional form occasionally building from ready made objects. Consequently, working this way suggests further combinations within my process such as the current series of paintings on doors.

The paintings on doors have become a metaphor for an ongoing expansive process. Definition and then redefinition of a moment. The juxtaposition of incongruous imagery suggests the co-existence of divergent viewpoints."

(Quoted from the *Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition* catalogue, 1987)

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Rodney Pople was born in 1952 in Launceston, and studied at the Tasmanian School of Art from 1972 to 1975. In 1977 he moved to London and attended the Slade School of Art until 1978. He also attended the New York Studio School in 1979 before returning to Tasmania. He held his first one-person exhibition at Art Empire Industry Gallery, Sydney, in 1981. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions including: The First Australian Sculpture Triennial, 1981, and Australian Perspecta, 1985.

Prior to 1981 when he settled in Sydney and began concentrating on painting, Rodney Pople's sculptures were precarious and slightly off-balance, using an awkward colour that suggests tension. "I would", wrote the artist in 1981, "not be happy making a pleasing, contented, solid-standing form because that would not suggest reality to me". Reality, in his sculptures and later his paintings, consists of setting up a visual tension between experimentation with an expressive chaos of fragmented details often free-floating in drifts of paint. In his sculptures this is contained within an architectural configuration and tensioned against the dynamics of nature with its forces of gravity, balance and structure.

By the mid-1980's the expressive, semi-abstract architecture of Pople's paintings began to be populated with discernible figurative images emerging from within his painterly washes and drifts of colour. Pople's expressive linear brushwork, not dissimilar in feeling to the cries of anguish and contained violence of Francis Bacon's painterly 'controlled accidents', also showed distorted images of the figure trapped within a closed architectural space. Unlike Bacon's preoccupation with the *condition humaine*, Pople's concern is with the bombardment of contemporary culture on the individual. The bricolage of images builds into a statement about the synthetic nature of culture and how we perceive the world around us.





Rodney POPLE  
*Painting with bronze cat. 1988*  
oil, metal-powder paint on six ash doors

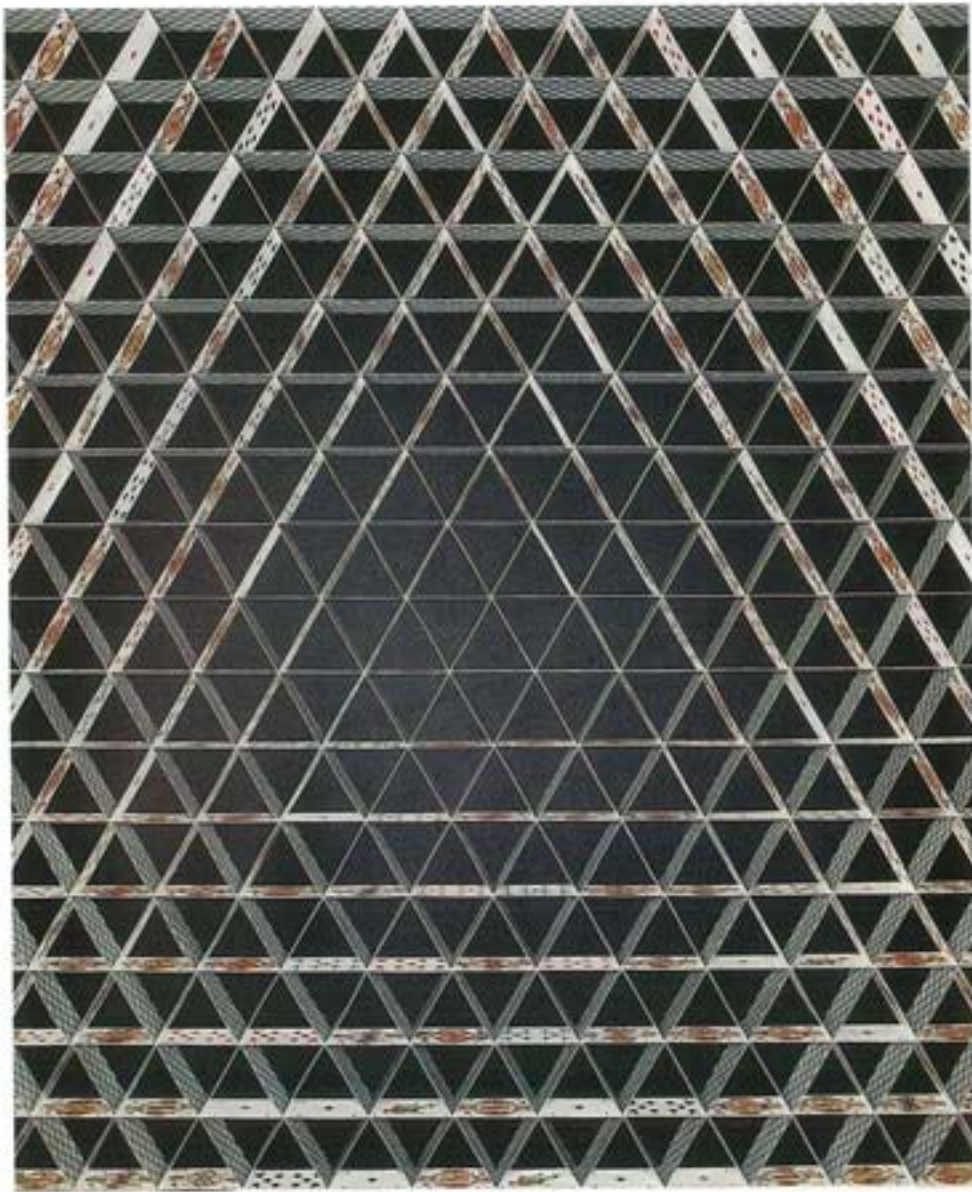
**Comment**

Jacky Redgate is a photographer whose work has always been concerned to suggest a sense of history, and in this respect her most recent images are no exception. What is perhaps different in the latest series, *Work-To-Rule*, is that her attention has been clearly focused on how the dramatic effect of a photographic style can endow humble everyday objects like cotton reels, ice cream cones, tea cups or string with considerable aesthetic clout. This rapid promotion of poor objects up through the ranks is not so much a wilful or anarchic act, as a gesture towards the serene authority of a modernist legacy. *Work-To-Rule* is what the title immediately suggests — images which have been fashioned from the etiquette of certain photographic traditions.

Whereas some of Redgate's past work, like *From the (Still) Life* (large format black and white images of a cornucopia), to my mind used quoted conventions of tableaux and nature morte somewhat too literally, *Work-To-Rule* employs a style which has been more freely based on codes taken from modernist portraiture and advertising. These new images have a dignity and poise which one associated with her past work, coupled with a genuine sense of experimentation.

(Quoted from, 'Critiques: Work to Rule', PHOTOFILE, Winter 1987, p25)

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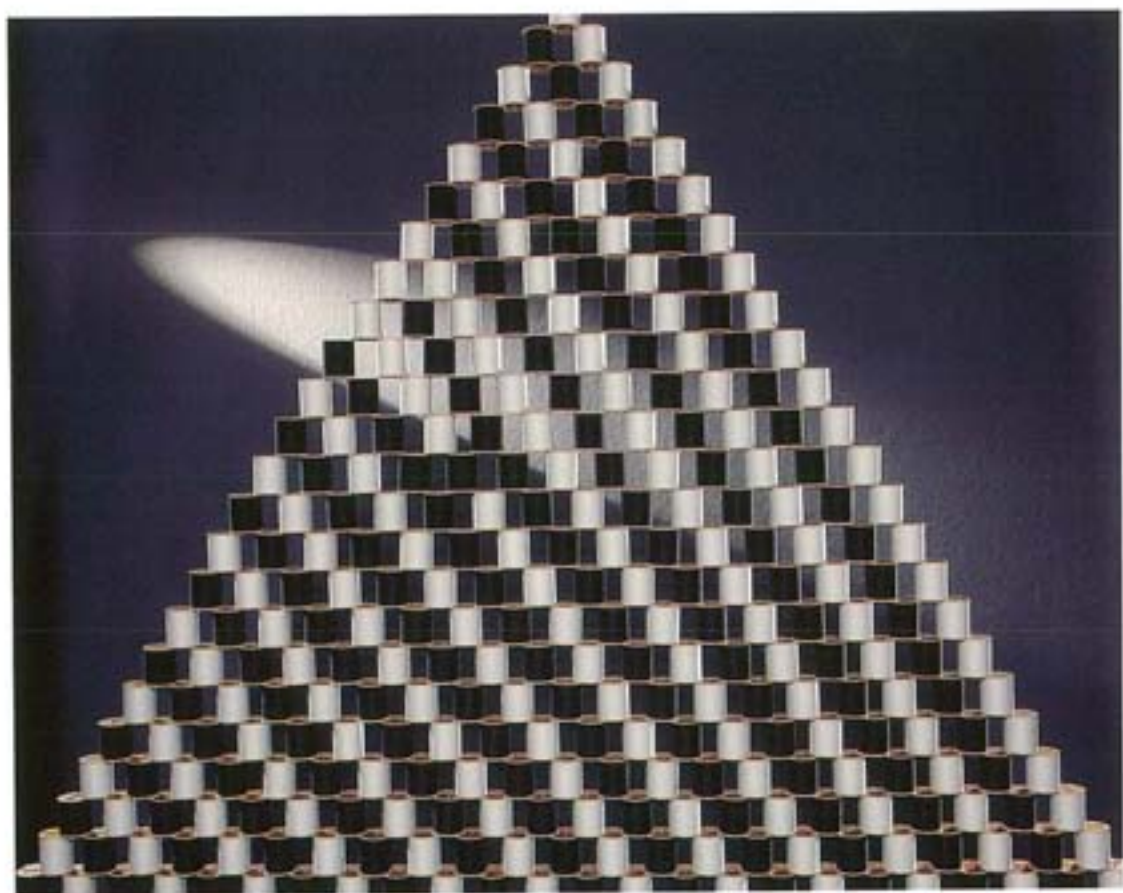


Jacky REDGATE  
*Work-to-rule VI*. 1986/87  
cibachrome

Jacky Redgate was born in Hammersmith, England, in 1955. She migrated to Australia in 1967 and attended the South Australian School of Art, where she was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Sculpture) in 1980. She then attended the Sydney College of Art, and was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in Photography in 1985. Redgate held her first one-person exhibition at the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, in 1982. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions including the Australian Perspecta, 1985 and 1987; the Biennale of Sydney, 1985 and the Australian Biennale, 1988.

Jacky Redgate is concerned with the rules and conventions of photography. In her 1984 work, *Photographer Unknown, A Portrait Chronicle of Photographs, England 1953/62*, she challenges the concept of the original photograph with a series of anonymous amateur portraits reprinted by Redgate from old, forgotten and neglected negatives. Each photograph with the subcredit *Photographer Unknown* reflects both the social history of the period and the conventions of family photography.

The *Work-To-Rule* series embodies many of the rules of early modernist, commercial photography, with its parody of careful lighting and artistic shadows, its artificial 'window dressing' composition and centrally positioned camera viewing point. The title also makes a pun on the laborious and systematic creation of these tableaux of mundane products — Redgate's display has its source in the New York window displays of the 1940s. There is also a tilt at human folly in the house of cards, and in the pyramid of cotton reels, the tower of Babel.



Jacky REDGATE  
*Work-to-rule 1*, 1986/87  
cibachrome

**Artist's Statement**

*The moon is in the offering* was begun in late '86, originally it stood vertical and harnessed the properties of the 1920's blocks of tenements. These flats are particular to the Eastern suburbs and Manly, somewhat like St Kilda. It was metamorphosed into a room painting in '87 at a time when I was considering architectural settings, decorations and murals inside a number of works — a Gaudiesque grotto.

The outside into the inside, the ruins of the original represented by the pink-brown stains, define the windows. It is an early attempt to integrate the archway into the work, rather than a doorway. The lightness, sunlight on decay, a reaffirmation of the plant and insect kingdom.

Atmosphere is cool, light is French, the Romantic in decay, perspective and images shift in the frame of the aesthetic counterpoint, shadows interrupt, negate, with images back to the landscape. The anatomy of silence in the looking. May the moss grow on those walls profusely".

Victor Rubin, 1987

Victor Rubin was born in 1950 in Sydney. "I must have been around three when I discovered the magic of drawing with water on concrete. It was incredibly exciting making all those marvellous shapes, but so frustrating watching them disappear before my eyes as the water evaporated in the sun. My normally tolerant mother put a sudden stop to my afternoon's activities when I began picking off branches from our frangipani tree and drawing with the sticky sap".

From 1967 to 1969 he attended the Bakery, a private art school run by John Olsen where Bill Rose and Janet Dawson also taught. The school encouraged Rubin's expressive, personal approach to art and served as an introduction to the art scene of the time. From 1970 to 1973 he attended the National Art School, East Sydney Technical College and Alexander Mackie Teachers College where he was awarded a Diploma of Art Education. He held his first one-person exhibition in 1972 in the Bonsai Room of the Yellow House, Martin Sharp's counter culture art co-operative in Kings Cross. Group shows that he has participated in include: *Australian Perspectives*, 1983 and 1985; *Vox Pop: into the Eighties*, 1983, and *Form-Image-Sign*, 1983.

Victor Rubin's early works feature expressive gestural lines and have a compulsive quality. They contain a cluttered enthusiasm for detail and a Cubist-inspired fragmentation of imagery inspired by the streetscapes and the schematized geometric patterning of 1920's building facades in the Sydney suburb of Bondi. In later works, Rubin populated his compositions with images of people, and by the 1980's, with crowds in apocalyptic landscapes, all detailed in a linear, highly personalized, expressive style. This highlighted his passion for combining the micro with the macro, for showing details within details.

Rubin's choice of themes and subjects is cyclical, so that he often returns to earlier works and relocates them within the ambience of the time. After the streetscape series he concentrated on painting images of particular individuals, producing an extensive series of portraits of friends and fellow artists. In later works these figures were reduced in scale and made anonymous within the crowds of his compositions. No longer urban portraits of individuals they became refugees lost in epic dramas set within holocaustic landscapes.

The Room series from which *The moon is in the offering*, 1985/87, followed a request by a Sydney art critic John McDonald for an illustration to an article he was writing on the art world. The series, which contains illusions of paintings within paintings in rooms within rooms, developed as a metaphor for various states of mind. These works also made reference to Rubin's earlier assemblages and heavily collaged paintings which depicted mock installations within the rooms within the paintings.

The shifting viewpoints and changing perspectives within the paintings adds to the conundrum, the ambiguity of the work. Rubin sees this complexity in his work as paralleling the reading of a contemporary novel, correlating to the Post-Modern ambiguity of the narrative with its multiple readings, shifts in perception and changes in perspective.



Victor RUBIN  
*The moon is in the offering*, 1985/87  
oil on jute canvas

### Artist's Statement

*"Untitled (Bicentennial Arts)* was originally intended as a poster design commissioned by the Australian Bicentennial Authority's Arts Programme. It depicts Calliope, Muse of Poetry and Eloquence, observing and recording the efforts of Thalia, Muse of Comedy, to rescue Terpsichore, Muse of the Dance. A contribution from the sale of this painting will be donated to the efforts of Greenpeace to save Antarctica".

Vivienne Shark LeWitt, January 1989

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Vivienne Shark LeWitt was born in Sale, Victoria, in 1956. She attended the University of Adelaide from 1974 to 1975, the Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart, from 1976 to 1979 and the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education from 1980 to 1981. She held her first one person exhibition at the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, in 1984 and has participated in numerous group exhibitions including *Australian Perspectives* 1983 and 1987; *The End of Civilization Part II: Love Among the Ruins*, (curated by the artist) at the George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1983; *Meaning and Excellence*, British and Australian tour, 1984-85 and *Australian Visions*, New York, 1984.

Vivienne Shark LeWitt's early works used the stylistic conventions of Egyptian art to portray figures dressed in contemporary Mod fashions. These works reflected her interest in the subtle variations of cultural symbols within the strict disciplines of both Egyptian art and contemporary fashion, as outward signs of the cultural structures and social systems inherent within society. This interest in signs and their functions originated from Shark LeWitt's interest in Post-Structuralist linguistic theory.

By the mid-1980s Shark LeWitt's concern with cultural substructures and their translation into symbols was reflected in her use of allegory in paintings which were small in scale, often on wood panels, with gold leaf and flat heraldic colours, and featuring schematized figures. The avoidance of detail, the limited perspective, and the narrative contained in these paintings was reminiscent of the art of the Medieval period, a time of mystery, faith and ritualized belief.

Vivienne Shark LeWitt's paintings have a lyrical, poetic quality heightened in her recent work by the elaboration of decorative detail. *Untitled (Bicentennial Arts)*, 1988, with its allegory of medieval actors in a contemporary drama has a deliberately anachronistic charm. It is through this apparent historical guile that its allegory cuts deep into our collective consciousness.





Vivienne SHARK LeWITT  
*Untitled (Bicentennial Arts)*, 1986/87  
oil on linen canvas

### Artist's Statement

"I like to think of my work in terms of a huge all-encompassing book, where each canvasboard panel is a page in the book. The idea comes from the French poet Mallarme, who wrote in 1895: 'Everything, in the world, exists to end up in a book'. The panels have been numbered right from the start and the panel count is continuous from 1 to infinity. I've almost reached 15,000 so [I] still have a long way to go! However, I find that the quantity has been increasingly *exponentially* each year since 1981 when I began to work in this format. All modes of art can be accommodated within this book, and all modes of expression: from the trivial to the serious, the banal to the profound, the pious to the blasphemous, etc. My intention is the exhaustion of all possible categories and I'll spend the rest of my life working towards achieving that goal.

The idea of using canvasboards as pages for this book came from Duchamp's painting *Tu m'* 1918 where coloured panels emanate from a single point — the point of consciousness. In French, Duchamp's title means something like 'You bore me' (referring to the act of painting). But with me its the exact opposite: it doesn't ever bore me. I like the idea of the infinite multiplication of panels filled by an endless sea of paint . . ."

(an extract from an interview. 'IMANTS TILLERS by Jennifer Slatyer',  
*The Australian Bicentennial Perspectives*, 1987, p111)

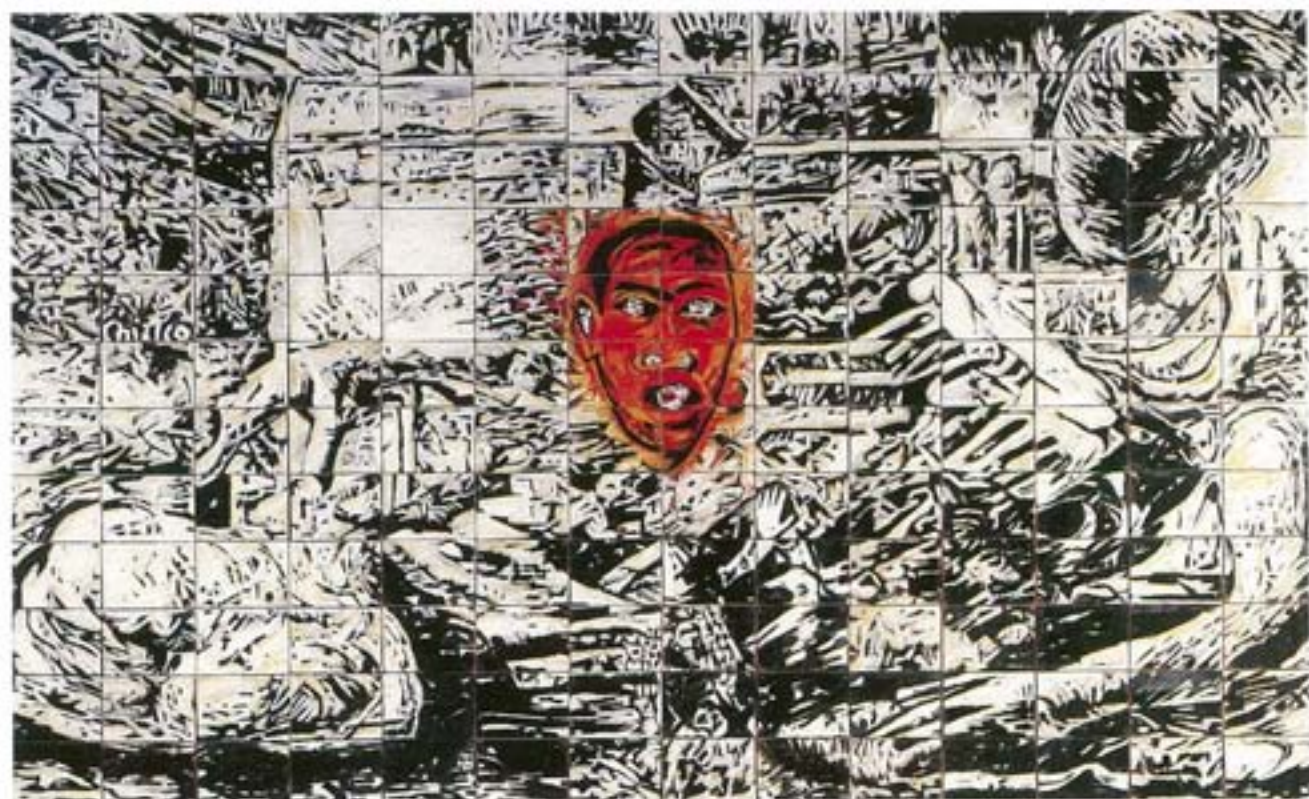
Imants Tillers was born in Sydney in 1950, of Latvian parents. He studied architecture at the University of Sydney from 1969 to 1972, graduating with a Bachelor of Science (Architecture) Honours and was awarded the University Medal. Associated with the Sydney University Fine Arts Workshop (the Tin Sheds), he began exhibiting professionally in 1970 and was included in *Object and Idea*, 1973, the first major museum exhibition in Australia to focus on conceptual art. Since this period Tillers has always used second-hand imagery. He has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *An Australian Accent*, shown in New York and Washington in 1984, and *The Australian Bicentennial Perspectives* 1987.

In 1986 Imants Tillers represented Australia at the Venice Biennale. In the catalogue, commenting on his 'appropriation' of images, he wrote: "In Australia the experience of art through mechanical reproduction always precedes their direct experience". It is for Tillers "the rhetoric of reproduction". Mechanical reproduction has in a sense robbed works of art of their uniqueness and in Australia this displacement of original images has become a metaphor for our cultural displacement. We inhabit an island of second-hand cultural experiences.

In *Conversations with the Bride*, 1974/75, shown at the Biennale de Sao Paulo, Brazil, Tillers combined on tripods 112 postcard size paintings based on images from Hans Heysen's popular gum tree painting *Summer*, 1909, and Marcel Duchamp's large glass construction, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, 1915/23.

Around 1981 Tillers adopted small, commercially prepared canvas boards as the format for his paintings. These could be worked on individually, using a numbering sequence, and later mounted together on a wall as the final work.

In *Enigma and anti-enigma*, 1988, the known images juxtaposed on the canvas boards are from art sources via reproductions. The large reclining figure to the right appears in an earlier Tiller's painting *Pataphysical Man*, 1984, which in turn has been appropriated from Giorgio de Chirico's painting *The Archaeologist*, 1926/27. Directly below the central red face taken from a painting by Francesco Clemente is a small mouse-like cartoon figure with raised hands from a Latvian children's book illustration, *The White Book* by Janis Jaunsudradins — an image that Tillers finds 'alien and archaic'. The term 'pataphysics' comes from Alfred Jarry's infamous play *Ubu Roi*, 1896. Jarry represents for Tillers the hero of alienation, an iconoclast who wishes to retreat from civilization.



Imants TILLERS  
*Enigma and anti-enigma*, 1988  
oil-stick over metal-powder paint  
on 168 canvas-boards

### Artist's Statement

"*A further remove*, dating from mid 1987, is an example of my interest in classical composition methods. The inclusion of the set square, placed strictly on the invisible underlying network, is perhaps symbolic of this concern.

The painting is also typical of my perverse delight in making highly formal juxtapositions of the ordinary and the extraordinary. The elements in *A further remove* include some artists' tools, a toy gorilla, a prodigiously overgrown marine protozoa, and a broken Victorian china bust.

These articles, drawn from diverse sources, then subjected to improbable lighting effects and distorted scale, form part of my catalogue of obsessions. I am interested in the relationship between objects and the emotive space that separates them."

David Wadeldon, January 1989

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David Wadeldon was born in Terang, Victoria, in 1955 and moved to Geelong in 1970. He studied at the Gordon Institute of Technology, Geelong, from 1972 to 1974, was awarded a Diploma of Art from the Preston Institute of Technology in 1976, and a Graduate Diploma of Fine Arts from Phillip Institute of Technology in 1982. He held his first one-person exhibition at Pinacotheca, Melbourne in 1984.

David Wadeldon's early works were small scale, realistic paintings of single objects made unreal or surreal by their close-focus detailing and isolation in the centre of the canvas.

Wadeldon was dissatisfied with these photo-realist paintings and their self imposed limitations, and began an extensive period of drawing concentrating on specific aspects of the Italian Masters of the 14th and 15th century. Having previously always worked on a small scale he was also interested in the Renaissance compositional techniques for large scale paintings, in particular the frescos of Piero Della Francesca, as a model for his future work.

In 1984 Wadeldon held his first exhibition. This comprised large works which appropriated many of the compositions and techniques of the Old Masters, with familiar images simplified and reduced to flat areas of colour outlined in black.

By the time of his second exhibition he had eliminated the outline and returned to three-dimensional illusion, modelling in *chiaroscuro* with sombre colours and emphasizing the painted surface. These works were influenced by the enigmatic, carefully crafted, drawings of Peter Booth and by the metaphysical, surrealist paintings of Giorgio di Chirico. Their subject matter contained a balance between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the microscopic and the large scale, the pictorial and the psychological. Drawn from a repertoire of objects which contained evocative associations these images dwelled together in an atmosphere of mystery and reality.

Wadeldon deliberately avoids the theatricality of Surrealism and strives for a cool classical otherworldly effect in his paintings. His titles such as *A further remove*, 1987, are also used to distance the viewer from specific interpretations of his iconography.



David WADELTON  
*A further remove*. 1987  
oil on linen canvas

### Artist's Statement

"My work is an attempt to picture things that are difficult to talk about. They are not difficult to talk about because they are tragic, but the exact feeling of a horse eating from one's hand, a bird on a branch in the morning sunlight, or a girl running down a road at night carrying her shoes can find life in a painted image that requires no further explanation. It is this mute function of painting that interests me."

Jenny Watson, January 1989

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Jenny Watson was born in Melbourne in 1951, attended the National Gallery School, Melbourne from 1970 to 1972, and was awarded a Diploma of Painting. She then studied at the Melbourne State College in 1973, where she received a Diploma of Education.

During the 1970s she painted a series of realistic animal portraits, images of dogs and cats taken from mass media and pet food packages and later from photographs of her own pets. Shown in her first one person exhibition, at Chapman Powell Street Gallery in 1973, these were indicative of the diaristic thread that weaves through all her work. She next painted a series of large-scale horse images transposed via a squared grid from racing magazines, reflecting her interest in horses and dressage. These works were followed by a series of portraits of friends as single images on a flat coloured background. Based on photographs these full-length portraits were indicative of her growing interest in photography as a contemporary tool for recording contemporary culture.

The use of photographic sources became increasingly important in her work until the early 1980s when she abandoned realism for a graffiti-like expressive, painterly style. This she referred to as 'cave painting' because of its elimination of detail and its child-like emphasis as with pre-historic cave paintings on essential pictorial elements.

Jenny Watson's next group of paintings, the *House series* 1977, consisted of two canvases: a small realistically painted and detailed record of one of the houses she had lived in as a young girl, and a larger, painterly image transcribed through a squared grid from the smaller work. This sectioning of images via a grid eventually evolved in her work into the use of small separate canvas boards, each board carrying an idea or an image which built up into the content of a larger work.

The free, painterly surface of Jenny Watson's works is both an expressive and emotive sign, as well as an attempt to break any illusion that may arise from her figurative pictorial images. This treatment of the surface is also an attempt to emphasize the materiality of the medium, and to reaffirm that the image is crafted from paint.

Watson's *Painted Page series* of the late 1970s, based on randomly selected sections of newspapers and magazines, reflected her involvement in contemporary culture. By the 1980s however, this gave way to a more highly personalized diaristic content. Partly influenced by her move to live in the country, her work often included dream imagery and images of horses as symbols of escape. Watson combined this theme of escapism with the innocent personae of Alice in Wonderland or Cinderella, as fantasy images of herself.

Jenny Watson's *Crimea Wars series* is nurtured by her immediate environment (Watson lived in Crimea Street St Kilda) and revolves around the social life centred on the Crystal Ballroom. This series reflects Watson's growing interest in memory as a filter for the past and as a reservoir for poignant images that mingle with equal validity, with images of the present. There is a rawness in both the materials and the painterly quality of these paintings, coupled with a deliberate naivety of style. Watson emulates a child-like drawing style for the schematized images in *The child bride* 1987, in an attempt to encompass all within the simplicity of a child's world.



**Jenny WATSON**

*The child bride*. 1987

oil, gouache, synthetic, polymer paint over  
metal-powder paint, plastic and paper collage,  
copper coin, steel nails on cotton-duck

### Artist's Statement

"A successful work is not one which resolves contradictions in a spurious harmony but one which expresses the idea of harmony negatively by embodying the contradictions, pure and uncompromised, in its innermost structure."

Theodor W. Adorno, (*Prisms*, 1967; Cambridge, Mass., 1981, p.32.)

"Each element of representational imagery in the work is repressive in that it is placed over an obvious (or equal) surface. Both the surface and the image are made independently of each other with no compromise made in terms of attention to each other. This is an attempt to further certain oppositions in the work which are generally perceived as mutually exclusive, and relate in their independent forms to dualistic logic. The combination of these alternative choices suggests in some way a cancelling out process or at least expresses conflicts and tensions and maintains a state of flux — as a result the relationships between various entities are never fixed.

There is also a desire which suggests evasiveness and certain misleading elements and in recognising this perhaps ultimately the work may be about surface seduction and patterns."

Peter Westwood, 23 January, 1989

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Peter Westwood was born in Sydney in 1954, and moved to Ballarat in 1959. He studied at the Ballarat College of Advanced Education from 1971 to 1974, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1981. He held his first one-person exhibition at Reconnaissance, Melbourne in 1986.

Peter Westwood is concerned with the illusion of reality, which for him is circumscribed by its extremes, formed by its opposites, and is subjectively perceived and structured by the mind — we apply laws to nature that only exist in our own perception, we superimpose laws to structure chaos. It is these contradictions and tensions that he attempts to isolate in his art. Thus the pictorial illusion of the image of the hand in *Untitled*, 1987, overrides and contradicts our perception of the real, actual, underlying textured surface.

*Untitled*, 1987, is the first of a series of assemblage works in which the textured, gestural surfaces incorporating fragmented, embedded objects are dominated and lost in the illusion of a painted image. Conversely the thinly painted image is also deconstructed by the textured surface, creating a dynamic visual and conceptual tension between reality and perception.

The image of the hand, resembling an enlarged detail from a Baroque or Renaissance figure painting, is a rational image superimposed on an irrational Abstract Expressionist surface. Although inspired by the *chiaroscuro* modelling of light and shade of Caravaggio and other Old Masters, Westwood's image of the hand is a photocopy of his own hand in which the half-tones have been eliminated by the duplication process.

Westwood's early works of the 1970s were concerned with the rhetoric of painting — often parodying both style and content. Using a flat airbrush technique he experimented with combining flat two-dimensional images with three-dimensional illusions, realist images that looked abstract, and photo-realist images of textured Abstract Expressionist surfaces. In the early 1980s he produced a series of paintings of dark, Romantic coastlines in which rugged mountains and windswept seas disappeared into abstraction. Merged into a sombre psychological mood, the elements of the landscape appeared as awe-inspiring images which elicited emotion through their scale, drama and atmosphere and thus evoked the 18th century concept of the sublime.





Peter WESTWOOD

*Untitled*. 1987

mixed media; surface - wood, metal, synthetic

polymer paint impasto

image - (thin) oil paint

Caroline Williams was born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1945. She attended the Elam School of Art, Christchurch, from 1964 to 1967, before travelling to Europe, Africa and the United States of America. Williams held her first one person exhibition at the Bonython Galleries, Sydney, in 1971. During most of the 1970s she lived in London, returning to live in Melbourne in 1981. She has participated in a number of group exhibitions including: *Novel Works*, 1986; *The Golden Shibboleth*, 1987 and *The Australian Biennale*, 1988.

Caroline Williams admires the European integration of art and life and how past traditions nurture contemporary culture. As an adolescent, she attended the Convent of Trinita de Monti, where she studied art history from a Roman Catholic perspective. At 17, before returning to her home in New Zealand, she attended the Academy of Florence, where emphasis was placed on drawing.

She came to prominence as an artist in Australia in the mid-1980s with a series of paintings of posturing, aristocratic gentlemen costumed in the style of late-18th century Rococo fashion. These 'dancing men' had a flippant and dandyish quality, yet the poses were directly appropriated from religious paintings, which created a disparity between their initial reading and the recognition of their source as historical and cultural archetypes.

Her early drawings, executed in London in the late 1970s had a surrealistic quality. They consisted of zoomorphic images showing the metamorphosis of animals through their clothing into humanoid shapes or personae — clothing maketh the man. These works, and her later 'dancing men' series, were a product of her admiration of Dada and Surrealism and her fascination with the Symbolist Movement, in particular with the works of Maurice Denis and Odilon Redon. From a contemporary feminist perspective, she was interested in the Symbolist male archetype as a decadent aesthete, and in the female as an aggressive vampire and seductress.

An element of Surrealism and an accompanying feeling of disquiet continues in Williams' recent landscape paintings in which she manipulates the 18th century conventions of the 'picturesque' and the 'sublime'. In these works, enigmatic monoliths and sinister edifices dominate the landscape, conveying a sense of both grandeur and decay, their surrealistic incongruity deconstructing the comfortable and immediate recognition of the Romantic landscape. Caroline Williams thus highlights both the artifices of art history and our Romantic perception of nature.



Caroline WILLIAMS  
*Untitled painting 1988, rocky road. 1988*  
oil on linen canvas

**Artist's Statement**

"Derain once remarked to Breton that in painting it was not a matter of reproducing an object but its virtue. We can consider that the objects depicted in painting can now be another image, another reproduction of a painting. Derain's work has held a continued fascination for me in the last five years. I have allowed my work to be infused by Derain's imagery, for the late works hold an emotive certitude which the hard work and intelligence of many Promethean modernists lack. Maybe it has something to do with my interest in the aura of the past image; the remembrance of a mood and how this relates to the present state of things. For these interests may rest finally on the temporal order . . .

The process [of painting] . . . involves the physical layering and ordering of the stretcher, linen, oil paint and the final image. The image is determined by the grid structure and is laboriously painted from left to right filling in each square. (Each square I paint is an original, only the larger image is a copy). Each layer of this painting is successively silhouetted by the next as it moves back from the image to the colour field, to the canvas, the stretcher and finally the wall. For the process shows, in an elementary way, how any painting is formed."

(Extract from the Moët & Chandon Touring Exhibition catalogue, 1987)

John Young born in Hong Kong in 1956 arrived in Australia 1968, settling in Sydney where he attended the University of Sydney and the Sydney College of the Arts from 1974 to 1977. He later attended the Julian Ashton School of Art in 1987, as a part time student. Young held his first one person exhibition, *The Second Mirage*, in 1982 at Rosroe, Connemara, Ireland, followed by *'Magnetic Seizure'* at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1984; *Collision* 1983, *The Grey Light* 1985 and *Winter Palace* 1986 at the Yull/Crowley Gallery Sydney.

Since 1983 John Young has used the images of the French painter Andre Derain, manipulating a selection of images according to his 'conceptual rhetoric' to create a balanced tension between the original, appropriated images and his processed representation of them.

In each painting the selected image is squared up on a grid for an 'accurate' and overt transposition — the grid can be compressed or elongated, thus changing the original image, yet retaining sufficient traits of the Derain image to honour the philosophy of appropriation. There is a delicate balance between appropriation and 'occupancy' by the borrower of the original image.

New Abstraction, with which John Young shares many affinities, locates these philosophic stratagems within its orb of interest. It places great weight in the distance of the artist from the authorship of his own set of images, reaffirming the stance of the anonymity of the artist's personality within the reading of the work.



John YOUNG  
*Outside the word*, 1987  
oil on linen canvas



**David LARWILL**

born 1958  
*Bungendore-type welcome*, 1988  
oil on two linen canvas panels  
n/s n/d  
182.5h. x 243.4w. x 3.6d.cms  
ICI 25-1988

**Lindy LEE**

born 1954  
*This heart*, 1988  
wax and oil on cotton-duck  
signed, dated and titled on canvas reverse,  
felt-tipped pen, diagonal script  
139.0h. x 134.6w. x 4.0d.cms  
ICI 16-1988

**Hilarie MAIS**

born 1952  
*The waiting - aron*, 1986  
sawn and carved wood, plaster,  
synthetic polymer paint  
n/s n/d  
119.8h. x 180.5w. x 5.5d.cms  
ICI 20-1988

**Stewart MACFARLANE**

born 1953  
*The boarder*, 1987  
oil on cotton-duck  
signed and dated l.l.c., grey oil  
title, date, artist's name, media and  
size on support reverse, u.l.c., red chalk  
150.6h. x 210.6w. x 4.5d.cms  
ICI 15-1988

**Victor MEERTENS**

born 1952  
*Pau preliminary*, 1988  
corrugated galvanised iron, synthetic enamel  
over a timber frame  
n/s n/d  
247.0h. x 110.0w. x 80.0d.cms  
ICI 41-1988

**John R. NEESON**

born 1946  
*Late 20th Century painting, no 1*, 1988  
oil on cotton-duck  
artist's name, title and date on  
support reverse, u.r.c., black oil  
121.8h. x 198.0w. x 3.5d.cms  
ICI 35-1988

**Elizabeth NEWMAN**

born 1962  
*That's entertainment, I and II*, 1987  
oil on two cotton-duck panels  
artist's initials, date and title on  
reverse centre, black crayon  
i) 152.2h. x 121.7w. x 3.4d.cms  
ii) 31.5h. x 25.9w. x 2.5d.cms  
ICI 26-1988

**Bronwyn OLIVER**

born 1959  
*Instrument*, 1987  
patinated copper rivets and strip  
n/s n/d  
173.5h. x 27.5w. x 13.5d.cms  
ICI 19-1988

**Bronwyn OLIVER**

born 1959  
*Heart*, 1988  
patinated copper strip and rivets  
n/s n/d  
59.2h. x 34.2w. x 16.5d.cms  
ICI 18-1988

**Ian PARRY**

born 1947  
*Refuge Cove, full moon*, 1988  
oil on cotton-duck  
n/s n/d  
168.3h. x 152.6w. x 3.0d.cms  
ICI 27-1988

**Stieg PERSSON**

born 1959  
*Our Faith, part 1: The Case For and Against  
Colour, no. 1*, 1985/86  
synthetic polymer paint and blackboard paint  
on canvas, oil and varnish on three composition boards  
n/s n/d  
152.0h. x 520.0w. x 3.5d.cms (variable, overall)  
i) 59.7h. x 59.7w. x 1.0d.cms  
ii) 152.0h. x 213.5w. x 3.5d.cms  
iii) 59.7h. x 59.7w. x 1.0d.cms  
iv) 59.7h. x 59.7w. x 1.0d.cms  
ICI 02-1988

**Rodney POPLE**

born 1952

*Painting with bronze cat.* 1988

oil, metal-powder paint on six ash doors

artist's name, title and door number

on each door verso

219.5h. x 348.6w. x 3.5d.cms (overall)

i) 217.0h. x 56.5w. x 3.5d.cms

ii) 219.5h. x 57.8w. x 3.5d.cms

iii) 217.5h. x 60.0w. x 3.5d.cms

iv) 217.0h. x 56.5w. x 3.5d.cms

v) 219.0h. x 57.7w. x 3.5d.cms

vi) 217.5h. x 60.1w. x 3.5d.cms

ICI 24-1988

**Jacky REDGATE**

born 1955

*Work-to-rule I.* 1986/87

cibachrome

n/s n/d

104.0h. x 139.0w.cms

ICI 06-1988

**Jacky REDGATE**

born 1955

*Work-to-rule VI.* 1986/87

cibachrome

n/s n/d

127.0h. x 102.0w.cms

ICI 05-1988

**Victor RUBIN**

born 1950

*The moon is in the offering.* 1985/87

oil on jute canvas

signed, dated and titled support reverse,

u.l.c., black chalk, script

164.5h. x 198.0w. x 2.5d.cms

ICI 22-1988

**Vivienne SHARK LeWITT**

born 1956

*Untitled (Bicentennial Arts).* 1986/87

oil on linen canvas

signed and dated on canvas reverse, u.r.c., blue oil

61.0h. x 45.8w. x 2.7d.cms

ICI 38-1988

**Imants TILLERS**

born 1950

*Enigma and anti-enigma.* 1988

oil-stick over metal-powder paint

on 168 canvas-boards

n/s n/d

150.0h. x 247.5w. x 0.5d.cms (overall)

12.5h. x 17.5w. x 0.5d.cms each panel (irreg.)

ICI 01-1988

**David WADELTON**

born 1955

*A further remove.* 1987

oil on linen canvas

signed and dated u.l.c., green oil,

titled on canvas reverse, u.r.c., charcoal

123.4h. x 184.4w. x 3.2d.cms (frame)

ICI 36-1988

**Jenny WATSON**

born 1951

*The child bride.* 1987

oil, gouache, synthetic, polymer paint over

metal-powder paint, plastic and paper collage,

copper coin, steel nails on cotton-duck

n/s n/d

172.1h. x 158.0w. x 2.0d.cms

ICI 37-1988

**Peter WESTWOOD**

born 1954

*Untitled.* 1987

mixed media; surface - wood, metal, synthetic

polymer paint impasto

image - (thin) oil paint

n/s n/d

152.2h. x 182.9w. x 7.7d.cms

ICI 29-1988

**Caroline WILLIAMS**

born 1945

*Untitled painting 1988, rocky road.* 1988

oil on linen canvas

signed l.r.c., light brown oil, script

152.2h. x 182.7w. x 3.6d.cms

ICI 08-1988

**John YOUNG**

born 1956

*Outside the word.* 1987

oil on linen canvas

n/s n/d

title date and artist's name, rear stretcher

bar, right side, felt-tipped pen

182.6h. x 167.6w. x 4.0d.cms

ICI 33-1988



