Chaos

&

Order

120 years of collecting at RMIT

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Curator's Essay

Chaos is the natural state of any collection of a certain size and age. Order is the driving impulse of the museum or gallery – or in this case university. RMIT has amassed an impressive array of art objects since its founding in 1887, but for all that, it has seldom clearly articulated (even to itself) exactly why having a collection would be a good idea, or for whose benefit it has one. The conflicting tendencies towards chaos and order are readily apparent in our collection, and after more than 120 years, with over 2500 art objects in its holding, it seems appropriate to begin a conversation about its development, interpretation and display - and about art collections in general.

And this is a vital conversation to have, because when we talk about art collections, it's easy to miss the forest for the trees. Applauding half-forgotten works trotted out in the service of the latest blockbuster; gasping at the amount paid for an old master; rolling one's eyes when a challenging acquisition upsets the sensibilities of the stout burghers at the local tabloid…the trees are all worthy topics for discussion, but the canopy they form comprises an implicitly ideological apparatus - one subject to bias and false narratives, despite the best of intentions - that confers and sustains status, power and identity on its owner.

Chaos & Order isn't simply an opportunity to survey the history of RMIT's art collection. Not that this in itself isn't an important venture, but a celebration of the past should never be uncritical. We should never forget that the defining characteristic of all collections is ownership. Wherever sufficient capital is accumulated - financial or cultural, in private hands or public - it becomes a tool capable of both empowerment and disenfranchisement.[1] Art collections are not exempt. In much of his writing on the subject, Walter Benjamin couches this in Marxist terms: even collections in public museums are the property of the state, ultimately maintained for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Such a collection "may well increase the burden of the treasures that are piled on humanity's back. But it does not give mankind the strength to shake them off, so as to get its hands on them."[2]

A debate on the merits of capitalism is well and truly outside the scope of this essay, but whether or not we agree with Benjamin that art museums represent a salvo in the ongoing class war, he is correct in identifying that the knowledge they embody denotes an unregulated source of authority. Property might be theft, but Benjamin feels the true sin of the modern museum is one of omission: their claim to disseminate culture is merely a contrivance. "Knowledge that could teach the proletariat nothing about its situation as a class was no danger to its oppressors. This was especially true of knowledge relating to the humanities. It sought only to *stimulate*, to *offer variety*, to *arouse interest*. History was shaken up, to relieve monotony; the result was *cultural history*."[3]

Looking at George Johnson's *Structure No. 14*, we see a painting bearing all the stylistic hallmarks of classical geometric abstraction - that is, the rational, non-objective exploration of space and form rising from the traditions of avant-garde Europe. This is a fair designation, but only in part. Charles Nodrum relates that Johnson shared the sensibilities of his contemporaries Roger Kemp, Jan Senbergs and Len French, and considered in this context his treatment of form becomes laden with totemic, symbolic weight and psychological import.[4] Johnson himself has described his work as social commentary, his compositions suggestive of civilization on the brink of collapse, common bonds

ready to break under pressure. No single reading is wholly true, or free from subjectivity. It's much less complicated to label Johnson a geometric abstractionist, and be done.

This is the 'cultural history' Benjamin rails against – false knowledge created by snatching objects from the messiness of their context, moulding and simplifying facts to fit reductive classifications or chronologies. Michel Foucault has demonstrated the folly of this in *The Order of Things*, quoting a passage from Borges in which the latter author invents a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' that orders the entirety of the animal kingdom into such categories as 'belonging to the Emperor', 'tame', 'fabulous', 'from a long way off look like flies', and 'having just broken the water pitcher'.[5] Foucault explains that we understand this system to be impossible not because the descriptors are strictly untrue, but because Borges does away with the common ground that unifies them – they're ridiculous because they're obviously arbitrary. The problem is that art collections are capable of giving categories like this a framework in which to exist, and through positions of cultural authority, galleries and museums can reify them. For further evidence, one need look no further than an ongoing study into visitor perceptions in the US that recently published statistics indicating that of the 100,000 people surveyed, the majority believed museums and similar institutions more trustworthy than news organisations.[6]

The desire to impose order is understandable.[7] The modern museum is a product of the Enlightenment[8], and it's not hard to see in their DNA a certain Hobbesian instinct towards civilising authority. 18th century collections were organised on the basis of scientific taxonomy and classification, and as such it's hardly surprising that as contemporary art museums developed, they inherited the same structure and desire to appear encyclopaedic – a desire perhaps reinforced by a lingering sense of inferiority over the importance of the humanities relative to the 'hard' sciences.[9]

Aside from an analysis of media and production, there is little that can be claimed as scientific about art collections. Nevertheless, they are fixated on presenting themselves as authentic taxonomies. In the first instance this is achieved by functioning metonymically, using examples to stand for a whole – a single bark painting to stand for all Aboriginal art, for instance; in the second, by narrowing the context in which artworks can be understood.[10] Susan Stewart uses the analogy of Noah's Ark as the archetypal collection: two of each animal gives us the world in microcosm. It's perfectly representational, internally consistent and utterly fictitious.[11]

The natural, problematic end of this process of simplification is an art history that, as Claire Bishop puts it, is 'conceived in terms of avant-garde originals and peripheral derivatives, [that] aways prioritizes the European centre and ignores the extent to which apparently 'belated' works hold other values in their own context'.[12] If art collections are to be genuinely democratic and relevant, they need to acknowledge such flaws. Institutional critique has become commonplace since the late 1980s, and museums, galleries and similar institutions have been under growing pressure to comply with the demands of audiences increasingly accustomed to questioning political and social inequality.[13]

RMIT's art collection is the product of many hands over more than a century of change. It has been subject to individual

tastes, biases - even rivalries. Without question, there are gaps in the history it purports to represent. There are names left out.

In part, this is because a defined program of acquisition has been a late development.[14] Although the university has been acquiring artwork in an ad hoc fashion since its establishment as the Working Mens' College, between 1890 and 1970 it had garnered only a handful of portraits, the odd public work, and a couple of admittedly impressive donations. It wasn't until nearly a century after its founding, under the direction of the then head of the Art Department, Lindsay Edward, that RMIT recognised that maintaining a permanent collection was appropriate for an institution with a stake in Melbourne's cultural development. Edward asserted that the intended purpose of the collection would be to make Australian art accessible to staff and students; however the management of the collection was never defined further than this, and while purchases were ratified by a committee, the plan for acquisitions appears to have been defined by what was available rather than a coherent strategy. Over the next half-decade RMIT purchased works by some of the leading practitioners of the day, such as Geoffrey Bartlett and Robert Jacks, who were relevant to the university's history and significant artists in their own right. These were supplemented by a number of works from international artists.

Though Edward's purchases were to form the backbone of the collection, the program of acquisition ended with his retirement five years later. The collection didn't grow again in a meaningful way until 1992, when RMIT amalgamated with the Phillip Institute of Technology, which had assembled its own collection in the decade between 1982 and 1992.[15]

It wasn't until 2009, under the guidance of then Vice Chancellor Margaret Gardner, that RMIT developed a formal acquisition policy with the intention of shaping the collection as a cultural resource, 'to tell the University's story through the creative endeavours of its staff and alumni, and to build on RMIT's legacy of fostering and supporting new, innovative artistic ventures.'[16] The question remains though: whose stories is the collection telling, and who benefits most from the telling? Or perhaps more pertinently, how can collections be used to help shape the values they claim to represent?

In his 1947 manifesto *Museum Without Walls*, cultural theorist Andre Malraux notes that an increasingly catholic approach to form, media, and function had rendered a monolithic concept of art all but senseless.[17] For Malraux, modern museums have established themselves as the true home of art because when (and only when) they are able to jettison their paternalistic inclinations, audiences are able to compare and contrast artworks of disparate periods, cultures, forms and techniques, and begin to construct thematic, poetic and emotional relationships between vastly different art objects.

It's in this spirit that *Chaos & Order* has taken shape. Curating an exhibition using a single collection can be difficult, in that the range one is choosing from – and therefore the relationships one can build – is necessarily limited. The exhibition therefore developed in the manner of an extended lipogram, or an Oulipo text. The constraints became a form of gamesmanship, finding ways to highlight (or sometimes conceal, like

a riddle, for the keen eye) symmetries and connections within the design of the display. The pose of a nude by Rupert Bunny mirrors, for example, that of an underwear model in a feminist screenprint by Ann Newmarch. The pent shape of the Rainbow Serpent in Yirawala's depiction of the Kunapipi story echoes the coils of Clement Meadmore's abstract *Stormy Weather*.

But spotting patterns – both deliberate and coincidental – amongst works in the collection wasn't the sole intent. Such similarities were designed to provoke deeper questions about how collections structure cultural worth: take Leonard French's *Sunfish*, which has been juxtaposed with Timothy Cook's *Kulama*. Both make use of a prominent cruciform at the centre of their composition, but their true parallel is not formal. Each artist has appropriated traditional religious iconography for non-traditional ends - French using the more familiar Christian symbolism, and Cook the body-paint designs of an initiation rite in the Twi Islands. Both are personal, stylised interpretations of established motifs, but the former is commonly regarded as 'modern art', and the latter as 'Aboriginal art'. Placing them alongside one another is intended to elide the false dichotomy that such categories impose; the coincidental resemblance of composition is merely the icing on the cake.

As any mathematician will tell you, chaos does not mean the same thing as random. Just as chaos theory indicates an underlying, emergent order dictated by the conditions one begins with, so too did the selection of artworks quickly began to dictate the form that the exhibition eventually took. Although there are no records indicating acquisitions being made according to subject matter or iconography, it became readily apparent that the majority of works in the university collection fall into five overlapping thematic groups – Form, the Self, the Other, Place and Protest – which form the basis of the layout. From there, it was a question of working backwards: for example, the 'Self' section was formed around fin de siècle nude celebrations of the female body by Rupert Bunny and Hugh Ramsay; speculating that these might originally have been intended for display in a salon or drawing room, the gallery housing them was decorated in Victorian damask wallpaper. Rather than the botanical and ethnographic works that might be supposed to have accompanied them in such a setting, they were instead contrasted with a contemporary reappraisal of these subjects - politically charged works by artists like Greg Semu, Kawita Vatanajyankur and Maria Fernando Cardoso who seek to reclaim the body from cultural appropriation and the male gaze.

Despite refuting conventional chronologies, RMIT's history remains an important part of the exhibition. The central display in the 'Form' section – a long, low table on which an array of two- and three-dimensional works are exhibited as if a salon hang were turned through 90 degrees – is an homage to a practice that took place in the 1980s when, once a year, the collection (then a much more manageable size) was packed up wholesale, sent to RMIT's Building 1, and laid out for staff members to select favourites for their offices. At the same time, the reference is layered: it is a visual quotation of Malraux's *Museum Without Walls* and Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* – both similarly arranged for their respective authors to better find pictorial correspondences between works separated by time, distance and cultures. Or, another layer: the display is itself a play on Form - turning the salon hang

on its side reinforces the raw, objective physicality of the artworks, which the traditionally decorative format would normally rob them of.

It's hard to get closer to the heart of what *Chaos & Order* is trying to achieve than to quote the always quotable Robert Hughes, who wrote that "The basic project of art is always to make the world whole and comprehensible, to restore it to us in all its glory and its occasional nastiness, not through argument but through feeling, and then to close the gap between you and everything that is not you… It's not something that committees can do. It's not a task achieved by groups or by movements. It's done by individuals, each person mediating in some way between a sense of history and an experience of the world."[18]

I feel that this is the job of a good gallery, and a well curated collection. We're here to facilitate understanding, not to instruct – to make a space for ideas, and let audiences use that space as they see fit. Let ambiguity reign, and trust the viewer to find solutions. Let there be hidden meanings, jokes, moments of clarity and moments of confusion. Let order allow collections to develop, but let chaos give them meaning.

Collection exhibitions are often seen as old-hat in comparison to the immediacy of the contemporary art scene, which is by its nature is temporary, and has come to value the ever-evolving *now* over the permanence associated with collections[19]. As Claire Bishop puts it, 'contemporaneity is being staged on the level of *image*: the new, the cool, the photogenic, the well-designed, the economically successful.'[20] *Chaos & Order* is attempting to put the lie to this, and show that collections are living things, their relevance is only limited by the imagination of those working with them.

Which brings me to my final point: *Chaos & Order* is an exhibition about art collections, but the most crucial questions it asks is 'what are collections for'? This is particularly important in RMIT's case. Its holding of contemporary art mirrors other local collections (public and private), with whom it cannot yet compete in terms of scope. Other university collections are older, or broader, or more focused. Moreover, as I noted at the beginning of this essay, this exhibition is the first true survey of RMIT's collection in 120 years. At its close the great majority of the artworks will return to storage; a lesser number will go back to offices and boardrooms, to be seen by only a privileged few. Why then should RMIT maintain a collection? It's to be hoped that *Chaos & Order* is the first step in answering this. The exhibition was developed with the tireless contributions of a group of postgraduate student curators from the RMIT MA Arts Management program – Ellie Collins, Adelaide Gandrille, Marybel Schwartz, Valerie Sim and Sophie Weston – for whom this formed part of their coursework, as well as being vital, first-hand industry experience. This is perhaps the most important aspect of what RMIT's collection can achieve: culture acquired by a university is not a question of property, but a resource, the primary beneficiaries of which should be students and researchers. Exhibitions like *Chaos & Order* show that the collection can be used to instigate research, partnerships and interventions that, rather than flaunting artworks as hoarded treasures, would mobilize them as tools with the aim of allowing their users to express their own stories, be they social, political or aesthetic. *Chaos & Order* isn't the culmination of 120 years of collecting; it is – I would hope – a fresh beginning.

1. In the context of museums, Bourdieu and Darbel's research is seminal. They express this far more eloquently than I can: "If the love of art is the clear mark of the chosen, separating, by an insuperable barrier, those who are touched by it from those who have not received its grace, it is understandable that in the tiniest details of their morphology and their organization, museums betray their true function, which is to reinforce for some the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion." Pierre Bordieu and Alain Darbel, *The love of art: European art museums and their public*, Oxford: Polity Press (first published 1969 as *L'amour de lárt*. Paris: Minuit.), 1991, p. 112

2. Walter Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian' (1937) in *One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Shorter, K., London, New Left Books, 1979, p. 361. Benjamin makes his feelings still more explicit by quoting Marx in his unfinished *Arcades Project*: "Private property has made us so stupid and inert that an object is ours only when we have it […] All the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by… the sense of *having*." Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Eiland, H., & McLaughlin, K., Belnap Press, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massacheusetts and London, England, 1999, p. 209. Italics in original

3. Benjamin (1937), pp. 355-56. Italics in original

4. Charles Nodrum, 'George Johnson, Construction with Brown Triangle 1986' in *Call of the avant-garde: constructivism and Australian art*, Cramer, S., Harding, L., Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2017, p. 118

5. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Vintage Books, New York, 1966, p. 15

6. Reported by Gina Fairley, ArtsHub, 25 May 2018, available online www.visual.artshub.com.au/au/news.aspx?contentTypeCatId=&CategoryId=1070&ListingId=255590&HubID=1 [accessed 25/08/2018]

7. And, as someone who spends much of their time painstakingly assembling a catalogue, I would also argue, necessary – but only in that context, where stratified data is essential to the proper care and maintenance of an object. When the same order occurs at the level of interpretation, or display, it has ceased to be a tool, and has become a fetish.

8. Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 393-97

9. See Jean-Hubert Martin, 'Theatre of the World: The Museum of Enchantments Versus the Docile Museum' in *Theatre of the World*, Museum of Old and New Art, 2012, p. 11. It's worth noting that this was not originally the case: for instance, post the Revolution and nationalisation, the Louvre's collection was originally displayed with the intention of contrasting the work of various schools. This model was swiftly abandoned in favour of a chronological hang, however: see also Thierry Dufrêne, 'Junking the Chronological Corset: Towards a Broader Art History that Splices Periods and Works' in ibid, p. 29

10. For a long time, established art-history revolved around a canon of mostly Western, male practitioners; all others formed a marginalia only raised as an exotic Other.

11. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives in Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1993, p. 152

12. Bishop, *Radical Museology: or What is 'Contemporary' in Museums of Contemporary Art?*, Koenig Books, London, 2013, p. 43

13. Lisa Corrin details these developments at length in 'Mining the Museum' in Globus, D., (ed.) *Fred Wilson: A Critical Reader*, Ridinghouse, London, 2011.
The cynical may observe that in practice, this seems to have largely occurred more often in the context of exhibitions however, which are quicker, easier, and above all, temporary. In contrast, issues such as repatriation of cultural materials are slow to be acted on.

14. That being said, I don't wish to play down the fact that there appears to have been little effort to collect the work of female artists, and less still of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (there are notable other absences, but for the sake of brevity, I mention only two the most egregious instances). This is not to say RMIT was significantly different from a lot of other institutions – its acquisitions merely, sadly reflect the tenor of the times. Casting one's eye down the list of artists in this exhibition, you'll notice the ratio of male to female representation is roughly 3:1; this is equivalent within in the collection at present. This has been greatly improved in recent years – before 2000 it was closer to 6:1. Since 1999 the collection of work by Aboriginal artists has grown from under 10 to close to 100. As I've indicated above though, conflating a program of ownership with one of reparation is ill-advised.

15. The Phillip Institute had assembled its own collection which, while similarly broad in scope, was more open than RMIT to building on its history by collecting the works of graduating students.

16. RMIT Art Collection policy, developed by RMIT Gallery, 2011.

17. See Andre Malraux, *Museum Without Walls* trans. Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price, London: Secker & Warburg, 1967.

18. Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change*, Thames and Hudson, 1991

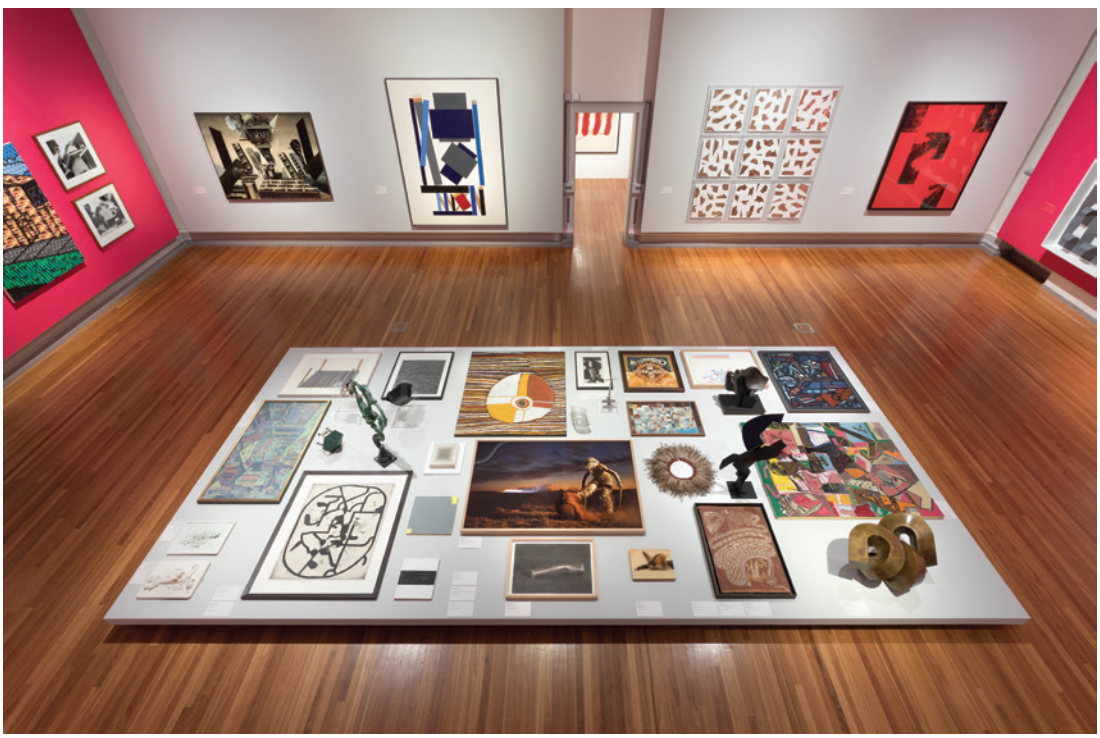
19. Sofia Hernández Chong Cuy, 'What About Collecting?' in Hoffmann, J., (ed.) *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating*, Mousse Publishing, Milan, 2013 p. 58

20. Bishop, p. 12. Bishop's discussion of contemporaneity versus the historical is also pertinent.

Tate Adams
Howard Arkley
Chris Bond
George Baldessin
Peter Clarke
Jock Clutterbuck
Timothy Cook
Noel Counihan
Len Crawford
Augustine Dall'Ava
Craig Easton
Mark Edgoose
Nina Ellis
Leonard French
Sally Gabori
Robert Grieve
Robert Hunter
Robert Jacks
George Johnson
Alan Johnston
Vincas Jomantas
Roger Kemp
Grahame King
Inge King
Robyn Kingston
Juz Kitson
Andrew Last
Sam Leach
Lindy Lee
Helen Maudsley
Clement Meadmore
Nick Mourtzakis
Jill Orr
Norma Redpath
Klaus Rinke
Gareth Sansom
Marlene Scerri
Barry Schache
Jan Senbergs
Wolfgang Sievers
Bruce Slatter
Studio of Domenico Brucciani
Wilma Tabacco
David Thomas
Yirawala

Form

Form



A conversation with

Jan Senbergs: I was at the RMIT Art School from 1966 to 1980 – with occasional times away when travelling. I entered RMIT in an unusual way I suppose. Having not gone to art school, I was keen to meet some of my generation who had, and who had already become teachers. So I used to go to this nearby pub where on Fridays after classes a group of them met.

There I met George Baldessin, Paul Partos, Peter Clarke, Jim Meldrum and some others. Sometimes I would jokingly chide them and say how quickly some of them had already become teachers so soon after being students. I think it was George who said, "Well, why don't you become a teacher…"

I was taken aback as they had suggested to the new Head of Art, Lindsay Edward, that he give me a session and see how I went.

Next thing I knew I was standing in front of a group of students, half of them 'mature age' students, looking expectantly at me – I wanted to escape! And that's how my teaching career began at RMIT.

Ellie Collins: Did you enjoy your time at RMIT?

JS: Yes I did. When you went into a class in those days, or the painting group, there was a real camaraderie. Nobody cared where they came from, what sort of background they had, because they had the same aspiration of wanting to paint and draw. Naturally, not everyone can succeed in that.

It was very healthy, I think, to be in that atmosphere, but the experience of going through an art school is enriching as you meet others with similar aspirations, and that experience broadens the 'world view'.

EC: Did you have much to do with RMIT Gallery?

JS: Not directly – but I saw and took part in some of the shows. Art historian Jenny Zimmer put on some fascinating shows there in the old Storey Hall. Shows from various departments of RMIT and also shows from various collections. As ever, problems with lack of funding and certain sectors wanting prominence made it harder. She ran a good gallery – and it was a good period for the Gallery.

EC: So you left in 1980, why was that?

JS: Well, by that time I was exhibiting quite a bit, and I wanted to concentrate on my work a bit more. I felt I had come to a stage where I had to make a decision as to whether to stay and have security, or take a chance at being a full time artist.

It was tempting to stay, but I had seen some colleagues who had stayed and who seemed unhappy later in their 'funded' retirement.

So I opted to leave and take my chances as a full time artist. It was a bit frightening, but I noticed that in general people start to take more notice of you.

Jan Senbergs

Lecturer, RMIT School of Art, 1966-80
Doctor of Arts Honoris Causa, 1986

EC: How do you judge if a work is completed, and if it is a success or not?

JS: This question makes me think about the well-known artist Robert Dickerson – he was a boxer when he was younger, and when he was asked when did he think his painting was completed he replied, "When the bell rings."

There is this 'inner bell' that one has (not always reliable), when you sense you're starting to embellish, and bother the surface too much – it's time for the alarm bells…

Whether the work is a success or not is difficult to assess. Success is many sided. It sometimes depends on how you get out of bed – one morning everything seems bright, including the painting, yet another time when the black clouds hover, the painting looks equally clouded.

And you can always kid yourself on that well-worn cliché, that my last work is my best.

EC: Could you tell me a bit about your practice now?

JS: Well I used to do a lot of travelling, often for research for a particular series, like the Antarctic, mining sites in Western Australia, Barcelona, the 'rust belt' of the US, and the Otways to name a few.

But now that I'm older, travel is not as important as it used to be and I'm at my most content now being in the studio for most of the time. Even sometimes when you're doing bugger all you can simply sit and think.

I have a large wall that I work on and when I see it blank, there is a necessity to make some marks on it. It's all about imagination – like painting a city that you know you'll never go and see.

But you know it – it's all in your mind's eye.

A conversation with

Ellie Collins: Would you consider yourself as a teacher first or an artist first - or are they both aspects of the same thing?

David Thomas: It's a false difference. What you're interested in is knowledge, trying to understand the truth about what your experiences are, and addressing those issues that need to be addressed through your practice. But teaching has given me the freedom to be able to concentrate on those things that I believe as an artist, and I haven't had the pressures, perhaps, of a person who hasn't had the financial support of teaching – pressure to sell work or to make work that's popular, or simpler. It's not that you're trying to make the work obscure but I want my work to be quiet, I want it to be contemplative, to have a point of view, and for you to spend time with the work and discover things within it. I don't want it to hit you over the head too much.

EC: Thinking about how your work is received – do you find the prospect of it entering a collection and potentially not being exhibited for a time being problematic?

DT: Well it's not that I want to hang on to [my work]. Part of its function is social. One of the things I believe it about myself as an artist is you've got a social contract and your art has to engage with the cultures that you're part of. So exhibiting is part of it, but there's lots of different ways of exhibiting.

And the fact that it gets acquired by a collection I find really gratifying, because it means that the collector is willing to invest their time via money into your work. And eventually, most of those things in private collections will finish up in public collections. And I've always been a strong believer of the importance of galleries as teaching places, places of learning.

So whether it's RMIT's Gallery or the NGV or the Kunstmuseum in Bonn - all those places have the opportunity of holding your work. And it might only be seen once every ten years, but what's good about that is that people can view it at different times in different contexts and that's really, I think, important.

One of the joys of RMIT's collection is that it goes on loan in to staff offices. And one of the problems is that it goes in to people's offices and that you never see it unless you've got access. But I think that's great that it's got that mobility. To try and get that balance is a really interesting thing. In my office, there are two works in the RMIT collection that I was really fortunate to have: one's a Tàpies, where text and energy and image formed together using the qualities of the medium in a particular way. The other is a Roger Kemp – a work that came out of a very deep interest in both the materiality of paint and an understanding of the contemplative form, and the connection between Eastern and Western ideas. Both were so directly relevant to the new interest in materiality and in complexity in painting and image making. And that happened to coincide with certain students' real interest in those issues in their own work, and the currency of thought that's going on in contemporary painting around the world at the moment.

EC: Do you feel that the way in which artworks are exhibited is as important as their content?

David Thomas

MA Fine Art (Painting), RMIT, 1992
PhD, RMIT, 2004
Lecturer, RMIT School of Art, 1989-91
Senior lecturer, 1993-2017

DT: If your works are displayed inappropriately and it changes their readings then of course you're going to be annoyed - but as soon as they're not your works anymore, well then that's the chance you take. If you're asking people to be sensitive then the curators need to be sensitive, too. The recent survey show I did at the RMIT Design Hub was one of the times when I worked very closely with the curators and they gave me a lot of freedom. It was a wonderful opportunity to review work I've done since the 70s, very selective bits of it, and to consider the idea of complexity, continuity and difference that happens in an extended practice.

EC: How do you judge success in your work?

DT: As a really young student, I placed a huge amount of importance on reviews in newspapers. What critics said was really important in the sense that it created a community of ideas and a debate that everyone knew about. So if you were canned everyone knew about it. If you were praised, everyone knew about it. And that meant there was a commonality in the way that discussions operated that doesn't happen today.

So those early reviews, I used to pour over them. And one of the really nice times was when I'd just had a show in the UK that I'd curated and was participating in. I was walking down the street in New York, and I saw a *Guardian*, picked it up and there was a review of that exhibition.

That's good for your ego but in the end it doesn't really make your work any better. And what I've learnt to do, without trying to be too modest about it, is to just put that into context.

I guess all I want my work to do is inform you of the transience of what you're looking at in a wonderful way - do it in a way that helps you to find an equilibrium in relationship to this ever-changing experience of being alive. And that's why I think, you know, I'm still very optimistic about art in what it can do for people.

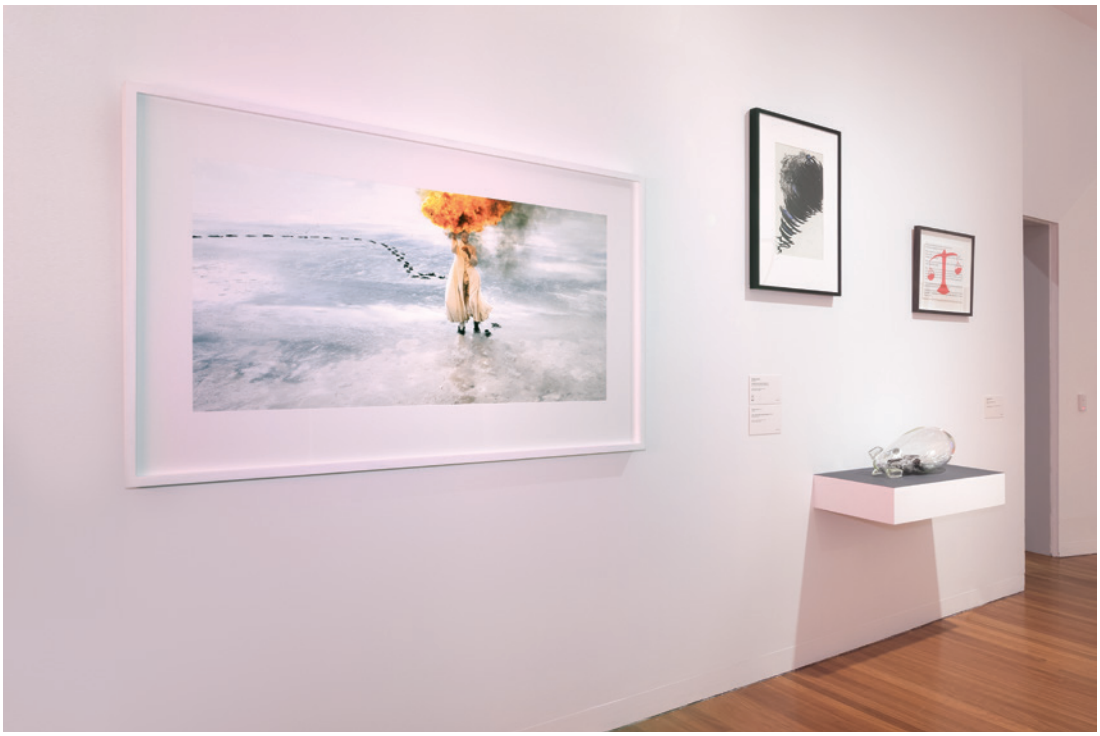
And it doesn't have to be art dramatically illustrating these things, but the very nature of the poetics of painting can offer up opportunities to think about how we imagine the world. How we create forms to help us reflect on what being alive actually means. About how we perceive, how we're energized, what our fears are, what our joys are, what these materials are, what the minutia of things are.

Art can provide those things. When you think of the wonders of something that's as conventional as the National Gallery, or on a smaller scale, when you think of the hours of study and work that goes to make what the RMIT collection holds, it's pretty mind-boggling. The energy, the resources, not just of the artists but of everyone around them that have gone to make those works is an amazing thing. And it can validate what human beings really have got the potential to be, and that is sensitive, reflective, energetic, optimistic beings.

Khadim Ali
Ali Baba Awrang
Penny Byrne
Emily Floyd
Euan Gray
George Matoulas
Jill Orr
Reko Rennie
Yhonnie Scarce
Antoni Tàpies
Kawita Vatanajyankur

Protest

Protest

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HISTORY OF
THE KEHLSTEIN

A conversation with

Valerie Sim: Tell us about your practice, which involves considerable endurance - why do you love it and where do you get your inspiration from?

Kawita Vatanajyankur: I believe that in today's world, we are governed by money, and money is a tool for our survival; we ourselves are slowly becoming a tool to make money. Because of this, we work continuously like machines; meanwhile, machines are replacing our jobs. My work parodies a slippage in the relationship between human and machines.

When it comes to the performative act, our bodies have amazing abilities to adjust and transform. I practiced for each work to become a particular tool or machine, working for a 3-4 week period until my body could be transformed into a specific tool for 3-4 minutes. I use repetition as a way to convince my body and my mind that I am truly a part of the object until I can't separate myself from it, until my body is eventually merged within the object and acts as a perfect working tool or machine.

Repetition is also a meditative part of my performance. Meditation is intended to help us lose negativities, pain and anxiety. I used meditation as a way to let go of my old self, disappear completely and become a newer and stronger version of myself. I found that this is a key for us all to value and respect ourselves, and not constantly run after society's concept of happiness.

VS: Can you discuss how the concept, ideas and message behind your *Work* series developed?

KV: I have been focusing on several issues ever since I started making experimental and performative video works. I was interested in how society and belief has shaped who we are and what we do today within the materialistic world of consumerism, the world where industries rule. For example, by filming a female body (myself) mimicking everyday objects, I was exploring how the media - including social media and advertising - is influencing women to look a certain way, to objectify themselves, to believe that physical appearance is important in bringing respect, power and wealth. Meanwhile, intelligence is rarely mentioned. I question if society's idea of 'beauty' is one of the main causes of sexual objectification, and I wonder if women are like sculptures being shaped by society's mould.

As women are trying very hard to fit in that specific category of 'beauty' by plastic surgery, chemical beauty products and medicine, they will eventually look the same and lose their uniqueness and identities. If gender equality has to start with how women see themselves and respect who they really are as a person, then it will be much more difficult if they lose sight of their identity.

Looking at my work, I want to enhance women's strength and power, and reassure them that strength comes from within. By holding on less tightly to society's perception of who we are as a person, we can really develop ourselves psychologically and emotionally.

My work also focuses on the food and fruits that we consume every day. I question how certain foods have been selected for us because they have the 'perfect shape'.

Kawita Vatanajyankur 27

BA Fine Art (Painting), RMIT, 2011

Cows, chicken and pigs are injected with hormones to grow faster while certain types of food that are not in a perfect shape - bananas that aren't bendy enough, for example - automatically go to waste. As industries need to produce more food, the hard, continuing and never-ending work ends up in the hands of poor labourers. Because the industries need more, these labourers are forced to push themselves to the point of physical exhaustion. Problems like labour exploitation and human trafficking on fishing boats are primary concerns in Thailand at the moment, yet we all seem to disregard the cause of the problem. In this materialistic world we live in, people often value one another by their role in work, position and career, and they often ignore the existence of the labourers working in factories or fishing boats. The fact that they are often ignored means we are pushing them away outside of our circle and disregard them as people, allowing them to be mistreated. We ourselves, and our consumer behaviours, are the cause of labour exploitation.

My work therefore focuses on valuing labourers and bringing their hard work to light. I believe in equality, and that it needs to start by respecting ourselves as well as others.

VS: Is your work mainly concerned with commenting on society, or is there a personal element to your practice?

KV: My father, who was a famous celebrity and CEO of a large company in Thailand, died when I was only a teenager. He was very well-known for his creativity. I believe that the pressure of his hard work, lack of sleep and lack of healthy diet caused his death. Ever since I was a child, my father worked 20 hours a day while society expected him to produce the best and most creative work. His death was a 'wake-up call' to everybody who is working without any life balance, but his book which focused on the 'true importance of life', which he wrote a few months before his death, was only popular for a while. When he died, I could hardly cope, and asked myself a lot of questions about 'work'. I questioned why we are all valued by our positions, our career, which leads us to keep working endlessly to gain more money and respect. Many people wish to be rich and famous and are running non-stop to achieve it. It is not a bad thing, but have you ever wondered what this is all about? Is this the true meaning of life? Why do we think that gaining more and having more will lead us to happiness? I question if whether we are complicit in enacting a form of slavery, craving for manufactured food and all other kind products, craving for the society's concept of a 'good life' which keeps us busy making money in order to afford things.

Making video art about 'work' is a way for me to heal myself after my father's death, and I want to continue my father's wish, to be reminded to keep balanced, appreciate and value who we are today, and be happy now. At the moment, I believe that life is about inner self-development. How we grow as a person and how we contribute to the world and society starts by respecting others, and in equality.


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A conversation with

Ellie Collins: You studied ceramics at RMIT and graduated in '87. Tell me a little about your time there.

Penny Byrne: That's right. Back then it was a very technical course, and particularly in my first year, I had an amazing lecturer called Jeff Wilkinson. The great thing about him was that he taught us technique. And that has set me up for everything that I've done. Even being a ceramics conservator and specializing in ceramics, you've got to know about how ceramics are made to then be able to conserve or restore them properly. So having him teaching us... Well, I suppose we were still able to be creative, but it was really down to learning how to do sprig moulding, learning how to do marbling, learning how to make your own glazes.

It was also really rigorous, and we did chemistry as well… We went into the chemistry department, and we had to buy special calculators, and these chemistry lecturers were thinking, "What the hell are these guys doing here?"

There's this courtyard that's blocked in now, but it was right near RMIT Building 1. We were doing raku firings out in this courtyard - had raku kilns going though the day, even during the week. And I just think now, with the noxious fumes that raku and sawdust firings… I think health and safety were probably... It was not even a thing that we even really were told about. I mean, we put dust masks on from time to time, but you know, there's no way that you'd be doing a raku firing now.

From an art history point of view, [our studies] were very male-centered. And it's only now, after many years, looking back at the artists that we learnt about, it seems very Western. None of this is a criticism, it was just of the time, you know? Feminism was kind of happening, but certainly hadn't filtered through in any way to the teaching. So it was very much a chronological, white, male, western, art history education.

EC: Could you talk me through your creative process?

PB: It can be me in my studio making small scale ceramics work, which is using found porcelain figurines that are vintage or antique, which I get from eBay and Op-Shops. And then I alter them, cut them up, add things to them, paint them, reconfigure them to make them a kind of social political commentary.

But in recent years I've also started to make really large scale collaborative artworks, and that can involve... You almost become like a production manager.

EC: And when the process is complete, if your work is included in a collection, do you feel a sense of loss of control or ownership?

PB: I think it's fantastic. Because it means it's going be looked after, and that's a great thing. It's safe and it's accessible, and it means that it can be curated into other shows relatively easily. The flip side is when work ends up in private collections. It can often just disappear. When a work leaves my studio, if I've made a whole lot of new work for a show, and it's been with me for ages and then it all gets boxed up, and I'm left with an empty studio... then I feel pretty bereft.

Penny Byrne

BA Fine Arts (Ceramics), RMIT, 1987

At the end of a show, if the work is sold, then it very much is goodbye. And I feel like I do need to say goodbye, so I do sometimes… Sort of say, well, you know, see you later, and have a good life. But then sometimes I end up seeing them again. If it's curated into a show, I find it interesting to see where the curator has placed it, what other work is around it.

EC: What would say has been the highlight of your career as an artist?

PB: Being invited to be in the Venice Biennale. The invitation literally came out of the blue, via a Facebook message. The guy said he was the curator of contemporary art from the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, and had I ever thought of making an artwork in glass, and would I like to be in this show?

And I got to go to Venice, to Murano, and work with maestros that are just amazing. And the glasswork that I made, the technique that I actually ended up using, had never been done before to make a life-size suit of armor, which is what I did. And they were just blown away by my idea. And so I'm hopefully going to do a residency at Canberra Glassworks later this year. That would never have happened without Venice.

EC: You've also trained and worked as a conservator; given that, do you think about the longevity of your work during your process?

PB: When I'm making it, I have to just ignore being a conservator, although I am still mindful of the materials I choose. But I also know that contemporary art is made without any consideration for conservation in the future. So I'm aware of it, but I don't let it limit what I do. I think that if there is an issue with anything I've made, or with any contemporary artwork, then it's more work for conservators. I'm helping my other profession!

EC: As a conservator, what's the most interesting piece you've worked on?

PB: When I was in the UK, I got to work on a section of the city wall that the Romans put round London. It was my first job after I'd graduated, working for this big London-based conservation firm.

And because of millennia of flooding and silting in the Thames, and people building houses and stuff, the foot path level for where the Romans were is now in the basement of where other buildings would be. We were literally at the footpath level of where the Romans would have been walking.

EC: And do experiences like that inform your artistic practice?

PB: Yeah, that sort of thing comes out through my art. 'Cause my work's looking at politics, and popular culture, and social justice, and... You know, so it's just tapping into me and the world, really. And how I am in the world, and what I think of the world, and what I think of my place in the world. So it's kind of just, it's just an extension of who I am.

But really, looking back, it hasn't come from nowhere. It's a kind of a distillation of everything that I am, and I feel like I've found my creative voice. But it was fantastic and satisfying to make things, and it still is.


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Maria Fernanda Cardoso
Michael Cook
Neil Emmerson
Juan Ford
Sam Jinks
Grace Lillian Lee
Xiao Xian Liu
Ann Newmarch
Trevor Nickolls
Polixeni Papapetrou
Mike Parr
Anthony Pryor
Clare Rae
Hugh Ramsay
Greg Semu
Christian Thompson
Kawita Vatanajyankur
Charles Wheeler

Self

Self

A conversation with

Sam Jinks: I had a strange introduction to art. When I was a kid, my mother painted a lot, and so I was always surrounded by art. I drew from very early on, and I was always sort of working things out. Like selling my artwork, peddling my wares: it was a way for a boy who was very socially inept to kind of communicate in the world. Unfortunately, my writing skills are very poor. I've always been pretty bad - I wasn't great at school. Except in practical art, where I always did very well.

My practice isn't really driven by process anymore. When I started, it was a very big technical challenge. It was very difficult to make the works, whereas now it's more about trying to make something that's actually worth making. You want something that speaks a bit more deeply… have it speak on its own, and actually have someone be able to get an understanding of what that experience is, or about the idea you're trying to convey.

I start off with sketches. Often, I'll think of something in the middle of the night. Then I'll sketch it out on paper, and make a maquette. It's tricky; often you lose it immediately, because it just isn't going to work. We've all had that experience where, in an evening you have a genius idea and in the morning go, "What was I thinking?"

Ellie Collins: Well, if you're lucky, it only takes a few hours, and not a few weeks before you realize it's not working.

SJ: Sometimes, it could take a month - I've had that experience before. But, yeah, once you get through that, you do a little maquette. And then, from there, if it's still got legs, you keep going with it. And I think the danger is when you're really deep into the actual full-sized work because you can get so close to it that you can no longer see it.

A lot of people can probably empathise with the idea that if you look closely and deeply enough at something, it becomes absurd. It's in your studio and you're seeing it every day. It's a treacherous situation to be in, especially with this kind of work because it's so time-consuming and it's a lot of detail. You never want to wind up kind of beating it to death with detail - then you can lose the work.

EC: That reminds me of when you say one word over, and over, and over again, and then suddenly, you can't figure it out if it's a word anymore.

SJ: Yeah, you need to smash it together - so to speak - and then kind of step back for a couple of days, go back to it, and your vision is sort of stable as opposed to getting all foggy. It's like you're standing in a room that's lit with red light. You start to acclimatize to it, and then everything else will be ice-cold blue. Because, that's all the red has been - your brain kind of acclimatizes to it.

EC: I read that you're working on creating a skin for robots.

SJ: Yeah, a couple years ago, a company contacted me and I think they have a growing momentum developing AI, and to a larger degree the hardware for movement and things like that.

This company contacted me and I started testing for them, and figuring out what's possible. Essentially, they are attempting to produce a robot that moves realistically. The concept being that, one day soon, someone will be able to achieve something with such a high level of realism it's almost indistinguishable from life. I still think it's a while off. But really, in the next 20 years,

I think it's pretty much guaranteed that someone's going to be able to get it done.

It's such a minefield of not only philosophical but moral questions. How do people communicate with a synthetic human? What sort of rights would they have? Would people emotionally respond in the same way that they might respond to a sculpture? Would they respond with some level of empathy, to know that that an individual would not be able to have rights?

What constitutes … what's enough to make something be considered human? If something looked identical, acted identical, was indistinguishable, how would people treat it? It'd be a sort of racial equality issue. It's an interesting time.

EC: Your work is included in quite a few collections and you also participate in a lot of exhibitions. Do you prefer being included in a permanent collection or exhibited in a temporary exhibition - appreciated over time or of seen by many at once?

SJ: Well, it's not a matter of preference. I think it's nice. I mean, I'm just amazed that anyone's interested at all. I do think when someone buys your work there's something very precious about that. Someone has endorsed you personally, and it's a decision that they've made on their own. People are using their own money, they're using their own tastes, and often with my work, it's not always something that - you know, people don't buy it for interior decoration.

So I don't know that there's any preference; it's nice to have acknowledgment from individuals, and when it goes to some sort of board, that's nice too. But I'm often very moved when someone buys a work as a personal decision.

EC: Do you feel a continuing attachment to works that have sold?

SJ: As time goes on, you really have to let the work go. Literally, because you don't get a say in how it will be shown. Like, I'm not hovering around at RMIT to check that the lighting's perfect. When I first showed *[Unsettled Dogs]*, I really did hover around to try and make sure that it was doing what it was meant to do. Because I think that, over time, you kind of realize that that's actually less important than just letting it have the light that it's going to have.

EC: Is there a highlight of your career so far?

SJ: I spend most of my time in my studio. I think it's just having the opportunity to make work. There've been times I've done really well and there have been parts where it's been very, very difficult. And really, the highlight for me is just making the work. It's messy and horrifying on occasion, but there's something extraordinary about that. You cannot compare anything – well, many things – to the experience of actually creating something yourself. It's quite magical, really, the process. I think that's actually the big thing for me. I've had exhibitions that I've been proud of, works I've made that I've been happy with. But really, the experience of making it – the act of bringing it to life. That's the thing that I enjoy.


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A conversation with

Ellie Collins: I heard that you actually started studying engineering at RMIT before you moved on to fine art. Is that true?

Juan Ford: Yeah, engineering was my first choice out of school. I do have a technical mind, but I have a creative streak. I think the two can co-exist but in engineering you must suppress your creative side for a very long time, until you can utilize it in an interesting way. In my third year I suspended my engineering degree, retreated to my parents' little bungalow at the back of our house and made a portfolio. And the next thing I knew, I was in art school.

EC: When you were studying, did you have a clear vision of what you wanted to achieve? Or were you more interested in trying different things and seeing what happens?

JF: Definitely the latter. I was confident in my technical ability. I could draw really well right off the bat. However, I didn't have a lot of a conceptual and historical background, and had a lot of catching up to do. And that led me to make a lot of mistakes - but you learn from that. I guess I discovered that once you know your stuff, confidence is a really big part of it.

I've experimented a lot. I've tried things. I've rebelled against things. I was sometimes a good student, and sometimes not so good. I'm sure you could ask my lecturers about that, but we had a warm regard for one another, and I respect how difficult it would have been for them to teach us all.

EC: Is there anyone, any teacher or student that was particularly influential for you?

JF: Almost all of them were influential. Back then there was a system of roving guest lecturers that would come in. They were the who's who of Melbourne's art world. Robin Kingston in the first year did an incredible job. And David Thomas had a big influence in moulding my thinking and getting me to think like an artist. There are many people I'm missing, but everybody was genuinely trying to get the best out of you.

EC: Tell me a little bit about your practice and how it has developed since you've left school?

JF: There've been a few changes – a big one was getting representation. You enter a really different world to that of academia. I didn't even know how to talk about money, which is incredibly useful - I lacked an essential life skill. Anyone who thinks that artists shouldn't have to think or talk about money is a fool. Because when you can, you can sustain a practice over the long term.

There have also been quite a few stylistic changes to my work. One of the big ones was when, in 2004, I bought a digital camera. That changed me. I often use photographic references. There was so much more light in

Juan Ford

BA Fine Art (Painting), RMIT, 1988
MA Fine Art, RMIT, 2001

my shots, and you can see the results right away. That was a big, big, big difference.

I also did a residency in Rome in 2006, hot-housed with a really intelligent community of people who took you seriously. I felt like I was in university again. And that's when I had to *think*. And, that rekindled whatever... I think I'd been feeling a little bit jaded by the commercial end of things. The experience rekindled aspects of my practice, and I started generating new and interesting ideas.

EC: You were just talking about how artists should think about money – is there a balance you have to find there?

JF: Yeah, and that's the thing. You've got to be an artist when you are in the studio. And then when you talk to a gallery, you need to be able to negotiate. And you need to be able to state what you want, figure out what the gallery wants, and then come to an agreement and consensus.

EC: Do you think about the painting as a finished product, and what happens to it once you've let it go?

JF: In terms of the longevity, I think that the levels of ambiguity within an art work really define that. When you're not around any to speak for the work, it has to be able to speak for itself. So you have to create the work in such a way that ambiguity is engineered so that the work will keep speaking in any future age.

So timeless themes are as important as themes that are relevant to this time. But I do wonder, in 500 years, when somebody sees a painting, are they still going to glean something from it? I'd hope so.

But you've got to let that go. Your work should be strong enough that it will be interpreted well. You have to be comfortable with the fact that you do not control the work, that you can't control the way somebody sees it.

Peter Booth
Godwin Bradbeer
Peter Ellis
Hayden Fowler
Bill Henson
Petr Herel
Clare Humphries
Juz Kitson
Kate Rohde
Ah Xian
Nick Mourtzakis
Susan Philipsz

Other

Other

A conversation with

Ellie Collins: You've both studied and taught at RMIT, is that right?

Peter Ellis: Yes, I think I've been involved in RMIT since 1975, as a student. I finished in 1978. I went overseas and travelled for a time. And then I think I began teaching here sessionally in about '82, and eventually I became a continuing staff member.

EC: What were you like as a student? Would you say you were confident in your vision?

PE: Yes, I was very confident in my vision. I think people around me, when I was 15, recognized that I had talent - or even probably before that. I mean, I was drawing and painting all the time. That was probably the pivotal year when I realised that I was going to go to art school, and gave up my desire to be a zoologist. I had drawn a lot of animals, and I was interested in biology and zoology, which is still a focus in my artwork. It was fantastic and satisfying to make things, and it still is - that's what drives me I think. I had already exhibited a lot since the age of 15, and I started at RMIT when I was about 17 or 18. In my first year, I had two exhibitions in a commercial gallery, so I was ambitious to make my art and show it.

EC: How has RMIT changed over the various years of your involvement?

PE: Well, the student groups change, and the demographic changes, and the type of student has changed in lots of different ways. When I went to art school it was free, as universities were. 1975 in Australia was quite different politically and socially.

EC: Could you tell me some defining moments of your time at RMIT?

PE: I think the best thing about it is that the art school itself has a great sense of integrity, which has to do with the people who teach here, and the students who come here. There is a desire to be original and innovative, both in skills, and also conceptually. I think the origin of this comes from the Working Mens' College - the fact that it wasn't seen as an elitist type of place. I think that's part of the core of the art school in some ways.

The best moments for me as a teacher are having trained a lot of people, some of who are now internationally renowned artists that I've had a hand in inspiring, or helping, or encouraging. That's the best feeling as a lecturer, the fact that you have guided or helped to inspire really, really great people to succeed.

EC: Has being involved with RMIT influenced your practice?

PE: I think the artwork that I make is separate from what I do at the university, in the sense that I make things in my studio the way the students make things in their studio. And my ideas and fantasies and passions come out of my work - I make work about my life and my experiences and what I think about. But I would do that anyway, whether I was at RMIT or not. I tend to make work every day, and I encourage other people to do the same.

Peter Ellis

BA Fine Art, RMIT, 1978
MA Fine Art, RMIT, 1996
Lecturer, RMIT School of Art, 1982 –

EC: Can you just talk me through a little bit of your own practice of making art?

PE: I think that as an artist, in different stages of one's life, the way you work changes. Sometimes I make work that is pre-planned and thought out, constructed and produced, and other times it's entirely automatic. And most of the writing or literature about my work involves my practice with Dada and Surrealism, which is something that I've been involved in since I was 15. I'm quite happy about that even though there've been times where I've been out of step with Australian or even international art. But I practice for myself as a way of life, not as part of a movement or art historical canon. You could sort of say that it's a philosophy for making work.

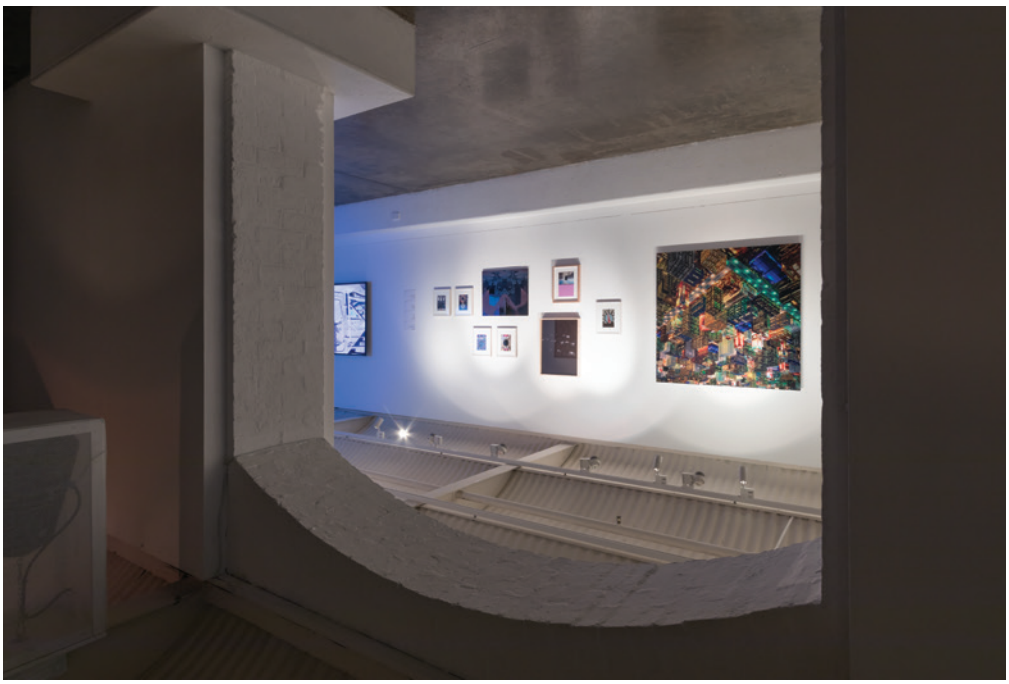
I've been very lucky to have had work acquired by RMIT when I was actually a student. And then some purchased after that, most recently in 2013 - something like eleven or so works purchased by the collection after I had a large survey show of my drawings at RMIT Gallery. The drawings that were selected were all favorites of mine, and whoever chose them - I'm assuming it was the senior curating team here - they picked some good ones. I'm very pleased and honoured to have them in the collection. And doubly pleased that there is an online collection, which is something that Jon [Buckingham] had worked on really successfully. That's good for artists, because if you haven't got those works anymore, sometimes you want to look at them again. It's good to compare things made over the years, or look at a favourite thing that you liked, aren't happy to have lost, but which have gone to a really good home.

EC: Given your career has spanned more than four decades, how do you define success in your work?

PE: I think part of it's meeting other artists who inspire me and who have been supportive of my work. I think that's a real highlight for anybody. Just being an artist is an honour really, and doubly so if you can spend your life talking about art in your job. In a way, it's two jobs. There's the smaller job of educating new artists, and then the bigger job - for me - making my art. That's the thing I enjoy the most, but it's a privilege to work with young people from all cultures and all places. I think being an artist is one of the most satisfying things one could be. It's what I set out to be when I was a teenager, and that's what I've achieved, so that's probably the highlight. I'm probably still doing the same things that I was when I was 15. Not exactly the same sort of work, but with the same passion.

Steve Stelios Adam
Rick Amor
Stephen Benwell
Ros Bandt
Chris Bond
Philip Brophy
Daniel Crooks
Craig Easton
Lindsay Edward
Sarah Edwards
Henning Eichinger
Nigel Frayne
Rosalie Gascoigne
Nathan Gray
Helga Groves
Stephen Haley
Dale Hickey
Jenny Loft
Karen Mills
Hisaharu Motoda
Albert Namatjira
John Olsen
Claude Pannka
Douglas Quin
Reko Rennie
Jeffery Smart
David Thomas
Darren Wardle
Chris Watson
Fred Williams

Place



Place

A conversation with

Ellie Collins: You enrolled in a BA in Sculpture in the early 70s, is that correct?

Jenny Loft: I was very young, only 19, and it was kind of a real change for me. There were only two women [in Sculpture], and it wasn't a large group of students, mainly men who had worked in other areas and then started Sculpture in their 30s and 40s. So there was a learning curve, especially because it was at the time that Vincas Jomantas was in charge of Sculpture, and he was a very quiet, gentle, private person in many ways.

The year that I enrolled [1974] was a really big experiment for RMIT because it was the first year that they actually had a Degree. We were guinea pigs: the art school was trying something new and something different. We were able to kind of pick and choose things that we wanted to do. They used to have an open evening and an open weekend in the print studios, and I used to just walk in, go and sit in the corner; for those two years, that's what I did.

I used to do quite a bit of printmaking and I'd just sit myself in the corner - and George Baldessin was there working with Fred Williams on their big projects, and I was in the corner sitting there quietly. I just watched what they were doing and just sort of took it all in. And I look back now and think, "How lucky was that?"

George was interested in people's frailties, but also looking for the compassion in there - I think that was something that I just took in, almost without realizing it. So, those are things that have followed through in the future.

EC: Can you tell me a little about how your career developed from there?

JL: There was an organization run by Carolynne Bourne called ISS, International Specialized Skills. It was a small training organization that had a connection with RMIT, where they brought in international trainers, or people who worked in classical areas. The one that had caught my attention was mosaics. They brought over Anna Minardo from Italy, and I did a series of workshops with her.

At that stage, I'd begun my third career – I'd retrained as a professional librarian, and I was working out at RMIT's Brunswick campus. They were just at the stage of building what is now the library. At the time I was doing these workshops with Anna Minardo, and I went up to [then Vice-Chancellor] Professor Beanland, and said, "A group of people that have come from all around Australia have been working with Anna, and we've created a mosaic. How about you install it in the new building?" He said yes, and it's still there.

That sort of started another area of my practice. An organization grew out of those workshops for the mosaic art group, and I was part of running it for five years. There was

Jenny Loft

BA (Sculpture), RMIT, 1977
RMIT Research librarian

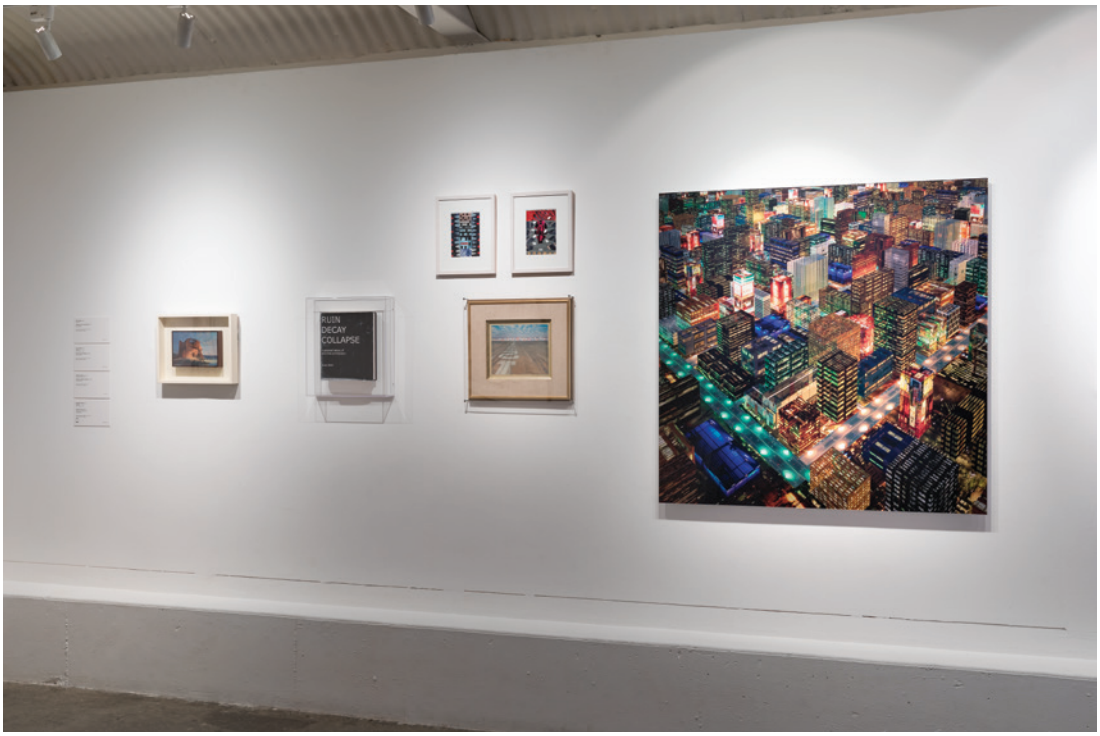
a significant mosaic movement in the 60s in Australia, and a lot of talented people went to Rome, went to Russia, went to the big key places in Italy to train, trained at the highest level, headed back to Australia… but would architects give them commissions?

And so there was quite a group of about ten or twelve of them who were still in Australia in the 70s who had been really hurt by this, and left mosaic completely or sort of went away and licked their wounds. I did quite a lot of research on trying to find those people, bringing them all together, bringing them out, and saying, "All that skill that you have, can you please pass it on?" We did a lot of trying to educate councils in terms of the commissions that they were doing, and that was one of our main aims.

Then there was the Meat Market - when I was there, I met Graham Stone, who managed the glass workshop for twenty years, and I had seven years with him as my mentor. I said to him, "I've been in the wilderness for fifteen years!"

In '76, RMIT organised and subsidised a five month art history tour of Europe, and Klaus Zimmer joined us. I'd been talking to him about glass, and he really encouraged me, but had said no, there aren't many places to learn. He would have been teaching at Monash at that time, but in stained glass. But he really encouraged me. He said, "Don't give up. Something will come along sometime," and it took a long, long time. So, that sort of sat there like this little seed, waiting. And that was what happened when I walked into the Meat Market.

I still work with glass, glass sculpture and glass casting, and that will always be a core part of my practice. My interests are very much around [environmental] conservation, having grown up in the bush in Adelaide, running feral - we lived in the back of a national park. And my husband, he worked in Antarctica in the late 70s and the 80s. So I do a lot of work on the ozone layer, and what they're doing with the Murray Darling Basin, and what's happening down in Antarctica.


RUIN
DECAY
COLLAPSE

List of works

Steve Stelios Adam 1959 –
Passing By ...More Quickly, 2012-13
ed. 1/3
8 channel sound installation
Commissioned through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Tate Adams 1922 – 2018
Gesture, 2003
Gouache on paper
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Jenny Zimmer, 2013

Khadim Ali 1978 –
Rustam & Sohrab, 2010
Opaque watercolour and pencil on wasli paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Khadim Ali 1978 –
Untitled, 2010
Opaque watercolour and pencil on wasli paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Khadim Ali 1978 –
Untitled, 2010
Opaque watercolour and pencil on wasli paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Rick Amor 1948 –
Study for The Terminal, 2017
Oil on panel
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Howard Arkley 1951–1999
Suburban Exterior, 1983
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased by the Phillip Institute of Technology, 1984

Ali Baba Awrang
Untitled [siyah mashq drawing], nd
Ink, gouache and gold leaf on wasli paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

George Baldessin 1939 – 1978
Banquet for No Eating, 1970
edition of 25
Etching, foil and coloured ink on medium weight wove paper
Acquired by RMIT University, c. 1985

George Baldessin 1939 –1978
Untitled [MM series], 1976
Charcoal and conté on paper
Purchased by RMIT Research & Innovation, 2015

Ros Bandt 1951 –
Raptor, 2014
6 channel sound installation
Purchased by RMIT Research & Innovation, 2015

Stephen Benwell 1953 –
Carafe, 2014
Stoneware and found materials
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2015

Chris Bond 1975 –
Abyss, 2014
Oil on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Chris Bond 1975 –
Ruin Decay Collapse, 2014
Oil on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Natalie Bookchin 1962 –
Mass Ornament, 2009
ed. 2/10
Single-channel HD video installation, 5.1 surround sound
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Peter Booth 1940 –
Drawing, 1982
Oil paint on paper
Purchased by the Phillip Institute of Technology, 1983

Peter Booth 1940 –
Drawing, 2016
Mixed media on paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Polly Borland 1959 –
Untitled (Nick Cave wearing a blue wig), 2010
Artist's proof, edition of 3
Type C photograph
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

John Brack 1920 – 1999
Nude with Italian Chair, 1976
Conté on paper
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1976

John Brack 1920 – 1999
Nude with Ladder, 1976
Conté on paper
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1976

John Brack 1920 – 1999
Seated Nude, 1981
Conté on paper
Purchased by the Phillip Institute of Technology, 1982

Godwin Bradbeer 1950 –
Swan of Trespass - Diptych, 2001/2011
Chinagraph, graphite, pastel dust and silver oxide on heavy-grade,
hot-pressed, acid-free Fabriano paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Philip Brophy 1959 –
Atmosis, 2012-13
16 channel sound installation
Commissioned through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Rupert Bunny 1864 – 1947
The Shelter [I], c. 1913-21
Oil on canvas
Gift of the Rupert Bunny Estate, 1949

Penny Byrne 1965 –
Silent Testimony (PTSD), 2015
Earthenware and mixed media
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Maria Fernanda Cardoso 1963 –
Intromittent organ of the Thelbunus mirabilis (Tasmanian harvestman) Opiliones, 2008-09
ed. 4/5
3D printed resin
Purchased by RMIT Gallery, 2014

Maria Fernanda Cardoso 1963 –
with Ross Rudesch Harley
Naked Flower #1: One wife, three husbands, 2013
ed. 1/3
Pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Maria Fernanda Cardoso 1963 –
with Ross Rudesch Harley
Naked Flower #5: One wife, six husbands, 2013
ed. 2/3
Pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Maria Fernanda Cardoso 1963 –
with Ross Rudesch Harley
Naked Flower #11: One wife, six husbands, 2013
ed. 2/3
Pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Peter Clarke 1935 –
Across and Suspended, 1983
Acrylic on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Jock Clutterbuck 1945 –
Large Cartouche No. 2, 1987
ed. 2/20
Etching on paper
Acquired by the RMIT School of Art, c. 1987

Jock Clutterbuck 1945 –
Zamjam, 2014
Bronze
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Timothy Cook 1958 –
Kulama, 2009
Natural pigments on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Michael Cook 1968 –
Mother - Rocking Horse, 2016
ed. 1/4
Inkjet print on cotton rag
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Michael Cook 1968 –
Mother - Swimming Pool, 2016
ed. 2/4
Inkjet print on cotton rag
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

List of works

Noel Counihan 1913 – 1986
Albert Namatjira, 1959
ed. 49/50
Linocut on cream wove paper
Acquired by the Preston Institute of Technology before 1972

Len Crawford 1920 – 1996
Abstract, 1963
Oil on canvas
Permanent loan courtesy of the Estate of Len Crawford, 1996

Daniel Crooks 1973 –
At least for a while anyway, 2015
ed. 3/3
Single channel high definition video
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Augustine Dall'Ava 1950 –
If Only Carl Knew No. 29, 1994
Painted wood, natural wood, painted and natural stone, painted seed pods, granite, bronze, steel and linen thread
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

Craig Easton 1961 –
Old Black, 2006-7
Acrylic and enamel on canvas
Purchased by RMIT University, 2007

Craig Easton 1961 –
Slates, 2010
Type C print
Gift of the artist, 2011

Mark Edgoose 1960 –
Teapot, 1984
Silver, steel, Pyrex
Acquired by RMIT University, 2008
WE McMillan Collection

Lindsay Edward 1919 – 2007
Chichén Itzá Revisited, nd
Oil on canvas
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1979

Sarah Edwards 1967 –
Echo Chamber, 2014
6 channel sound installation
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Henning Eichinger 1959 –
Melbourne Diary, 2014
Series of seven photographs with oil on card
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Nina Ellis
Bowl, 2003
Mild steel with gold chisel inlay
Acquired by RMIT University, 2003
WE McMillan Collection

Peter Ellis 1956 –
Thermometer, 1996
Gouache, watercolour, rubber stamp and ink
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Neil Emmerson 1956 –
(frost), 2015
Inkjet print (double printed, in colour then in black) on found woollen blanket, MDF plinth painted in acrylic
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Emily Floyd 1972 –
Puffins with Fish # Björgólfur Thor Björgólfsson and Björgólfur Guðmundsson, 2017
ed. 2/2
Wood, two pack epoxy paint, mild steel with black oxide coating
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Juan Ford 1973 –
Degenerator, 2013
Oil on linen
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Hayden Fowler 1973 –
New World Order, 2016
ed. 8/10
Single-channel HD video
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Nigel Frayne 1952 – 2018
What U might have heard..., 2015
8 channel sound installation
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2015

Leonard French 1928 – 2017
Sunfish, 1974
Enamel on canvas
Purchased by the Preston Institute of Technology, 1974

Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori 1924 – 2015
Dibirdibi Country, 2009
Synthetic polymer paint on linen
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Rosalie Gasgoigne 1917 – 1999
Galahs Rising, 1984
Raw weathered ply wood and primed timber slats
Purchased by the Phillip Institute of Technology, 1984

Euan Gray 1973 –
German Tourist Poster #2 (Prora), 2012
Ink and acrylic on mount board
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Euan Gray 1973 –
German Tourist Poster #3 (The Kehlstein), 2012
Ink and acrylic on mount board
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Euan Gray 1973 –
German Tourist Poster #4 (Prora), 2012
Ink and acrylic on mount board
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Nathan Gray 1974 –
Species of Spaces, 2013
ed. 2/3
5 channel video (1080p), 10 channel audio
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Robert Grieve 1924 – 2006
Variation in Red, White & Black, c. 1995
Mixed media on paper on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Helga Groves 1961 –
Lithic (topology series #2) #2, 2014
Oil, medium and wax on wood
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Stephen Haley 1961 –
Simmer City, 2016
Artist's proof, edition of 5
Lightjet print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Bill Henson 1955 –
Untitled Sequence, 1979-82
Silver gelatin photograph
Purchased by the Phillip Institute of Technology,1986

Petr Herel 1943 –
Borges Sequel, 1982
ed. 36/55
Series of ten etchings
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Dale Hickey
Cottles Bridge Landscape, 1980
Oil on canvas
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1980

Clare Humphries 1973 –
I have never been able to bury her, 2013
ed. 2/5
Ink on paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Robert Hunter 1947 – 2014
Untitled No. 4, 1987
Synthetic polymer paint on plywood
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Ralph Renard, 2011

Robert Jacks 1943 – 2014
Grey Cut Paper 45°-90°, 1969/2012
Acrylic on arches paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Robert Jacks 1943 – 2014
Enforced Outcome – Still Life, 1981
Graphite drawing
Acquired by RMIT University 1981

Sam Jinks 1973 –
Unsettled Dogs, 2012
ed. 1/3
Silicone, pigment, resin, hair and fur
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

List of works

George Johnson 1926 –
Structure No. 14, 1983
Acrylic on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

Alan Johnston 1945 –
Untitled, 2012
Zinc white acrylic, No. 3 pencil, charcoal on wood
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Vincas Jomantas 1922 – 2001
The King II, 2014
ed. 2/2
Bronze
Commissioned posthumously through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Roger Kemp 1908 – 1987
In Space, 1974
Enamel paint on hardboard
Purchased by the Preston Institute of Technology, 1974

Grahame King 1915 – 2008
Study for Aise, 1979
Watercolour and gouache
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Inge King 1915 – 2016
Flight, c. 1992-93
Fabricated steel and paint
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Robin Kingston 1954 –
Untitled 4, 2007
Watercolour
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Juz Kitson 1987 –
Flowers For Your Funeral, 2013
Porcelain with celadon glaze
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Juz Kitson 1987 –
Founded on the belief that there is order, 2017
Jingdezhen porcelain, Southern Ice porcelain, physical vapour deposition, beetle wings, rabbit pelt, wild goat hide, resin, silicone, bone, treated pine and marine ply
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Andrew Last 1963 –
Slotted Basket, c. 2002
Anodised aluminium
Acquired by RMIT University, 2002

Sam Leach 1973 –
Bat Target Perception 1, 2012
Oil and resin on wood
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Lindy Lee 1954 –
Vermillion Seal, 1999
Photocopy, oil paint, acrylic paint and wax on board
Acquired by RMIT University, c. 2002

Grace Lillian Lee
Body Sculpture: Acceptance, 2016
Cotton, cane and feathers
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Grace Lillian Lee
Body Sculpture: Enlightenment, 2016
Cotton, cane and feathers
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Xiao Xian Liu 1963 -
The Couple, 2004
Camphor wood, bronze
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Jenny Loft 1946 -
Coastal Gothic, 2015
Glass, horn and ceramic plate
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

George Matoulas 1966 –
with Peter Lyssiotis (text)
Why is it called Justice?, 2008
Screenprint
Commissioned through the School of Art Print Imaging Practice Residency, 2008

Helen Maudsley 1929 –
Cassandra. To withstand. The landscape of never to know., 2002-03
Oil and varnish on linen
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Clement Meadmore 1929 – 2005
Stormy Weather, 1997
ed. 1/4
Bronze
Purchased by RMIT University, 1998

Karen Mills 1966 –
Untitled, nd
Natural pigments and PVA fixitive on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Hisaharu Motoda 1963 –
Indication-Opera House (Sydney), 2010
ed. 6/10
Lithograph
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Nick Mourtzakis 1950 –
Metal Arm, 2007
Charcoal and conté on paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

Nick Mourtzakis 1950 –
Notte, 2014
Compressed charcoal and pastel on rag paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Albert Namatjira 1902 – 1959
Untitled [unknown], nd
Watercolour on paper
Acquired from the Malcolm Moore Estate, c.1973

Ann Newmarch 1945 –
Two Versions, 1975
ed. 11/22
Screenprint on paper
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Dr Douglas Kagi, 2012

Ann Newmarch 1945 –
We must risk unlearning, 1975
Artist's proof, edition of 40
Screenprint on paper
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Dr Douglas Kagi, 2012

Trevor Nickolls 1949 – 2012
Untitled, 1991
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

John Olsen 1928 –
Pond, nd
Watercolour
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1976

Jill Orr 1952 –
with Christina Simons (photographer)
Antipodean Epic – Night Dust, 2015
ed. 3/5
Inkjet print on Cansen Baryta Photographic paper
Purchased though the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Jill Orr 1952 –
with Naomi Herzog (photographer)
Southern Cross: To Bear and Behold - Burning, 2009
Artist's proof, edition of 5
Inkjet print on Crane Silver Rag
Purchased though the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Claude Pannka 1928 – 1972
Untitled [unknown], nd
Watercolour on paper
Acquired from the Malcolm Moore Estate, c.1973

Polixeni Papapetrou 1960 – 2018
Study for Hattah Man and Hattah Woman, 2012
ed. 4/8
Pigment ink print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2013

Mike Parr 1945 –
Self-portrait, 1989
ed. 5/8
Etching
Acquired by the Phillip Institute of Technology, c. 1989

Susan Philipsz 1965 –
We'll All Go Together, 2009
ed. 2/3
4 channel sound installation
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

List of works

Anthony Pryor 1951 – 1991
Standing Figure I, 1984
European pine
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Douglas Quin 1956 –
Madeira Soundscape, 2012-13
16 channel sound installation
Commissioned through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Clare Rae 1981 –
Untitled (cleaner's stairs), 2013
ed. 3/5
Archival pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Clare Rae 1981 –
Untitled #1 (Climbing the Walls and Other Actions series), 2009
ed. 3/5
Archival pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Clare Rae 1981 –
Untitled #4 (Climbing the Walls and Other Actions series), 2009
ed. 4/5
Archival pigment print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Hugh Ramsay 1877 – 1906
Untitled [Nude study - female model, half-draped, back view], c. 1895
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs JO Wicking, 1947

Reko Rennie 1974 –
I wear my own crown, 2013
Neon and glass
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2014

Reko Rennie 1974 -
I Was Always Here, 2018
Wallpaper design
Commissioned by RMIT Gallery, 2018

Norma Redpath 1928 – 2013
Fluted Capital Head, 1966
Bronze
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2015

Klaus Rinke 1939 –
Er Spuert Alles Auf 6ter Sinn... Carbon, 2008
Graphite and acrylic lacquer on panel
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Kate Rohde 1980 –
Crystal Marsupial, 2012
Polyurethane
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Gareth Sansom 1939 –
Hopscotch, 1976
Oil and enamel on canvas
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1978

Marlene Scerri 1950 –
Emu feather skirt, 2010
Emu feathers, string, beeswax, ochre
Acquired by RMIT Gallery, 2010

Barry Schache 1937 –
Cross and candlesticks, 1964
Silver-plated gilding metal, enamel, ruby
Acquired by RMIT University, 1964
WE McMillan Collection

Greg Semu 1971 –
Auto-portrait with 12 Disciples, 2010
ed. 6/10
Digital C type print
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Jan Senbergs 1939 –
Valley, 1973
Oil and silkscreen on canvas
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Yhonnie Scarce 1973 –
Glass Bomb (Blue Danube Series) IV, 2015
Hand-blown glass
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Wolfgang Sievers 1913 – 2007
Clendon Lodge, for Mrs. Mary Williams, 83 Clendon Road, Toorak, 1976
Silver gelatin photograph
Acquired by RMIT Gallery, 1999

Wolfgang Sievers 1913 – 2007
Clendon Lodge, for Mrs. Mary Williams, 83 Clendon Road, Toorak, 1976
Silver gelatin photograph
Acquired by RMIT Gallery, 1999

Bruce Slatter 1971 –
Displaced, 2005
Enamel on tin, wood, 2 pack filler
Purchased through the RMIT Vice Chancellor's Strategic Initiatives Fund, 2009

Jeffrey Smart 1921 – 2013
Study for Beirut Airport, 1978
Oil on canvas
Purchased by RMIT University, 1978

Studio of Domenico Brucciani (attrib. fabricator) 1846 – 81
Acanthus scroll, c. 1860
Plaster cast
Donated by the Melbourne Public Library (now State Library of Victoria) to the Working Men's College, c. 1895

Wilma Tabacco 1953 –
Airborne, 2008
12 carat gold leaf, 24 carat gold leaf and pigment on paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

Antoni Tàpies 1923 – 2012
Untitled [Visca Catalunya], 1972
Lithograph on off white, heavy weight wove paper
Purchased by the RMIT School of Art, 1976

David Thomas 1951 –
Pink + Black Reflection, 2010
Acrylic, vinyl and photographic print on board
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

David Thomas 1951 –
When Two Directions Become All Directions (deep grey, yellow), 2013-14
Acrylic on wooden panel
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Christian Thompson 1978 –
To Hold is to be Beholden, 2016
Artist's proof, edition of 6
Type C print on Fuji Pearl metallic paper
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

Kawita Vatanajyankur 1987 –
Scale of Justice, 2016
ed. 1/3
Split channel high definition video
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Kawita Vatanajyankur 1987 –
Squeezers, 2015
Artist's proof, edition of 3
Split channel high definition video
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2016

Darren Wardle 1969 –
Silent Industry, 2010
Screenprint on Perspex
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2010

Chris Watson 1953 –
Namib, 2012-13
16 channel sound installation
Commissioned through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Charles Wheeler 1881 – 1977
Blue and Gold, c. 1937
Oil on canvas
Purchased by the Emily McPherson College

Fred Williams
Werribee Gorge, c. 1977
Oil on canvas
Purchased by the Preston Institute of Technology, 1978

Ah Xian 1960 –
China, China - Bust 78, 2002
Porcelain and celadon glaze
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2012

Yirawala c.1897 – 1976
Kunapipi (Sacred & Secret), c. 1965
Natural pigments on bark
Purchased through the RMIT Art Fund, 2017

RMIT Gallery, RMIT University
www.rmitgallery.com
344 Swanston Street Melbourne 3000
Tel: +613 9925 1717 Fax: +613 9925 1738
Email rmit.gallery@rmit.edu.au

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RMIT UNIVERSITY Creative Student Life

SIAL Sound Studios RMIT University

NGARARA WILLIM FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Koskela - SOCIAL WINERY - LABOUR OF LOVE

Chaos & Order: 120 Years of Collecting at RMIT
RMIT Gallery, 12 Apr – 9 Jun 2018

Curator: Jon Buckingham
Curatorial assistants: Ellie Collins, Adélaïde Gandrille, Marybel Schwartz, Valerie Sim, Sophie Weston

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