

CHAPTER TWO – FROM ENGLAND TO AUSTRALIA

2.1 – Bridging the Continents

In terms of influences, the previous chapter treated those which were instrumental in shaping and guiding the artist's work prior to leaving England and migrating to Australia. The sections and subsections which follow chart the artist's subsequent journey and may be understood as those which encompass the most consequential transitional stages and points of critical change.

In view of the fact that artist's translation from England to Australia represented not only a nexus, but also a defining point of change on the irregular pathway of artistic activity, it cannot therefore be overlooked as a crucial period of transition. To describe the contrast between the manicured landscape (dotted with towns and villages) of the temperate southeast of England, with the sparsely populated (at least in many places) and uncontrolled wilderness of much of the tropical northeast coast and hinterland of north Queensland as acute, would be an understatement. Indeed in his essay *Inside the Shadows* (1992), which reports on the artist's work during this transitional period, the curator Christopher Saines (1992) observes that

The effect of moving from London to Innisfail, North Queensland, must have had a ... dislocating effect ...The contrast with the parklands, fields and hedgerows of England could not have been more compelling. The rainforest of North Queensland was evidence enough that 'the only control here was natural control, if there was any control at all.

(Saines, 1992: 7).

Although the contrasts of climate and the new environment evoked both a sense of fascination and disbelief, they also elicited a feeling of great excitement accompanied by not a little discomfort “...it was as though things... [only previously] imagined were substantiated ...” (Saines, 1992: 7). Nevertheless, in order to acclimatize to such extreme differences, a considerable degree of adjustment, (or readjustment) was, not unexpectedly, demanded.

To be confronted by such a great contrast in both the climate and environment as a mature artist would, in itself, be challenging enough but, as an emerging artist (nurtured in London and Brighton), such a change was completely bewildering. In fact, gone were all the familiar forms of nature, both vegetal and faunal, known by name since childhood. Gone also were the recognizable patterns of stars, and the positions of the waxing and waning moon in the night sky. Absent too was the anticipated yearly round with its rhythmic transition of four distinctive seasons melding one into another (see 1.4); indeed the very progression of the year was completely reversed, as were the exchanged positions of day and night.

The light was acutely different and, in concert with it the qualities of shade and colour, indeed the very atmosphere itself. No more washed, pale blue skies in springtime, balmy languorous summer evenings, ethereal mists of autumn or short, dim, icy winter days and, gone with them, were the apparently subtle nuances of a soft and ever-changing light.

Not only was the sense of vision assailed by the dazzling contrasts of light and shade, the unfamiliar topography and vegetation, but also the other senses by those of sound and smell. The air also resounded with the penetrating electrical *whine* of curious insects, the strident trilling chorus of unseen frogs and the polyphony of exotic birds. Indeed the enervating, heavy, moisture laden air was possessed of a pungent aromatic odour, a musky-scented bouquet of tropical flowers, damp earth and decaying vegetation. However, perhaps the most curious phenomenon of all, was the discovery of the *Coriolis effect* and its peculiar influence in the southern hemisphere on the reverse rotational movement of water, and the ocean winds.

In view of such a prospect of strangeness and difference, what strategies then, might be employed as a means of responding to this unfamiliar (new) environment? In spite of the many expeditions made into the bush, rambles through the rainforest, excursions to the seashore and out to the reefs and islands, apart from enjoying the experiences, little came of them immediately in terms of creative work. The artist's customary practice of examining and analyzing the unfamiliar, has always involved the making of studies and notations from life, either in a sketchbook or on independent sheets. Although a number of attempts were made to utilize this approach, all unfortunately refused to work. This lack of success can be attributed to a number of factors, most of which conspired to create considerable physical discomfort. Certainly the more prominent were those of humidity, heat and the extreme brightness of the light, but assuredly the most disturbing, were the unremitting *sorties* prosecuted by a wide variety of insect life of every shape and size. Indeed several years elapsed before the artist was sufficiently acclimatized to be able to effect sustained studies from nature *au plien air*. To make good this initial

inability to produce studies of this kind, it was thought that perhaps the compilation of a photographic journal could be of value. However this project proved ultimately to be unproductive. Although hundreds of photographs resulted, apart from an initial perusal, they remained unlooked at and in the end contributed little, if anything, to the creation of new artworks. Diverting and attractive though many of them were, and despite the undeniable ability of photography to influence perception in almost every sphere, somehow they conveyed neither the sense of place, nor adequate documentation of the kind of visual experiences that the artist was beginning to encounter.

2.2 – Responses to a New Environment

The following discussion charts the translation of a particular genre of visual language developed by the artist in England to its evolution and eventual transformation within an Australian context. It focuses upon the conceptual drivers and those technical and stylistic aspects which (at the time) appeared to be so compelling, yet nevertheless remained problematic. These were compelling inasmuch as the artist enjoyed the synchronous process of technical development with the weavings of imagination. They were nevertheless problematic as the work was not only difficult to resolve (much of it was left unfinished). Moreover it remained (apart from drawing on extant literary sources (see Table 1.7.4) and contributing illustrations to those as yet unpenned) uncircumscribed by any apparently well-defined practical purpose. As has already been intimated, the artist's schooling had been undertaken in an institution where the acquisition of practical skills and a thorough knowledge of one's craft were *à priori* (see 1.7). It was also

generally understood that, whatever a person's *stylistic* proclivities or *formal* inclinations, their practice would be founded on *objective* studies, from nature, the *life-room*, the theory and practice of the elements of formal design, from a study of the great works of the past, and the History of Art, which had a tendency to provide an account of Art objects and accept the continuous re-definitions of Art as naturally retroactive and progressive.

Several years prior to arriving in Australia (north Queensland), the artist had begun to evolve a form of visual expression quite contrary to that advocated by and encouraged at Camberwell. However, despite adopting such a counter response, the developments which followed were not in themselves considered to be specifically reactive. Nevertheless they did represent a distinct change of direction both in the artist's style and visual thinking. Both the academic and *artistic* climate at Camberwell (during that time-1965-70), embraced neither the conceptual orientations nor praxes espoused by what it perceived as the hydra of *neo-surrealist* influences. These were not only to be found in the works of significant individuals e.g., Paul Wunderlich (b.1927-), Mati Klarwein (1932-2000) (Plate 2.2.1), Wilfried Satty (b.1939-) and many others, but more threateningly in those of the loose-knit, informally organized and widely scattered groups of (so called) *visionary* artists.

Perhaps one of the most notable examples was the original *Vienna School* or, to give it its full title, the *Vienna School of Fantastic Realism*, which was founded by Ernst Fuchs (b.1930-) (Plate 2.2.2), and Rudolf Hausner (b.1914-) in 1959 (Plate 2.2.3). It is, in the present context relevant to note, as Jacobson (2000) confirms (though

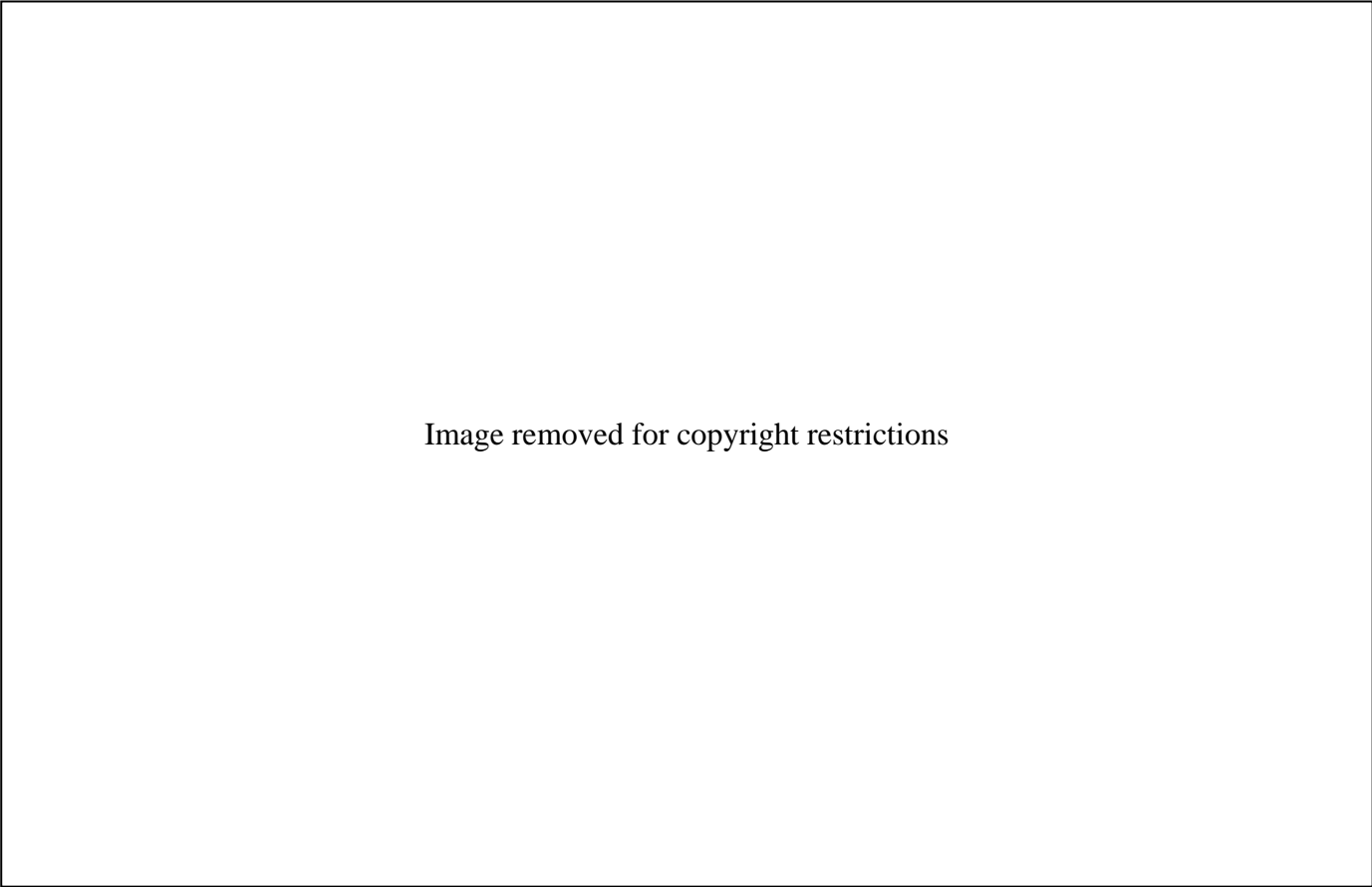


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Plate 2.2.1 Mati Klarwein, *Annunciation* (1962), oil and tempera on canvas on wooden board. Album cover for Carlos Santana's *Abraxas* (1970), lettering by Robert Venosa.

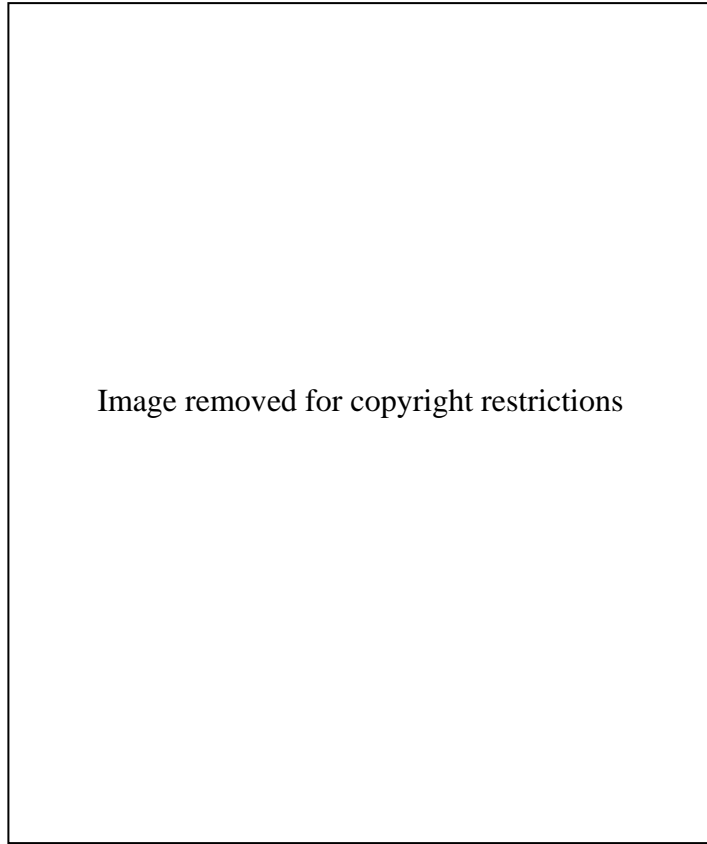


Plate 2.2.2 Ernst Fuchs, *Queen Esther and Dead Haman* (1965-69), etching, Avant-Garde magazine, November 1969.

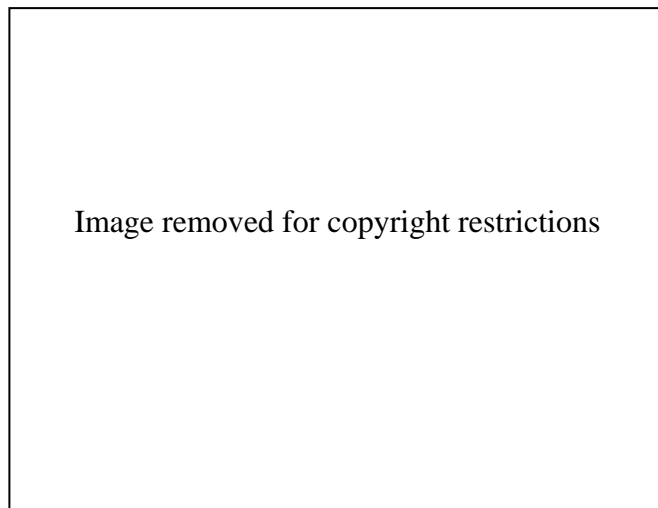


Plate 2.2.3 Rudolf Hausner, *Adam Ball - Player* (1974), acrylic paint, resin oil ultramine on Duplex sheet stuck with canvas, 78 x 94cm.

from a partisan position), that “Art historians have linked the Vienna School.... to the surrealists ...” (Jacobson, 2000: 35) and, whilst such a nexus is undeniable, it is also true that it represents the relationship of a *mother to her child*. Also identified by Jacobson (2000) is the fact that a profound difference exists between them, inasmuch as the founders of the *Vienna School*,

... have given birth to an international family of painters more spiritually grounded ... [who] dared to restore poetry to painting, revealing art and concealing the medium.

(Jacobson, 2000: 35).

Given the observations which have already been made concerning the prevailing *artistic* climate and the creative and academic agendas at Camberwell, the substance of Jacobson’s (2000) remarks and all that they imply do, to some extent, explain not only the institution’s disavowal of *neo-surrealist* (and *Surrealist* (1924-66)) influences, but also the artist’s search for *other*, perhaps more personally engaging, ways to develop meaningful forms of visual expression. It is noteworthy, for example, that at Camberwell neither the concept of *being spiritually* grounded, nor that of *restoring poetry* to the visual image (given its *Surrealist* explanation, i.e., “as the opposite of literature ...” (Alexandrian, 1970: 7)) was high on the list of significant issues broached in the debates involving *Objective Representational Painting*, or the approved variations of extant forms of *abstraction*. Furthermore the idea of “... concealing the medium ...” (Jacobson, 2000: 35) and thereby denying not only its perceptual logic but also the

possibility of determining the history of its *factual* application, was viewed with considerable displeasure. In terms of *Objective Representational Painting*, the recording (and checking) of *visual facts*, together with a *painterly* transcription of the subject e.g., the development of the artist's unique signature in terms of his/her manipulation of the medium, was *a priori*.

It should be mentioned that the reasons underlying Camberwell's (the Painting School) capacity to embrace such apparently antithetical interests, stem from the same source (as much political as aesthetic) as its ambivalent attitude towards the preoccupations of *Surrealism* (or "Sur-Realism" as Coldstream (1930) referred to it) and more recent *neo-surrealistic* tendencies. This source can be identified as having originated with *The Euston Road School* (1937-39) ideologies and, subsequent to its closure as previously mentioned in 1.7, the relocation of both its staff (together with a handful of students) and a revised curriculum e.g., the pursuit of a *philosophy of commitment* and experimental *objective representation*, to Camberwell. It should be reiterated (see 1.7) that a detailed explanation of the events surrounding these developments lies beyond the scope of the present study and the reader is directed to Dr Bruce Laughton's (1985) seminal work, *The Euston Road School: A Study in Objective Painting* (1985) in which he provides a well researched and lucid account of the School's revised precepts and its reunification at Camberwell between the years 1943 to 1945 and beyond.

The artist's own agenda (though some three decades further on) was, however, quite straightforward. Stated simply it represented a temporary (albeit viewed in hindsight) disaffection with the notion of a "...scientifically measurable world, a world without

mystery, hallmarked by the intellect...” (Schneede, 1972:56)., and one dogged by the recording of tangible *objective* facts. Furthermore, as the critical theorist Theodor Adorno (1958) succinctly, though retrospectively, observed, the “... Surrealist gathers up those things denied to man by material reality...” (Adorno, 1958: 56). To this may also be added André Breton’s (1924) original dictum concerning *Surrealism*, which states that it “... rests on a belief in the higher reality of certain neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of dream [and] in the disinterested play of thought”. (Breton, 1924: 56) – albeit written much earlier.

Of relevance in the present context, among others, there are at least three significant differences evident in the approach of the artists of the *Vienna School* (generally associated with *Visionary art*, *neo-surrealism* or, according to Michael Bell, “...Veristic Surrealism” (Jacobson, 2000: 113)) compared with those of historical *Surrealism*. The first may perhaps be discerned in the attitude of the *School’s* founders (and followers) to the development of an awareness and recognition of a transcendental and omniscient *divine presence*. It should be added that the pursuit and development of the creative *means* by which would-be aspirants were required to engage in and communicate with and through this *presence* was understood (by the artists themselves) to be both *a priori* and individually transforming. In fact Jacobson (2000) observes that

When Fuchs, Brauer, Lehmden, Hutter and Hausner ... came together in their formative days, they did not subscribe to the older Surrealist’s rejection of established religion Unlike the Surrealists ... this new generation of artists ...

not only revealed the mindscape but added a spiritual dimension and understanding to their work.

(Jacobson, 2000: 52).

The second example of difference involves the approach of the artists of the *Vienna School* and their progeny to the materials and technical production employed in the material fabrication of their images. While apparently unknown to him at the time, their position regarding this matter is well rendered by Jacobson (2000) who, in describing his own artistic needs, asserts that "... the visions and feelings I wanted to share required a refined and meticulous technique of painting." (Jacobson, 2000: 29). It was intended that the employment of such technical refinement would not only serve the purpose of endowing an *unseen world* with a convincing mask of reality, but also that the technique itself would, to some degree, provide a substrate from which certain pictorial elements of the work could be developed.

However, unlike most of the *Surrealists*, with the possible exception of Salvador Dali's (1904-1989) later works, the artists of the *Vienna School* and their followers embraced the notion of reviving the technical means of much earlier historical periods but without their intentional humour or irony. Of particular interest to them in this regard were the Icon painters and particularly "... the great practitioners of Flemish, German and Venetian painting ..." (Jacobson, 2000: 37). Indeed such technical methods were (as they still are) practiced by them in an atmosphere of, as it were, arcane knowledge, and

by which means they continue to conjure their oneiric and subconsciously stimulated visionary images.

A third lies in the differences in attitude and approach to the utilization of *collage*, or more accurately *montage* and the manner in which "... it addresses itself directly to the observer's powers of association." (Schneede, 1972: 5). As the interpretations of the term *montage* vary considerably, it is felt that the following descriptions may assist in clarifying the matter. Within the present context, the process of *montage* may be characterized in several ways, the most generally accepted, according to Brow (1962), being the "... process of combining pictorial elements from several sources so that the elements are both distinct and blended into an overall artistic production." (Brow, 1962: 5). It is however, also commonly understood to include the

... sticking of one layer ...[of imagal matter] over another, especially as in photomontage when ...[filmic material or] photographs of objects are applied to... an unusual or incongruous background.

(Murray and Murray, 1959: 216).

However the term *collage*, which will be discussed in greater depth further on is more generic, characterizing any work that has been built up wholly or partly by "...pasting or gluing; specifically pasting paper, cloth...[or other material], into pictures or objects ...[or] the artistic product of this process." (Brow, 1962: 5). The fact that the artists of the *Vienna School* and their followers have consistently employed strategies utilized in

the creation of *montage* is well known. However the *montaged* elements, unlike those of the *Surrealists*, were not *clipped out*, reassembled and pasted onto a support, but the individual elements generally served as a model or models from which scrupulously rendered copies were made.

Nevertheless the difference in approach is marked, as the source material is not only distanced from the artist's finished work (as opposed to providing the medium of its fabrication), but also subsumed and modified by its conversion into a common medium, e.g., paint, graphic media, ink etc. Furthermore the decision to employ *montage* (or *collage*) material directly to a support, or render the *montage* elements in some other medium (generally one which is consonant with the rest of the work), presents us not only with divergent readings concerning the authenticity of their origins and their interactions with other pictorial elements, but also a palpable contrast in terms of approach to the artistic process. On the one hand, the original source materials (whatever their physical differences) are declared essential to the work, on the other, they are materially dissociated from their origins and disguised, having been meticulously replicated in another medium and fused with other pictorial elements in a sutureless aggregation of simulacra.

Given the theme of the present discussion it should perhaps be mentioned that the artist was aware of the impact of Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) ideas on the development of *Surrealism*, particularly in relation to the espousal of his hypotheses concerning dreams, (*Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)), jokes, *primitivism* and *animism* (*Totem and Taboo*

(1913)), free *association* and the workings of the *libido*, (though initially Freud himself, in spite of his meeting with Dali, apparently displayed a considerable degree of disdain for *Surrealism*). However a reading (by the artist) of Freud's speculative biographical study of *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* (1910), with all its "... possible and actual mistakes of fact ..." (Farrell, 1963: 29), did little at the time to stimulate any further interest in his ideas.

The artist was also familiar with the omniscience of Carl Jung's (1875 – 1961) ideas and their profound, though ambient, influence on the arts. Of particular note was his work relating to the psychology of dreams and his uncovering of "... the relativity of time ... in his exploration of the human unconscious." (von Franz, 1976: 10). To this may be appended the *theory of archetypes* and the *collective unconscious*, notions of duality - *anima* and *animus*, the processes of Alchemy "... based on his discovery of alchemical symbolism in dreams ..." (Biedermann, 1970: 57), the function of symbols and the metaphysical thought and transformative practices of the East (e.g., the creation of *Mandalas*). Such phenomena were of singular interest to those groups and individuals whose works were impelled by interests in dreams, the *visionary*, the *surreal*, the *occult*, the *mythical*, altered states of consciousness and "... shamanic self-discovery..." (Rhodes, 1994:190). Indeed his discovery and active employment of "... cryptograms of the self ..." (Jung, 1963), through the construction of (alchemical) *quadratura circuli* and the *mandala*, in addition to being of great interest to many artists, in fact also "... provides the key to his entire system ..." (McGuire, 1973: v) of understanding the goal of the psychic development of self.

The significance of Jung's contribution to humanity's understanding of itself, its creative direction, and the workings of its inner world cannot be denied but, as Jacobson (2000) points out in his discussion of the visionary *vis à vis* the spiritual in the arts, "...Jungian psychology, although more transpersonal than the psychology of many others, is not a wisdom tradition ... Jung is an entrance... [and] not a sacred path ..." (Jacobson, 2000: 200). Although more contemporary in origin, Jacobson's (2000) remarks go some way to pinpointing the reason for the artist's passing interest (at the time) in the work of Freud, and Jung and that of their successors. On the other hand his observations do explain, at least in part, why the artist found the visionary though controversial writings of the author/anthropologist Carlos Castaneda (1925-98), so compelling above all others.

Castaneda's (1970-79) accounts of his apprenticeship and transformational *journey*, through initiation into sorcery, arcane knowledge and alien philosophies, presented the artist with a window through which could be glimpsed not only other perceptions of reality, but also approaches for looking at (or *seeing*) the *phenomenal world* which, though often bizarre, were at once practical and astonishing. As a coda to the issues of *Surrealism, vis à vis* psychology and the *Surrealists* and the *neo surrealist* utilization of *montage*, also worthy of note is Adorno's (1956) observation that "... if one wants to explain Surrealism on its own terms, one should not resort to psychology but to its very artistic method ... which is evidently that of, montage..." (Adorno, 1956: 32).

The adoption of *montage* and, at a later date, *collage* has contributed significantly to the development of the artist's practice. As strategies employed in both the assemblage of

formative pictorial and textual elements and the development of compositional structures, they combine to form a distinctive and common thread throughout the artist's work. Although the utilization of *collage* (as opposed to *montage*) has been but lightly touched upon, its import as a compositional strategy in the artist's later work will be addressed subsequently.

In addition to the employment of the artifice of *montage* the artist adopted a further strategy (at this time), for the creation of pictorial images and compositional structures. Although certainly as old as humanity itself, the *Surrealists* developed a form of creative practice (though originating from *Dada* (1916-24)), which was based upon *free association*, *automatism*, and the discovery of the absurd through procedures involving chance. The outcome stemming from the application of these procedures was the creation of extraordinarily engaging and *fantastic* images, conjured up from apparently meaningless scatters of marks or dots, networks of scribbled lines, doodles and rubbings (*frottages*) made from textured surfaces.

In discussing the artist's work from this period, it is difficult to detach it from practices (as, for example, those mentioned above), which were, in essence, designed with the specific purpose of allowing (what is generally understood as) the *unconscious* to take the reins during the creative process. Initially the ideas underlying the works, given that many of them possessed literary associations, (for example, the writings of Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1998) and Carlos Castaneda, (see Table 1.7.4)) were cued by what may best be described as the *written picture* and *painted word*. Reference has been made previously to the artist's preoccupation with both the

works and writings of (and about) Salvador Dali, and Max Ernst, to which may be added Paul Klee's (1879-1940) multifaceted elucidations which were also concerned with the evocation and development of an hermetic pictorial language. (see Tables 1.7.3 and 1.7.4).

In fact, it was an expository extract from the German art historian Werner Haftmann's (1967) eloquent study of Paul Klee's thought and methods of creation, *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee* (1967) that provided the artist with a bridge of comprehension. Indeed it was Haftmann's (1967) study which assisted in traversing the boundaries of understanding regarding the difficult matters of the development of pictorial form and the way in which it might be achieved, without recourse to working directly from *life* or *nature*. That is not to *discount* the world of *nature* or to deny the process of memory involved in its reconstruction before the fact, but simply to allow it to be digested, to percolate through the filters of memory over greater periods of time and re-emerge in visual form as a response to the promptings of the *unconscious*. Haftmann (1967), in fact, provides a clear transcription of a strategy outlined by Alfred Kubin (1877-1959), which, though unrealized by him, constituted an eminently practical key to the production of such images. In the hands of his colleague Klee, Kubin's fictional proposition became a highly successful working method. The proposal described by Kubin (1909) though it applied not to himself but a fictional character, proclaims that

A series of little works was produced. In these I tried to create new and direct images based on secret rhythms of which I became conscious; they writhed, got entangled, and exploded against each other. I went still further. I renounced

everything except line, and during these months evolved a peculiar system of lines. It was a fragmentary style, writing rather than drawing, but like a sensitive meteorological instrument it recorded even the slightest oscillations of my inner mood. *Psychography* was the name I gave to this procedure.

(Kubin, 1909: 47).

Haftmann (1967) explains that, although Kubin and Klee shared similar ideas, "... Kubin only dreamt of the possibility ...[whilst] Klee was already at work making it come true on the pictorial plane." (Haftmann, 1967: 46). Haftmann (1967) also relates that

In Kubin's novel *Die Andere Seite* 1908-9 the narrator describes how: 'For hours on end I ...tried to contemplate stones, flowers, animals and ... [humanity] in the mass. In this way my eye was sharpened. The more I trained my senses the more they gradually influenced my thought processes and transformed them One day when I was looking at a shell, it became ... clear to me that its existence was not as trivial as I had formerly believed. Somehow one had gradually to create a world that is not necessarily alive, and indeed create it anew I felt there is a common bond between everything I knew the world is the power of imagination, imagination – power.

(Haftmann, 1967: 46-7).

In the explication of Kubin's account of his fictional artist, Haftmann (1967) reveals that

This imaginary painter ... sees the world from his somewhat extra-human point of view in quite another way. 'Once I saw the world as a tapestry-like miracle of colour, in which the most amazing contrasts were resolved in harmony; another time I found myself surveying an immeasurable filigree of forms. Like a sleep-walker, I found myself reacting to quite new sensations' There follows the transformation of all these experiences into abstract pictorial terms.

(Haftmann, 1967: 47).

Haftmann (1967) explains that the *psychographic* method described in Kubin's novel (1908-9) corresponded "... exactly to what Klee called 'psychic improvisation', and completed the bridge which he had been looking for between the world within and the world without..." (Haftmann, 1967: 49). The practical outcome of Klee's attempts to bridge the exterior and interior worlds, according to Haftmann (1967), was that

The process of *psychic improvisation* enabled him [Klee] to call up remote and quite unusual things, poetic themes from every psychic level from the sublime to the grotesque.

(Haftmann, 1967:62).

The artist was not only intrigued by Haftmann's account of Kubin's (1908-09) descriptions of *psychography* and Klee's (1909) pictorial demonstrations of *psychic improvisation*, but sought to adopt and adapt elements of them (as far as they were understood) as vital components in the evolution of his own practice. It was believed

that, if such an approach had served Klee so effectively in the development of his early work, it could possibly serve the artist equally as well.

Indeed many of Klee's small graphic works from the period (1903-19) (see Plate 2.2.4 and 2.2.5) were felt to be so compelling from the standpoints of technical accomplishment, subject matter and invention, that the artist made copies from a number of them (see Table 1.7.3), confident that their secrets could be uncovered. This practice was continued until it was felt that the qualities of the artist's own work resonated in some way with those of the originals. To the process of (what was understood to be) *psychic improvisation*, augmented and extended through the utilization of *montage* (and *collage*) (see Plates 2.2.6 and 2.2.7), the artist also attempted to include pictorial records of images experienced in dreams (see Plate 2.2.8) and altered states of consciousness achieved through various meditation practices. (see Plates 2.2.9 and 2.2.10). As Saines (1992) observes, "Instead of using ... systems of measured drawing taught to him at Camberwell ... [in] London ... [the artist] allowed himself to use a kind of 'internal measure' of things." (Saines, 1992: 5).

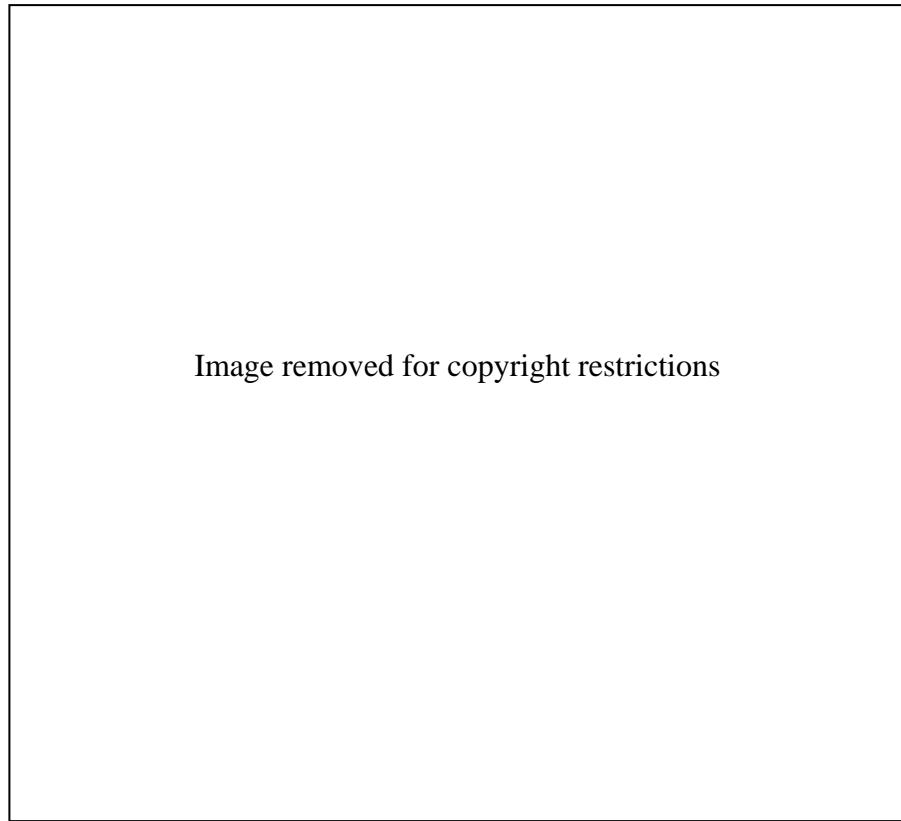


Plate 2.2.4 Paul Klee, *Virgin in a Tree* (1903), etching, 23.6 x 29.6 cm, Städtische Galerie im Lebenbachhaus, Munich.

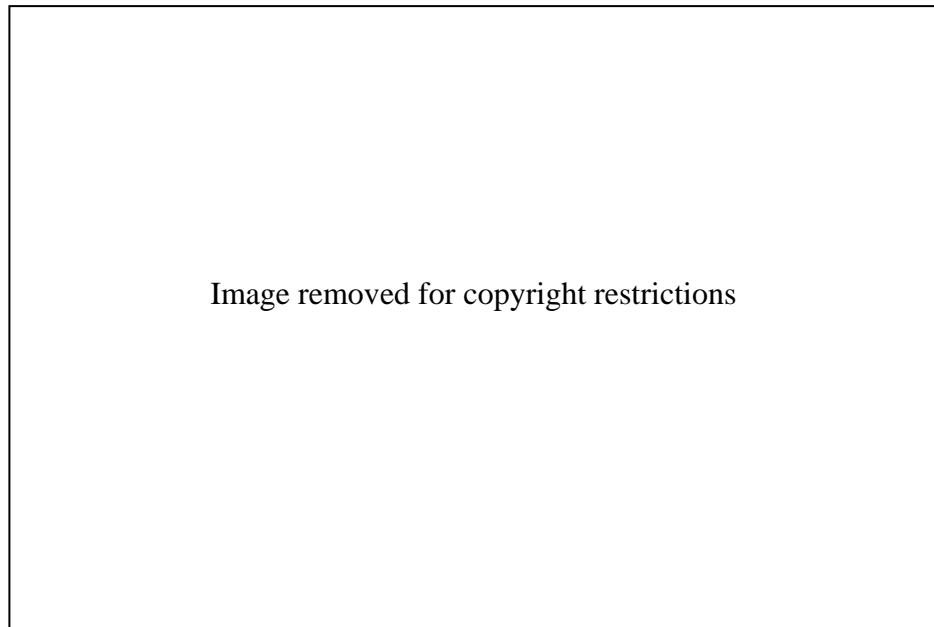


Plate 2.2.5 Paul Klee, *Needle Drawing* (1919), ink on board, 15.1 x 24 cm, Private Collection, New York.



Plate 2.2.6 *They were cunning like old beasts of prey*, pen and black ink, watercolour with collage on paper laid on cardboard; varnished, 7.9 x 9.8 cm, (based on a text from *Labyrinths* by Jorge Luis Borges).



Plate 2.2.7 *Study for a Conjectural Portrait of Josephina before her Window*, gouache and pencil on paper, 19.2 x 16.2 cm, (influenced by the writings of Carlos Castaneda).



Plate 2.2.8 *Dream Image of a Jimson Plant*, pencil, crayon, pen and black ink, watercolour, touched with white and point of brush on paper, 14.8 x 2.1cm.

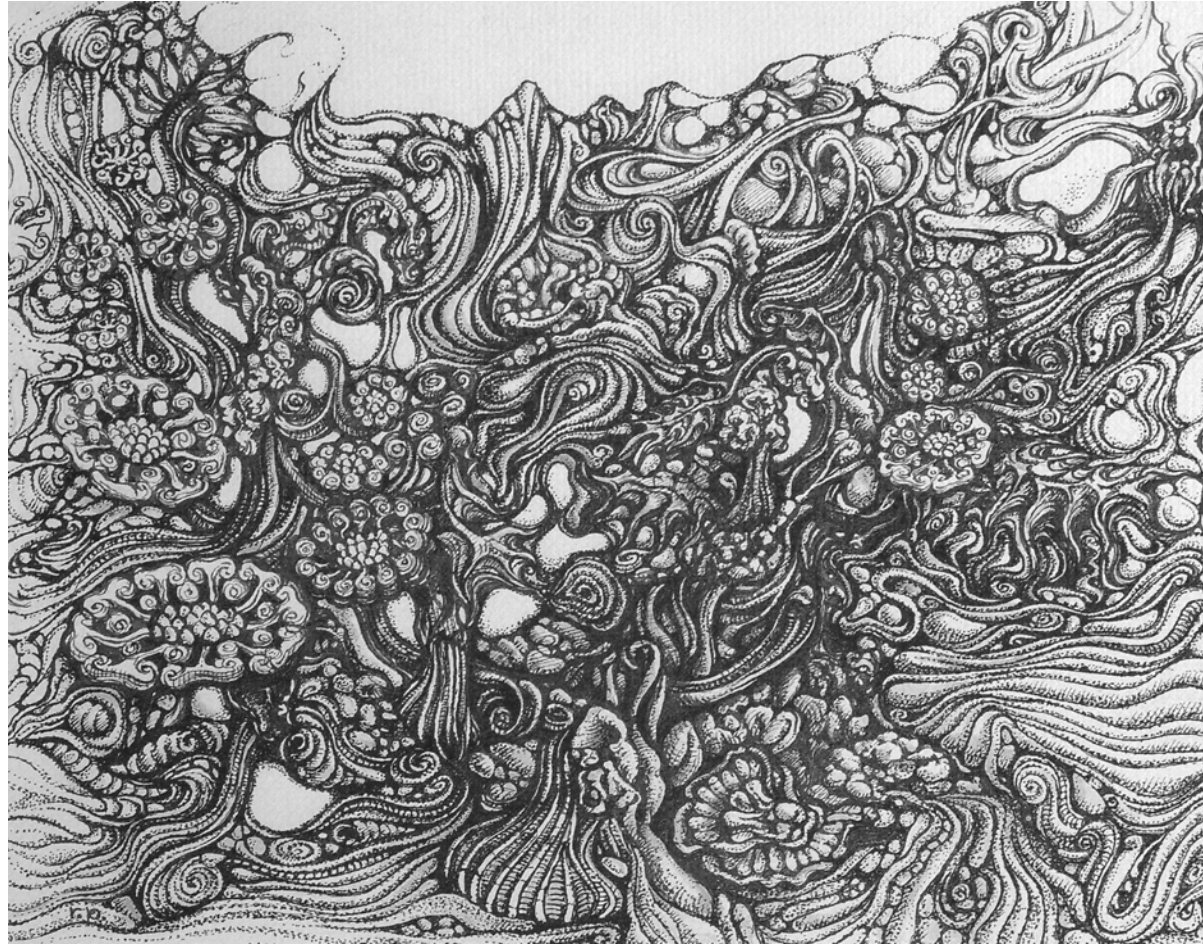


Plate 2.2.9 *The Blossoming of Primeval Plants*, pen and black ink, sepia and grey wash, point of brush on paper, 17.8 x 21.3 cm.



Plate 2.2.10 *Ensnared Between the Tides*, pen and black ink, grey and sepia wash, touched with white and point of brush on paper, 10.6 x 12.9 cm, *Perc Tucker Regional Gallery*.

Nevertheless, from a technical point of view, the works produced in Australia remained very similar in execution to those made in England, though the former were in some instances a little larger and more elaborate in their execution. In terms of method, this involved the conception of a loose foundational pencil sketch, overdrawn and built up in variously toned layers of pen and (Chinese) ink, a procedure which remained constant in the creation of the linear, stippled and hatched graphic elements. To this basic drawing were also added light monochrome washes in watercolour, together with touches of white to accentuate the solidity of the forms and small but significant inclusions of *montage* (see Plate 2.2.7). Indeed in some instances images were created from *collaged* reassemblages of fragments from the artist's own work.

As noted by Saines (1992), it should also perhaps be mentioned, that, whilst some early images signal an indebtedness "... to Leonardo, recalling his search for animist forms ... [in landscapes] and among the formless motion of clouds." (Saines, 1992: 5), others were prompted almost as much by the works of William Blake (1757-1827), Edward Calvert (1799-1183), Samuel Palmer (1805-88) and Jan Toorop (1858-1928) as they were by those of Paul Klee and Alfred Kubin. Although the technical production, as already mentioned, remained similar (subsequent to the artist settling in Australia), a noticeable shift of focus occurred in the work, in which the world of *nature* appeared to "... form the 'organic architecture' of ... ancient sanctuaries pressed with evidence of ... [their] biological, anthropological and poetic past". (Saines, 1992: 7), an environment at once more intensely bio-morphic and impenetrable. It goes without saying that this was almost certainly the result of the

raft of new experiences to which the artist was exposed in an entirely unfamiliar and alien environment (see Plates 2.2.9 and 2.2.10).

The development of the artist's work at this time (1971-75), notwithstanding its diverse influences (see Tables 1.7.1, 1.7.2 and 1.7.3) and backward glance (to an historical period much preoccupied with the "... crisis in the representation of reality..." (Appignanesi and Garratt, (1996: 45)), was driven simply by a desire to transform "... nature into a visual equivalent of what we imagine it to be ... [and to create] pictorial realizations of the dreams that haunt us..." (Haftmann, 1967: 52). Nevertheless it is this body of work and all that informed it which constitutes the bridge spanning two continents and represents a journey of four years; two post Camberwell years prior to migration from England and a further two from the point of arrival in "... his adoptive country." (Searle, 1992: 4). The conceptual and technical influences from this period onwards, however, combined to create a fabric whose warp and weft have, over time, produced an irregular pattern throughout the artist's practice, at times quite distinct but at others submerged.

2.3 – Return from a Bio-morphic *Cul-de-sac*.

The previous section addressed those aspects of the artist's creative output which suggest pervasive common threads of interest evident in much subsequent work. Although these influences have been subject to considerable formal variation in terms of the extent of their obvious visibility, or lack of it, the conceptual drivers have, in the main, remained very similar. What follows represents an attempt to provide a concise account of the process of disengagement with the work which originated in England and continued for some time in Australia. The comment has

been made that artists may easily become prisoners of their own style. Nothing could be closer to the truth in the case of the artist's own work at this time. The final phase in the creation of these bio-morphic images has been described by Saines (1992) as being "... built upon overwhelming accretions of matter, resonance and memory." (Saines, 1992: 7) which, in fact, became so dense that their only manumission in terms of *subject* was that of suffocation.

Having arrived at an impasse and being unable to progress further with the creation of the small monochrome works originated in England (and continued in north Queensland), the artist became increasingly aware of what at the time was thought to be the *apparent* absurdity of working in the tropics (given the highly chromatic nature of the environment) exclusively in black and white and tone. However, not long after the artist had made a decision to discontinue this practice in order to re-engage with the problems of working in colour, two notable experiences transpired which to some extent precipitated future events. The first, as noted by the curator and author Ross Searle (1991), arose on a trip to Thailand in 1976-77 where, for the first time, the artist

... came into contact with a [sophisticated indigenous] culture located in a tropical climate not unlike Townsville the artist saw a lot of art [in Thailand] ... for the first time, which dealt with the tropical environment; its denseness and its colour. This was an important realization, which led ... to new ways of working with colour form and subject.

(Searle, 1991: 53).

The second emerged whilst traveling in south central Bali in the regions of Campuan - Ubud and Batuan (1979), also climatically similar environments to that in which the artist lived, where it came to light that the *native* painters in these regions, particularly in the Batuan area, in addition to working in colour, maintained a longstanding and thriving tradition of producing small scale highly complex tonal paintings (see Plate 2.3.1). Needless to say the discovery of this work was quite unexpected and modified the artist's ideas concerning the use of tone and colour in tropical regions. Now identified by the generic title of the *Batuan Miniature School*, its painters not only employed almost identical techniques to those used by the artist (Leuras, 1987), although unknown to him at the time, but also demonstrated occasional, though fortuitous, parallels in their avocation of subject matter. Indeed, in his discussion of the subject, the author, publisher and specialist in south east Asian culture Leonard Leuras (1987), submits that

Batuan is ... famed for the skill of its painters ... who are known for the attention they pay to minute symbolic and documentary detail. Fantasy artists such as Hiëronymus Bosch, W.C. Escher and Aubrey Beardsley would have felt at home ... [with] the art of the Ubud - Pengosekan area, but it is in Batuan that Indian, Persian and mediaeval Christian miniaturists would find kindred spirits and artworks.

(Leuras, 1987: 119).

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Plate 2.3.1 *Krishna stealing the Gopi's clothes*, (c.1967),
Batuan School, ink and acrylic paint on canvas, (no size).

The experiences in Thailand, and Bali (many of which were set aside for further contemplation) proved to be particularly salutary in setting a new orientation. Hence, in order to move forwards, and as an alternative to imposing the straightjacket of a pre-existing graphic framework on the sentient experiences of colour from a new environment, different avenues were sought. It is invariably the case that complex drawing structures, including of course the extensive employment of tonal modelling, not only countervails the reading of colour, but also tends to negate the viewer's experience of it. In point of fact, a considerable proportion of twentieth century art (not to mention the late nineteenth century) has, from its early pioneers onward, struggled with this dilemma, having been concerned (among other things) with defining and exploring the multifarious problems associated with the perception, organization and presentation of colour. The artist turned once again for direction to the work and writings of Paul Klee about whom the author and curator Phillip Ball (2001) remarks that

No one can deny that ... [he] was a superb and inventive colourist. Jean-Paul Satre went further: 'Klee is an angel who re-creates the miracles of this world' ... a conjuror in colour ... one moment working in luminous pastel shades, at another in lustrous, subtly modulated reds ... [and] then in bright primaries on a dream-like background.

(Ball, 2001: 352).

Despite examining the visible evidence of Klee's wide ranging exploration of *the pictorial means* – including his copious pedagogical notes addressing the problems

associated with the implementation of colour – as well as much of the related voluminous documentation, on this occasion the artist could divine neither a way forward nor a solution. Indeed no progress was made at all until an element, apparently absent in Klee's work, had been identified. The component not found in Klee's *oeuvre* however, made an increasingly prominent appearance in the later works (1939-44) of his *Bauhaus* (1919-32) colleague Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) (see Plate 2.3.2).

The missing element was, in fact, that of an opaque, highly chromatic, uniform ground; a *colour-field* upon and against which independent multi-coloured shapes had been arranged without apparently employing the traditional conventions of either pictorial space or directional orientation. What the artist found compelling was the manner in which Kandinsky (in his later compositions of 1932-44) was able to particularize the chromatic tenor of a work by establishing what may be described (to borrow a term from music) as a defined *colour key*. Indeed it would appear that he employed a coloured ground much like a great symphonic chord, which resonated throughout the entire work, thereby creating a dynamic chromatic foil for the overlaid pictorial elements. Of course Kandinsky's works from the *Paris period* (1932-44) were not created in artistic isolation, but they were, as far as the artist was concerned, the first to provide a means of access (from a contemporary western viewpoint) and indicate a new direction.

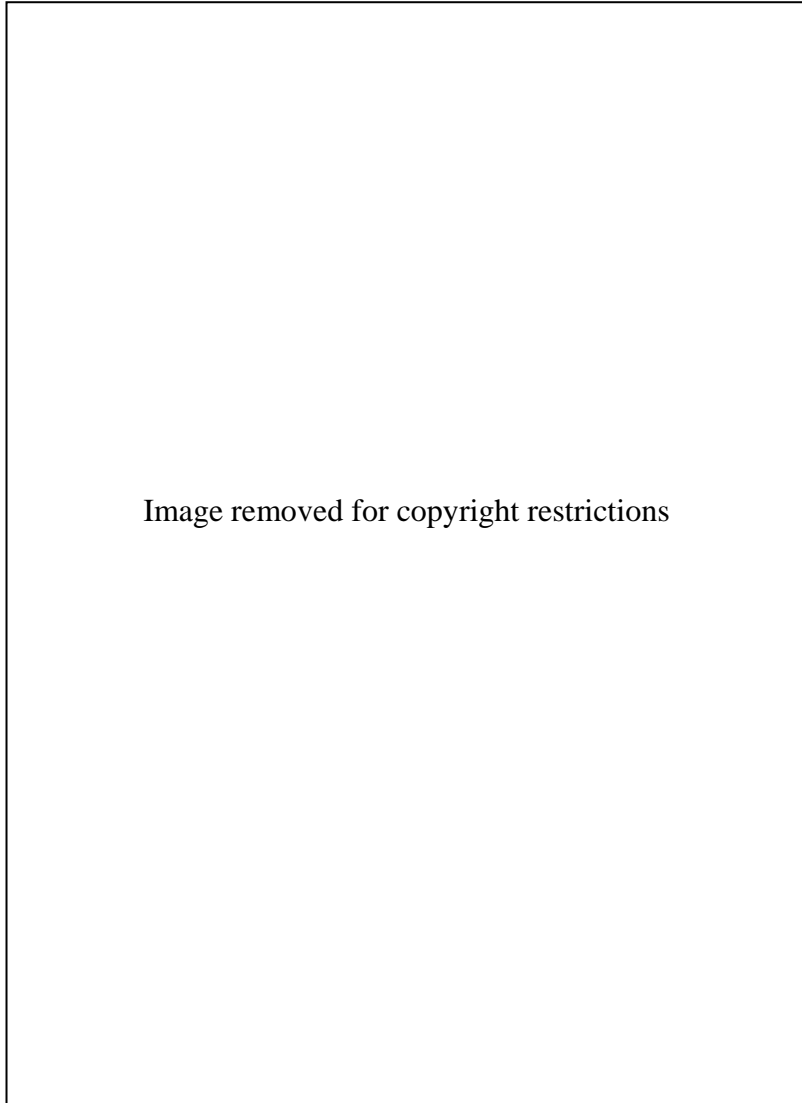


Plate 2.3.2 Wassily Kandinsky, *Sky Blue* (1940), oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm, Musée National d'Art Modern, Paris.

2.4 – New Directions in Australia.

The previous section (see 2.3) addressed the artist's earlier pre-occupations with the creation of small-scale monochromatic, bio morphic works, whilst at the same time discussing the primary motivating factors and principal sources of stylistic influence. Also noted was the fact that the impasse reached with the earlier work gave rise to an ever growing desire to undertake a fundamental change of direction. This directional change was motivated, among other things (including encounters with Asian art forms), by a profound need to become re-united (once again) with the experience of working in and with colour. Moreover the re-evaluation of earlier work was driven as much by a burgeoning awareness of the possibilities of other, as yet untapped (though obvious) visual encounters of the new environment, as it was by a growing sense of *mélange* issuing from the artist's former practice.

Certainly one of the most immediate and striking of these encounters was a first sighting of the sweeping expanse of opalescent sea and unfathomable metallic blue sky, which presented not only an uninterrupted expanse of open space, but also apparently illimitable fields of almost unbroken colour. The initial experience of being unable to respond to the tropical environment of north Queensland in a manner, which did not rely excessively on a practice, which had been developed in a distant place, gradually began to recede. Aside from the writings and paintings of Klee and Kandinsky, and taking note of the environment itself, where could guidance be sought that might assist in the task of beginning anew? Not unnaturally, the artist first turned to the work of others (though paradoxically not initially to Australian

artists) from Europe, who had traveled a parallel path and who had lived and worked successfully in similar tropical environments.

The fact that a number of notable artists travelled from the northern hemisphere to the South Seas, particularly to the Polynesian Islands is well known e.g., Emil Nolde (1867- 1956) and Max Pechstein (1881-1953) "... whose journey to the Palau Islands in 1914 was clearly modeled on Gauguin's stay in Tahiti." (Rhodes, 1994:72). Nevertheless it would be difficult to find works of greater consequence created as a direct result of their visits there, than those of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and subsequently Henri Matisse (1869-1954). Indeed innovative developments in the later works of both artists were, to a considerable degree, driven by their independent search for "... Bouganville's Utopia ..." (Rhodes, 1994:70) in the islands of the South Pacific: Gauguin by his search for the *primitive* and the pulse and colour of life in Tahiti and the Marquesas (from 1891-93 and again from 1895-1903) (see Plate 2.4.1), and Matisse (who followed in his wake to Tahiti in 1930), by his search for "... a different density ... [of light] in the tropics." (Girard, 1994: 108).

Moreover the enormous impact of the work produced as a result of their respective journeys (as is well known) has reverberated, in one way or another, throughout the corridors of the history of contemporary western art and contributed significantly to shaping major aspects of its subsequent development. Although beyond the scope of the present study, the penumbral aspect of these reverberations include, of course, the unavoidable issues associated with *colonialism* e.g., of cultural dispossession and appropriation and more recently, though "... lack[ing] in an 'originary moment' or

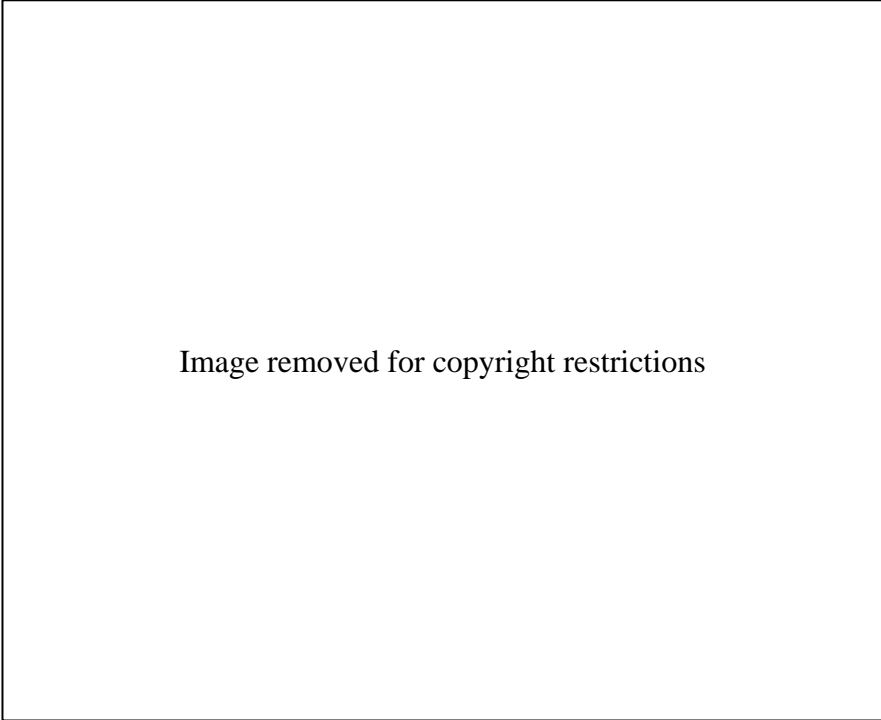


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Plate 2.4.1 Paul Gauguin, *Fatata Te Miti* (1892), oil on canvas, 67.9 x 91.5 cm.

coherent methodology.” (Ghandi, 1998: viii), the critical discourse of *post colonialism*.

In his description of Matisse’s response to colour in Polynesia (Tahiti), the issues of *colonialism* notwithstanding, the art historian and curator of the Musée Matisse (Nice-Cimiez), Xavier Girard (1994) submits that, (unlike Gauguin) Matisse expected that his impressions of Tahiti would

... filter into ... [his] painting later on ...[and] ‘such colours’, he said in 1931 about Tahitian skies, ‘cannot bear fruit except through memory, after they have been weighed against our own colours’ Little by little, Tahiti, with its dazzling colours, was to make its presence felt thematically and spatially, gradually suffusing the rest of Matisse’s career with its fragrance.

(Girard, 1994: 109).

Like Gauguin before him (though *formerly* more extreme), Matisse’s evocations of tropical environs, the lagoons and coral reefs of Polynesia became increasingly chromatic, flat, abstract and decorative in their composition and treatment. The carefully selected and uniformly flat coloured grounds (or *coloured fields*), reminiscent of those created by Kandinsky, were designed to evoke a particular chromatic sensation or mood. These were overlaid with emblematic figures and multivalent signs, pictorial equivalents that resonated with the forms of marine organisms, and the floral, vegetal and faunal life he found there (see Plate 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). Indeed it is in the work of Matisse that we are able to observe, possibly for

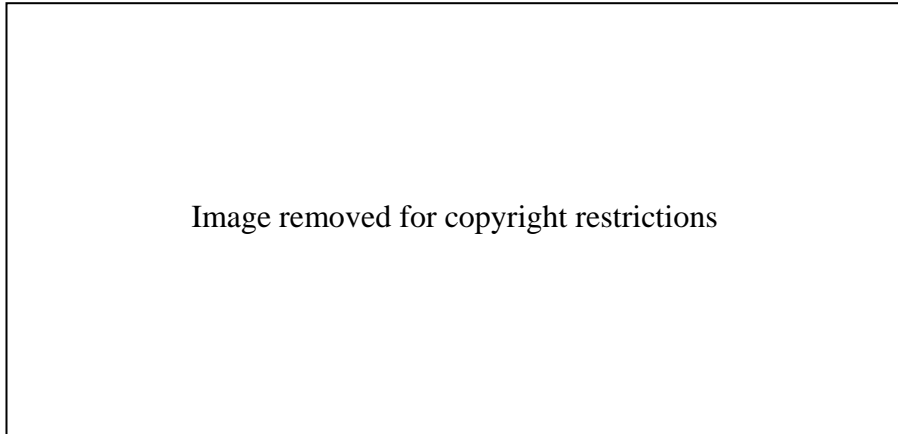


Plate 2.4.2 Henri Matisse, *Polynesia: The Sea* (1946), screen print on canvas, 194.5 x 30.9 cm.

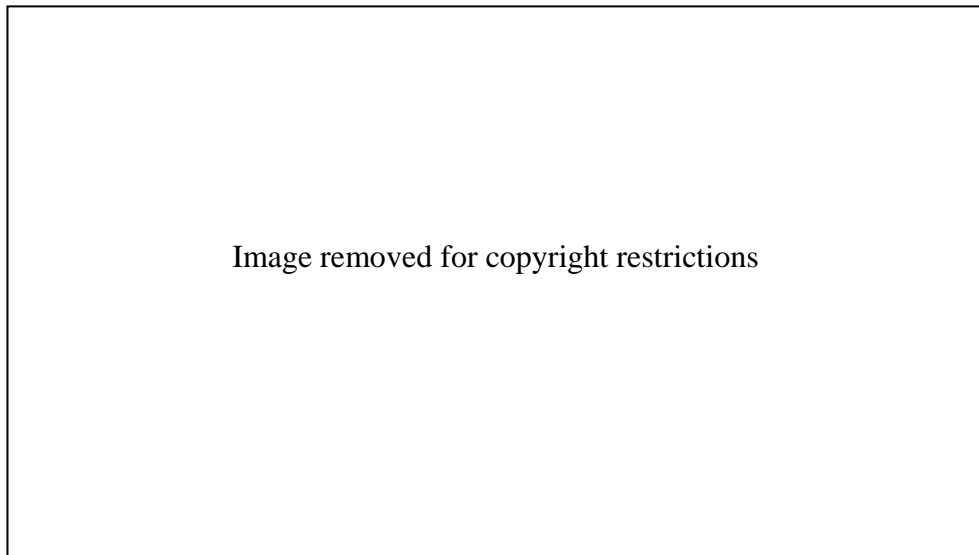


Plate 2.4.3 Henri Matisse, *Oceania: The Sea* (1946), “*Découpage*” on canvas, 162.5 x 309 cm.

the first time since the work of the great Byzantine mosaicists and mediaeval book painters, the most favourable circumstances for the use of colour in art, and that is, when it is "... freed ... from its literal, descriptive role ..." (Cole, 1993: 56). The artist was able to discern in Matisse's, writings and late work (1940-54) an outstanding example not only of ways in which to move forward conceptually e.g., in terms of treatment of unfamiliar subject matter, but also eminently practical strategies for the development of new work.

From a conceptual point of view, the artist was intrigued by Matisse's desire to develop a personal language of pictorial signs which the art historian Jack Flam (1978) has described as a placement of "... emphasis ... [by him] on the creation of intuitive symbolism through perceptual experience. "(Flam, 1978: 33). However, aside from Matisse's insistence on *intuition vis à vis perceptual experience*, the artist was also fascinated by his concern for the distinctly temporal concept "... of existence as flux ..." (Flam, 1978: 33), together with the significance of the role played by memory resulting in "... a synthesis (or condensation) of sensations into perceptions, and of perceptions into significant form." (Flam, 1978: 34). Indeed, in Matisse's conceptions of *flux* and *intuition*, as Flam (1976) has remarked, close parallels may be found in the epistemic expositions of the French philosopher Henri Bergson, and the Italian philosopher and critic Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), who attempted to build a theoretical bridge spanning the gap between metaphysics and science.

In the case of Bergson, his theories exhibit a pronounced temporal and spiritual impress in which strong emphasis is assigned to the notion of duration, or *durée*.

Indeed he believed it to be "... the basic element of experience and ... [proclaimed the notion] of a life giving force that permeates the entire natural order." (*Collins English Dictionary*, 1983: 183). Bergson, in fact presents us with *intuition* as a

... mode of knowledge ... [and] an immediate datum of awareness, distinguishing succession from simultaneity (succession being understood as duration and simultaneity as 'measurable time' and 'space *qua* homogeneity').

(Delavoy, 1982: 179).

In a contemporary philosophical context however, *intuitive knowledge*, as Thompson (2000) explains, can be understood simply as "... direct knowledge, which is not the result of conscious reasoning or experience." (Thompson, 2000: 210). This may also be considered in the context of memory, specifically memory as an aspect of duration, or *durée*. Indeed the artist was provided with much to contemplate in this regard, as Matisse's large scale *Polynesian* works (see Plates 2.4.2, and 2.4.3) produced in 1946 were created from (visual) experiences to which he had been exposed in 1930, a time lapse of some sixteen years duration. Curious though it may be, the art historian and curator John Elderfield (1978) sheds some light on this temporal delay when he explains that

... [Matisse's] response to nature was the true subject of his art. This made it necessary to alter what he saw, to modify its local and temporal dimensions. Hence the removal from immediate reality - and from topical, disturbing subjects - and the search for something unconfined by time and space in the

free world of memory that matched and consolidated the calm and eternal mood of the subjects themselves.

(Elderfield, 1978: 21-22).

Although much has been discussed with regard to attitudinal and conceptual affiliations, little reference has yet been made to the methods by which the artist's practice was advanced other than citing a continued interest in the utilization of *collage*. In this regard a form of *collage* did indeed play a significant role. However it was employed as a compositional strategy taking the form of maquettes which were employed in the development of much larger painted works. Nevertheless though the actual *collage* elements *per se* were not used in the finished work, the painted enlargements were executed in a manner which faithfully reproduced the appearance of cut and pasted papers painted with gouache and (a little later) clipped from commercially printed materials (see Plates 2.4.4 and 2.4.5).

In the present context it is noteworthy that, despite its use by professional artists for over half a century, no really comprehensive definition was attempted for *collage* until that of the influential German art historian Franz Mon in 1968. Mon (1968) in fact refers not simply to *collage* but to the "collage principle" (*prinzip collage*), about which he remarks that

The formula 'collage principle' indicates that collage does not mean simply one artistic technique among many, but reveals a basic attitude to artistic activity which pervades the whole of modern art. A collage unites in a composition, elements which originate from the ... environment, bear traces



Plate 2.4.4 *Borderland* (1976), *Décollage*, gouache on paper, 21.5 x 24.5 cm, Private Collection, Chicago.



Plate 2.4.5 *Cox's Landing* (1974-5), acrylic and wax crayon 122.5 x 92.5 cm, Private Collection, Australia.

of modification, and are therefore socially mediated. Collage transposes received reality, as seen through the filter of civilization, into an artistic world ripe for reconstitution. There is nothing real that might not become an element in collage. The principles and techniques of composition in collage ... also govern the experimental work, which takes place in other artistic disciplines.

(Mon, 1968: 122).

In terms of the artist's own development at the time (though not a *collage* artist in the strict sense), the significance of Mon's (1968) explication cannot be overemphasized. The message it delivered was that if, an artist was not utilizing the *collage principle* in some way, then he or she certainly should be. Although the artist had previously employed aspects of *montage*, a technique, which lends itself perfectly to the fabrication of a wide variety of approaches to the construction and re-structuring of narrative images, it was not a method well suited to the exploration and manipulation of colour. The artist was, however, well aware of the method of *collage* developed by Matisse, the varieties of work for which he employed it and the fact that similar methods have been much utilized by other artists with a more recent art practice. Matisse's overwhelming interest in juxtaposing areas of pure colour at the expense of line and tonal modelling led naturally and immediately to the employment of *découpage*. As described by Brow (1962) *découpage* as a method is

... a hard-edged technique ... in [which] the paper materials are cut rather than torn ... [they] may be cut beforehand, or as the work progresses and may be adjusted and manipulated to fulfill the artist's conception.

(Brow, 1962: 5).

Matisse not only employed it as a vehicle for fabricating finished works but also recognized its versatility as a method for creating preparatory works, both great and small, in a variety of media. Having recognized the possibilities of employing *découpage* e.g., the relationship of sharply cut edges to precise drawing, the artist also employed it in a variety of forms as a method for creating pre-compositional and compositional works. Indeed the flexibility it offers as a compositional technique is, in the artist's opinion, without equal as it not only allows for the fabrication of works at any scale on almost any shaped surface, but also permits immediate positional changes of all or any of the pictorial (or design) elements.

It should be mentioned that, although it was in the work of Matisse that the artist first identified a potential for the use of *découpage* in his own work (see Plate 2.4.3), its employment by David Hockney as a compositional strategy and by Bridget Riley in her cut and pasted "... paper-and-gouache designs ..." (Cole, 1993: 61) was also of significance. The confluence of influences discussed thus far were not only crucial in providing the artist with strategies for advancing his own practice but also provided the crucible for the next generation of work.

2.5 – Developing an Australian Vision.

Although considerable attention has been devoted to the influences of artists from Britain, Europe and America. (see 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), no mention has yet been made of those exerted by Australian artists, particularly those working in the tropical

regions of north Queensland. As the curator and author Ross Searle (1991) has observed in his historical survey of the art of north Queensland,

.... [it] has always drawn visiting artists from [other regions of] Australia and around the world. Artists in north Queensland have interacted with an environment possessing strong exotic associations.

(Searle, 1991: 57).

The tropics have also been associated, as Searle (1991) remarks, "... with Gauguin's exotic Polynesian subjects." (Searle, 1991: 57). Two artists who openly demonstrated such Gauguinesque influences were Donald Friend (1915-89) and Noel Wood (1912-) whose work during their individual sojourns (between the 1930s and 1950s) was, however, available to the artist only in reproductions as the originals were difficult to locate. Be that as it may and despite the influence of Gauguin, the artist could find little in such work, which substantiated his own experiences or, indeed, inspired further exploration. This was not the case, however, with the work of Ray Croke (b.1922-) whose paintings of the tropical environment and indigenous island peoples the artist found to be genuinely engaging. His Rousseau-like (1844-1910) treatment and carefully composed arrangements of tropical plants, flowers and the landscape generally proved to be highly instructive. Ray Croke, as Searle (1991) confirms "... is acknowledged as the quintessential interpreter of the landscape of north Queensland." (Searle, 1991: 47) (see Plate 2.5.1).

Undoubtedly the predominant Australian formative influence has been that of John Coburn (b.1925-). It is perhaps prescient that his early years, in fact, were spent in

Ingham and Charters Towers although his links with north Queensland, as Searle (1991) remarks, have since been *tenuous*. Nevertheless “ ... the basic elements of ... [his] art were shaped and tempered by his early life in north Queensland.” (Searle, 1991: 51). Indeed his work (see Plate 2.5.2) distinguishes itself in the manner of its development through a formal organic abstract language whose progenitors (among others) may be found in the work of Jean (Hans) Arp (1887-1966), the later paintings of Kandinsky and the *découpages* of Matisse (see 2.3 and 2.4), the paintings of Joan Miró (1893-1983) and Marc Rothko (1903-1970) together with the *hard-edge* abstraction of the 1960s and early 70s. A further aspect of Coburn’s work (with which the artist empathizes strongly) derives from the art of the early Renaissance masters (particularly Italian altarpieces from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) which “ ... contributed to [his] interest in the use of gold leaf in some ... [of his] paintings ...” (Coburn, personal communication: 1991).

Coburn’s regard for the artistic achievements and cultural heritage of indigenous Australians, their historical background and relationship to the landscape has also been a central feature, as has the subtle manner in which he melded its influences into the development of his own work. Coburn’s example has been of paramount importance to the artist’s perception of his environment and the manner in which subject matter can be transformed and synthesized through the *pictorial means*.

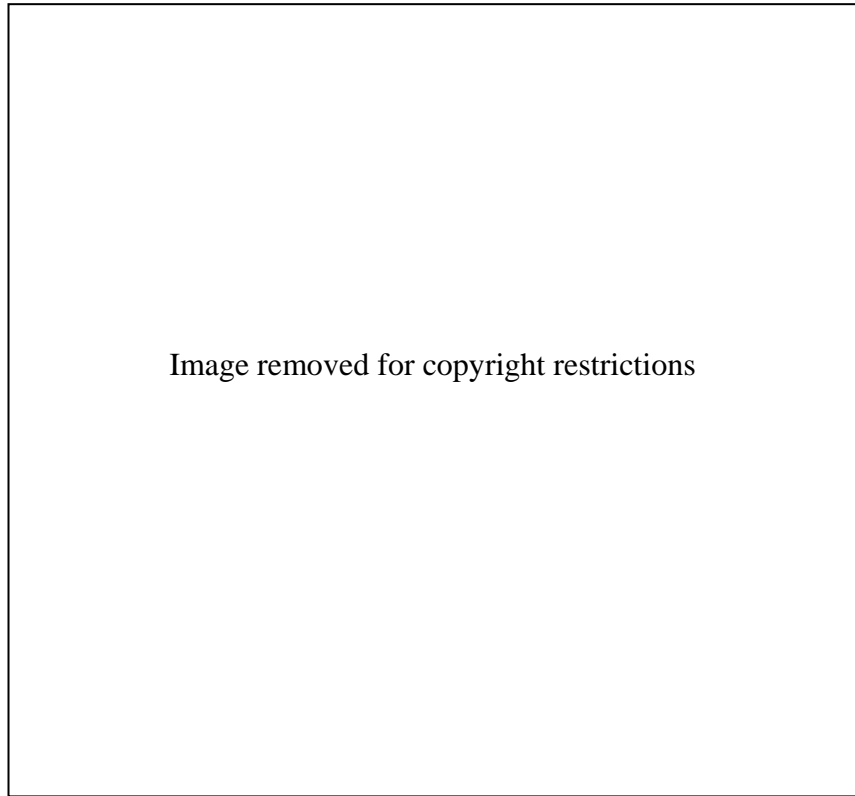


Plate 2.5.1 Ray Crooke, *The White Hibiscus* (c.1960s), oil on board, 73.5 x 88.5 cm, University Art Museum, University of Queensland.

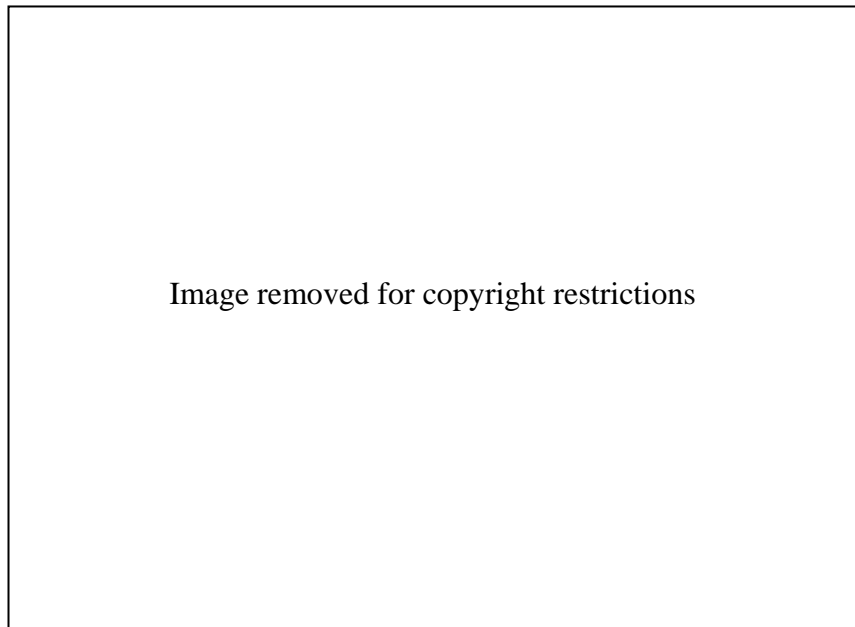


Plate 2.5.2 John Coburn, *Gulf Country* (1987), oil on canvas, 122 x 168cm, Private Collection, Sydney.

As a result of the artist's location, being relatively isolated in relation to the major centres of Australian cultural activities, artistic peers have also played a crucial role in acculturating the artist to the Australian environment. Of particular significance in this regard have been the natural history illustrator Jim Cox, (b.1939-), and the artists David Blackman (b.1941-), Anneke Silver (b.1937-) (see Plate 2.5.3), James Brown (b.1953-) and the printmaker and fabricator of Artist's Books Ron McBurnie (b.1957-) (see Plate 2.5.4).

Since that initial time of visual insecurity and perceptual frustration, there have been regular exhibitions of work. These are numerous and span a period of over three decades. Included among those of the early 1990s is the artist's visual research entitled *The Lost Songs of Eden* (1991) for the degree of Master of Creative Arts. Although in many ways markedly different in appearance from the work being undertaken for the present study, at a conceptual level it is nevertheless important to acknowledge underlying interests, which are common to both.

In terms of an hypothesis for the Masters research, the artist proposed to demonstrate, at a primary level, that it was possible to create a symbolic record delineating the interaction between the *basic* elements of fire (the sun) and water (rain and river) in relation to seasonal change. It was further proposed that this could be achieved by developing a means of transcription schematizing the temporal movement of natural phenomena. The basis for developing an appropriate schema

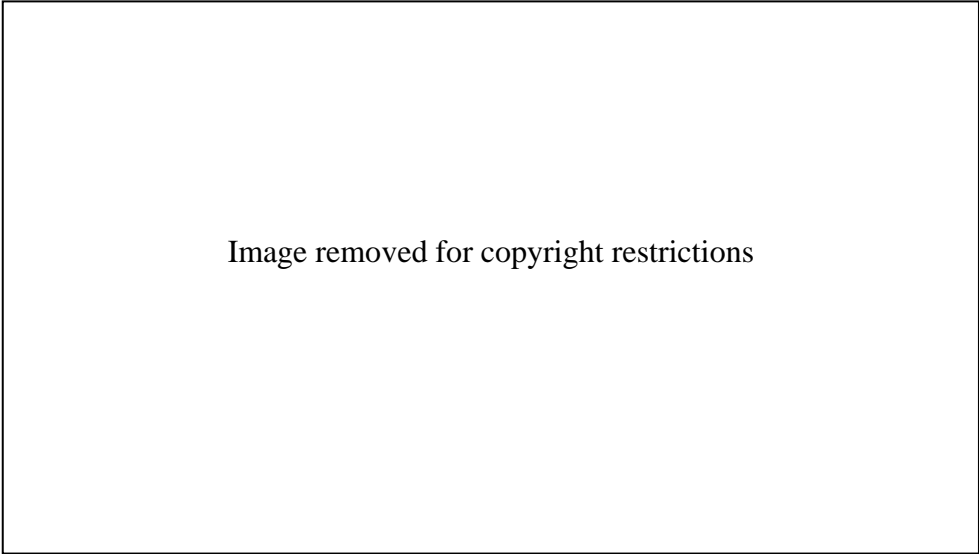


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Plate 2.5.3 Anneke Silver, *Memories of the Aegean* (1990), pigments and gold leaf on panel, 59 x 60 cm.

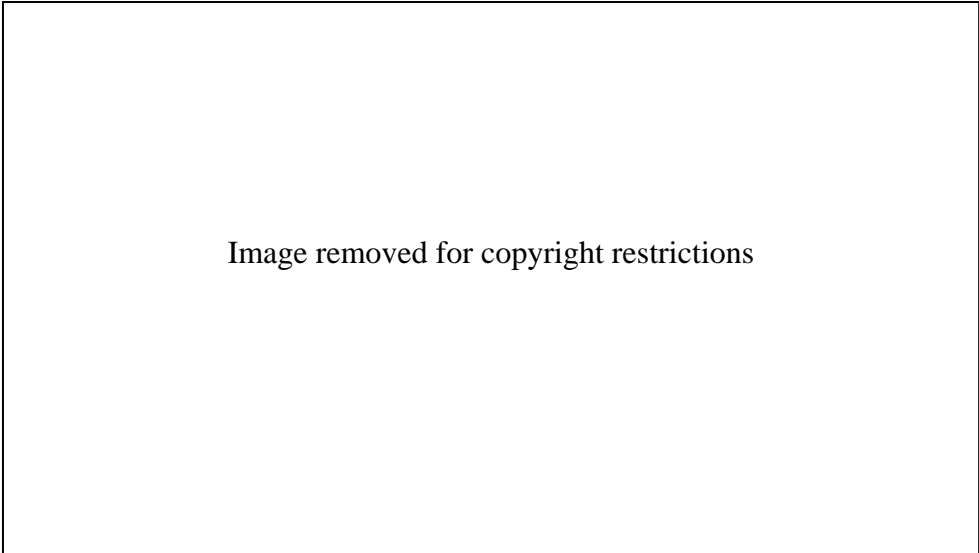


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Plate 2.5.4 Ron Mc Burnie, *Tree Planting for a New Year* (1989), copper plate etching, 19.9 x 22.1 cm.

and visual language was effected through the manipulation of periodic patterns suggested by conjectured water designs inscribed on ancient artefacts from the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

The creative work was founded upon a recontextualization of the ancient source material in the form of simulated artifacts (see Plate 2.5.5) on which were recorded the (apparent) positions of the vertical movements of the sun throughout the course of a year (see Plate 2.5.6 and 2.5.7). The day selected to record the change of angle of the sun's path was set on the same day of each month and was also that which coincided with the occurrence of the equinoxes and solstices. This apparent temporo-positional movement was transcribed in the form of expanding and contracting *meander-patterns* as the sun's vertical angle became more obtuse in the winter and more acute during the summer months. By way of further explanation, the distinguished archaeologist Marija Gimbutas (1982), in her explanation of Neolithic patterns, submits that

...geometric signs were necessary to invigorate the effectiveness of...
amulets....and the meander ...[characterized] the mythical waters or the
energy of the waters...

(Gimbutas, 1982: 135).

The fluctuating angles of the sun's (apparent) movements were determined against a vertical projection of the line of latitude forming a right angle with the earth's



Plate 2.5.5 *Two amygdaloid plaques* (1990), dry pigments and wax on tracing paper skin, infilled with lime and seeds, 16.5 x 15 cm.

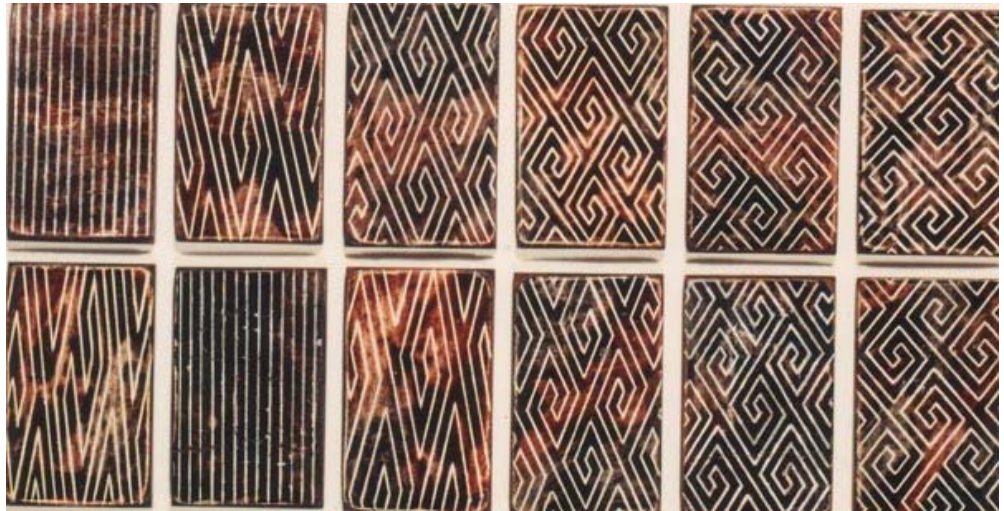


Plate 2.5.6 *Garden of the Sun No. 1* (1990), pair of calendrical works, January-December, pigment and wax on engraved synthetic stone on card mounted on wood, 52 x 26 cm.



Plate 2.5.7 *Garden of the Sun No. 2* (1990), pair of calendrical works, January-December pigment and wax on engraved synthetic stone on card mounted on wood, 52 x 26 cm.

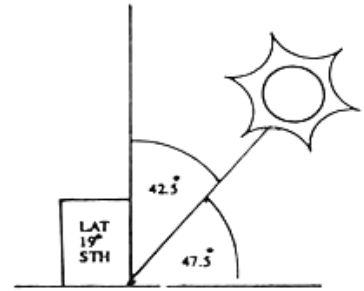
surface and marking both the position of the *centre of arc* and the artist's (home) geographical location (see Figure 2.5.1).

A significant part of the rationale for the study was based on the notion of empowerment (Gimbutas, 1982) or, more accurately, a distanced re-empowerment by association, of mute enigmatic pseudo-ancient artifacts: indeed it was to re-make and simulate objects of material culture which aspired to some kind of signification. The works which contributed to the exhibition *The Lost Songs of Eden* (1991) are described by the art historian Ursula Szulakowska (1998) in her book *Experimental Art in Queensland 1975-1995* who remarks that

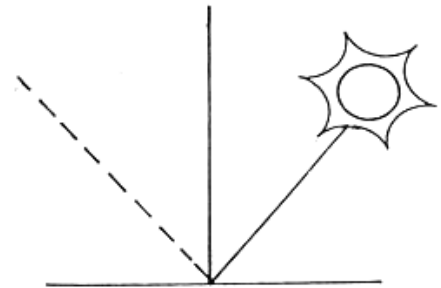
...[they] are conceptual works with elements of ritual... [and] the process of crafting the meticulously finished objects conceals their elaborate conceptual infrastructure...[The artist] interpreted Neolithic...carvings of angular geometries which he compared to the wave patterns in water. He analysed them further as being an astronomical record of the progress of the seasons....then transposed the imagery to the equivalent astronomical context of the dry tropics of northern Australia, specifically the vertical angle of the sun above Townsville on the twentieth day of each month The progress of the sun... [was recorded] over twelve months, then engraved on constructed 'stones' with meander designs derived from the astronomical data. The lines simultaneously represent the movement of the sun and that of water in the Ross River.

(Szulakowska,1998: 102).

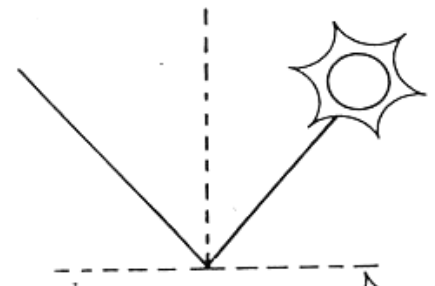
Position of the vertical angle of the sun on 20th June, midday, at latitude 19° south



As the pattern to be created is symbolic of water the angle is reflected



Removing the perpendicular and the base



Finally we have the angle of the meander pattern representing water determined by the vertical angle of the sun on June 20th at midday

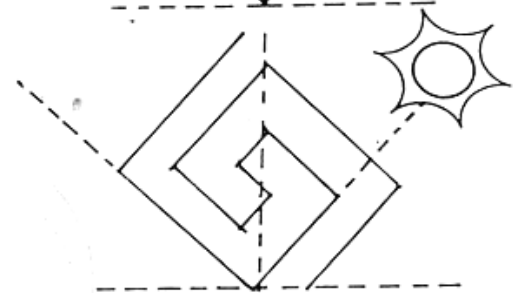


Figure 2.5.1 Excerpt from the catalogue for *The Lost Songs of Eden* (1990), delineating four key stages in the manipulation of a *meander pattern unit* utilizing the vertical angle of the sun.

Table 2.5.1 provides a summary of all the significant exhibitions over the period of three decades (1973-1999) with particular emphasis being given to the identification of elements of focus and/or change. Where publications are referenced in the table, only skeletal data have been included as complete details are provided in the Bibliography. It should be noted that Table 2.5.1 does not include the exhibitions from 2000 to 2001, which form the focus of the current research and the subject of subsequent chapters. At this point two exhibition lines had developed one exploring the micro/macro environment and the other the artist's book.

Table 2.5.1
Chronological Listing of Significant Exhibitions

Exhibition Title	Year	Galleries	Nature	Associated Publications	Pictorial Style and Media	Elements of Focus and/or Change
Artists of the South West. Curator – Arts Council of Great Britain.	1973	Poole Museum, Dorset, UK.	Group.	<i>Artists of the South West.</i> ACGB, UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miniature drawings. Pen and wash on paper. • Miniature paintings Gouache on paper with <i>montage</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imaginative <i>neo-surreal</i> works evoking a world of fantasy • Driven by literature, dreams, altered states of consciousness, and <i>psychic improvisation</i>. • Influence of <i>Vienna School</i>.
	1973	South London Gallery. London, UK.	Group	<i>Artists of the South West.</i> ACGB, UK.		
New Works. Curator – Ralph Martin.	1974- 1975	The Martin Gallery, Townsville, Queensland.	Two person.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat unmodulated colour, decorative tending toward abstraction. • Medium sized acrylic paintings based on small <i>collage</i> maquettes. • <i>Découpages</i> of cut and pasted paper painted with gouache. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete break with previous work. • Subject matter based on material from local marine and coastal environment. • Colour governed by observation and feeling in order to create space and evoke mood. • Interest in Indian <i>Tantric</i> art.
Exhibition Highlights. Curator – Norman Wilson.	1976	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. North Queensland.	Group.	<i>Exhibition Highlights.</i> List of Exhibits. Exhibition notes Glen Betz.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above with the addition of coloured of found (<i>objets trouvée</i>) printed materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects based on tropical gardens and park settings. Coloured background <i>fields</i> increased in area, with reduction in complexity of pictorial elements.
Untitled.	1977	The Martin Gallery, Townsville, Queensland.	Solo.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale. Acrylic on canvas. • Paintings based on small <i>collage(découpage)</i> maquettes. Gouache on pasted paper. • <i>Découpage</i> elements rendered in paint as in <i>montage</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects based on reflections in water e.g., swimming pools. • <i>Hard-edge</i> geometric abstraction, citing figurative elements in a narrow band at the top edge. • Continuous field of inclined, undulating rhombuses, set in registers divided by horizontal striped bands.

New Abstraction. Curator – Anna Bock.	1979	Civic Theatre Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies from life. Pencil and watercolour on paper. • Large paintings. Acrylic on canvas. • Small paintings. Gouache and tempera. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects based on material gathered from visits to Thailand 1977/78, Java and Bali. 1979. • Chromatic background fields of earlier work replaced by dark tonal grounds projecting striped pictorial elements. • Began to explore Aboriginal and other forms of rock art. • Growing interest in <i>Sacred Geometry</i>, the past and present and its, utilizations in compositional structures.
	1979	The Martin Gallery, Townsville, Queensland.	Group.			
	1979	Tonnoirs Fine Art Gallery Townsville, Queensland.	Group.			
Recent Work. Curator – Ralph Martin.	1981	The Martin Gallery, Townsville, Queensland.	Group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies from life and imagination. • Pencil and gouache. • Small paintings. Gouache and tempera on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections of work from 1976-79. • Allowed for reflection on earlier work.
	Curator – Paul Tonnoir.	1981	Tonnoirs Fine Art Gallery Townsville, Queensland.	Group.		
Tie Exhibition. Curator – Norman Wilson.	1982	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. North Queensland.	Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Tie Exhibition.</i> Catalogue. Text from artist's statements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monochrome. • Miniature drawings. Gouache and pencil on paper. • Medium sized drawings. Pastel and charcoal on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on schematized drawing. • Shapes of found (<i>objets trouvée</i>) sea-worn glass fragments, objects, stones and pieces of wood, etc. • Concentration on quasi-mytho symbolic objects and <i>the myth of progress</i>.
Painted Myths. Curator – Ralph Martin with Anna Bock.	1983	The Martin Gallery Townsville, Queensland.	Solo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tracing the Mythical.</i> Art Network. Text Anna Bock. • <i>Painted Myths.</i> Linq Magazine. Text Anna Bock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monochrome. • Miniature drawings. Gouache and pencil on paper. • Medium sized drawings. Pastel and charcoal on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for creating and documenting personal symbolic signs. • Interest in ancient and primal and schematic symbolic forms of communication.

Drawings x 4. Travelling Exhibition. Curator – Norman Wilson.	1984-1985	Perc Tucker Regional North Queensland.	Four person show.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drawings x 4.</i> Arts National. Text by Glen Betz. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large monochrome drawings. Charcoal, pastel and chalk on canvas coloured with acrylic tempera. • Miniatures in line. Engraved drawings on coloured wax covered plaster grounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal concerns “... the present as a locus of loss” (Benjamin, 1988: 18). • Re-presentation of fragmented objects which aspire to signification. • Subjects drawn from ancient artefacts utilizing measured drawing. • Interest in forms of schematic drawing referencing symbols. • Based on material gathered from trips to Greece, Crete and Egypt 1982-83.
	1985	Raintrees Gallery Cairns, Queensland.	"	"		
	1985	Noosa Shire Gallery Tewantin, Queensland.	"	"		
	1985	College of Art Gallery Brisbane, Queensland.	"	"		
	1985	Ipswich Regional Gallery. Ipswich, Queensland.	"	"		
	1985	Gladstone Regional Gallery. Gladstone, Queensland.	"	"		
Tropical Visions: Selection of 25 Queensland Artists. Curator – John Milington.	1987	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. North Queensland.	Group.	<i>Tropical Visions:</i> Illustrated book (Hardcover). Foreward Jeffery Makin, text John Millington. <i>Letter from Townsville.</i> Linq Magazine. Text Anneke Silver and Ron McBurnie.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of small scale paintings. Gouache and tempera on paper. • Studies from life and inventions. Pencil and watercolour on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention transferred from conceptually oriented drawings. • Interest in <i>Post-Modern</i> notions of <i>double coding</i>. • Returned to more lyrical narrative form of painting. • Revisited and further developed earlier chromatic painted works. • Work informed by visits to Mexico and Central America.
	1987	The Centre Gallery. Gold Coast, Queensland.	Group.			
Robert Preston Survey Exhibition. Curator – Ross Searle.	1989	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Solo. Survey Exhibition.	<i>Robert Preston Survey Exhibition. Selection of Work from 1966-89.</i> Catalogue. Introduction Ross Searle, text Anneke Silver. <i>Preston, Silver Work and Biography.</i> Video. Commentary Coral Sea Images.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad cross section of drawings, paintings, collage works, and objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of ideas and work spanning twenty three years. • Allowed for reflection and appraisal of earlier work.

Invitation Exhibition.	1989	Savode at St. Johns, Brisbane, Queensland.	Group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small linear drawings. Waxed gouache on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of drawings made between 1982-83. • Informed by ancient artefacts from Near East Greece.
Recent Acquisitions: Works on Paper.	1990	Queensland Art Gallery. Brisbane, Queensland.	Group.	<i>Dictionary of Australian Artists and Galleries.</i> Two Volume Book (Hardback). Text Max Germaine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large linear drawing. Black chalk and charcoal on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three pieces based on fragmented objects made in 1983 informed by rock engravings. • The <i>locus of loss</i> and mytho-symbolic subject matter. • Interest in ideas of (<i>Neo</i>) <i>Metaphysical Art</i> (Jenks, 1989:37).
Works on Paper: 8 Queensland Artists.	1990	Grahame Galleries. Brisbane, Queensland.	Group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small linear drawings. Charcoal on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of drawings based on rubbings and fragmented objects. • Made in 1984 from <i>objets trouvée</i>.
Monsoon Madness.	1990	Queensland Conservation Council. Brisbane.	Group.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies from nature. Pencil, gouache and watercolour on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of work from sketch book pages. Made between 1986-88.
Post Euston Road: A Review of Contemporary Trends.	1990	Austin and Desmond Galleries, Gallery II. London, U K.	Large Group. Survey Exhibition.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium sized painting. • Acrylic tempera on canvas on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of a painting from 1976. • A tropical garden one of several works based on a discovery of a "... subject in terms of material and process..." (Searle, 1989: 25).
Lost Songs of Eden. Curator – The artist, Exhibition as a partial requirement for the Degree of Master of Creative Arts.	1990	Tonnoirs Fine Art. Townsville, Queensland.	Solo. Examination Exhibition.	<i>The Lost Songs of Eden.</i> Catalogue. Text the artist. <i>Experimental Art in Queensland 1975-1995.</i> Book (Soft cover). Text Dr Ursula Szulakowska.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium sized drawings. Charcoal on paper overlaid with tracing paper. • Constructed objects. Engraved wax covered plaster on board. • Miniature polychrome, engraved clay objects mounted on canvas grounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works based on an imagined aesthetic harmony of the past. • The present as a time characterized by melancholy, nostalgia, and a mystical sense of loss and deprivation as in <i>Pittura Colta</i>. • Design of works based on ancient patterned clay and bone artefacts. • Patterns of drawings and artefacts manipulated to coincide with solar movements and circadian rhythms.

Images Past Images Present. Curator – Ross Searle.	1991	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland	Two Person.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for <i>Lost Songs of Eden</i> (1990). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-showing of a selection of work from <i>Lost Songs of Eden</i> (1990). • Exhibited with Anneke Silver.
Accent in the Landscape. Curator – George Hirst.	1991	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland	Group.	<i>Accent on the Landscape</i> . Catalogue. Text George Hirst.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of works drawn from the Gallery’s permanent collection. • Allowed for reflection on earlier work.
Artist in the Tropics: 200 Years of Art in North Queensland. Curator – Ross Searle.	1991	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland	Large Group Historical Survey Exhibition.	<i>Artist in the Tropics: 200 Years of Art in North Queensland.</i> Illustrated book Foreword Daniel Thomas, text Ross Searle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale paintings Gouache and tempera • Sketchbook pages. Pencil and watercolour • Photocopy <i>collage</i> work. Photocopied drawings assembled on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small selection of works based on a “...close interaction with the local environment the idea of a lost culture...[and] personal deities that relate to the seasons.” (Searle, 1991: 54). • Continued interest in aspects of (<i>Neo</i>) <i>metaphysical Art</i>.
Eight Artists in Townsville: A Cultural Exchange Exhibition. Curated by the museums.	1991	Iwaki City Art Museum. Iwaki, Japan	Group.	<i>Eight Artists in Townsville.</i> Foreward Mitsuhide Iwaki. Text in Japanese and English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engraved objects. Clay and pigments. • Engraved drawing. Wax coated plaster on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of work from <i>Lost Songs of Eden</i> (1990).
	1991	Tokuyama City Museum. Tokuyama, Japan.	Group.	Catalogue. Title and text in Japanese.		
International Print Fair. Curators – Noreen Grahame and others.	1991	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Large International Group Exhibition.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four book illustrations. Engraved and etched copper plates printed on hand made paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial images produced for proposed book of short poetic works. • Images based on drawings from sketchbooks.

Seeing green, Curator George Hirst	1991	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland	Group	<i>Seeing Green.</i> Catalogue. Text George Hirst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engraved objects Clay and pigments. • Engraved drawings. Wax coated plaster on board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of work from <i>Lost Songs of Eden</i> (1990).
'Space'. Curator – Ross Searle.	1992	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Group	<i>Exhibition Highlights.</i> Text Ross Searle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large paintings. Acrylic on canvas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of work from Gallery Collection. • Allowed for reflection on earlier work.
Small Works Wide Visions. Curator – Allan Bruce.	1993	Downlands. Toowoomba, Large Group. Queensland.		<i>Small works: Wide Visions.</i> Catalogue. Essay Allan Bruce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies from nature. Pencil and watercolour on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketchbook pages investigating a variety of material. • Subject matter drawn from life and invented.
Between the Tides: An Exhibition of Works on Paper 1971-75. Curator – Ross Searle.	1992	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Solo.	<i>Between the Tides.</i> Catalogue. Foreword Ross Searle, text Christopher Saines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monochrome miniature drawings. Pen, ink and wash with <i>collage</i> on paper. • Polychrome miniature paintings. Gouache on paper, on card. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early transitional works produced during the two years prior to and two years after arrival in Australia. • Fantasy images with <i>neo-surrealist</i> tendencies based on literature, dreams, altered states of consciousness and psychic improvisation.
Curator – Noreen Grahame.	1993	Grahame Galleries. Brisbane, Queensland.	Solo.			
18 Degrees South. Curator – Ann Carter.	1993	Flinders Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Group.	<i>Exhibition of Works and Paper.</i> Text Anne Carter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies for designs of objects. Pencil and gouache on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sketchbook pages of ideas for objects. • Selection of works from <i>Lost Songs of Eden</i> (1990).

Collecting in the Tropics. Curator – Ross Searle.	1994	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Selected Group.	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of works. A variety of media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of work from the Gallery’s permanent collection. • Allowed for reflection on earlier work.
Lyre Bird Press. Curators – Tate Adams and Ron McBurnie.	1994	Lyre Bird Press. James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland.	Group.	<i>Lyre Bird Press: Inaugural Exhibition.</i> List of works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory book designs; scale. <i>same size</i>. Pencil, Gouache, and gilding, on <i>collaged</i> leaves between board covers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock-ups for <i>Artist’s Unique Book</i>. • Text from <i>Trees: Lost Scrolls of the Essene Brotherhood</i>, translated by E.B. Szekely. • Original interpretation of an ancient text with lettering, images and decorations.
Muse. Curator – Chris Downie.	1995	Umbrella Studio. Townsville, Queensland.	Group.	<i>Muse.</i> Text Chris Downie. <i>In Symbiosis with the View.</i> Eyeline. Text Helen Waterer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miniature painting Gouache on paper on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative work with Alison Gray. • Works from 1972 used as part of an installation exploring humanity and the environment.
Recent Acquisitions. Curator – Ross Searle.	1995	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Selected Group.	<i>Recent Acquisitions Exhibition Highlights:</i> Exhibition notes Ross Searle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small size paintings. Gouache, tempera and dry ground pigments on paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selection of five works (in the same medium) made between 1978-1988. • Documented progressive stylistic developments.
New Brisbane International: Federal Airports Corporation. Curator – Dr Jean Battersby.	1995	International Airport Brisbane, Queensland.	Selected Group.	<i>New Brisbane International</i> Brochure text FAC <i>Art and Airports</i> Book (soft cover). FAC. Text Dr Jean Battersby. <i>Art and Airports 2</i> Art Craft International. Text Dr Jean Battersby.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies for floor designs. Gouache and gold leaf on paper on board. • Painted designs for floor mosaic. Gouache, tempera, dry ground pigments on paper on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs for a public work to be translated into mosaic. • Subject based on tropical coastal\marine theme reflecting North Queensland environment. • Lyrical image of a timeless primeval (<i>Arcadian</i>), marine world “...distanced from contemporary reality.” (Elderfield, 1978: 38). • Four works prompted by T.S. Eliot’s <i>Four Quartets</i> (1944).

Reflections. Curator – Cyrilla Wellings.	1966	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.	Selected Group.	<i>Reflections.</i> Catalogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted design for floor mosaic. . • Gouache, tempera, dry ground pigments on paper on board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for New Brisbane International (1995).
The Permanent Collection Reviewed. Curator – Robyn Walton.	1999	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery. Townsville, Queensland.	Selected Group.	<i>The Permanent Collection Reviewed</i> Floor program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of selected works. • Variety of media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works selected by the Curator from the Gallery’s permanent collection.