

2 0 0 G E R T R U D E S T R E E T

NEIL EMMERSON

JOANNA FLYNN

RICHARD HORVATH

ANDREW HURLE

KATE LOHSE

GEOFF LOWE

SALLY MANNALL

CURATED BY

ROSE LANG

SARAH RITSON

SALLY SMART

CONSTANZE ZIKOS

TONY PACOT

THURSDAY 4 AUGUST UNTIL SATURDAY 27 AUGUST 1988

A S H O R T R I

An exhibition of eleven artists whose work makes use of a variety of printmaking media – a short ride in the fast machine of history. This work is not concerned with a tyrannical and exclusive tradition of technical perfection, nor any attendant closure of meaning. And so, if printmaking is a mechanical vehicle, a process of getting from one point to another, we are not travelling the conventional line. Rather than the packaged or preconceived destination, the interest is in points of departure and changes of direction.

ROSE LANG

The last thing I want to do here is rattle off a list of explanations, one for each work, one for each artist. Even though there are explanatory narratives for each image, I think it's more important to leave the prints open to manipulation by the viewer. That's not saying anything new of course, it's always assumed that any encounter with an image is a matter of navigating a course between the Scylla of explanation and the Charybdis of interpretation. However, I was constantly struck by the efforts that the artists showing in this exhibition made to avoid such a binary. They seemed to want neither a ceaseless array of multiple readings and re-readings nor the finality of authorial intention, a certain structure but not constraint, and this at the level of both facture and reading.

So I thought I'd sketch out a series of broad themes within which these images might be placed – not firmly but fluidly, as a point of departure rather than of closure. Offering my own experience as neutral yet overarching is a conceit that comes easily to the art historian/critic (almost naturally it seems). But I want to try to turn coming to these printmakers as the self-proclaimed ideal reader to my advantage in a way, because, to return to my earlier point, I think they're motivated by a desire to distinguish themselves by their very distance from traditional understandings of their media. In this way the ideal reader becomes the perfect foil, for it's the conventional parameters brought to the print – technique and craft, skill and finish, the place of the print in the hierarchy of media, the relationship of image to text, the visibility of touch, the 'content' of the print and, to a lesser extent, the nature of representation itself – which are the starting points for these works.

I came to these images with what turned out to be an altogether too narrow conception of what a print might be, what printmaking as a practice entailed or allowed. I tended to think of prints as portable, folio-sized objects; as manufactured in a workshop atmosphere with great emphasis on skill and control (be it the preparation of stone, plate, block or screen; in inking, making proofs, reworking and so on). I looked for traces of all of these in the image seeing the print as the record of an accumulation of procedures. Even a screenprint seemed to be something to be seen up close, to be read as a series of ink strata. (And this in a vastly more mechanical sense than I would in the case of a painting.) I still think that a good many of the prints in this exhibition are 'about' procedure and 'about' the traces of the artist's touch,

but often these issues appear contrapuntally, as things to be left behind, submerged, or even erased, in an effort to extend media.

So the sources of images, their filtration through an accumulation of procedures, their montage and erasure, their distance from their origin and the viewer became the central issues for me as I looked at the prints. It became clear that the artists were using these themes to question the parameters which the ideal reader would use to frame their work. (And the absence of frames in this exhibition strikes me as analogous to the freeing up and expansion of the print that I'm trying to describe.) It seems to me that what had previously been technical or conceptual constants in printmaking had become variables, so to speak. The constraining factor of stone, plate, or press size in lithography was left behind in multi-plate or multi-sheet prints. The clean, controlled lines of the silkscreen were lost when paint was sprayed directly onto its surface; when smudges, errors, annotations and fingerprints were left on the surface of the master; when the print itself was reworked with thinners. The conventional figure-ground distinction was blurred when the crisp neutrality of paper was replaced by the noisy interference of patterned fabric, or when the print itself became a ground upon which further images were painted and drawn. The autographic touch of the artist was avoided in the use of photomechanical techniques such as silkscreen and photocopying. Control and craft were deliberately forfeited when chance was introduced via a multiplicity of grounds and inks. A collaged accretion of signs, procedures, hesitations and reworkings made the print into a hybrid; mixed media became a recurrent motif in an effort to leave behind the craft-oriented integrity of the discrete technique. The distinctions between image and ground; intaglio, planographic and serigraphic; sketch, state and finished product; print, drawing, painting, and photograph were all refused in a plurality of procedures, scales, and finishes.

In a number of important senses distance and origin are common themes in these works. I've already remarked on the distance of the prints from the conventional parameters of the various media. In addition the distance of the images from their sources, of representation from its object, and of viewer from the image itself are also strategically marked. The multiple origins of these prints – cinema, television, architectural form, alphabet soup, text books, stained bandages, novels, art history, the domestic and the subconscious – militate against understanding the print as fine art object, textual accompaniment, or trace of artist's touch. The loss of the source image(s) through reworking, realignment, and modification of scale and context serves to widen the gulf between image and referent. Even where the image has a photographic origin a series of technical manoeuvres intervenes to blur and abstract the source in order to underline the absence of the object. The ostensive nature of the image, its presumed ability to point to an object, to bring it into presence in a kind of surrogate sighting, loses definition in a haze of manipulations. And, finally, the viewer is physically distanced from the print, made to step back further and further, denied the opportunity to enclose and contain the image.

That last remark should make it clear that no given statement in this essay can be applied to every work in the exhibition, just as no given work can be matched with every statement. The distance between this text and the images is at issue here, as it always is. In this respect I take my lead from the works themselves; the relationship of this essay to the prints is similar to their relationship to conventional understandings of printmaking – the text should be brought to the images only to be left behind, perhaps even discarded completely.

CHRIS McAULIFFE

SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES

NEIL EMMERSON

Born in Melbourne 1956. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1982-83 Print Council of Australia, Travelling Student Exhibition
- 1984 Solo Exhibition, *Etchings and Lithographs*, Tamarind Print Workshop Gallery, Sydney.
- 1985 Solo Exhibition, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Lake Macquarie Community Gallery, N.S.W.
- 1986 Group Exhibition, *Hunter Valley Printmakers* – Exchange Exhibition, Paris, France and Berkley, U.S.A.
- 1987 Solo Exhibition, City of Newcastle Artist in Residence 1986.
- 1987-88 Travel in Europe, living and working in Belgium.

JOANNA FLYNN

Born in Western Australia 1959.

- 1984 Group Exhibition, *Reasons to be Cheerful*, Cockatoo Gallery, Launceston.
- 1986-87 Group Exhibition, *The Gothic: Perversity and its Pleasure*, Curated by Robyn McKenzie, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne.
- 1987 Solo Exhibition, *Narrative Paintings*, Hollywood or Bust Gallery, Perth.

RICHARD HORVARTH

Born in Holland 1950. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1976 Group Exhibition including sculpture, *Prahran Graduate Exhibition*, Gryphon Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1978 Group Exhibition, *3RRR Art Benefit Show*, Melbourne.
- 1979 Group Exhibition, *The Hardware Show*, Hardware Lane, Melbourne.
- 1981 Group Exhibition, *Poster Show*, R.M.I.T. Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1982 Group Exhibition, *Art Workers Union Show*, Trades Hall Gallery, Melbourne.

- 1982 Group Exhibition, including poster work, *Twenty Five Years of Rock; An Historical Survey of Rock Imagery*, Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne.
- 1983 Group Exhibition, *Fringe Prints*, Print Council of Australia, Melbourne.
- 1985 Collaborative Mixed Media Installation, *Sculpture '85*, World Trade Centre, Melbourne.
- 1985 Solo Exhibition of painting, woodcuts and screenprints, Pinacotheca, Melbourne.

ANDREW HURLE

Born in Melbourne 1962. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1981 Group Exhibition, *On the Road*, Canberra, CYSS.
- 1982 Group Exhibition of photocopy works, *WAR*, Bitumen River Gallery, Canberra.
- 1982 BRG Group Exchange Exhibition of etchings, photocopy and 3D works, Iceberg Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1983 Group Exhibition, *Dogogue*, Ainslie Village, Canberra. A collaboration, independently produced and managed.
- 1984 Sequence of photocopy slides shown at *The Cartoon Show*, Rumbarellas, Melbourne.
- 1985 Two person collaboration of photocopy and 3D work, *Epigones*, Pheasant Gallery, Canberra School of Art.
- 1986 Group Exhibition, *Scanned Image*, Arts Council Gallery Canberra.
- 1986 Group Exhibition of paintings, *The World*, Arts Council Gallery, Canberra.
- 1987 One of four artists commissioned for IYSH Secretariat, *Focus*, five display panels of photographs and text.

KATE LOHSE

Lives and works in Broken Hill, N.S.W.

- 1980 Solo Exhibition, *Students Gallery* (later *Mori Gallery*), Sydney.
- 1981 Solo Exhibition, Drummond Street Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1983 Group Exhibition, *Perspecta '83*, A.G.N.S.W., Sydney.
- 1984 Solo Exhibition, Mori Gallery, Sydney.
- 1984-87 Group Exhibition, *Sydney Printmakers* (invited artist), Blaxland Gallery, Sydney.
- 1985 Group Exhibition, *Heartland*, Touring Exhibition from Wollongong City Gallery.
- 1985 Group Exhibition, *Australian Perspecta*, A.G.N.S.W., Sydney.
- 1985 Group Exhibition, *Print as Object*, Touring Exhibition from Print Council of Australia, Melbourne.
- 1987 Group Exhibition, *In the Shadow of the Bicentennial . . .*, Mori Gallery, Sydney.
- 1987 Group Exhibition, *Shocking Diversity*, Curated by Julie Ewington, Touring Exhibition from Print Council of Australia, Melbourne.

- 1988 Group Exhibition, *Bradford Print Survey*, Curated by Victoria Lynn, A.G.N.S.W., Touring Exhibition from Bradford, United Kingdom.
- 1988 Group Exhibition, *Print Portfolio 1988*, Curated by Roger Butler.

GEOFF LOWE

Born in Melbourne 1952. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1971 Group Exhibition, *Elaine Targett Drawing Prize*, Hawthorn City Art Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1975 Solo Exhibition, Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1976 Solo Exhibition, Anna Simons Gallery, Canberra.
- 1981 Group Exhibition, *Aspects of the Landscape*, Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne; Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo; Benalla Art Gallery, Benalla.
- 1983 Solo Exhibition, Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, *Apocalypse + Utopia*, University Gallery, University of Melbourne.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, *The Politics of Picturing*, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, *Architectura Picta*, Ewing and George Paton Galleries, University of Melbourne; Artspace, Sydney.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, *Meaning and Excellence*, ANZART Australian Artists in Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art; Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, U.K.; Ewing and George Paton Galleries, University of Melbourne.
- 1985 Group Exhibition, *Tower Hill and its Artists*, Warrnambool Art Gallery, Warrnambool.
- 1986 Solo Exhibition, *Ten Famous Feelings for Men and Tower Hill Drawings*, I.M.A., Brisbane.
- 1986 Group Exhibition, *How Much Beauty Can I Stand*, A.C.C.A., Melbourne.
- 1987 Group Exhibition, *From Field to Figuration*, N.G.V., Melbourne.
- 1988 Solo Exhibition, Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney.
- 1988 Group Exhibition, *Artisans*, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne.

SALLY MANNALL

Born in Canberra 1964. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1987 *National Student Art Prize Exhibition*, Mitchell College, Bathurst.
- 1987 *Final Year Student Exhibition*, Canberra School of Art, A.C.T.
- 1988 *Speaking Through Vision*, works by graduating students of the Printmaking Workshop, University Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, A.C.T.
- 1988 *Sweet Turpentine*, works from the Printmaking Workshop, Canberra School of Art, Print Council of Australia Gallery, Melbourne.

- 1988 *Made in Canberra*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space Members Exhibition, A.C.T.
- 1988 *Prelude*, an exhibition of works by graduate printmakers from the Canberra School of Art, Stadford Gallery, Sydney.

TONY PACOT

Born in Melbourne 1961. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1982 Group Exhibition, *Graduate Exhibition*, Chisholm.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, *Ten Young Artists*, Europa Gallery.
- 1984 Group Exhibition, St Kilda Arts Festival.
- 1985 Box Hill Acquisitive Exhibition.
- 1986 Sketch Gallery, Noosa Heads, Queensland.
- 1987 Group Exhibition, *In The Dark*, Post-Graduate Painters, Chisholm.

SARAH RITSON

Born in Melbourne 1964. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1987 *Pictures*, Print Council of Australia, Group Exhibition of Graduating V.C.A., Printmakers, Melbourne.
- 1988 Group Exhibition, 70 Arden Street, North Melbourne.

SALLY SMART

Born in South Australia 1960. Lives and works in Melbourne.

- 1986 Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney.
- 1986 Reconnaissance, Melbourne.
- 1986 *6 Melbourne Artists*, Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra.
- 1986 *Expatriates or Exiles*, Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide.
- 1987 *Artbank Big Paintings*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney.
- 1988 St Kilda Prize, Linden House, Melbourne.

CONSTANZE ZIKOS

Born in Greece. Lives and works in Melbourne.

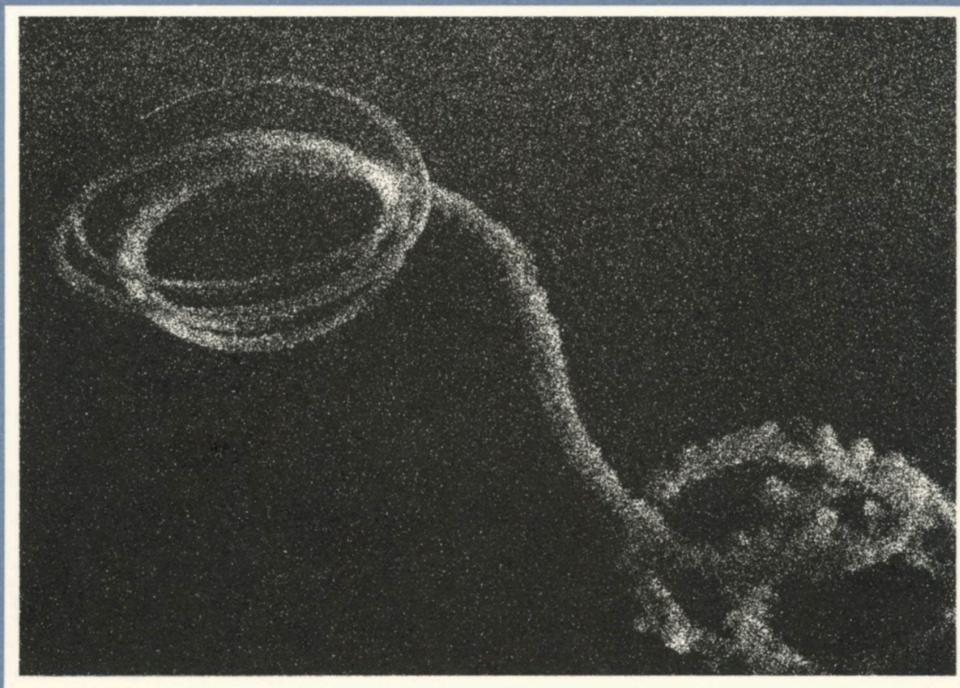
- 1986 Commissioned to decorate Subterranean Night Club (destroyed).
- 1987 Group Exhibition, Seamen's Mission, Port Melbourne. Commissioned to decorate The Club.
- 1988 Group Exhibition, Arthaus, Sydney.

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