LLOYD REES
SOME TASMANIAN WORKS

An exhibition organised by the Fine Arts Committee of the University of Tasmania, 11 to 30 September, 1984
Tasmania comes into Lloyd Rees' life in the later period. Tasmania's historic architecture would have been characterised in detailed drawings in Rees' early manner, had fate not played a part. John Eldershaw had taken over the old mill building near the bridge at Richmond. In 1925 Rees was on a boat to visit him, however, shortly after leaving Sydney a strike was called. It was over forty years later that he painted the Richmond landscape from the river in front of the mill, and the watertank near the churchyard.

Tasmania means for Rees above all, his son, Alan and his family. Since 1967, Christmas and summer holidays have meant Sandy Bay, the Derwent, and mountain peaks. Rees has always worked from his home, or homes of relatives; now Tasmania could become part of the formation of his vision. Before ever coming to Tasmania he did a tiny watercolour on a Weet-Bix lid, of sailing on the Derwent, realising it was to become a serious pursuit of Alan and family. Hobart's superb setting offered exciting mountain forms, and hills 'which come down to the water in the proper manner', as his friend Alan Stout, the philosopher, would say.

Tasmania partakes of the two completely opposite later styles. The earlier of these, layers impression upon impression until the resulting encrusted paint surface becomes the ancient earth itself. *The Edge of the Forest* is such a work. Painted after the first visit to Tasmania, coming there fresh from Europe, this work is regarded by the artist as one of his most Australian. The paint becomes a weathered sandstone quarried cliff-face at the back of the units near the university where he stayed. To us, it is suburbia, with washing lines and rubble, but that setting inspired this work, and *A Mountain Stream, Tasmania*, now in the Australian National Gallery. The artist has swept away the debris to find the essential characteristics.

In 1969, from his son's verandah he painted the watercolour and oil of *The Distant Derwent*. More topographical than usual, the watercolour is a favourite of the artist because it contains so much drawing. It shows how a note from nature is the starting point for the more generalized oils done back in the Sydney studio, be it a drawing like that for the *Edge of the Forest*, a rough sketch from which more finished watercolours are done, or lithographs which emerge in this later period. *The Distant Derwent* oil unusually preserves the topographical feeling, though the bay has been bathed in pale blue which has perhaps as much to do with the artist's consciousness of the beauty of the scene, as with the colours of Sandy Bay which vary according to the elements.

Though the Derwent is the dominant subject, several important works are of peaks, and rocks on Mt. Wellington. A hundred years earlier, Piguenit was similarly inspired by a romantic vision of Tasmania, and the lower North Shore of Sydney, Lane Cove, adjacent to Rees' suburb, Northwood. Piguenit was at his best depicting the darker side of nature, its awesomeness, its solitude. Rees found that he wanted to express in the later years, nature enveloped in light. There is a certain optimism, and love of the world, which this implies, but an understanding of
the opposite is part of Rees’ history, and lends intensity of longing to his vision. Early illness and personal tragedy, and a lifelong fear of death, have as much to do with his late style, as does his personal happiness with his wife and family, achievement in art, and the possibility of many occasions to explore France and Italy, homes of his spirit.

The latest style from the later 1970’s is a dialogue between the artist and the universe, rather than between parts of Australia and Europe. Rees has become more interested in painting than in representation. If we ask of a work — is it Sydney? Is it Hobart? It becomes impossible to answer. It is true that Sydney and Hobart have an affinity for the artist, but although the source of every painting is a particular note of nature, this note becomes so transmuted by the artist’s mood, that it no longer becomes discernible until one is told.

*Morning on the Derwent* is a celebration of his courtship with the sun. For Rees, it was almost an impossibility to paint the sun itself, something he dared not try. For months each attempt was quickly covered in a veil of radiance. In *Morning on the Derwent*, painted from the window of the University library, the sun is felt as a symbol for the central concept of the artist’s philosophy, Endlessness. He believes that he comes from infinity and will merge into infinity.

The most recent paintings have seen a turning to less dramatic, cooler, moods and tones. The *Twilight* and *Evening* paintings are examples in which Rees comes very close to painting that which he never intends to paint, abstractions. He has never given up the toehold in representation. As a child he experienced in a field, a sensation of the immensity of nature. It has left him with a fear of open spaces, a fear of wandering far afield to paint, a fear of flying. As a result, a great number of his works have a square in a bottom corner — a shed, a building. Even the most abstract visions are anchored by a diagonal sweep of foreground, particularly in these watercolours of broad bands of land, sea, sky in the oils, and there are few works without the presence, not of people, but of the human touch — buildings, boats, yachts. In these works it is as if he were absorbed in the quiet, the solitude, the beauty of such moments, as were Whistler and David Davies, almost to the point of losing even that toehold on land. The elegiac paleness of the recent work perhaps prefigures another change in direction for the artist approaching ninety years of age.

The immensity of nature is Turner’s theme. Rees’ paintings do not lead us into the vastness of space. It is not space, but land, sea, sky within reach of his gaze, that is his subject. He loves the world, here and now, as he is enveloped by its aura. The substance of the paint has changed as his philosophy changed emphasis. The paint no longer symbolises the earth itself, but becomes an atmospheric veil that shrouds the earth with mystery. The veil is itself an embodiment of an earthly tangible beauty which is a symbol of the ineffable. The artist has said, ‘I don’t want to go to Heaven, because it can’t be as beautiful as this.’

Renee Free, 1984
Study for the Edge of the Forest, 1967
Carbon pencil and wash, 406 x 502

Opposite page, The Distant Derwent, 1970 (The River Derwent)
Oil on canvas, 760 x 1075

Front cover from The Distant Derwent, 1969
Carbon and watercolour on paper, 440 x 605
BIOGRAPHY

1895 Lloyd Frederic Rees born on 17 May 1895 at Yeronga, Brisbane, the seventh of eight children. His parents are Owen Rees, of Welsh descent, from Melbourne, and Angele Buerguez of French descent from Mauritius

1916 Sees Sydney for the first time, and visits Melbourne

1917 Comes to live in Sydney

1923-24 Visits Europe

1927 Marries Dulcie Metcalfe (died 1928)

1931 Marries Marjory Pollard

1934 Birth of son, Alan Lloyd Rees. Moves to Northwood, Sydney

1942 Retrospective exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales

1946-83 Instructor and lecturer in art at the School of Architecture, University of Sydney

1947 Builds 'Caloola'

1952-53 Visits Europe

1959-60 Visits Europe

1966-67 Visits Europe

1967 First of many visits to Tasmania

1969-70 Retrospective exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, touring State galleries and Newcastle City Art Gallery, opens 2 October

Publication of memoirs, The Small Treasures of a Lifetime, Ure Smith, Sydney 1969

1970 Exhibition, Leeson Street Gallery, Melbourne, September-October

Awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters degree, University of Sydney

1971 Exhibition of paintings and drawings, Leeson Street Gallery, Melbourne, open 28 September

Awarded Australian International Co-operation Art Award for 1970

Awarded the McCaughey Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, for the painting Country 1 : Beziers

Retrospective of drawings from the artist's collection, Von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle, opens 12 February

Exhibition of paintings and drawings, The Macquarie Galleries, Canberra, 30 October—12 November

1972 Publication of Lloyd Rees by Renee Free, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne 1972

Speech at Gough Whitlam rally, Sydney Opera House, with Patrick White and others

Exhibition of paintings and drawings, Von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle, 30 March—16 April

Exhibition of recent paintings and drawings, Artarmon Galleries, Sydney, 17 May

Visits Europe: France (Chartres, Vezelay, Paris) in July; San Gimignano in August; later Greece and London

Exhibition, New Grafton Gallery, London, 13 September—10 October

1974 Exhibition of works inspired by Tuscany and Burgundy, The Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, 19 June—1 July

Exhibition of paintings and drawings, Lister Gallery, Perth, coinciding with the Festival of Perth, 18 February—5 March

1975 Exhibition, Von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle, 27 June—20 July

Anti-Sir John Kerr exhibition, Paddington Town Hall (group exhibition)

Exhibition: 'Cathedrals of France, with emphasis upon Chartres', Artarmon Galleries, Sydney; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart; David Sumner Gallery, Adelaide

Exhibition: 'A tribute to Lloyd Rees', Warana Festival, Queensland Art Gallery

Exhibition: 'Paintings and drawings and the Cathedrals of France', David Sumner Gallery, Adelaide, Adelaide Festival of the Arts, 6 March—18 March

Exhibition: 'European sketches', The Macquarie Galleries, Canberra, 20 May—6 June

Rees' only visit to the Centre of Australia — Ayers Rock, the Olgas, the Macdonnell Ranges

Exhibition of drawings 1932-76 and etchings, 1976, Arts Council, Canberra; Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane, 6 October—4 November

Completion of a waterfall in Martin Place, Sydney. Rees is chairman of the fund-raising committee, and he and his wife have guaranteed the funds with their life savings

1977 Grant of freedom of the city of Sydney

Exhibition: 'The Australian Centre and other works', The Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, 29 June—11 July

Awarded Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George (CMG)

The Trustees Prize for 1977 in honour of Lloyd Rees, Queensland Art Gallery

Publication of catalogue of Lloyd Rees' works in the collection

Royal Queensland Art Society, 88th Annual Exhibition, guest artist, July

Exhibition of oils, pastels and mixed media — 'Northwood, Balmain and Lane Cove', Von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle 22 March—9 April


Exhibition of Etchings: 'A Tribute to Sydney', The Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, 17 May—5 June


Appears on the Michael Parkinson television programme

Exhibition, Bonynon Art Gallery, Adelaide, November

Awarded the McCaughey Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales for The Great Rock — Dusk

1980 Exhibition of Drawings and the 'Caloola Suite' of lithographs, The Macquarie Galleries, Sydney; The Macquarie Galleries, Canberra

Survey exhibition of paintings and drawings organised by University Gallery, University of Melbourne, tours regional galleries in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, is shown at S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney

City of Bathurst, honorary Citizenship Certificate, 6 October

1982 Exhibition 'Printed works', Art Gallery of Western Australia, 25 February—6 April 1982

Exhibition: 'Late Drawings and Lithographs', Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, 30 April—30 May 1982; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 3 June—3 July; Brisbane Civic Art Gallery and Museum, 15 July—13 August
Exhibition: 'New Lithographs, 1982', Artarmon Gallery, 9 November 1982
Exhibition: 'Recent Works', Realities, Melbourne, 1—26 March
Completes the manuscript of his second book of memoirs
Guest at Official Opening of the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 12 October. Invited to meet Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II
Exhibition of lithographs, Gallery Fifty-two, Claremont, Western Australia, 15 October
Awarded the Wynne Prize for 1982, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 17 December
Visits Tasmania 19 December until 20 February 1983

1983
Exhibition: 'Orban-Rees', Masterpiece Gallery, Hobart. Opens 18 February
Exhibition: 'Blue Days on the Derwent', Von Bertouch Galleries, Newcastle

1984
Exhibition: 'Lloyd Rees : New Colour Lithographs, The Sandy Bay Set', Artarmon Galleries
Awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree, University of Tasmania

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Writings by Lloyd Rees
*The Small Treasures of a Lifetime*, Ure Smith, Sydney 1969
Foreword to exhibition catalogue *The Cathedrals of France, with emphasis upon Chartres.*
Artarmon Galleries, Sydney 1975
Manuscript of memoirs, 1982

Writings about Lloyd Rees
Renee Free, 'Lloyd Rees Retrospective', exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1969
Renee Free, Introduction to 'Tribute to Sydney' suite by Lloyd Rees, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney 1979
Lou Klepac 'Homage to Lloyd Rees', *Art and Australia*, vol 18 no 2 summer 1980
Lily Brett-Lovett 'Lloyd Rees — Australia's Old Master' *Pol* magazine, July—August 1980
Renee Free, 'Lloyd Rees: The Later Works' (Sydney Craftsman's Press, 1983)

A full bibliography is published by Barbara Chapman in 'Lloyd Rees: Late Drawings and Lithographs', exhibition catalogue, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston 1982

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*Dawn at Sandy Bay, 1984, (Golden Sunrise, Sandy Bay)*
Oil on canvas mounted on board, 406 x 515

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Alan Rees, Renee Free, Jon Williamson, Chris Cowles, Airlie Alam, Meg Taylor, Frances Butterfield, Hendrik Kolenberg Rod Ewins, Penny Hawson and John Farrow
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery

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Lloyd Rees, Dr R S Jensen, P T and T L Sexton
Nevin Hurst, Masterpiece Gallery
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
**LIST OF WORKS**

- **Measurements are in mm, height then breadth**
- **Bracketed Titles represent alternative Titles**
- **Works marked with an asterisk are illustrated in this catalogue**

### Study for the Edge of the Forest, 1967* (RE-CORD)
- Carbon pencil and wash, 406 x 502
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '67
- Private Collection.

### The Edge of the Forest, 1967
- Oil on canvas mounted on masonite, 667 x 825
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '67
- Private Collection.

### The Derwent from Sandy Bay, 1967
- Carbon, pencil, pen and ink and wash on paper, 185 x 250
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '67
- Private Collection.

### The Tempest, 1968
- Pen, ink and watercolour on card, 95 x 205
- Private Collection.

### The Distant Derwent, 1969*
- Carbon and watercolour on paper, 440 x 605
- Signed lower left: L. Rees, 1969
- Private Collection.

### The Distant Derwent, 1970 (The River Derwent)*
- Oil on canvas, 760 x 1075
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '70
- Private Collection.

### North Down, 1971
- Pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 190 x 245
- Signed lower left: Lloyd Rees '71
- Private Collection.

### Channel View, Tasmania, 1971
- Pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 440 x 605
- Signed and dated lower right
- Exh. 1981/82, *Tasmania Visited*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Cat.No. 43
- Illust. 1981/82, *Tasmania Visited*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Cat.No. 43
- Collection: Nevin Hurst, Masterpiece Gallery, Hobart.

### Evening on the Derwent, 1982
- Oil on canvas, 810 x 964
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '82

### Midsummer Eve, Tasmania, 1982
- Oil on canvas, 760 x 1015
- Signed lower left

### Morning on the Derwent, 1982
- Oil on canvas, 1220 x 1820
- Signed and dated lower left
- Exh. 1982/83 *Wynne Prize*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, prizewinner
- 1983, *'Exhibition Commentary', Art and Australia*, Vol.21 No.1, Spring, colour plate page 22

### Impression on the Derwent, 1982
- Watercolour and pastel, 365 x 550
- Signed in pencil, bottom left-hand corner
- Collection: Dr. R.S. Jensen.

### Tasmanian Twilight, 1982
- Watercolour, 535 x 725
- Signed in pencil, bottom right-hand corner

### River Derwent by Moonlight, 1983 (Evening No.2)
- Oil on canvas mounted on board, 510 x 610
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '83
- Private Collection.

### Dawn at Sandy Bay, 1984, (Golden Sunrise, Sandy Bay)*
- Oil on canvas mounted on board, 406 x 515
- Signed lower left: Rees '84
- Private Collection.

### Twilight, 1984
- Oil on canvas on masonite, 813 x 1103
- Signed lower left: Rees '84
- Private Collection.

### Dusk on the Derwent, 1984
- Watercolour on paper, 381 x 565
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '84
- Private Collection.

### Afternoon, Mt. Nelson, 1984
- Watercolour on paper, 381 x 565
- Signed lower left: L. Rees '84
- Private Collection.

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**Fine Arts Gallery**
University of Tasmania
11 to 30 September 1984

**Gallery hours**
Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Saturday 10.00 am to 12.00 noon
Sunday 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm

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