Acknowledgements:

The Curator and the Art Exhibitions Committee would like to thank Meg Taylor for her assistance.

The University Art Exhibitions Committee's ongoing programme is greatly facilitated by a grant from the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board.

The University acknowledges the generous assistance of the Visual Arts/Crafts Board, Australia Council, which, through its Contemporary Art Acquisitions Programme, has enabled the University to purchase a number of the works presented in this exhibition.

Catalogue Design Jane Wood
Poster Design Anita Hansen
Poster Printing Specialty
Photography John Farrow
Typesetting Crystal Graphics
Catalogue Printing Focal Printing
Curator Frances Butterfield
Catalogue Essay Jonathan Holmes
© 1988
ISBN 0 85901 384 7

Fine Arts Gallery
University of Tasmania
10-30 June 1988
This is the third exhibition to display a diverse range of recent purchases which the University Fine Arts Committee has made for the University Collection during the past four years. It is a collection which has grown markedly during that period, particularly as a result of the decision of the University to assist in the purchase of the major collection of drawings and pastels by Jack Carington Smith, and because of the generous assistance of the Visual Arts and Crafts Board, Australia Council, which, through its Contemporary Art Acquisitions Programme, has provided the University with a major addition to its acquisitions funds, and has directly assisted in the purchase of a number of works in the present exhibition.

Although the Carington Smith Collection proves the exception, it is the policy of the Fine Arts Committee to acquire work by living Australian artists and to do so with a sense that the works can be adequately placed and displayed in buildings on the various campuses of the University. To ascribe this utilitarian function to the Committee is in no way to downplay another function which it has, namely to purchase work which will draw attention to some of the current preoccupations with which visual artists are dealing.

We are fortunate in this regard in that so many of the works recently purchased have been acquired from exhibitions which have been mounted either by the University Exhibitions Committee for the Centre for the Arts Gallery and the University Fine Arts Gallery or by members of the Chameleon Co-operative for its gallery. In both instances, there has been a consistent attempt to deal with the presentation of work thematically, and this has done much to provide a focus for the University's purchases.

Robert Rooney's *As You Were* was first seen in Hobart in the exhibition *The Source* which Elizabeth Gower mounted in 1986. Gower's purpose was to provide an account of artistic intention with each artist exhibiting a wide range of primary source material to assist the reading of the major works. In Rooney's case, a strong sense of the primacy of mass-media imagery in his work was clearly evident. In an *Art and Text* paper, 'Artists and Models', a beautifully constructed layout of found images, quotes and aphorisms, Rooney had included the following statement:

**THE WORDS**

I have nothing original to say.

Fragments.

Quotes, quotes, quotes of quotes, and more quotes.

**THE IMAGES**

Public.

**THE COLLECTION**

Private.

And, as Rooney was to say about the body of paintings of which *As You Were* was a part, the primary sources included 'incopts in *A Comment,* illustrations in various armed service annuals and post-war volumes of *As You Were,* advertisements in *Fortune* magazines and *Esquire* (mostly from the 40s and 50s) and an illustrated prospectus for the *Art Training Institute* correspondence course.  

The word play of this particular painting's title is at once wry and ironic - "AS YOU WERE" flickers between the sense of nostalgia for a time past and the order to stand easy, to relax, a pun which is clearly brought into pictorial collision in the play between the figure, the sailor responding to the officer's order, and the background, a 'sky' full of aerial weaponry.

Judging by Rooney's published statements and the focus of much of his recent writing as a formidable critic, a way of beginning to read this particular work therefore would be to assume that the artist is 'speaking' the visual language, a language of images which exists 'out there,' and which the artist will use in much the same way that we use speech in relation to the language. In this way the work can be seen as an elaborate and highly encoded form of 'speech,' one which thrives on the subtlety with which metaphor can be used to make an astringent social and political comment.

Barry Cleavin's exhibition *Bitter Suites,* shown in Hobart last year, contained a considerable number of images dealing with war, but whereas Rooney's work favours irony, in the case of Cleavin, a more savage hand is at work. As Rodney Broad commented in the catalogue introduction, Cleavin treats 'the fine line between propaganda and a more personal association of images showing human potential for barbarity.' In the *Popular Illusions* - the bicycle cycle series, however, a more playful hand is at work with Cleavin developing an extended pun which utilises an array of Duchampian allusions, and includes a reference to one of the items in Duchamp's *La Boite de 1914,* the cyclist. But even here we are made to feel aware of the way in which power is vested in images: whereas in the *Bitter Suites,* Cleavin shows how the artist's hand (his/her images) is implicated in the validation of war (his images comment on design drawings of war machines), in the case of the Duchamp cycle, Cleavin alludes to another form of power, the fiscal significance of particular images; the Cleavin series was bought relatively inexpensively (with the artist's concurrence!); a duplicate of *La Boite de 1914* produced by Duchamp in 1966 was put up for sale at Sotheby's in 1985 with an expected price range of £70,000 and £90,000.

Punning exemplifies the fundamental instability of our individual relationships to the outside world, and is an extremely useful figure by which to characterize both the yearning for the apprehension of an underlying order in the external world and the reality, which is that everything is in flux. Elizabeth Gower's *Monetary* which, at first glance appears as a monochrome structure of pleasing proportions, scale and unity, gradually reveals itself as a febrile array of domestic objects, cups, toy boats, scissors, hairdryer, safety pins, tubes, each object contributing some of the lines which make up the complete structure. Roland Barthes, in his famous essay, 'The *Eiffel Tower*,' speaks about the view from the tower giving a timeless sense of structure, of unity, to the very physical, chaotically temporal, reality of life on the ground, and we can see that this preoccupation, to speak about the impossibility of that yearning for restitution, is a significant concern in Gower's recent work.

The fragmentation which is implied in Gower's work is treated very much more starkly in David Keeling's *Medium Ground* in which there is a strong sense that the human hand is forming the natural as well as the artificial world as a corporation of objects to be consumed. Paint handling gives the sense that what is represented is desiccated ground, where the form of objects appears palpable but where the
connectedness of things is replaced by discontinuity. The site where this objectification is carried out is a particularly bleak view of the landscape, and one which is seldom adopted by artists working in Tasmania.

Less despairing is the work of Anne Connors and Ruth Johnstone. For the Chameleon exhibition Metaphorical Views, they observed: The images explore the use of of metaphor. The work is multi-layered, interconnecting universal themes, a response to the landscape, and personal subconscious symbolism. Strong central forms pervade the imagery. Landscape is bound up integrity in our concerns, not only as a background setting, but also as an important contribution to an overall psychological view.

Despite the fact that there is a surreal dimension to Keeling’s work, it seems reasonable to argue for the strong literal quality there; in the case of Johnstone and Connors, their commitment to the literal form of objects and of the landscape is more apparent, although emphasis, placement and scale play an important part in evoking a symbolic dimension which is both romantic in conception, and figurative in nature.

The other artist in this exhibition whose principal preoccupation is with the landscape is John Neeson. His large-scale drawing is one of a major series of works completed during a two-year sojourn in Hobart. Rarely literal, these landscapes do, however, provide an exceedingly evocative distillation of what is obviously close observation, and there is a very strong sense of place here. The allusion to the interior/exterior worlds is both literal and figurative; the cylinder, sphere and cone stand for the artefact which is the landscape genre (and the Cezannesque reference is obviously intentional), but they also can be seen as symbols of the structural devices which the artist uses to ‘frame’ and to articulate experience.

The other four artists in this exhibition, Ruth Propsting, Adrienne Gaha, Lisa Anderson and Mike Parr are all concerned with the figure. Mike Parr’s The Grid (Fear of Thinking) is the most recent work acquired and pursues much the same concerns as those seen in his exhibition Portage at the Fine Arts Gallery in 1986. Then, Parr observed:

In these years after the Holocaust the great need is to be able to think (it seems to me that the great impossibility is uncomprised thought). The process of thinking must be a process of self-discovery.

And in the exhibition catalogue for that show I argued that a significant aspect of this series of drawings was the way in which Parr appeared to be reworking his self-image, having gone through ‘photo-death’ (and were offered up as an object of consumption), as process (drawing). The significance of this reworking must lie in its uncompromising concern with process, where the analysis of the subject (here the artist) is in constant flux. This is exemplified in the distinction which Parr makes between the careful drawings of anamorphic, photographed projections of his self-image and the “automatic” drawings which are the other important constituents of the work, drawings which speak of the generally unspoken. Propsting’s suite of drawings refers directly to the impact of the women’s movement on visual arts practice and considers a way of dealing with the constant reinforcement of the idea that art is a significant and singular domain of male endeavour. In two instances, The Thinker and Davida there is an expropriation as these two art historical icons are rendered as androgynous figures and indeed, throughout this series, Propsting draws on a range of iconic forms (predominantly from classical western sources) which are worked upon to provide a reading of the presence of women in contemporary visual arts practice, and their implied absence in the classical antecedents - this is done both through the naming of the works and the parallel introduction of new meanings which are invested in the icons. The winged figure, as a figure of freedom, flight and victory, is a case in point.

Gaha’s drawings also work with a range of iconic figures drawn from classical western sources, in her case with those “traditionally bound up with the figurative representation of sensual and erotic themes in western art.” In a statement for the 6 Drawing exhibition she observed that:

By appropriating the imagery and representational practices of these periods, I have found I am able to work at resolving an intellectual concern with a personal and expressive one. I am working towards evoking a sensual response to the drawings themselves. For it is through this response that the viewer becomes forced to question his/her relationship to images of this kind.

This is a profound issue for many women artists working in the eighties, particularly since the depiction of the nude has been so programatically structured as a persuasively male form of representation, a representation figured with the male in mind. Both Gaha’s Torso and Lisa Anderson’s Venus consider, therefore, whether such images, which have been so completely absorbed into western, patriarchal forms of visual art practice, can be prised free to hold and convey some sense of another experience of desire, another form of representation.

Jonathan Holmes
May 1988
LISA ANDERSON
Born 1958, Ipswich, Queensland; lives in Sydney

Studies
1977-1979 Diploma of Teaching (Secondary Art), Kelvin Grove CAE., Brisbane.
1982 Graduate Diploma in Professional Art Studies (Painting), City Art Institute, Sydney.
1984-1986 Master of Art (Visual), City Art Institute, Sydney

Exhibitions


Grants and Awards
1983 Travel Grant, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council
1984 Visiting Artists Studio, Dublin School of Art and Design
1985 Moya Dyring Studio, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris and the Art Gallery of New South Wales
1986 Studio (renovations and repairs), shared grant for Studio 27, Sydney
1986 Exhibitions Grant to curate Public Language at the Performance Space, Sydney

Selected Bibliography

Represented
City of Ipswich Art Gallery, Queensland; University of Tasmania; Lincoln Civic Collection, UK; Private collections in Australia and overseas.
BARRY CLEAVIN

Born 1939, Dunedin, NZ; lives in Christchurch, NZ

Studies
1963-1966 University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts
1972 Honolulu Academy of Arts

Selected Exhibitions (Solo shows) Since 1966 he has held several solo shows in New Zealand: Ewe and Eye, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1982, touring New Zealand, 1982-1983; Hindsight, Gingko Gallery, Christchurch, 1983; The Bitter Suites, Denis Cohn Gallery, Auckland, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, 1985, and at the Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1987; Looking Up from Under, University of Maine, USA, 1987

(Group shows) Since 1965 he has participated in many group shows both in New Zealand and Internationally, and has been invited to exhibit in print biennales in Biella, Barcelona, Bradford, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Cracow, Frechen, Fredrikstad, Grenchen, Ljubljana, Listowel, Melbourne, New Delhi, Paris and Tokyo. Other group exhibitions include: New Prints from New Zealand, Soker Kaseman Gallery, San Francisco, 1984; Anxious Images, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1984; Intergrafia, Berlin, 1987; Losing One's Marbles, Portfolio Gallery, Auckland, 1987; Mini Print International, Cadaques, Barcelona, 1987. He has also participated in the drawing exhibitions Premi International Dibuix Joan Miro, Barcelona since 1968, and the Exposition Internationale de Dessins Originaux, Rijeka.

Awards
1967, 1972 Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Scholarship
1983 Fulbright Award

Selected Bibliography Ewe and Eye [catalogue introduction by Dr R Wilson] Auckland City Art Gallery, 1982; Anxious Images [catalogue introduction by Alexa Johnston], Auckland City Art Gallery, 1984; Louise Beale Gallery Catalogue, Wellington, 1986; The Bitter Suites [exhibition catalogue], Hobart, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1987

Represented Dunedin Public Art Gallery, NZ; Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, NZ; National Gallery, Wellington, NZ; Auckland City Art Gallery, NZ; Library of Congress Collection, Washington DC, U.S.A.; Honolulu Academy of Art; University of Tasmania
BARRY CLEAVIN

‘M Duchamp has Time for Reflection’ from
Popular Illusions - The Bicycle Cycle (1986)
ANNE CONNORS

Born 1954, Hobart, Tasmania; lives in Melbourne

Studies

Selected Exhibitions

Awards
1980 Acquisitive Award, Burnie Art Gallery

Bibliography

Represented
Australian National Gallery; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; Tasmanian School of Art; University of Tasmania; Burnie Art Gallery; Victorian College of the Arts
ANNE CONNORS

in the Grotto (1985)
ADRIENNE GAHA

Born 1960, Sydney, N.S.W.; lives in Sydney

Studies
1982 Higher Art Certificate, East Sydney Technical College
1984 Sydney College of the Arts

Exhibitions (Solo show) Cockles and Muscles, Mori Gallery, Sydney, 1986
(Group shows) Bunker to Bunker, Art Unit, Sydney, 1983; Women's Work, Cell Block Theatre, Sydney, 1983; The Balcony, Seymour Centre Foyer, Sydney, 1983; Vertigo, Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney, 1985; Dad and Dave Come to Town - 3 Australian Artists [works on paper], Neben der Sicherheit, Koln, West Germany, 1984; Last Past the Postism, Art Unit, Sydney, 1985; Perspecta, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1985; 6 Drawing, Tasmanian School of Art Gallery, Hobart, 1985; Self Image - the Immolation Mirage, Biennale Satellite Exhibition, The Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallery, Penrith, 1986; The Hugh Williamson Prize, City of Ballarat Fine Arts Gallery, Ballarat, 1986; The Hand and the Photograph, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, 1986; Backlash, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1986

Awards
1988 VAB Travel Grant and the Greene Street Studio, New York


Represented National Gallery of Victoria; University of Tasmania; private collections in Australia and West Germany
ELIZABETH GOWER

Born 1952, Adelaide, SA; lives in Melbourne

Studies
1970-1973 Prahran College of Advanced Education
1974 Mercer House Teachers College, Melbourne


Awards
1980 Alliance Française Art Fellowship for study in France
1982 Visual Arts Board Special Projects Grant
1983 Visual Arts Board Travel Grant and Paretaio Studio, Italy


Represented National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Shepparton Arts Centre, Victoria; Sale Regional Arts Centre, Victoria; Ballarat Fine Arts Gallery, Ballarat; Artbank; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; University of Tasmania
RUTH JOHNSON
Born 1955, Hamilton, Victoria; lives in Melbourne

Studies
1974 & 1976-1979 Diploma of Fine Art, Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education
1981-1982 Graduate Diploma of Fine Art [Printmaking]; Melbourne College of Advanced Education

Selected Exhibitions (Solo shows)

Awards
1982 Diamond Valley Acquisitive Art Award
1982 Warrnambool Art Gallery Acquisitive Art Award
1982 Acquisitive Award, Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre
1984 Acquisitive Invitation Ansett Art Award
1984 First prize, print acquired from Mini Prints, Print Council of Australia
1986 Equal first prize, print acquired, Fremantle Print Award
1986 Acquisitive Award, Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre

Commissions
1984 Mitchelton Wine Label, and print acquisition
1986 Member Print, Print Council of Australia
1986 Myer Foundation/Victorian Print Workshop, editioned prints
1987 Victorian Print Workshop poster and editioned print

Selected Bibliography
150 Victorian Women Artists, Melbourne 1985; Other People, Melbourne, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 1985

Represented
Artbank; Hamilton Art Gallery; Victorian Arts Centre; Adelaide College of the Arts, Warrnambool Art Gallery, Griffith University; University of Tasmania; Shire of Diamond Valley; Phillip Institute of Technology; Hamilton Collection, Victorian Education Department; Benalla Art Gallery; Shepparton Art Gallery; Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre; Fremantle Arts Centre; Print Council of Australia; Myer Foundation
DAVID KEELING

Born 1951, Launceston, Tasmania; lives in Hobart

Studies
1970 Swinburne Film and Television School
1973 Tasmanian School of Art
1981 Alexander Mackie School of Art, Sydney

Exhibitions (Solo show) Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, 1987


Represented University of Tasmania; Artbank; private collections in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW
DAVID KEELING
Middle Ground (1986)