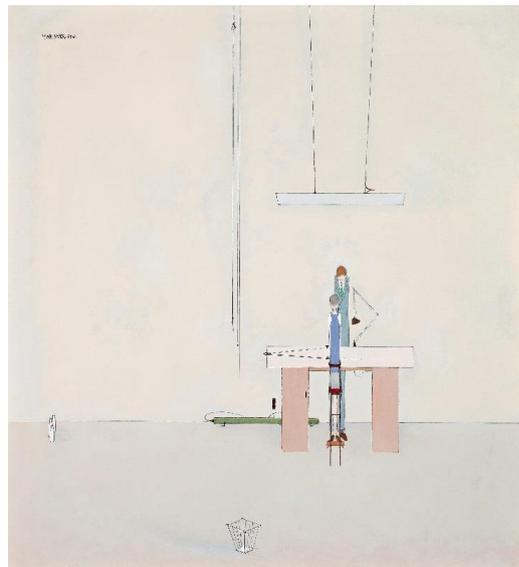


Edwin Tanner: Mathematical Expressionist

12 May – 15 July 2018

Curated by Anthony Fitzpatrick



Edwin Tanner *Professional Engineers* 1954-56
oil on canvas, 126.5 x 114.5 cm © The Estate of Edwin Tanner

How do you describe an artist whose work deftly and often wittily combines a diverse range of interests and expertise, including engineering, mathematics, aeronautics and analytic philosophy, together with a great passion for literature, poetry, music and art?

In the catalogue for his solo exhibition in 1961, exceptional Australian artist Edwin Tanner (1920-1980) was described as a ‘the sole member of the class “mathematical expressionists”’.

TarraWarra Museum of Art’s exhibition of Edwin Tanner’s work, 12 May to 15 July, has adopted the title, ***Edwin Tanner: Mathematical Expressionist.***

The title aptly describes Tanner’s remarkable ability to seamlessly integrate in his paintings the spare and linear draughtsmanship and carefully balanced design of his engineering profession, with a poetic sensibility for subtly modulated colour, muted tones and vivid evocations of stillness and space.

Director, Victoria Lynn says ‘TarraWarra Museum of Art is committed to expanding access to and awareness of artists held in our significant collection of Australian art. The collection was donated to the Museum by our founding patrons Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC. Edwin Tanner is an artist whose work was collected in depth and he is represented in our collection by six paintings, all of which will feature in this survey’.

This exhibition, the first survey since the retrospective at the Monash University Gallery in 1990, will explore a number of different facets and periods of Tanner's oeuvre.

The 1950s paintings range from representational works with autobiographical references to his various experiences as a professional engineer, a public servant, a champion cyclist, a student of philosophy, and aircraft pilot, to more schematic works in which machines are seen to take on human traits and people are transformed into mechanised entities.

The 1960s sees a greater range of experimentation with textured surfaces, construction and relief techniques, and assemblages of different media through which he explores a broad range of literary, philosophical, and autobiographical themes.

Finally, in the late 1960s and 1970s, his conceptual investigations continue in a more abstracted mode, in which finely calibrated lines and shapes are precisely composed amid large fields of colour.

Curator, Anthony Fitzpatrick, says the exhibition will provide an opportunity for new audiences to encounter and engage with a broad range of works by this extraordinary Australian artist.

With the recent rise of artificial intelligence, widespread automation, innovation in robotics and ever proliferating digitalisation of everyday life, it is a timely opportunity to revisit the work of an artist who, as a professional engineer, was intimately involved in the development and construction of the machinery and infrastructure which have helped to shape our increasingly automated technological environment. Tanner once described himself as "preoccupied with the circuitry of the species", and many of his works reflect his awareness of how, through the increasingly fluid interrelationships between humans and technology, we are alternately emancipated and ensnared, connected and isolated. As the art critic Margaret Plant described in 1970, Tanner's inventions are "a prophetic satire of the age of cybernetic serendipity."

Edwin Tanner: Mathematical Expressionist includes over 60 paintings and drawings from 1952 to 1980, which have been drawn from major public and private collections, including several works from the TarraWarra Museum of Art collection. The exhibition also features archival material, including photos, sketches, and engineering documentation, as well as a number of poems written by Tanner, to further enrich appreciation of the diverse talents of this polymath artist.



Edwin Tanner *Critic at His Peak* 1960
oil on canvas on composition board, 81.5 x 84 cm.
Collection of John Symond AM © The Estate of Edwin Tanner

CONCURRENT EXHIBITION

James Hullick: THE ARBOUR and THE ORRERY

12 May – 15 July 2018

Curated by Anthony Fitzpatrick



*James Hullick THE ARBOUR OF DOORS 2018 (detail of installation components)
mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo: James Hullick. Courtesy of the artist*

For this exhibition, new work from James Hullick's machine installation practice will accompany TarraWarra Museum of Art's major survey of the work of Edwin Tanner. The exhibition will feature two new components by Hullick that are in dialogue with the works of Tanner: THE ARBOUR OF DOORS, an enclosed speaker cave made of recycled audiovisual materials that visitors can enter, and THE ORRERY OF HUMAN DESIRES, a mechanical model of rotating speakers and analogue synthesisers which will articulate orbits of human desire. The two works have been conceived of as 'instruments' for expanding audiovisual practice.

ENDS

To arrange interview with Anthony Fitzpatrick or for supply of images please contact:

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TarraWarra Museum of Art

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Opening Hours:

Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. Open all public holidays except Christmas Day.

Open 7 days a week from Boxing Day to Australia Day.

Exhibition Admission: \$10.00 Adults; \$8.00 Seniors; \$5.00 Pensioners and Students; Children 12 and under free.