

VCE Studio Arts: ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS



Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection

Curated by Victoria Lynn

TarraWarra Museum of Art

29 February–19 March, 2020

List of Artworks and Didactic Texts

Rosalie Gascoigne

***Milky Way* 1995**

sawn painted and stencilled plywood from cable reels with ink markings on composition board

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2009

***Promised Land* 1986**

weathered painted and stencilled wooden boards from soft-drink boxes on plywood backing

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001

***Municipal Gardens* 1983**

torn or cut patterned linoleum and painted and stencilled wood from soft-drink boxes on plywood backing

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001

***Poplars* 1996–97**

patterned linoleum and sawn plywood retro reflective road signs on composition board

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2009

***Club Colours* 1983**

painted and stencilled wood from soft-drink boxes on plywood backing

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2009

***Lantern* 1990**

sawn plywood retro reflective road signs on plywood backing

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001

Cloud Cuckoo Land 1998

sawn plywood retro reflective road signs on composition board

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2013

Rosalie Gascoigne's works play with materials and words, creating assemblages that rearrange the colloquial properties of the Australian landscape. She dismantles the branding on crates, or the directional words on a road sign into newly formed non-sensical collages, that celebrate the art of collage, where one element acts upon another in an ever-changing set of relations.

The grid is perhaps the most archetypal form of modernist abstraction. For Rosalie Gascoigne, the grid is employed as a compositional method to explore the transitional spaces between the man-made and the organic. Her highly distinctive assemblages play on the potential of the grid to generate highly personal and experiential evocations of natural phenomena in ways which transcend the more rigid, impersonal qualities associated with its geometry.

At a surface level the serial repetition of components arranged and balanced according to vertical and horizontal axes in works such as *Promised Land* corresponds to a reductive Minimalist sensibility. However, it is the heavily weathered timber from these discarded soft drink crates with their faded paint and wear and tear which infuses the work with a resonant and suggestive force. As the artist traversed the countryside around Canberra she deliberately sought out materials that she felt were 'invested with the spirit of the place' and capable of recalling 'the feeling of an actual moment in the landscape'. In this light, the vital materiality of the reclaimed material is not only inscribed with the effects of its prolonged exposure to the elements, but it also speaks directly to Gascoigne's deep and abiding memories of her experiences in the landscape and, perhaps, as the title suggests, the elusive promise of fulfilment.

Charles Blackman***Hoardings*** 1954

oil and enamel on composition board

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2015

Hoardings is part of a series of works that Blackman painted representing hand-painted advertisements, posters and signs that adorned railway platforms and shop fronts. As he commented, 'I saw these hoardings on railway stations and factory sites as a full-time outdoor show in themselves. But also the products and their confrontations were a honeycomb of sweet nostalgias which reflected back the gestures of children I set against them.' In this image, a young girl steps into her shadow beneath an advertisement for Skipping Girl Pure Malt Vinegar. The combination of words and signs is playfully combined, with humorous connections between them.

Hilarie Mais***reflection/feather*** 2016

oil on wood

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Acquired 2017

Cluster Ghost 2016

synthetic polymer paint on wood

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Acquired 2017

For almost five decades the sculpture of Hilarie Mais has pivoted around key aesthetic idioms that emerged in abstract art of the 1960s: the grid, the square, the rectangle, the spiral and the circle. However, Mais has imbued these forms with qualities that set her work apart from that of her predecessors. Her structures variously lean, are suspended or hang on the wall, casting shadows that often appear as ghostly hues. Not only does her sculpture explore the interchange between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality, creating complex optical relationships, it also expresses a tactile, emotional and bodily undercurrent. The works open up a spatial zone that is greater in size than the objects themselves; they play with mathematical systems while simultaneously celebrating and embracing the imperfect; and they act as structures for colour. Moreover, Mais' works explore the fact of the object – its ontological status, its presence.

In Mais' art, colour, system, number, line and form rhyme with a kind of synaesthesia. Hue is emotional, numbers have a tone, systems can refer to people and forms create an after-image – shadows. Her abstract forms eschew narrative and engage with a will to silence. Yet they are so visually complex that they chime with emotional energy. Her expanded abstraction connects with us on an emotional level, while the visibility of her process and materials has an everyday quality, measured in concert with the size of her own body so that they are easy to handle and construct. As such, her work is intimate.

Judy Watson

***Spine* 1997**

pigment, pastel and synthetic polymer paint on canvas

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2011

Judy Watson's Aboriginal matrilineal family are from Waanyi country in north-west Queensland. She once stated that she is 'interested in what's beneath the surface ... peeling back the layers', and many of her works respond to the stories hidden in specific sites, bringing to visibility Indigenous histories by tracing and revealing the psychological and emotional contours of the landscape. In her work *Spine*, the stained canvas depicts a spine-like form in ochre over tidal flows and fluid passages. In 1990, Watson made a significant visit to her grandmother's country where she heard stories of survival and resilience. The 'spine' in this work suggests not only the relationship between body and land that is so important in Indigenous culture, but also the active need to be resilient in a changing societal, political and cultural landscape.

Janet Laurence

Sacred Green* 2018 from the series *Chlorophyll Collapse

diabond mirror, dye sublimation archival print onto Chromaluxe aluminium and C type silver halide on clear polyester and oil glaze on acrylic

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Acquired 2018

Based in Sydney, Janet Laurence is renowned as one of Australia's leading contemporary artists. For over three decades her multidisciplinary practice has explored the profound interconnections between all natural systems. In the context of the age of the Anthropocene—an era of loss of life and habitat at an unprecedented rate—her work is a call to the viewer to be both ethically and emotionally immersed in the precarity of our world.

This recent work, *Sacred Green*, 2018, is a long frieze comprised of a series of panels which shift between fluid oil glazes and archival prints of pristine forests. With her distinctive use of overlapping layers of mirrors and transparent polyester sheets, the images are both framed and fractured in new and uncertain ways. This sense of fragility produces emotional intimacy, which corresponds to the fragility of the ecosystem. As the artist explains: 'This work investigates what it might mean for us to heal and protect, albeit metaphorically, the natural world, fusing this with a sense of communal loss and in doing so ignites a journey to a greater understanding of this powerful life force. Combining elements from the Tarkine in Tasmania, and the Sacred Forest in Bhutan, for me, the work is as much poetic and alchemical as it is scientific and art-historical. What is sacred? *Sacred Green* reveres nature as sacred.'

Robert Klippel

No title (No. 1232) 1980

57 sculptures: air-dried modelling clay, plastic, enamel paint, aluminium foil and metallic paint

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Acquired 2018

From the age of six, Klippel was preoccupied with making replica models of ships, studying their design and construction, then carving and building exacting miniature versions. This passion continued into early adulthood and, in 1943, after several years active naval service, those skills were harnessed for the war effort when he was employed to make models of aircraft for air force pilot identification training. Excited by the seemingly unlimited possibilities of plastic model making kits which he first encountered in the 1960s, Klippel continued to use them in various ways. In later works such as the collection of forms that comprises *No. 1232*, he would use the kits to construct small sculptures, isolating one or two plastic components, or combining hundreds of them in miniature monoliths of modelling clay.

Additional Information

- The **Virtual Exhibition** for *Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection* is available [here](#).

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