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Artwork exhibited in the 30th Anniversary Exhibition

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30TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

There have always been artists living and working in the Illawarra. However it was not until comparatively recent times that there has been an appropriate venue to celebrate and promote their work.

In 1951 a group of local people (Gino Sanguineti, Joy Morrison, David Aspden, Bill Peascod, Ron Lambert, Robert and Valerie Parr, Lorraine Holmes, Coralie Barr and Frida Cochrane, amongst many others) formed the Illawarra Art Society to promote wider interest in the arts and to advocate for the development of a permanent art gallery in the Illawarra. The art society was the driving force behind the establishment of various acquisitive art prizes in the 1950s and 1960s. The winning artworks which once graced Wollongong City Council offices today form an important element of the permanent collection of the Wollongong City Gallery. However it was not until 1976 with the unique gift of the Bob Sredersas art collection to the city and people of Wollongong that a permanent art gallery for the region became a reality.

In June 1978, the first Wollongong City Gallery (WCG) was established in the "Hughes, Whetton and Reilly" building, corner of Burelli and Keira Streets, Wollongong. In 1991 the Wollongong City Gallery relocated to its present site, the former Wollongong City Council Administration Building. Today the WCG is recognised as one of the most innovative regional art museums in Australia.

This 30th Anniversary Exhibition operates as two intertwining and complementary parts. The first part is a display of historical and contemporary works from the Wollongong City Gallery collection. The second part or thread is a selection of mostly contemporary art works made by artists who are connected to the Illawarra region.

The radiating core of the show is situated in the Integral Energy Gallery, the main exhibiting space of the WCG. Audiences will encounter old favourites and rarely displayed works juxtaposed with new acquisitions. From Eugene von Guerard and Thomas Gleghorn to Imants Tillers, Emily Kame Kngwarreye and Anna Kristensen viewers will be able to track attitudes to the development of the Australian landscape tradition. With works by Grace Cossington Smith, Beryl Foster, Stephen Birch and Tim McMonagle (amongst others) there are examples of Australian artists' engagement with the languages of abstraction, conceptual practices and popular culture motifs. Also on display is a selection of important Asian ceramics.

This collection is a rich and unique asset owned by the people of the Illawarra. Consisting of over two thousand works (and still growing!) the WCG permanent collection not only documents regional histories and art practices, but also reflects developments and issues in art of local, national and international relevance. Developed through acquisition by purchase or by private and public donations, the strength of the permanent collection is one of the reasons that the Wollongong City Gallery has become such an important active caretaker and cultural producer for the people of the Illawarra. The continued growth and display of the permanent collection is an essential element to maintain this role.

The Wollongong City Council deserves high praise for its thirty year and ongoing commitment and support of the WCG as a centre of excellence in the arts.

The permanent collection is also testament to the dedicated commitment of numerous individuals and community organisations but special mention has to be made of extraordinary support given to the gallery by Dr Ronald and Mrs Alison Fine, Michael Hobbs, Ian Dickson, Gora Singh Mann, William Tatlow, Peter Fay and the late George and Nerissa Johnson and their family.

The work of thirty-four contemporary artists comprises the second part of the 30th Anniversary Exhibition. This selection is the outcome of over fifty studio visits by Craig Judd, Robert Howe and John Monteleone. A broad range of media is represented: painting, printmaking, textiles, photography, ceramics, installation, sculpture and photography.

All of the artists are based in or have strong connections to the Illawarra region. We wanted to represent the work of artists who are considered "elders", to acknowledge their place and role as mentors and exemplars. With the majority of artists however, we were interested to see recent works from the previous three years. It was important to get a sense of the work, where and how it was made. There was no program or predetermined search for specific themes or content or types of practice.

Space does not allow description and analysis of the unique qualities and skills of each artist involved in the exhibition. If there is to be a linkage across the artworks in the 30th Anniversary Exhibition it is process - a living and evolving field of research into personal and formal artistic concerns. In this show artists have discovered a particular artistic vocabulary and are intent on exploring all levels of that language with expansive bodies of work. The apparent confidence of the art work is a direct result of the incremental learning and development that close engagement with process delivers.

I would like to thank all of the artists who allowed us to view their work. Within the time limits of the development of the exhibition it was not possible to visit every artist working in the region. There are many more Illawarra artists who the Wollongong City Gallery would like to work with in the future. This part of the 30th Anniversary Exhibition then is not a definitive overview but rather an indicative display to give audiences and visitors a taste of the energy and breadth of the creativity of the Illawarra.

Craig Judd
Gallery Director/CEO

ARTHUR APANSKI

Arthur Apanski lives and works at Coledale. Arthur was born in 1964 in Moscow. He first pursued a career in the arts as an actor. Arthur migrated to Australia in 1997, and has been painting full-time since 2005. He is interested in the "Great Tradition" of European painting with its emphasis on technique and the power of illusionism.



MAY BARRIE

May Barrie lives and works at Calderwood. May settled in Wollongong in 1950. She trained at National Art School, Sydney. She has travelled widely, ran a dairy farm and raised five children. May has held regular group and solo exhibitions since 1947, including a major survey show at WCG in 1996 and studio open days at her farm, Callemondah. May still works constantly with stone carving.



SUE BLANCHFIELD

Sue Blanchfield is a printmaker, photographer, painter and maker of objects. She first came to the Illawarra in 1970 as an art teacher, and left to travel through South East Asia, returning in the late 80s to build and settle in the Illawarra on the escarpment behind Jamberoo. Sue makes work that explores the diverse issues surrounding Australia's settlement history and responses to the land.



KURT BRERETON

Kurt Brereton lives in Bulli. His work is a response to the changing nature of the local rainforest, mangrove and beach environments. The impacts of rapid urban development, global warming and tourism have all been significant subjects in his work over the years. Kurt wishes to celebrate the beauty of the land ("singing up the country") while at the same time addressing the many disappearances and erasures he has witnessed.



MITCH CAIRNS

Mitch Cairns lives and works from Stanwell Tops. He graduated from the National Art School in 2006, and in the same year became a finalist in the Helen Lempriere Travelling Art Scholarship. He produces sculptural objects as well as paintings, including an evolving series of text works featuring references to religion and the Australian media and broad cultural developments.



VIC CHAPMAN

Vic Chapman, Noongaburra people Yuwaalaraay language, was born in 1932. His works depict stories told to Vic as a child and are still being told in Yuwaalaraay/Gamilaray country in north western New South Wales. The stories were collected by Mrs K. Langloh Parker, wife of the then owner of "Bangate" a sheep station north of Lightning Ridge. Vic's mother was born on this property.



TORI DE MESTRE

Tori De Mestre trained at the National Art School, Melbourne State College and the University of Wollongong. Since 1979 Tori has held numerous group and solo exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. Tori is interested in exploring the layers of history. Her recent work depicts the many weeds invading the family farm at Calderwood... a tangle of both history and memory.





LINDA DRAPER

Linda Draper lives in Thirroul. Her current ceramic works are intimate memorials to the memories, fears, desires and daydreams of a female growing up in the Australian suburbs. Linda creates miniature worlds frozen in time, with a dream-like visual fragility of confectionary, wax or marble. Drained of colour these memorials may evoke ghosts and other mysterious forms and associations.



MARK DRAPER

Mark Draper makes paintings that on first encounter are generally regarded as being 'about' the landscape. Rather, with their strong chromatic, graphic and textual references, they allude to qualities found in the landscape, qualities that are simultaneously visual, visceral and psychological. Mark is a lecturer in painting at West Wollongong TAFE.



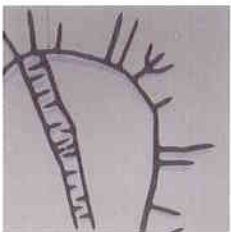
BERT FLUGELMAN

Bert Flugelman has a long association with the Illawarra region. Best known for his dramatic sculptures, Bert also has made more traditional paintings and drawings as well as wild installations. Always exploring and interrogating forms and materials and content Bert Flugelman has been a mentor and inspiration to many artists around Australia.



ASHLEY FROST

Ashley Frost is represented in Australia by Stella Downer Fine Art. Frost lives in Thirroul. His recent urban landscapes in oil on board and mixed media on paper depict the diversity and colour of inner city Sydney suburbs, usually at the moment where day ends and night begins. Frost has also made landscape works centred on the cities of New York, Beijing and Brasilia.



IAN GENTLE

Ian Gentle lives in Nowra. For over two decades Ian Gentle has been re-working found bits of wood (tree debris) to create sculptures that resemble an ancient, protean sort of language. These 'Illawarra runes' have a physical intensity that is derived from many drawn studies but they also retain symbolic references to the passage of time in nature and to lived but often unspoken experiences.



AGNIESZKA GOLDA

Agnieszka Golda was born in Krakow, Poland and migrated to Australia in 1982 at the height of Polish Martial Law. She makes art across a range of media including textiles, painting and installation. Agnieszka's work focuses on a personal experience of migration, the intertwined sensory and emotional encounters of cycles of cross-cultural arrival, departure and home-coming. She is a lecturer in Textiles in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong.



LESLEY GOLDACRE

Lesley Goldacre is based at Coledale. Lesley makes photographs where figures hover between the material and the immaterial, the conscious and the unconscious. The artist states - "Water uplifts us. We know that water animates life and spirit. It symbolises the feminine aspect. We enter the water, and we are freed from all constraints, including the downward pull of the planet. Unselfconsciously, we assume a natural grace of body and mind, suspended in a world of flux, and not bound by time and space".

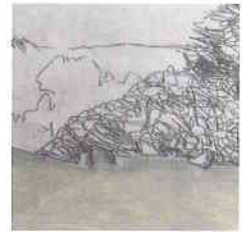
PENNY HARRIS

Penny Harris makes complex sculptures that are derived from inconsequential, often domestic forms and materials that are then cast in bronze. This process reconstructs and transforms the original identity and purpose of the objects. Often overlooked and sometimes dismissed in their original state, the cast forms have a completely new fixed weighted identity. Penny is a lecturer in sculpture at the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong.



LIZ JENEID

Liz Jeneid works across a range of disciplines including artist books, printmaking and textiles. The landscape has always been a central interest and point of inspiration. She has had artist residencies in Denmark, Paris, Greece, and on ships going to the Arctic and Antarctic. In 2008, Liz was made a Fellow of the University of Wollongong to honour over 20 years teaching visual arts in the Faculty of Creative Arts. Now, after retiring, she is able to travel, teach short courses, curate exhibitions and participate in overseas events.



DEREK KRECKLER

Derek Kreckler lives in Austinmer and teaches in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. Derek studied in Adelaide (1980) and at the University of Sydney, Sydney College of The Arts (1991). Since 1978 he has been working across performance, video, sound and photography. For this exhibition, Kreckler explores the portrait. He has exhibited internationally in Kwangju, Mumbai, New York and London, and extensively throughout Australia. Recently Kreckler's work was displayed in 'On Reason and Emotion', the 2004 Biennale of Sydney at the Museum of Contemporary Art.



ALISON MACKAY

Alison Mackay lives and works near Huskisson. Her work has been exhibited throughout NSW, Victoria, the ACT and Queensland. A major exploration of the artist is still life arrangements. In this work the subjects are often viewed from above, giving an emphasis to the elements of design and geometry, as well as exploring the colour, texture and form of everyday things.



KALEV MÄEVÄLI

Kalev Mäeväli uses the photographic medium to represent the existence of other worlds that we cannot perceive. Often two images are presented to reveal a narrative sequence of events. At night, when the perception of our surroundings becomes diminished, clues and messages are left (illuminated). There is also an interplay (intentional/unintentional) with human life and existence with the physical surroundings.



MARION MARRISON

Marion Marrison is interested in what gives a sense of place. Bush is something that is clambered through or over on the way to somewhere. The artist believes that the bush is rarely appreciated and is generally undervalued. While trees, rocks, waterfalls, vistas or views tend to be the currency of Australian landscape imagery, they are rarely domestic or experienced landscapes. For the most part they are contained in national parks and as such are places of pilgrimage. These particular photographs are of Sydney locations.



DALE MILES

Dale Miles is from Nowra. He uses a wide range of sculptural techniques and materials to produce staged Australian landscapes. By combining accumulations, hand made and found forms there seems to be an underlying ecological consciousness in Dale's work. Often working with marine subject matter, this work proposes possible ecological adaptations to human caused interference.





BILL MILLWARD

Bill Millward is represented by Ground Floor Gallery in Sydney. Born in England, he came to Wollongong in 1997. Bill's work reflects an interest in visual phenomena observed within the built environment, particularly the weathering effects on stone or concrete wall constructions, which can evoke a sense of loss and of time's passage. He explores working processes that differ from the normal conventions of painting to create abstract images that have their own unique qualities and imagery.



STEPHANIE MONTIETH

Stephanie Montieth is a graduate of the College of Fine Arts UNSW. A previous Wollongong City Gallery resident artist, Stephanie is making intimate scaled paintings - still lifes of seemingly innocent subject matter that somehow, subtly, hints at the ironic. Her painterly style is a direct result of the processes of observation.



RICHARD MORECROFT

Richard Morecroft makes photographs that explore the recurring influences and forces of the natural world. These incredibly detailed abstract and sometimes decorative works depict images from erosion to the almost fractal patterns of vegetation or mineral formation. In all of Richard's work there is a sense of common forces at work - a sense that there are universal rules of structure, growth and decay from the very microscopic to macro energies of storms and volcanoes.



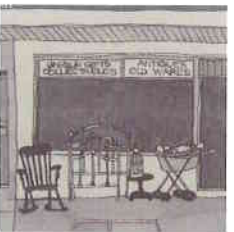
VIC MORRISON

Vic Morrison is a multi-arts practitioner based in Falls Creek. A winner of the Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (1985), Vic has developed a unique approach to art making. He has created a synthesis of Australian Indigenous culture with Western European culture, seen in the form of Greco-Roman and Christian themes and iconography. Vic has been an ambassador for the Creative and Performing Arts in NSW Education to Washington DC and a lecturer in Art Education at Penn State University USA. He is now working full-time as an artist.



FRANK NOWLAN

Frank Nowlan makes paintings about the things everyone knows - the daily news and quiet domestic and community activities. His subject matter usually relates to the Northern Illawarra. Frank has had no formal art training but became interested in art while undertaking primary teacher training at Alexander Mackie College. Here his art teacher, Miss Waugh, gave Frank his love of art. Miss Waugh had previously taught Brett Whitely at Bathurst. Frank started painting seriously after retiring from teaching.



KATHRYN ORTON

Kathryn Orton is a printmaker who is fascinated with the urban environment. For some time she has developed a motif derived from close observation. She depicts street scenes that hint at changes in architecture, commerce and lifestyle over time. Orton is interested in the choices people make to put their signature on a place, what she calls "the character of the ordinary".



JACKY REDGATE

Jacky Redgate teaches in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. Originally from Adelaide, she has been exhibiting since 1979, working across photography and sculpture. Redgate is fascinated with how spaces operate. This work is a detail from her recent solo exhibition 'Visions From Her Bed' at the IMA Brisbane. Enlarged family portrait photographs from the late nineteenth century are juxtaposed with solids/sculptures. Strangely tense works, there is no priority given to the orientation of the portrait photographs or the solids creating a distorted depth of field.

PAUL RYAN

Paul Ryan lives and works in Thirroul. A graduate of the University of Wollongong, Paul has exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions since 1989. He has developed a rich expressive mode of painting that he employs with different subject matter from meditations on Australian history to the urban landscapes of the Illawarra to portraiture and to genre. Paul has also won and featured as a finalist in several art prizes, including the Archibald, Wynne, Sulman, Dobell and Blake prizes.



GINO SANGUINETI

Gino Sanguineti was born in Chiavari, Italy, and moved to Australia in 1951 to begin work as a fitter and turner at Port Kembla steelworks but continually worked at developing his art. He has mainly worked in painting, sculpture and printmaking and has a love of landscape gleaned from weekends spent painting outdoors as a youngster in Italy. In his abstractions, Gino displays a strong sense of design while in his sculptures, the human figure stands out as a legacy of the influence of the Italian masters.



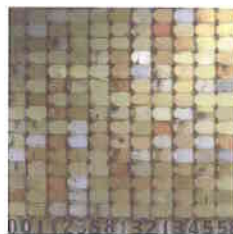
MIGNON STEELE

Mignon Steele was born at Bulli in 1978 and now lives in Bellambi. She graduated from the National Art School in 1999. She writes about her work, "I am always curious about the line between ugliness and beauty in art and the world. I am attracted to history as it appears and emerges on surfaces, both man-made and natural. I paint what I can't help but paint. In this sense I imagine I am part of some ancient compulsive tradition."



TANYA STUBBLES

Tanya makes social landscapes which are expressions of how people of a particular place interact with their environment. Tanya's goal is to explore Australian identity, stories and pastimes. Sourcing found, distressed materials from across the country, she weaves together stories of the land, its people and history. Her works open portals to the past, triggering memories of childhood experiences and forgotten pastimes.



SUSAN TINDALL-McDONALD

Susan Tindall-McDonald writes, "I have always had a fascination with church windows, their shape, colour and light. They represent a window to the soul, what we see in our past and our future. I love searching for old ceramic plates, cups, and pieces of old glass. Combining them with Italian glass tiles and leadlight to give the reflective qualities I need. Each window has a little piece of history reflecting back at the viewer, and as the light changes during the day so, then, does each piece."



GUY WARREN

Guy Warren has been influential in the Australian visual arts community throughout a 60 year career as teacher, designer, administrator and painter. He played a central role in the development of the renowned University of Wollongong art collection. Winner of the 1985 Archibald prize, Guy received recognition for his services to the visual arts with the award of a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1999. He has had over 50 solo exhibitions and his works are held in national and state galleries of Australia as well as many overseas collections.



Robert Howe has co-curated this exhibition with the support of the Arts NSW Emerging Curator's Pilot Program. This exhibition has been generously sponsored by Illawarra Credit Union and Kells The Lawyers.

