A PLACE FOR ART

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG ART COLLECTION
COVER IMAGE:
Guy Warren
_Escarpment, Illawarra_
1986
synthetic polymer paint on linen
178 x 230 cm (detail)
Gift of the artist, through the
Australian Government’s
Cultural Gifts Program, 1997
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Bert Flugelman

*Lawrence Hargrave Memorial*

1988-1989

stainless steel

14 m (H)

Commissioned by the Friends of the University of Wollongong, to celebrate the Australian Bicentenary, 1988
I’m very pleased to introduce and support this publication which celebrates the University of Wollongong Art Collection. Students, staff and visitors to our campuses all have some experience of the range of works which make up the Art Collection. The priority given to making art accessible in a variety of settings means this institution is truly rich in cultural capital.

Art at our University is valued on a number of levels; this can be reflected in the unique aesthetic of each piece or perhaps the relationship between the work and its environment. Bert Flugelman’s towering steel sculpture on the Illawarra escarpment is an eye-catching icon that almost demands attention. By contrast, Ann Thomson’s Solar Boat and Elisabeth Cummings’ Bush Rocks After the Rain speak to me in a different way. I’m a long time fan of Thomson’s vigorous and colourful works which give me a sense of her deep connection with nature, while Cummings’ absorbing paintings always take me on a journey and make me ask questions about her inspiration.

Our reaction to art is often intensely personal and sometimes our relationship with a particular work is difficult to explain. Art is a way of enhancing our sensibilities and each acquisition, whether it is a large and dynamic sculpture or a story-telling Indigenous work on paper, adds to the cultural capital that we are building. In an institution with such a strong national and international reputation, and an incredibly diverse population, the artworks the University acquires are more than simply financial investments. They are a valuable and valued element of the unique, multi-layered experience offered to those who may, even briefly, connect with our campuses.

Jillian Broadbent AO
CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
Guy Warren
One Morning Early
2000
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
167 x 295 cm
Purchased 2001
A future for art

My first encounter with the University of Wollongong Art Collection was during a tour of the main campus as part of the selection process for the position of Vice-Chancellor. As I entered the Vice-Chancellor’s Unit in Building 36 Guy Warren’s large landscape, *One Morning Early*, was a striking sight at the top of the stairs.

This rich and complex painting feels like a view deep into the temperate rainforests of southern New South Wales. If you stop long enough you find, beyond the stylised fronds and tree trunks, a group of figures: camouflaged, ghostly outlines deeply integrated into the work. This picture stretches the boundaries of Australian romantic landscapes and the way we normally place people in the frame.

Is this painting’s position at the top of the stairs a moment of accidental curation or a stroke of genius? Whatever the answer, we know that universities are, first and foremost, about people and the way they interact with place. This picture captures a core aspect of the University of Wollongong: bright, complex and vibrant. That it was painted by one of our colleagues and a champion of the Creative Arts is an added bonus.

Art has long been valued at our campuses and today its role is diversifying alongside the nature and locations of this lively institution. The construction of new facilities shows an increasing understanding of how creativity and design can be integrated within the built environment to offer a unique experience for students, staff and visitors. This extension of the original vision for the Art Collection represents an opportunity for development and further ensures its unique connection to the University’s evolution.

This publication documents and celebrates the distinctive role of the University of Wollongong Art Collection. Within these pages is a glimpse of the scope and significance of this rich gathering of works which I know is widely enjoyed and I hope will continue to grow.

*Paul Wellings*
VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
Emily Kam Kngwarreye

*Untitled*

c. 1990

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

127 x 152 cm

Purchased 1993
THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG Art Collection represents a rich tradition of diversity and, most importantly, accessibility. While other Australian institutions might have more valuable collections, I’d suggest none make works so available for viewing. Paintings, sculpture and artefacts are all integral to our University culture which is represented on the walls and grounds of our campuses.

For this we owe a large debt of gratitude to those who over the years have supported and promoted the growth of this marvellous resource. Former Vice-Chancellor, Ken McKinnon, had the vision to see the value of an Art Collection which is connected to the University. As well past curator, John Eveleigh, started the process of acquiring works which formed a strong artistic foundation, while former director, Guy Warren, continued this process to deliver on the original vision. Today we see the current curatorial staff using their expertise to ensure the Art Collection continues to develop and stay vibrant.

Many of the pieces on display can become personal favourites, with their own importance for each individual. To me, the Emily Kngwarreye work in my former office is a wonderful painting. I feel privileged to have had an example of work by such a significant artist as a backdrop for my day. Throughout this publication others will tell their story about how art fits into their University experience, exemplifying the uniqueness of this wonderful shared asset.

Gerard Sutton AO
VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG
1995-2011
Elisabeth Cummings
_Bush Rocks After the Rain_
1998
oil on canvas
112 x 112 cm
Purchased 1998
Guy Warren
UOW ART COLLECTION DIRECTOR
1992 - 2005

The University of Wollongong Art Collection, which John Eveleigh founded, focussed mainly on interesting works by graduating students. Later we were able to expand on this focus and acquired works by established Australian artists, including extensive holdings of works by Indigenous artists. The Art Collection also benefited from generous gifts: for example, Douglas Kagi donated an important collection of prints by British artists of international reputation.

The idea of accessibility to art was, and still is, absolutely predominant. From the very beginning the works were to be seen around the University. Regardless of the faculty or campus where students were studying, they could see art on the walls and in the grounds. Some people didn’t like what was put up but that was fine, so long as they noticed and reacted. Indeed, many people became very attached to the works in their space and objected strongly to any subsequent change.

Art has the power to make us fascinated and curious, angry and delighted, and to make us think – all useful elements in a university environment.
May Barrie
*Viva Solaris*
c. 1976
angaston marble
180 x 38 x 38 cm
Purchased 1977
One of the most visible realisations of the University of Wollongong’s commitment to integrating art into everyday campus experience is Bert Flugelman’s sculpture *Gateway to Mount Keira*. The stainless steel archway is positioned to mark the escarpment at a significant place of learning for the Dharawal people, the traditional owners of the land. Close by on the main campus stands May Barrie’s totemic stone sculpture *Viva Solaris* which, as long-time staff recall, was met with some surprise when it was placed there in 1977. For although Barrie was a local resident with a unique reputation in Australian art as a stone carver and an exhibition record dating back to 1947, the importance of art to the life of the University was still a nascent concept.

The University of Wollongong Art Collection began in the late 1970s. Like other institutional collections, its genesis was a combination of realising acquisition opportunities and random, but welcomed, donations. The visual arts’ presence on campus gained focus in 1983, when Edward Cowie arrived to take up leadership of the newly formed School of Creative Arts with a ‘vision splendid’ for an interdisciplinary arts centre. An ordered collecting of staff and student work was developed and by the late 1980s the UOW Art Collection was formalised. It grew in scale and significance, initially with John Eveleigh as director, followed by Guy Warren from 1992 to 2005, assisted during that time by Didier Balez and Glenn Barkley. Barkley was later curator of the Art Collection until 2008.

Successive vice-chancellors have recognised the value of the Art Collection and supported its development; today it encompasses close to 4000 artworks. Many of these are on display throughout the main campus in Wollongong as well as at the nearby Innovation Campus and the regional campus network which covers sites in Nowra, Batemans Bay, Bega, Moss Vale, Loftus and the Sydney Business School. This dispersed, open access to the Art Collection offers students, staff and visitors the opportunity to interact with, enjoy and appreciate artwork in their social, learning and
working environments. The current Collection management team, under the directorship of Amanda Lawson, with Phillipa Webb as curator and Robert Howe as co-ordinator, often works in partnership with the capital works program of the University, tailoring commissions, acquisitions and placement of works to site-specific requirements.

The UOW Art Collection has three major acquisition areas: works of regional significance by artists who live and/or work in the Illawarra, or who have connections to the region and the University; representative works of excellence by contemporary Australian and New Zealand artists; and the development of particular specialisations. One such area is contemporary works on paper: the Art Collection has major holdings of the influential local arts collective Redback Graphix through the Michael Callaghan Donation; there is also a concentration on Australian Indigenous artworks on paper; and a collection of international prints which flowed from the important Douglas Kagi Gift.

An art collection is an accumulation of cultural material across many fields of experience and times and thereby provides an archive of changing tastes, knowledge and values from particular vantage points. The UOW Art Collection is a unique repository of works with particular significance to the Illawarra, a striking part of Australia’s eastern seaboard that begins south of Sydney at Stanwell Tops and stretches down to the Shoalhaven River. It not only reflects the distinctive landscape and communities of the area, but also provides a vital record of the many changes that have occurred since colonial times.

Before the building of viable road and railway connections, trade and transport by sea were essential features of life in the Illawarra and coastal regions around Australia. William James Forster’s *S.S. Currajong* is a finely painted profile of a steamship, one of many vessels that serviced the area, heroically battling the elements. It was part of a gift to the University that captured the imagination of the local public as well as publicising the existence of the Art Collection in its early days. Today the sea-lanes near Wollongong are still full of cargo ships, as the chunky vessels in Julian Twigg’s *Waiting, Port Kembla* show.

From the 1860s images of the coastline around Wollongong and nearby villages, as well as agricultural and industrial developments, appeared occasionally in journals such as the *Illustrated Sydney News, Town and Country Journal* and the *Sydney Mail*. However the entire continent became focussed on the Illawarra in March 1887 when 81 miners perished in the Bulli mine disaster. Arthur de Tourcey Collingridge, staff artist for the *Illustrated Sydney News*, created a complex tableau of the key figures and events of the disaster for
the April 15 issue. In this coloured lithograph Collingridge captures the urgency of the moment, the destruction and community distress that ensued.

Industrialisation and its effects are an inescapable and vital part of the history of the Illawarra and a key subject area for many artists in the Art Collection. Roy Dalgarno had his vision forged in the matrix of the Great Depression. *Foundry Men* depicts the artist’s favourite subject matter – men at work (whether they be factory workers, drovers, miners, sailors or wharfies) struggling together. In this work extraneous detail is omitted and attention is focussed on the dangerous working conditions as well as the shared humanity and heroism of labour.

John Eveleigh’s pen and ink drawing depicts the *Wollongong Steel Works BHP*, once the central economic force of the Illawarra. The deep spaces, shadows and diagonals of the composition create an intense atmosphere that gives a sense of the energy of the steel industry that once dominated the region. Significantly there are no people working the
machines in Eveleigh’s drawing. In the late 1970s BHP dramatically cut employment, creating major social dislocation. Laurence Aberhart’s photograph draws on the European art tradition of still life, *nature morte*, to reflect on the impact of this decision. *Port Kembla, NSW, 23rd August 1997* shows it all: references to profligate wealth and consumption – the furnaces of industry, advertising, as well as simply drawn fruits, traditional emblems of sensory delight. Bright sunlight floods this post-pop image of industrial ugliness, highlighting every detail, but the graffiti text invests the photograph with an arresting, humorous, biblical significance.

In contrast, Samuel Elyard’s idyllic *Lake Illawarra* is an example of the romantic vision that colonial artists brought to their interpretations of the Illawarra’s raw majesty. Elyard, a member of an early settler family in the region, learnt drawing as an essential social skill, as did most gentlemen of his class. Certainly not amateurish, there is a strange, visionary quality to this work, emphasised by the grisaille technique and coloured ground of the paper.
Before the suburban development of the mid to later twentieth century swallowed up most available coastal land, the beaches of the Illawarra were favourite holiday destinations. Gerringong and its surrounds were regular subjects for Herbert Gallop. Early commentary on his work made much of his famous relative, James MacNeill Whistler. Gallop quipped that he “might have a bit of paint madness from his great uncle” (Register, Adelaide, 13 October 1926). His bright watercolour of late 1930s beach holiday life is a nostalgic image, typical of the safe, modernist style that made Gallop’s career a success.
Also nostalgic, but operating in an entirely different aesthetic, is *Homes, Mt Keira* by Noel McKenna. A deceptively simple watercolour of outer suburbia, this image makes clear the ambivalent relationship that Australia has with what was once “wilderness”, the bush. McKenna depicts a group of humble family houses like fragile fortresses teetering on the edge, aliens in an alienating landscape. The comforting profile of Mt Keira and the escarpment dominates the scene. In a subtle way the artist is referring to the urban history of the Illawarra where, over time, small villages expanded organically, without too much official oversight or care, joining together to form the expanse of present day Wollongong. The clarity of line and colour emphasises a sense of emptiness and isolation and suggests that perhaps McKenna enjoys this wasteland.

Works such as these form part of the substantial amount of historical and archival material which is increasingly important to the Art Collection, particularly in its emerging role as a study resource with great potential for integration into coursework and research at UOW. Generationally closer, and perhaps more relevant to current Creative Arts students, is the extraordinary donation of twentieth century international prints by Melbourne scientist and collector, Douglas Kagi. Comprising works by well known artists such as Victor Vasarely, Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield and Paula Rego, the Kagi Gift is a perfect introduction to the tenets of Pop and Post Modernism, art styles with reprography at their heart. Blake, for example, said he wanted to make art that was the visual equivalent to pop music. Skilful collage techniques as well as the irony and humour of Marcel Duchamp inform *Ostrich Beach*, a wry reflection on the habits of his nineteenth century British forebears. More ominous in tone and content is Rego’s *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. An inveterate storyteller, she has become highly regarded for her uncanny, if possibly realistic, representations of domestic dramas and childhood dreams. Equally subversive is the depiction of seemingly banal domestic objects and settings by Patrick Caulfield. The cryptic detachment of the Caulfield style has its roots in the work of synthetic cubists such as Juan Gris rather than the heady fun of London’s Carnaby Street and 1960s “New Generation” Pop. What is striking about works like *Large Jug* is that graphic simplicity elevates the form to cultural emblem.

From the international to the local, the UOW Art Collection contains important mid to late twentieth century works. The cultural history of regional centres in Australia is often overlooked and the Collection goes some way to redress this. There have been significant acquisitions of pieces by modernist artists at times based in the Illawarra such as Ivan
Englund, William Peascod, Gino Sanguineti, Ron Lambert, Joan Brassil, Pat Harry and Col Jordan. Charismatic figures, who played important roles introducing regional audiences and students to the new languages of abstract art in sculpture, painting and ceramics, some of these artists came to Australia as post-WWII immigrants. Many also studied and taught at the Wollongong Technical School, now TAFE Illawarra and still a key learning hub in the area. The work of more canonical Australian twentieth century artists such as Elwyn Lynn, Ann Thomson and Salvatore Zofrea also feature in the Art Collection.

The University is a site where an individual can develop keen critical thinking skills and where debate and discourse can create knowledge, so it is significant that many of the works in the Art Collection engage with lively social commentary and cultural critique. Contemporary Australian and New Zealand art has gained an international reputation for this kind of approach. Gender constructions of masculinity and femininity are touched on in the work of Pat Harry, Cherine Fahd, Ronnie Van Hout and Peter Cooley. Harry’s pagan *mise en scene* is brimming with anthropomorphic nightmare, while Fahd’s *Mary*
beautifully deflates the enormous weight of history with a few strategically placed balloons. In the series of staged photographs of which this is part, Fahd was interested in how the balloon can have both comic (thought-bubbles, breasts) and cosmic (perfection, science) references. Van Hout’s *The Disappearance* is a not-so-simple shed. For this artist, it is a structure of “clear space”. Built for and inhabited by men, usually separated from the domestic environment and away from what is perceived as the controlling gaze of women, the shed can be a place of male refuge, meditation and creativity – a place not often celebrated in art. In contrast, Cooley hyperbolises the traditionally feminine sentiment of nostalgia with *Three Sisters*, tourist art writ large.

One of the most important aspects of contemporary Australian culture (post-1970) is the broad critical and public recognition of Indigenous artistic practices. Once relegated to the back corridors and storerooms of ethnographic museums, Indigenous art and culture has reactivated the art world and, in the process, drawn attention to the contested nature of culture and history. The experiences and effects of colonisation have become a major, sometimes contentious, subject for contemporary artists in Australia. While some Indigenous artists have deliberately retained a “naïve” approach to content and finish, others choose to expand the languages of abstraction or have adopted a more urgent and direct political manner of address.

Since the late 1990s the Art Collection has developed a rich and varied representation of Indigenous art, from the “traditional” to the “urban” and to the “local”. These are debatable but useful definitions that help frame the remarkable diversity of contemporary Australian Indigenous art. Marrnyula Mununggurr is a senior artist at Yirrkala, Northern Territory. Her bark painting, *Dhangi Fishing at Wulwulwuy*, one of the first Indigenous works to be collected for UOW, adapts sacred clan designs that refer to hunting activities, specific landscape characteristics and the different kinds of fresh water found in her environment.

Far from the remote communities of Northern and Western Australia, where many Indigenous artists reflect strong traditional elements in their work, artists such as Destiny Deacon, Judy Watson and Tracey Moffatt explore the often problematic constructions of identity. Their work reveals some of the long-term effects of colonisation for Indigenous Australians. Deacon and Moffatt use (black) humour as a key strategy in their art while Watson looks back to nature to create a new spiritual lexicon based on the notion of the body as landscape.
Gordon Hookey, Joan Ross, Frank Nowlan and Rod Moss present a spectrum of views in their work which, interestingly, is also informed by humour. Hookey’s *First Stolen Then Stolen Land*, donated by Indigenous curator Tess Allas, is a luridly comic painting that details the artist’s experience of the conundrums of the Native Title Acts and conservative politics. Nowlan’s *Thirroul Sub Division* explores issues concerned with Indigenous land rights but with a decidedly Illawarra edge. The painting depicts the Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy that was established in 2000 in response to a local government decision to sell public land between Thirroul and Bulli for a private housing development. After a long community battle against this decision, Sandon Point was declared a place of significance for Aboriginal people and a third of the land was retained.
for public use. Another distinctive Illawarra artist, Nowlan makes paintings about things he knows – the daily news, the usually quiet domestic and community activities of the Northern Illawarra.

In contrast to the immediate and direct styles of Hookey and Nowlan, Moss employs meticulous technique to create an almost documentary reportage of aspects of Aboriginal life in and around Alice Springs. *T.V at Reenie’s Camp, Todd River 1995* is a large graphite drawing that depicts contemporary life in what locals call the Whitegate town camp. A group of Arrente people watch TV in a landscape setting. The collision of traditional Indigenous culture and twentieth century European culture is inescapable in this image, countering the more usual exoticism that clouds white reception and understanding of contemporary Aboriginal art and culture.

In the video animation *BBQ This Sunday, BYO* Ross re-presents the colonial history of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s land with an ironic reversal or twist. Ross refers to Joseph Lycett’s 1824 *Views in Australia or New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land Delineated*, designed to advertise the new colony to possible free settler immigrants.
Using the original as one might a pattern book, Ross compounds its elegant fictions, populating the scene with 21st century symbols of the law, ownership and control. Men and women in fluorescent vests, a hevy of “witches hats” (motor traffic control devices) and mysterious floating geometric shapes are deliberately dissonant features. Later in the animation a more obvious reference to the invasion of Australia provides the climactic key to the work – the word “invasion” having a completely different energy to the somewhat benign “colonisation” or “settlement”. This work is “cultural critique” in action.

A much more direct approach is evident in the rare poster *Trespassers keep out!* by Indigenous artist Avril Quaill. Made at the Tin Sheds at Sydney University in 1982, it uses simple but powerful iconography to convey its message about racism. Artists and screenprinters working at the Tin Sheds – a central force in Sydney’s protest movement during the 1970s and 80s – drew on traditions of political poster-making and social activism with strong colours, vernacular slogans and striking imagery. There are threads of connection back to the Illawarra here: Wollongong-born Michael Callaghan was an

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Avril Quaill
*Trespassers keep out!*
1982
screenprint, 48 x 72 cm
Gift of Martin Munz and Carole Hardwick, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2007
influential member of the Earthworks Poster Collective based at the Tin Sheds; he also founded Redback Graphix, one of the most interesting and dynamic artists’ initiatives to have emerged from the region.

The UOW specialisation in works on paper, enhanced through the Callaghan and Kagi donations, has also been expanded via a stream of acquisitions of Indigenous printmaking, commencing in the late 1990s. When Guy Warren visited Darwin in 1998 to work with master printer Basil Hall at Northern Editions print workshop, he purchased several Indigenous prints, triggering a vibrant engagement with this rapidly growing area of Australian art production.

During his time as curator, Glenn Barkley forged links with master printers and Indigenous artists, both locally and far afield, and garnered the enthusiasm of University staff who donated funds to support acquisitions. Significant suites of prints include the Melville Island artists’ project with Melbourne Museum, produced at the Australian Print Workshop; a full set of printers’ proofs donated by Franck Gohier of Redhand Print in Darwin; the Utopia Suite, a 1991 collaboration between various artist/printers and the
Central Australian community at Utopia; and prints from Tom Boulder’s Duck Print, which moved to Port Kembla around 2005. Recently several valuable prints by New South Wales artist Kevin Gilbert, who began his printmaking career while in prison in the 1960s, have been acquired. Barkley brought into public view the Art Collection’s strength in works on paper with a well-received touring exhibition, *Multiplicity: Prints and Multiples*, curated in 2007 in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

Textiles have long been a teaching and research strength in Creative Arts at UOW. Academic staff Diana Wood Conroy and Sue Blanchfield both worked with remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, and their connections led to a number of acquisitions, such as the silkscreen *Crocodile* by Nancy Gaymala Yunupingu, in the distinctive, striking style of Yirrkala textile printing. A recent, valuable addition has been the purchase of several works by women artists at Utopia, Central Australia, created during the 2007 Utopia Batik Revival Workshop conducted by Julia Murray, the original co-ordinator of the batik art workshop there in the 1970s. Lena Skinner Ngala’s fluid silk
batik, with its symbols of key foods and bush medicines, is a beautiful example of this work. The Utopia women’s adoption of the traditional Indonesian method of painting – or drawing – with hot wax is remarkable, not only for their mastery of a difficult technique but also for their distinctive ‘Utopia style’ that is at once loose and free-flowing yet strong graphically.

The Illawarra has a number of Indigenous artists and art workshops, spanning the Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Arts and Culture Studio in Gerringong, the Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation’s artist studio near Port Kembla, and long-standing connections between the South Coast and communities at La Perouse in Sydney. Reflecting UOW’s policy of positive wider engagement with the Indigenous communities of the Illawarra, the Art Collection is steadily increasing its acquisitions in this area. La Perouse-based Esme Timbery has gained a national reputation for her reworking of shellwork traditions in her Sydney Harbour Bridge sculptures. Phyllis Stewart’s early shellworked slippers, shoes and thongs looks to this heritage while *Miniature Baskets* combines tradition with innovation to suggest a new language to refer to the experience of the Illawarra environment.

In the screenprint *The Seasonal Workers (Eurobodalla)*, Lorraine Brown, who works at Coomaditchie, re-presents an aspect of Indigenous life that has now long passed but which still lingers in communal memory. In this regard Brown’s work links with the spirit behind other pieces in the Art Collection by Ian Abdulla and Roy Kennedy, although the lurid colours of this print perhaps suggests the tensions that memory can engender rather than a more familiar and comforting rose-coloured nostalgia.

While not a major focus, the Art Collection also accommodates a representation of student work. Two examples from the 1990s are Mark Osland’s sombre marine genre piece, *Where Have All the Sandhills Gone?*, which harks back to Forster’s nineteenth century oceanic imagery, and David (Yin Wei) Chen’s large expressive diptych *Art and Visa*. Chen’s painting speaks to a more recent aspect of Australian life – the experience of international students on campus. It juxtaposes an appropriated historical Chinese motif – the closely rendered wandering monk – with the contemporary form of a shadowy stylised female ghost/demon which is constructed employing a looser, more expressive or painterly mode.

Many of the teaching staff in Visual Arts at UOW have a strong reputation in their field, and the Art Collection has acquired considerable holdings of their work, through
Jacky Redgate

*Light Throw (Mirrors) #5*

2010-2011
c-type photograph,
hand printed from original
negative face mounted to UV
perspex
126 x 158 cm
Purchased 2011
purchases and donations. Wood Conroy and Liz Jeneid have championed a sophisticated interrogation and re-fashioning of traditional crafts practices. Jacky Redgate and Derek Kreckler challenge audiences to consider the nature of representation and the dynamics of reception in contemporary photography. Jelle van den Berg and Richard Hook explore the relationship between process, site and motif. Some artists’ work has been specifically selected to integrate with and enhance the University’s built environment. Ian Gentle’s sculpture, *Whispering Ant*, complements the dramatic architectural spaces of the UOW Library. Gentle was influenced by the climate of pantheistic neo-primitivism that infused much of the late 1960s and 70s and later by Surrealism. In this impressive example of his mature style, Gentle reconfigures found gum twigs to create a work that is part giant amoeba, part map and part totem. Significant works by artists such as these, with long-standing connections to the University, will continue to make distinctive contributions to the Art Collection.

Throughout almost forty years of acquiring art at the University of Wollongong, a rich and unusually accessible resource has evolved. In *A Place for Art* we hope to provide a sense of the breadth and diversity of this important collection. As well as surveying a selection of strengths and highlights, these pages capture the voices of some of the many individuals who have come to know and appreciate particular works. The stories they tell about the connection they make with their ‘favourites’ offer insight into the Collection’s reach and impact. Woven into the fabric of campus life, art infuses the experience of being at UOW. The Art Collection brings spaces alive and inspires the individuals who inhabit them: the University has truly become a place for art.
Selected works
ABOVE LEFT
Newell Harry
*KAFIR/FAKIR*
2006
black gesso, oil pastel on ironed Fabriano paper
111 x 154 cm
Purchased 2007

BELOW LEFT
Noel McKenna
*Homes, Mt Keira*
2002
ink, pencil and watercolour on paper
29.5 x 39 cm
Gift of the artist, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2004

ABOVE
Pat Harry
*Untitled*
2008
synthetic polymer paint and charcoal on canvas
150 x 240 cm
Purchased 2009
My grandfather Roy (Pop) Kennedy started his art career relatively late after a colourful life with lots of hardship. His experiences weren’t individual to him and this shows in his paintings and etchings, which tell stories from his childhood growing up on the Aboriginal missions at Darlington Point in the Griffith region.

This etching, like many of his works, is rich with memory of those mission days and shows through its intricate detail a relationship with everyday life and community. The people, the bicycles, the fish in the river all reflect a thousand and one yarns of life on the missions. Pop’s pictures are also a record of that era when Aboriginal people were separated and forced to move frequently. I look at this etching and see not only the visual information but also identify a connection, a sense of family and community. This work provides a deep and descriptive story of people, place and life that helps me understand how everything fits together.
Gambinya Thelma Burke
Pineapple Plantation
2006
synthetic polymer paint on linen
121 x 136 cm
Purchased 2011
Ray Munyal
_Yarpany Dhuwa Honey_
c. 1980
ochre on bark
162 x 73 cm
Purchased 1991
Lena Skinner Ngala
Untitled
2007
batik on silk
186 x 109 cm
Purchased 2010
Rod Moss
*TV at Reenie’s Camp, Todd River 1995*
2010
graphite pencil on paper
72 x 106 cm
Purchased 2010
Guy Davidson
LECTURER
FACULTY OF ARTS

I saw Scarred for Life (1994), the photographic series from which these two works are taken, in the 1990s and it made a big impact on me. The series illustrates, in Moffatt’s words, “tragic, funny tales” of childhood and adolescence which she says are true stories told to her by friends. The series was put together while Moffatt was in residence at Wollongong and the locations are all in the Illawarra.

The images are deliberately “un-arty.” Despite being carefully composed, they do a good job of convincing us that they’re moments caught on the run, stylistically recalling photojournalism or snapshots. I think this is why these depictions of everyday traumas connect with so many people. With their faded colours and seeming artlessness, the images, like those of an old family photo album, summon up the suburban upbringing that so many Australians have had; and everyone also has “scarring” moments in their past.

I was so impressed by the series that for several years I included it as part of a cultural studies subject and I like knowing they’re still part of the campus environment.

Tracey Moffatt
Job Hunt 1976, and Birth Certificate 1962
from the series Scarred for Life 1994
off-set lithographic print on paper
80 x 60 cm
Purchased 1999
**TOP LEFT**
Cherine Fahd
*Mary*
2001
type-C photograph
49.5 x 75 cm
Purchased 2005

**BOTTOM LEFT**
Peter Cooley
*Untitled (Three Sisters)*
2005
earthenware with underglaze decoration and lustre
20 x 31 x 21 cm
Purchased 2005

**ABOVE**
Ronnie Van Hout
*The Disappearance 1*
2005
wood, polyurethane, polystyrene, resin, paint, monitor, DVD player and amplified speakers
130 x 220 x 95 cm
Gift of the artist, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2007
Roy Dalgarno
*Foundry Men*
1985
etching
42.5 x 55.5 cm
Accessioned 1986
Christopher Coughlan
PROJECT OFFICER
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Like many people I’m most attracted to art that takes me out of everyday life. I appreciate works that tell me something about the artist, a time and place, and the creative process. I tend to gravitate to work that tells a story or that has something behind it.

This is a naturalistic depiction of objects but there are other layers to appreciate. The geometric forms seem reminiscent of Islamic art, which is of particular interest to me. This work is beautifully proportioned, with subtle colours and techniques.

I find it appealing because it’s restful and contemplative. I think the artist has put a lot of thought into this meticulous work and it repays the time and effort one puts into observing it.

Belinda Fox
_A Fine Line I_
2007
intaglio, linocut and pigment
108 x 70 cm
Purchased 2008
Paula Rego
*Baa Baa Black Sheep*
1989
etching and aquatint
32.5 x 21.3 cm
Gift of Peter Fay, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2004

Peter Blake
*Ostrich Beach*
2000
screenprint
33 x 25.5 cm
Gift of Dr Douglas Kagi, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2006
Derek Kreckler
Big Wave Hunting (2011), After Francis J. Mortimer (1875-1944) (detail)
2011
photograph
Purchased 2011
Lisa Miller

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES MANAGER

In the mid-nineties I worked as a marine ecologist and one of my projects focussed on the ocean outfalls of the Illawarra. I spent a lot of time diving off the coast here so I remember admiring the steelworks juxtaposed against the natural beauty of the ocean and escarpment. This juxtaposition was also represented by the contrast between the merchant ships waiting offshore and the Five Islands that sit as sentinels along the coast line. The Dreamtime story I’d heard about the Islands was that they were whales that carried the Aboriginal people to the Illawarra coast.

These paintings were the first artwork I noticed in detail at the University as I sat opposite the HR desk, nervously waiting to be interviewed for my new role. They seemed like a home coming, reminding me of time spent off the coast admiring the beauty of the Illawarra. I took them as a good sign which helped calm my nerves. I still smile when I pass these paintings today and if you look closely at the ships you realise one is really an island.

Julian Twigg

*Waiting, Port Kembla and Stacks, Port Kembla*

2005

oil on board

both 72 x 55 cm

Gift of the artist, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2007
William Forster
_S.S. Currajong_
1889
watercolour on paper
44.5 x 64.5 cm
Gift of Edgar Beale, 1986

Herbert Gallop
_Untitled (Werri Beach)_
c. 1937
watercolour
30 x 38.5 cm
Accessioned 2000
Frank Nowlan
Thirroul Sub-Division
2005
oil on canvas
25.5 x 30 cm
Purchased 2005
To me this is the quintessential image of the Illawarra and its escarpment. Even if the title wasn’t visible many people would know exactly where it is because the view seems so familiar. It’s wonderful how the artist, David Manks, has captured the scene so vibrantly. The nuances of colour and light make this painting a living piece of art that evolves imperceptibly throughout the day. The work comes to life in the morning, then changes and dims towards the evening. I like to think that it goes to sleep at night and wakes in the morning before everyone arrives.

This work can be found at the Sydney Business School and I regularly take the time to stop and appreciate it. The painting is part of a rich collection of works that have been carefully selected and placed on display throughout the Business School. They’ve been gathered for staff, students and visitors to enjoy and to complement our exciting new location at Circular Quay. More than that, they tell everyone about our roots, where we come from and what we stand for. The classic image of the Illawarra represented in this work is a perfect example of that philosophy.
Patrick Caulfield

*Large Jug*

1983
screenprint
98 x 64 cm
Gift of Dr Douglas Kagi, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2003

Jelle van den Berg

*Pacific Series #1 – #4*

2008
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm
Purchased 2008
Joan Ross

*BBQ This Sunday, BYO*

2011
digital animation
Purchased 2011
Mark Osland

Where Have All the Sandhills Gone?

1998

oil on canvas

114 x 80 cm

Purchased 1998
I’ve worked in mainstream media and media relations for many years and while I didn’t have the privilege of interviewing Lloyd Rees, I remember hearing him speaking about returning home from his travels in the UK and Europe. He’d realised how unique the light was in Australia and could understand its effect on his work. That’s the thing I love about this hand coloured lithograph – the play of light.

I’m a Lloyd Rees fan in general and like a lot of his images of Sydney Harbour. The way he portrays the reflection on the water is wonderful. This depiction of Werri Beach is a little different to his other works; it’s more sombre but I love the way he’s captured the scene and brought the view to me as I pause in my day to look at the work.
Diana Wood Conroy

*Naming: Lake Mungo*

2000

linen, tapestry, with gouache and gesso on canvas

120 x 120 cm

Gift of the artist, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2010
Tony Ameneiro
*Location II*
2002
linocut, etching and chine collé
25 x 42.5 cm
Purchased 2004

Ian Gentle
*Bush Rat*
1989
screenprint
67.5 x 45 cm
Accessioned 1993
Ian Gentle
*Whispering Ant*
1992
eucalypt wood
400 x 200 cm
Purchased 1993
Destiny Deacon

*Man in Shirt*

1993

polaroid laser print

99 x 27 cm

Purchased 1993
I love seeing this James Gleeson painting – it feels like an old friend. I’ve walked past this piece every single work day for about ten years and I’ve had quite a few conversations with students or other staff about it when I’ve come across them looking at it.

I think that this oil painting is a really interesting and engaging work as well as being technically amazing. This painting has a gorgeous luminous quality that draws viewers in to look closer. I love the colours and composition, the skilled brushwork and intricate detail, and the strangely fantastical scene that Gleeson has created. My only quibble about this piece is its title. It seems to me to be a much more incredible scene than the title indicates but I really would recommend taking the time to look at this painting. I think we are lucky to have such a valuable and amazing work on display.
Richard Hook
*Off the Port*
2008
acrylic on canvas
124 x 124 cm
Purchased 2008
Laurence Aberhart
*Port Kembla, NSW, 23rd August 1997*
1997/1999
silver gelatin contact print
20 x 25 cm
Purchased 2000
When I was a child, I recall spending many summers in the Illawarra’s northern suburbs with my uncle Paul Higgs and his long-time friend Ron Lambert. At the time computing was new and my uncle and Ron were looking at its use as a new medium for their art. Through them I developed my love for computing. They introduced me to programming and, more importantly, showed me its applications in disciplines that I’d never contemplated.

I spent hours at their homes, working on computing, tinkering and exploring. I remember walking around and discovering studios filled to the ceiling with the paintings they’d created. When I look at either a Lambert or Higgs piece today, I think of my childhood and how these two individuals had a genuine love for whatever they were working on; they had curiosity, creativity and passion for their medium. It’s this curiosity and creativity that helped shape me into the individual that I am today and for that I’m forever grateful. These works of art also help me remember what computing is all about: curiosity, creativity and passion.
Ron Lambert
*Arousal*
c. 1992
oil on canvas
91.5 x 114 cm
Accessioned 1998
Liz Jeneid
*Going Bananas* (detail)
1987
mixed media
Purchased 1987

Alan Peascod
*Jar*
c. 1990
ceramic
33 x 30 x 23 cm
Purchased 1991
William Peascod

Escarment
1963
synthetic polymer paint and mixed media on canvas on board
140.5 x 123 cm
Accessioned 1986
Gino Sanguineti
*Untitled*
c. 1975
copper
215 x 215 cm
Purchased 1975
Ivan Englund

*Port Kembla Landscape*

1962

oil on board

91.5 x 137 cm

Purchased 1962
Sandra Jones  
DIRECTOR  
CENTRE FOR HEALTH INITIATIVES

I’m originally from Western Australia and this work connects me to the environment and colours of my home state. The lines crossing the canvas give a sense of the geography of the countryside and the deep ochre colour is of course found throughout much of WA. Even though the artist, Gloria Petyarre, is from Central Australia this work says something about a large part the continent.

This painting is typical of what I find appealing. I connect with art in which at first glance little seems to be happening, and yet the piece still produces a strong emotional response. To me, art is about the feelings generated by a work and Gloria Petyarre’s painting appealed to me as soon as I saw it. I think one of its strengths is its simplicity which evokes a sense of peace and restfulness. This work is hung at the UOW’s Innovation Campus and I find it absolutely striking every time I see it.

Gloria Petyarre  
Untitled  
1997  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
108 x 185 cm  
Gift of Bronwyn Johnson, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2006
Elwyn Lynn
Bowmore
1994
mixed media
30 x 40.9 cm
Purchased 1994
Ann Thomson
Solar Boat
1974
oil on canvas
153 x 122 cm
Purchased 1974
John Stockdale

*Extension 65*

1965

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

123 x 275 cm

Purchased 1979
Simon Blau

*Still Life - Pottery*

1994

oil on canvas

121.5 x 152 cm

Gift of the artist, through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program, 2007
Bronwyn Lang

PRESIDENT
POSTGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

*Gateway to Mount Keira* emerges from the grassy space beyond the University’s Faculty of Creative Arts like a tuning fork and this dramatic silver filament is visible as traffic enters and exits the University. I can remember this work from my days as an FCA undergraduate during the late nineties and students still gather around it to chat and relax between lectures. It’s an iconic work which is synonymous with campus life. For me it’s a reminder of resonance, of shared wavelength, a symbolic structure that captures attention and imagination. I’ve heard this piece described as an “element”, as the “potato masher” and I guess there would be many colloquial terms which change with each wave of enrolments and graduations.

Flugelman’s work is a point of reference for a community. It reflects connections between eras and ideas, the Illawarra steel industry and our vibrant arts culture, and the cerebral and physical environments of our institution.

Bert Flugelman

*Gateway to Mount Keira*
1985
stainless steel
8 x 4 m
Gift of the artist, 1987
Col Jordan

*On Hunting the Lake Lizards*

1997

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

163.5 x 178.5 cm

Purchased 2001
David (Yin-Wei) Chen

*Art and Visa*

1994

oil on canvas

2 panels, 236 x 312 cm

Purchased 1994
Nancy Gaymala Yunupingu
Crocodile
1995
silkscreen print on calico
90 x 413 cm
Purchased 1995
The artist, whom we know as Sambo Barra Barra, was a senior ceremony man in Eastern Arnhem Land. He lived at Ngukurr and was an important member of the Ngukurr art community which was established in the mid 1980s. His works all combine the traditional art of his father’s country in North East Arnhem Land with the vibrant colour and figurative style that characterises Ngukurr art. I had a long association with Barra Barra during the three and half decades that I worked as an anthropologist with the Ngukurr community. I was captivated by the development of the artistic drive at Ngukurr and its unique, though diverse, styles.

This acrylic on canvas was painted in 1999. The bones and casing shown in this work are a two dimensional representation of the log coffin in a North East Arnhem Land secondary burial. Ceremonial secondary burial is an important aspect of traditional life in Barra Barra’s father’s country. This painting is one of his most accomplished and finely executed. It is clearly representational, highly symbolic and innovative.

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Sambo Barra Barra

**Bones in Hollow Log**

1999

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

130 x 110 cm

Purchased 1999
Salvatore Zofrea

*Illawarra Flame Tree and Bowerbird*

2008

hand coloured woodcut print

69 x 88 cm

Purchased 2010
Phyllis Stewart

Miniature Baskets
2009
cordline, raffia, cane, kurrajong bark,
emu foot sedge, matt rush, soft twig sedge, bangalow palm,
paperbark, wire.

Sizes vary, eg top row left: 7.3 h x 5 cm diameter
Purchased 2011
Lila Lawrence

The Beauty in My Mind

2005

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

70 x 53 cm

Purchased 2007
Abbie Watson
MANAGER
DIGITAL MEDIA CENTRE

I enjoy a lot of works that the University of Wollongong has on display but I’m very keen to increase the exposure for digital art. I hadn’t previously seen works by the Mangano sisters, Silvana and Gabriella, until we opened an exhibition here at the Digital Media Centre early in 2011, but I love “if...so...then,”. I find this work utterly captivating.

The artists, identical twin sisters, are positioned within the artwork and are engaged in a synchronized act of drawing within a confined space. The artists’ drawing action is so close it’s like an embrace and appears natural although it must have been choreographed. In this reflected communication there is something very intimate, charming and quite personal. I feel like I’m privy to the artists’ relationship with their medium as well as each other. It’s a fascinating and lovely work that is definitely one of my favourites. To see other people captured by it when it’s being screened is wonderful.

Gabriella & Silvana Mangano
if...so...then, 2006
single-channel SD 4:3
Purchased 2008
Michael Callaghan and Mary Callaghan
(Redback Graphix)
*Nice Poster*
1981
screenprint
86 x 65 cm
Purchased 2006
In comparison to other art collecting institutions across Australia, the University of Wollongong Art Collection is relatively young. Its growth is now at a point where, with an established direction and clear acquisition focus, the purchase and donation of works continues to strengthen and broaden the diversity of art on display across the University’s campuses.

Maintaining ready access to artworks for University students and staff is very important, as these are the people who connect with the Art Collection on a daily basis. The works on display are always carefully chosen, with the goal where possible to complement a Faculty or Unit’s purpose and area of expertise. This ongoing process generates an interesting and sometimes dynamic dialogue. Art also plays an important function in light of the continued expansion of the University’s built environment, with works often being commissioned for specific sites. This evolving role further broadens access to and engagement with art on our campuses.

As the Art Collection develops, the well-being of its holdings is increasingly important. Conservation is now a particular focus for curatorial staff, and this emphasis will continue into the future so that we best protect these valued pieces. Just as critical is the management of information about this widely dispersed resource. We are entering a phase in which technology, such as the digitisation of information, is facilitating vital record keeping for works which can also be used as study and research resources for new generations at the University.

This is an exciting time with art being seen increasingly as an integral component of all our campuses. I’m looking forward to continuing the development and expansion of the Art Collection, broadening its reach, and building a rich and important asset for the University and its community.
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