The Eucumbene suite and the Heretic: paintings, prints and livre d'artiste

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The Eucumbene Suite
and
The Heretic

PAINTINGS, PRINTS AND LIVRE D'ARTISTE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree.

DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

FROM

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

BY

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STATEMENT

Since 1982, sometime after arriving back from a three year scholarship in Europe, my outlook has been to extend the Australian Landscape Tradition. I am seeking in some way, to come to terms with, to re-invent and create symbolic images, metaphors for a unique land, outside the 'European Enclosed Garden'. Also to evoke the essence of the landscape, accept it's realness, yet, capture it's otherness, it's 'something elseness' - to encounter, not just to observe.

Idris Murphy - Artist's Comment
New Art Two
Craftsman House 1988
INTRODUCTION

The following discussion attempts to place my work in relation to a continuing Australian landscape tradition which itself has continuities and connections to a Northern European, Romantic landscape tradition. I believe that certain philosophical attitudes inherent in Romanticism have continued alongside Modernism; that is the early Modernism, into which I was initiated.

By introducing my work in relation to that of George Rouault, who is often considered in the light of both these 'isms', I hope to show not only a similar, underlying spiritual attitude, but that our work also differs in fundamental ways from Romanticism and Modernism.

In my statement above: the use of terms such as 'otherness' and 'something elseness' should be seen as an attempt to elucidate my relationship to landscape and to the paintings themselves. In doing so I will be looking to introduce views that may extend the nature of my work as a whole and point to a way-out from both these 'isms'.

The Northern Romantic movement, and the romantic philosophies, have had a profound effect on artists in the Modern movement, up to and including the present-day, and give us a new structure for the history of modern art. The tradition runs from Goya through Casper David Freidrich to Mark Rothko.

There seems little doubt that, alongside the Modernist landscape tradition, which was Paris based and, with few exceptions, ran on formal values, extending to artists such as Richard Diebenkorn in the USA, there is a Romantic tradition, a northern tradition, which uses the landscape as its main motif, and which is metaphysical in approach: an attempt to evoke the sublime, to use painting to touch the divine.
These secular translations of sacred Christian imagery into the language of modern semi-divinities, new martyrs, new heroes, new heads of state can be found throughout Western art of the Romantic era, in David, Ingres, and Goya or in the Anglo-American masters like West and Copley, who could rephrase the tragic deaths of such modern military leaders as General James Wolfe or Major Francis Peirson in the terms of traditional Pietas. In both Catholic and Protestant countries, these transvaluations of Christian experience were inevitably based on the corporal motifs inherited from Christian iconography: palpable visions of earthly tragedy or heavenly grandeur as conveyed through noble figural compositions. Yet in Protestant North, far more than in the Catholic South, another kind of translation from the sacred to the secular took place, one in which we feel that the powers of the Deity have somehow left the flesh-and-blood drama of Christian art and have penetrated, instead, the domain of the landscape.”

Robert Rosenblum
THE ROMANTIC APPROACH

Caspar David Friedrich is possibly the most documented and most recognised of the German Romantics of the 19th Century and, according to Rosenblum, had an orthodox Christian background, albeit a solitary one, as did the other central figure in the German movement, Otto Runge.

In 1809 Friedrich produced a painting 'Monk by the Sea' which Rosenblum describes thus;

'For modern spectators, Friedrich’s painting might even fulfil the transcendental expectations of religious art although, to be sure, it conforms to no canonical religious subject and could therefore be considered no way a religious painting by pre-Romantic, that is pre modern, standards.'  

The main dilemma that Friedrich had was to revitalize the experience of the divine in the secular world, but outside the confines of traditional Christian iconography. This was shared on different levels by many of his contemporaries. He and his colleagues took for their new schema, the landscape. If there is a Biblical exegesis to back their approach, no better than Romans 1 v 20. could be found:

Ever since God created the world his everlasting power and deity - however invisible - have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made.

So it would seem that for the Romantic, the artist could break away from traditional subject matter and produce a work that would express soulful meaning, a sublime landscape. Art could approach the basic tenets of the spiritual, and traditional Christian subject matter need not be the only religious subject matter. From the passage in Romans, this seems to be the implication, and that the world that God had made could speak of him through, in this case the landscape [nature] (if you only looked hard enough), and this was to form
an important part of the Romantic tradition.

Ulrich Finke, (1974) wrote:

'The landscapes of Casper David Friedrich (1774 1840) represent the clearest expression of north German Romanticism. Man and nature come together in a new relationship: the human figure and the Gothic ruins often found in his paintings take up the Baroque concept of the vanity of the world and endow it with enhanced subjective significance. 'A little later he went on to say, 'The constituents of the pictures are still totally picturesque in the classical sense, and it is indeed this which makes them Romantic, that is, wild, stimulating to the imagination; but they reflect that Christian frame of reference which was foreign to Baroque landscape painters.'

Friedrich's ideas were also influenced by the nature philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling:

'Since even philosophers admit that all one's experience is an extension of ones internal imaginative life, in every flower we see, or should see, the living spirit which man invests it with, and in this way landscape will come alive, Thus Romantic nature philosophy became a total way of looking at the world. Nature can be seen in man and man in nature. Landscape became a symbol of life.'

There are some particular phenomena and particular sites that they chose to exploit and these we need to place in context. To quote some of the writers of the time Goethe, 18th August 1771, tells us of the young Werther's sensations in front of the landscape:
'Stupendous mountains encompassed me, abysses yawned at my feet and cataracts fell headlong down before me'

Thomas Moore wrote of Niagara in 1804;

'We arrived at the new ladder and descended to the bottom. Here all its awful sublimities rushed full upon me. My whole heart and soul ascended towards the Divinity in a swell of devout admiration which I never before experienced. Oh! bring the atheist here, and he cannot return an atheist. I pity the man who can coldly sit down to write a description of these ineffable wonders; much more do I pity him who can submit them to the measurement of gallons and yards. We must have a new combination of language to describe the Falls of Niagara.'

Moore's relocation of divinity in nature, far from the traditional rituals of Christianity, could be inspired in many Romantics not only by torrential cataracts and vertical abysses, but also by the opposite extreme of an uncommon stillness and silence. Whereas the Dutch Seventeenth Century landscape painters with their more biblically based outlook, were committed just as much to the ordinary everyday things in nature, the Romantic's dwelt on the grandiose and Man's insignificance in the face of it. Another way we might describe their intentions would be to consider their looking back to the Gothic as a metaphor. Friedrich used Gothic ruins to show how great the past was compared with the doubtful present. Gothic decaying churches for Friedrich make for haunting symbols of decay and possible redemption. But in Friedrich and Turner and in Australians like Rees, human passion became more and more relegated to the domain of nature. And in the case of Turner and Friedrich, man often acts as a luckless or evil intruder to be devoured by avalanches, snowstorms, tempestuous seas or else becomes a silent worshipping meditator, to be equally absorbed by nature's quiet, almost
supernatural mysteries. This may have been a reaction or indeed an over reaction to a mechanistic universe, one which they refused to see only through objective vision. We might make the observation here that the French and English Romantic feeling for nature, differs from that of Runge and from Friedrich Turner's 'The Shipwreck' of 1805, or Gericault's 'Raft of the Medusa' 1817, show how an extreme human situation is created by the overpowering might of nature. One might conclude with Rosenblum that;

'such a capacity to translate the natural into the supernatural is one thing among many that decisively separates Turner's analysis of shimmering light from that of the Impressionists, just as it separates Friedrich's intense scrutiny of nature from that of the many Realist landscape painters working later in the nineteenth century.'6*

It seems unfair to contain or pigeon-hole an artist's work too categorically. Turner seemed to impose upon everything he drew or painted an explicit or implicit sense of supernatural power and mystery. It becomes especially difficult, often, to decide which works are religious and which secular in character.

In order to place my work in relation to those works of the Romantic tradition, and in fact at odds, somewhat, with their understanding of nature, it will be useful to look at another artist who has not only been stylistically influential but more importantly from a Christian philosophic view, shares an approach which is closer to my own.

George Rouault;

'Our art finds its equilibrium between two realms, the contemplative and the objective' 7*

In a letter to Suares, written in 1913, George Rouault was emphatic as to the
place nature and landscapes would play in his art.

'The landscapes will be my spring-board, they will be the basis of my work'

When warned he would soon have enough of nature, he answered

'for the visionary and the poet may spend a million years investigating nature in varied and diverse ways, yet it will always be a springboard.'

Indeed some saw Rouault as a Romantic, as in the case of this critique.

'Ultimately he is a Romantic. The passion of his art derives from intense concentration on the object, often gained by hours of observation in obscure cafes:'

Having been placed with the Romantics, as he was no doubt aware, Rouault asserted a different position.

'They think I am a Subjectivist. But actually I am both an Objectivist and a Subjectivist. Those who say it is not necessary to look at nature are insensitive. It is very useful to be always on the alert, to observe nature constantly'.

For Rouault, says Dyrness,

'art and life made a single whole. In using nature in his art he aimed to capture - we repeat - its essential meaning and its drama, not to seek something beneath and beyond it'.

Waldermar George comes closer when he affirms that Rouault avoided being either abstract or literary. Instead
'He takes a portion of reality and transforms transposes, and recreates it without idealizing it.'

For Rouault, nature does not lose its autonomy, but imagination needs always to feed upon nature. Yet I believe much that I would introduce here concerning Rouault cannot be simplified and reduced, to exclude the 'other' as Dyrness has in the quote above. Add to this Peter Fuller's comments in his chapter on Rouault, in IMAGES OF GOD. There, although proclaiming an atheistic view, he does, however, sum up well the radical view of nature that Rouault took and a world view of which I am in accord but which I am directing towards an Australian landscape.

Fuller writes:

'When I move from such Protestant thinkers and practitioners back to the luminous world of Rouault, I am convinced that I am confronted by a genuinely spiritual dimension which is in no easy sense reducible either to sensations of colour, or psychoanalytic insights. This 'something more' I am certain, arises from Rouault's immersion in what was, for him a still living 'symbolic order' which could speak, without reductionism, of revelation, incarnation, repentance, salvation and eternal life. God, for Rouault, was certainly not immediately discernible in nature (Objective artists are blind). Nor had he retreated solely into the depths of the individual human soul (Subjective artists are one eyed) Nor was he yet utterly inaccessible in 'wholly other,' ineffable, other worldly space. Rather, or so Rouault believed, his revealing grace was made manifest through the iconography, life work, liturgy, and physical fabric of the church. He longed for his own art to be a part of this collective experience, this divine tradition. Even though that could not be, it remains the revelatory radiance of the stained glass window above the high altar which gives his pictures of whores a dimension that is entirely absent from, say, Bacon's existential butchery.
Thus, those of us who are already deprived [through intellectual insight or cultural habit] of the consolations of religion can hardly look to Rouault for comfort; for he forces us to ask whether the full consolation of art can ever really be fully available to those who are not prepared, or are not able, to commit themselves to illusions more radical than the merely 'aesthetic'.'
To try to describe 'something more' in Fuller's terms and to explore this more radical view of nature, I will refer to J. V. Taylor's Book 'The Go Between God', in which Taylor, I believe, tries to describe this 'something more'; pointing out the 'otherness' of the world, and yet accepting its realness.

'The mountain or tree I am looking at ceases to be merely an object I am observing and becomes a subject, existing in its own life, and saying something to me, one could almost say nodding to me in a private conspiracy. That, in fact is the precise meaning of the word 'numinous', which comes from the Latin nuo, to nod or to beckon. The truly numinous experience is not marked only by primitive awe in the face of the unknown or overwhelming, but occurs also when something as ordinary as a sleeping child, as simple as a flower, suddenly commands attention. There are actually two stages in my experience. Firstly, I am forced to recognize the real otherness of what I am looking at: it does not depend on my seeing or responding; it exists without me and, secondly, there is a communication between us which I am bound to admit, if I am not obstinately blind, has not entirely originated in myself.

As Paul van Buren has said:

The decisive point to be made is that some men are struck by the ordinary, whereas most find it merely ordinary. Seeing the ordinary as extraordinary, as a wonder, is no more and no less in need of justification than seeing the ordinary as ordinary and something to be taken for granted.'15*
Taylor continues later:

That I am I, that a tree is itself. These two phrases point to the heart of all the experience I have been describing. The selfhood of the tree, the music, the girl, the mountain, confronts me in its absolute otherness, and also demands that I meet it in my own integrity. It's identity owes nothing to my seeing it, reflecting upon it, analysing it or reacting to it. Seeing it in this way does not endorse my former experiences and opinion. I am seeing with new eyes. For now this other being meets me in its own authenticity, and I am face to face with the truth of it, not merely the truth about it. The difference between those two kinds of truth is of the greatest consequence. To learn the truth (about) Mont Kilimanjaro or Titian's 'The Death of Actaeon' or Jesus of Nazareth is a process of investigation and analysis which makes an object of what I am studying and puts me at once removed from its intrinsic reality. The 'facts' come between me and it, like over-intrusive interpreters at a conversation with a foreigner. But to encounter the truth (of) Mont Kilimanjaro or the truth (of) 'The Death of Actaeon' or the truth (of) Jesus is to submit to being the object of their impact. From one point of view this is a dangerously subjective way of knowing truth, but from another point of view it is the only way in which truth authenticates itself. It is the truth (of) the Titian which comes out to meet me in such power that my direct response is a kind of 'Yes', not 'it swirls with movement' nor 'it reverses the position in 'Diana surprised at her bath.' Both these observations, and much more that I read or hear about the picture, may be true as facts and in due course my recognition of them will enrich my response; but my response will still consist simply in 'Yes'. Any truth about the picture, any informative truth, may affect the quality of my response to its intrinsic truth, but cannot give that intrinsic truth to me, for that can come only to me directly from the picture itself.
The truth (about) something is like a string of adjectives, but the truth (of) something must always be experienced as a noun or pronoun.

From the multitude of such experiences we come to understand that the source of a profound response of recognition, joy, and wonder is not the responding person, myself, but the presence to which I am responding. What we call the object of our response is really the activator. Or to put it another way, the line we like to draw between subject and object, between that which calls and that which answers, grows faint and finally disappears. As soon as 'being' becomes 'presences' it has already become a part of that to which it is present.

Many people resolutely resist this fading of the line. They insist that the experience of being addressed by an object or event in the material world is merely subjective fantasy. But to attribute any personal communication to inanimate nature is to revert, they say, to a primitive dynamism. And of course this is perfectly true; but it is only part of the truth. Our commonsense, objective way of looking at reality is necessary for our survival; but a more reciprocal way is equally valid. To say this is not an attempt to find a place for God in the gap of extra-sensory perception. For as I have reiterated before, the second way of responding to reality is as natural and as commonplace as the first.

The need to hold both these modes of perception in balance has nowhere been better expressed than by Martin Buber in his little masterpiece 'I and Thou', here Buber considers the objective world and the subjective.

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude. He perceives what exists round about him -- simply things, and beings as things. It is to some extent a reliable world. It is your object, remains it as
long as you wish, and remains a total stranger, with you and without. You perceive it, take it to yourself as the 'truth', and it lets itself be taken; but it does not give itself to you.

Only concerning it may you make yourself 'understood' with others; it is ready, though attached to everyone in a different way, to be an object common to you all. But you cannot meet others in it. You cannot hold onto life without it, its reliability sustains you; but should you die in it, your grave would be in nothingness.

Or, on the other hand, man meets what exists and becomes as what is over against him. It comes even when it is not summoned, and vanished even when tightly held. It cannot be surveyed and if you wish to make it capable of survey you lose it. It comes, to bring you out...Between you and it there is mutual giving: you say Thou to it and give yourself to it; it says Thou to you and gives itself to you. You cannot make yourself understood with others concerning it, you are alone with it. But it teaches you to meet others, and hold your ground when you meet them. Through the graciousness of its comings and the solemn sadness of its goings it leads you away to the Thou in which the parallel lines of relations meet. It does not help to sustain your life, it only helps to glimpse eternity \(^{16}\)

In his book "Real Presences", George Steiner continues to explore the more substantive term, 'presences' which underlines this 'otherness'; indeed he introduces his third and final chapter, titled 'Presences' with the following sentence

There is language, there is Art, because there is 'the other'.

on the next page he goes on to say,
The meaning, the existential modes of art, music, and literature are functional within the experience of our meeting with the other. All aesthetics, all critical and hermeneutic discourse, is an attempt to clarify the paradox and opaqueness of that meeting as well as its felicities.\(^{17}\)

and on page 188,

*The 'otherness' which enters into us makes us other.*\(^{18}\)

He supports much that Taylor says concerning the character of this 'something elseness' this 'presence' this 'happening to us.' In regard to these connection, much of Steiner's writing in "Real Presences" could be considered at length, but this is not possible within this document.

Rouault, I believe, is not from the Romantic tradition, the landscape is not totally lost in subjectivity, the acceptance of the createdness of nature (that is the given reality) and its autonomous self, creates a sense of otherness, that could not be immersed in or become merely part of imagination.

One might say that this mitigates the total 'I' centredness of both the Romantic and late Modernist.

This may be seen somewhat as a paradox, in the way in which Rouault wishes to hold onto the tension between the objective world and the subjective world. This tension is a dialogue between the objective/subjective. It is this communication which both questions and gives answers, which ultimately can only be fully understood (in this case), from the experience of the work itself.

This is the 'otherness' that Fuller points to in his work on Rouault, but to which he ultimately remains objective!

One could look for other examples, such as the New Zealand artist, Colin
McCahon. His 'I AND THOU' paintings in particular, show, that like Rouault, he was not a Romantic or indeed in the end a Modernist.

This way of perceiving nature is also shared by John Berger, and although the language is somewhat different, it supports a way of considering nature which is at the heart of what Taylor is saying and the approach that I have taken to my work.

'Urban living has always tended to produce a sentimental view of nature. Nature is thought of as a garden or a view framed by a window, or an arena of freedom. Peasants, sailors, nomads, have known better. Nature is energy and struggle. It is what exists without any promise. If it can be thought of by man as an arena, a setting, it has to be thought of as one which lends itself as much to evil as to good. Its energy is fearsomely indifferent. The first necessity of life is shelter. Shelter against nature. The first prayer is for protection. The first sign of life is pain. If the Creation was purposeful, its purpose is a hidden one which can only be discovered intangibility within signs, never by the evidence of what happens.

It is within this bleak natural context that beauty is encountered, and the encounter is by its nature sudden and unpredictable. The gale blows itself out, the sea changes from the colour of grey shit to aquamarine. Under the fallen boulder of an avalanche a flower grows. Over the shanty town the moon rises. I offer dramatic examples so as to insist upon the bleakness of the context. Reflect upon more everyday examples. However it is encountered, beauty is always an exception, always (in despite of). This is why it moves us.

It can be argued that the origin of the way we are moved by natural beauty was functional. Flowers are a promise of fertility, a sunset is a reminder of
fire and warmth, moonlight makes the night less dark, the bright colours of a bird's plumage are (atavistically even for us) a sexual stimulus. Yet such argument is too reductionist, I believe. Snow is useless. A butterfly offers us very little .......

Berger continues

'Yet there seem to be certain constants which all cultures have found 'beautiful': among them - certain flowers, trees, forms of rock, birds, animals, the moon, running water...

One is obliged to acknowledge a coincidence or perhaps a congruence. The evolution of natural forms and the evolution of human perception have coincided to produce the phenomenon of a potential recognition: what is and what we can see (and by seeing also feel) sometimes meet at a point of affirmation. This point, this coincidence, is two-faced: what has been seen is recognized and affirmed and, at the same time, the seer is affirmed by what he sees. For a brief moment one finds oneself - without the pretensions of a creator - in the position of God in the first chapter of Genesis...And he saw that (it was) good. The aesthetic emotion before nature derives, I believe, from this double affirmation.

Yet we do not live in the first chapter of Genesis. We live - if one follows the biblical sequence of events - after the fall. In any case, we live in a world of suffering in which evil is rampant, a world whose events do not confirm our Being, a world that has to be resisted. It is in this situation that the aesthetic moment offers hope. That we find a crystal or a poppy beautiful means that we are less alone, that we are more deeply inserted into existence than the course of a single life would lead us to believe. I try to describe as accurately as possible the experience in question; my starting point is phenomenological, not deductive; its form, perceived as such, becomes a
message that one receives but cannot translate because, in it, all is instantaneous. For an instant, the energy of one’s perceptions becomes inseparable from the energy of the creation.

The aesthetic emotion we feel before a man-made object such as the white bird with which I started - is a derivative of the emotion we feel before nature. The white bird is an attempt to translate a message received from the real bird. All the languages of art have been developed as an attempt to transform the instantaneous into the permanent. Art supposes that beauty is not an exception - is (not in despite of) - but is the basis for order.

Several years ago, when considering the historical face of art, I wrote that I judged a work of art according to whether or not it helped men in the modern world claim their social rights. I hold to that. Art’s other transcendental face raises the question of man’s ontological right.

The notion that art is the mirror of nature is one that only appeals in periods of scepticism. Art does not imitate nature, it imitates a creation, sometimes to propose an alternative world, sometimes simply to amplify, to confirm, to make social the brief hope offered by nature. Art is an organized response to what nature allows us to glimpse occasionally. Art sets out to transform the potential recognition into an unceasing one. It proclaims man in the hope of receiving a surer reply...the transcendental face of art is always a form of prayer.

The white wooden bird is wafted by the warm air rising from the stove in the kitchen where the neighbours are drinking. Outside, in the Minus 25 oc, the real birds are freezing to death!’

Charles Birch in a chapter, called Purpose in the Universe makes some distinctions which may be helpful in the way we conceive of nature.
The objective of this chapter has been to establish that the universe is the sort of existence in which purpose can operate. For that it was necessary to establish that the individual entities of existence are themselves of such a nature that they could be responsive to influences that can be called purposive.20*

He goes onto say that the next chapter would make no sense

'unless we have grasped the distinction between the world as it appears on one hand outwardly and as revealed by mechanistic science, and on the other hand the world that is hidden beneath appearances but is as real.'21*

And as part of his conclusion Birch considers the modernist viewpoint thus.

'In the postmodern ecological worldview the whole of the universe and its entities look more like life than matter. The appropriate image is no longer the machine but the organism. This view is counter-intuitive if we concentrate on the thingness of things. Our failure to see the world in ecological or organic terms is because we tend to reify everything in it. The modern worldview which was born in the sixteenth century and which dominates our thinking to this day tends to interpret everything from the bottom up. We think of the universe in terms of building blocks like bricks and try to put them together into a universe, and what we get of course is a contrivance without feeling, without life. This is the tragic consequence of the modern world view'.22*
Some implications for the Australian landscape

Fuller writes;

'Australian landscape painting is best understood as a successful attempt to develop and continue Neo-Romantic landscape painting - a British phenomenon, which cannot be fully explained in terms of European Renaissance or Modernist Traditions'. Fuller 23*

'From the middle of the last century, even those born in England's green and pleasant land had to face up to what it meant to be blown about the desert dust, or sealed within the iron hills. The old imagery of god-given garden became less and less appropriate. Perhaps this helps to account for the vogue for Middle Eastern desert paintings which captured so many British and Parisian painters in the 19th century. But, in the absence of any new and compelling models of nature closer to home, 'Higher landscape' was evacuated; depiction of the natural world became sentimental or topographic. 'The Scenery, in other words, was either painted for its own sake, or as a reflection of trivial, inconsequential, or 'unearned' values. This, I came to feel, was the tragedy of the British Landscape until the wars of the 20th century, paradoxically, enthused it with new imagery, meaning and life. Henry More, Paul and John Nash John Piper and Graham Sutherland were able to bring about a (redemption through form) upon a scarred and injured terrain, and thereby propose a vision of man, and his relationship to nature, of a terrible and awe-inspiring beauty'.24*
The Wasteland

'What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief.
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.'  T.S.Eliot

'But it seemed to me that Nolan, Boyd, and in rather a different way, Fred Williams, had all begun to propose a new aesthetic, involving a new vision of the natural world, and man's place with it, which could lead to a discovery of a way out of and beyond the modernist impasse. It is not difficult for me to recognize what these artists had learned from European painting. And yet I had come to feel that they had used what they had learned to speak of an experience of nature which we Europeans could only glimpse occasionally through the savage ecological brutalities of war. They seemed to me to have done this with a freshness and originality of vision which sprang out of their perception of that nature which proposed, a nature in which the memento mori, the skull, or knob of bone, is never far beneath the soil skin. I came to the view that this was of far greater potency and not only to Australians, in the 20th Century, than a cottage garden decked with dog-roses.'

Fuller is right, I believe, when he underscores the dominance of the landscape

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and its effect on these artists both those from the British Romantic school and those from the Antipodes and the unearned values that had overcome much of the British landscape painting until the Great wars of the 20th century, but that paradox that he points to has other implications which extend further than a renewed Romanticism.

The Garden Europe, and the uncomfortable Australian landscape has to be represented from a different approach, not unlike the understanding which Rouault may have brought to it, in that death and despair are also part of the garden and may be more apparent in our garden where death and the desert are both symbolically and factually everpresent. A landscape where, in many places, gardening has never taken place, and which refuses to be walled around, to be captured, to be humanized, to have beauty ordered at her. The land of a very different Eden.

It seems to me that Turner and others of the Romantic School tried to conjure up Eden, based on a particular concept of the garden, but could not see that both hope and despair, or in more biblical terms, fall and redemption are 'superimposed' on the landscape or 'seen together in landscape'.

_This unique and authentic opening of the eyes by the Spirit of creativity within the heart of all things produces that double exposure by which what is and what might be are seen together in a single vision._26* TAYLOR

That death and hope are part of the antipodean garden, that humanity is subject to this same sense of inbuilt frustration, in both the Creation and in the creation of the art work itself (but not overwhelmed by nature or insignificant in God's world, as with the Romantics) is evident in Romans 8 v 19:22

_It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to_
attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know has been groaning in one great act of giving birth.

Fuller, touches not only on the nature of this wide brown land, but on the metaphor of the desert. (which has a continuing meaningfulness in the Christian tradition) and it is to this, that I would finally refer.

Professor Headley Beare, in an occasional essay, describes the apparent paradox of the Desert:

'For a decade now, I have been wrestling with this paradox about the religious life. We experience the Red Sea crossing, that is, Salvation and the freedom to be - and then we are plunged into what can be only called wilderness, the wild, untamed and fearful desert. We reach it once we have exhausted or used up all the creature comforts we brought with us out of our life in Egypt.....Yet all the mature contemplatives I know or have read about sooner or later seem to lead to the desert, metaphorically, spiritually, sometimes literally. As happened with Job, the person searching for God seems universally to find himself or herself in a place where there seems nothing tangible to rely upon, no "rewards", often no peace, in fact, one could sometimes believe, no God. It is bewildering in many senses, and can lead to the rejection of almost everything one has learnt about religious Faith. Like some of the wandering Israelites, you can perish in the desert. Yet it has to be accepted for what it is, a necessary part of one's spiritual growth, not to be avoided but rather to be taken as evidence that one is being refined by God who at times seems wanton and unfair, but most of all silent and sometimes absent!'
'What is lonelier than death? To confront the emptiness, the void, the apparent hopelessness of this desert and to encounter there the miracle of new life in Christ, the joy of the eschatological hope already fulfilled in mystery - this was the monastic vocation.'

Taylor again considers this apparent, paradox when he states:

'The Bible pictures man stretched in unending tension between his idealism and the intractable problems of existence, or - using biblical words - between the image of God and the falleness of nature and the sinfulness of man.'

Taylor personifies the above by saying:

'Job never found an answer to the problem of unmerited suffering. The problem remained insoluble, but in it he met God.'

**Journey of the Magi**

'All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set this down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had though they were different; this Birth was Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our Places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death'.

T S Elliot
I hope that the position that I have outlined above introduces an area for consideration which has been lost in the rush to the pluralism of a post-Christian era and indeed is in need of even more debate especially in the understanding of the landscape and our approach to it.
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THE PAINTINGS

The subject matter for the first few paintings comes from the south coast of New South Wales in an area called Durras Lakes. The works (that inspired this set of eleven works) were views of the lakes themselves. I will endeavour to comment on all these works, some more so than others.

1. 'Two views of Durras'

Had it's start as two separate works, begun at the same time, with a particular view in mind: an area where the landscape has very little in the the way of man-made incursions and continues a sense of stillness, a sort of permanence, even when it is windy; a more permanent presence than the viewer.

The foreshore I purposely overlooked as it seemed the only part that had been affected, churned up by people looking for bait.

Both these halves of the painting started with this view in mind. However, one image seemed to be taken over by a view of the river itself, this new image seemed to suggest itself from a process of struggle with the original and failing concept, so as to produce a new image. Both these images, arrived at by different means, seemed to be about the same sense of place although a different view. Being of similar dimensions they were able to be interchanged, that is, the view which was originally on the right side was now placed on the left and made to function with a completely different set of formal problems, a juxtaposition which best evoked the place; two views one whole. The flexibility of being able to change the works around in this way and the idea of being slightly surprised, 'taken back', offered a possible new way for considering the image, like looking at the work in a mirror for the first time. This then produced another set of formal problems to deal with. There seems little point in describing every decision that was made, in every painting; this being found in...
the process of the paintings themselves. But some description may help in understanding the more overt thought processes of my intentions. Of course there is often nothing new in these problems, only that they are significant in the course of my own remembered associations and decisions and how these decisions were reached, and that I have deemed them important. Looking at this work two years after its creation, 'Two Views of Durras' seems to have a slightly escapist air about it, perhaps a sense of solitude that only wilderness untroubled by human intervention can give. There may be something of the romantic ideal about the first work described here which seemed to have struck an uneasy balance with works from the rest of the set. However, even within each work, I am conscious of the tensions between formal concerns, the view itself, and a certain idealisation

2. 'Casurinas and High Tide'
This work also has a certain idealised approach, a particular serenity, the tide coming in over the sand flats washing away all but the most recent traces of man made intrusions; I have left in only the keel marks made when a boat has been drawn up the sand bank in the shallows, to avoid the rising tide. This mark also has a strong formal quality which stands against the possibility of it being sentimental

3. 'Late Moon Rising'
In this work the dead trees and a strong vertical on the right hand side; a telegraph pole, suggest other concerns away from the idealised or sentimental. The acceptance of the contemporary idiom of the telegraph pole and intrusion into the landscape, that may seem of little consequence to some, takes on a significance for this subject matter which once would have been rejected, now forms a somewhat problematic part of my response. Roads also are part of that newly accepted subjected matter: roads that we see pushed through the bush are often the platform from which we see the landscape. Images of dams which
in Australia seem somehow always low or ironically washed away and damaged by floods formed part of the next paintings. This next work incorporates most of these concerns and is the nexus between objective and subjective.

4. 'Dip in the Road'
(you often know it to be there by the sign, but can't see it, just feel it while driving). Driving past, driving through, driving over becomes part of your understanding. The word 'dip': acting like a particular smell or fragrance; which stings memory into focus, comes to stand for and evoke a very particular sense of place.

This then became the springboard for the next seven paintings, incorporating more concern for local colour, not in a purely topographic way, but to pick out and to heighten; not just colour based on purely aesthetic decisions alone, more subjective but still somehow particular. This painting incorporated most of these new concerns and I believe is one of the most successful paintings to date.

5. 'The Weir'
Seems to slide toward colour of the more purely aesthetic nature, a choice less rooted in a particular place. However this is something that happens in the doing and sounds very matter of fact as if colour was the only thing going through the artist's mind on this particular production.
In one painting the formal and imaginative overrides the particular, and in another painting the image somehow sets up a tension which incorporates all these concerns within a 'sense of place'.

About this time I had made some changes in the format of the pictures, starting with, 'Dip In The Road'. These works were influenced by what I have referred to in the catalogue of my 1990 show at Macquarie Galleries as 'monoworks'.

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(suffice to say these works incorporated the idea of the mono print and the 'printed from material itself', the plate and print, in a single entity and were all based on the square). As with the last two works described, I considered that the square somehow worked against the Romantic or overt 'landscape' value often associated with the rectangle.

I also made the decision to work on marine ply for these next five works. Looking back I suppose this had the affect of balancing the more formal statement of the square against the warm natural grain of the timber which I could retain if I wished or prime with some opaque colour; hence setting up for me, a healthy tension which could produced another set of possibilities. It also allowed me the freedom to draw and scrape more directly with less likelihood of damaging the surface and to be even more unconstrained with the making of the image. Like working on inexpensive paper one feels unconstrained by the worth of the material and more likely to take risks, and there was always the 'other side' to work on.

This, linked to a smaller scale, permitted me to place the works side by side, as in 'Two views of Durras,' to see if these would indeed form a single work or retain their individual independence; or to turn one work upside down in an unfinished state to consider an even more radical set of formal possibilities, as pertains to a new way of seeing the place, as a new set or a single work.

At this time I began to feel confident enough to start the paintings with only the slightest idea of the place I wanted to portray, and to allow the work to evolve and finally to let it convince me, of its placeness and authenticity as an image. This was, in a way, highly destructive and time consuming because many pictures materialised but could not be held "to-place", and so were painted out. It did however allow for the maximum amount of innovation when searching for the superimposed, picture on place, or place on picture.
To add to this I was able whenever I wished, to turn these 'square works' on their side or even upside down in order to see anew the image and to be surprised into seeing some other way. One could begin reconsidering the place-picture. The square being in itself more flexible, accommodating a landscape view from any way that it was looked at.

Although I said this procedure was destructive, it was the kind that is needed as part of restoration, in the hope of restoring, evocation of that which is already there but is in need of resurrection. It may be a kind of dying into life. It also accommodates a sense of surprise, of shock in order to see a-new.

This procedure happened in most of the following works. With some the image was excavated early and known quickly; others were most infuriatingly difficult to find. This is because 'place' must be particular and newly revealing at the same time.

It is for me one of the great benefits of working with rather thin layers of acrylic which either dries quickly then to be worked over with the next layer, or to be scraped off, to reveal some other possible view or to be re-worked again. Oil would have to be extremely thick and I would feel that the possibility of making many and often drastic changes would be curtailed to the detriment of the final image. This seemed to be particularly true of these last paintings.

I am not completely sure in what sequence these last five works were produced, as they all started about the same time. I began to draw on the plywood directly, although some works were painted with a clear gel medium which sealed the drawing and gave the colour a highlighted appearance.

Another concern in the production of all these works has been the use of collage. This usually takes the form of cut or torn paper that has often been the end product of a series of mono prints and sometimes paper painted or printed with the intent of producing a particular texture or colour.
I believe that the use of collage for me is basically part of the total illusion; that is, it is used to allude to different spatial depths; sometimes deeper space other times superficial; sometimes ambiguous space. But it also stands as another way of finding out by evoking another possible response. By collage, you can move from one illusion (the paper with some texture or pattern, reading in its own right) then placed against an already established set of illusions, it creates a different set of possibilities-seeing anew, to re-cognise. Paint also does this but from a different starting point.

6. ‘AFTER BURNING OFF’ and 7. ‘DUST COVERED DRIVE’
seem to emanate from this same (driving past approach), ‘After Burning Off’ is literally that, a view from the road, a landscape that has either been burned in order to save a greater damage, or the vestiges of larger unseen fires of a day before. It was however a remembered instance, a place seen and then left, not to be seen again. This differs considerably from ‘dust covered drive’, a place that I have driven past numerous times and seen in different times of the day but remembered for a particular sense and feel, with constant re-examinations.

There are at least two effects here which simplify and distil this view; in ‘Dust Covered Drive’, it is the speed in which one passes that gives an overall sense of the place; the dust which had reduced both visibility and flattens the view.
In ‘After Burning Off’ the instant is held and holds this static stance, the second work incorporates the speed (the moving by) suggested in the use of the paint marks themselves. I would like to touch on these last works which now seem nearly too close, but they are I believe among the best and most considered works I have produced up to date.
8. 'LANDSCAPE AND THE MELBOURNE EXPRESS'.
is for me worth noting as it seemed to sum up a view of the landscape from the
train (another way from which we view the landscape) in a matter of fact,
contemporary way; ordinary in its subject matter, not being strapped to the mast
in a storm, nor Turner's steam train, no obsessions with overt awe although still
acknowledging the way we might experience the landscape from the moving
train, which may surprise. It seemed important too, for the fact that there was no
embarrassment or difficulty in portraying the view and the carriage or event as
a whole, even the stain on the window, these seemed all to be acceptable, as
much part of life as the untouched bush.
Somehow these paintings evoke a remembered event and distil it, in situ, and
make sense of the whole presence. It allows an experience that is even more
acute than the original experience.

9. 'DOWN TO PEBBLY'
Following on with the use of the road motifs, this work emanates from several
views and long held associations for this area (I first went there thirty years
ago). These views looking down and into the valley, the gravel road, and at the
sea in the distance through the tree tops are superimposed over memory and
affirmed yet are held there by the massive spotted gums their trunks, so
important, both emotionally and formally.
This work incorporates several viewpoints and indeed several depths, the
deeper space of the distant foliage and the up front-ness of the trunks, which
form a dense, picture plane presence.

These last works,

10. 'DAM REFLECTIONS' and 11. 'A REAL PRESENCE'
(the latter being the last to be completed) need comment first because they are
works that were most difficult; the slightly off square being most
unaccommodating to formal resolution, and were the extended outcome of working with the square, extending the format by 6 cm on one side had the effect, at first glance of being a square (more formal) and yet setting up a tension which forced away from the abstract\formal concerns towards a more personal\subjective use of the format, more about the landscape itself perhaps, but not back to the more recognisable rectangle: extending the objective\subjectiveness idea to the format itself. This was intuitive and although being aware of the importance of these changes and the need to successfully complete these difficult works, it is with hindsight that these things become more evident and therefore more a consideration. It seems to be true of all these works that much that can be said for one particular work could be of relevance to the others, and so I have considered only those things that were of immediate importance to me.

In the work 'Dam Reflections' I see the concerns that I covered in both 'After Burning Off' and 'Dust Covered Drive' have somehow been incorporated. The flattening out of the background and sense of movement (it is a closer view of the landscape, from the train journey to Melbourne) and the foreground, middle ground - if we can use that description - is static and the reverse of the way we actually see the view from train or indeed any vehicle.

There seems to be a range of implications for each view that has been evoked by the work itself almost through osmosis. Perhaps the last work finished in this group, 'Real Presences', sums up much that has been of concern in the writing and in this group of works.

The title of this work is firstly in reference to the place itself, an end of the beach where the foliage comes down to meet the sand and the rocks. It has an odd vibrant feeling, a presence, yet the painting is not any exact view, but a
concordance of all views; not only by day but by night, experienced in fog in rain in sun. There is a sense of otherness which is always there; it may be that this is the summation of all these things, a transformation of those instances into permanence. But the painting does not depend only on place, it is in itself, in its process that it has produced 'presence'; hence the title, which also refers to Steiner's book 'Real Presences' from which I have quoted.

In the final consideration it must be left to the works to reveal their own 'real presence's, as a group and as individuals.
THE PROJECTS
IMAGES FOR THE EUCUMBENE PRINTS

DOCUMENTATION

In both the HERETIC and the EUCUMBENE suite there were different concerns and or objectives which separated them from the paintings. These can only be fully considered ‘in the process’ or as part of a continuing process. Having completed the works I will consider the outcome.

One of these concerns was that the Heretic would be a watershed for my stylistic devices or in some final way a symbolic detachment from the European confinements in my art, especially in printmaking. In simple terms, saying good-bye to the European parents and modernism (as opposed to that seen in late modernism) which I had already rejected. This might be best described as the final working through of those confinements in printmaking which is, I now believe, to be the role which the printmaking plays in relation to my painting and drawing. In these projects and in other such printmaking, the works tend to consolidate certain stages, and leave them somewhat isolated and vulnerable in a way that the paintings are not. This then is a commentary on those processes and mostly descriptive.

In the Eucumbene suite this takes on another concern as well, that of an examination, or the problematic concern related to a particular view of nature, which I have already commented on in section one. The control of the Lithography medium, and its usefulness in exploring possible new approaches, which the painting and drawings has been heading toward for some time. In both these projects this process could be likened to looking back over one's shoulder, looking back, but committed to movement, often in some other direction.
THE EUCUMBENE PRINTS

The Eucumbene Suite, a set of Lithographs, based largely on the Lake Eucumbene region in New South Wales, was the result of the ideas hatched when the first landscape project, (artist/poet) was contemplated. This then was reconsidered, and conceived in this suite/set format when I was invited to participate in the Doctorate Program.

The Eucumbene prints consist of a set of six works, four of which form a 'Suite' and two other larger works, one of which is based on the Eucumbene area and the other is a composite of two views.

These prints are more difficult to describe in any overtly symbolic terms. In that way they differ from the Heretic images: but they are in a different way a 'watershed' as to the approach that I take to the work generally. In them I had set out to more systematically consider the conventions that I use in the production of the printed work and the continuing search for a more compelling and original construct of these conventions and how these differ and yet relate to the rest of the work.

I set out to start each work from a different concept, ie, the lithograph, LAKESIDE, LAKE EUCUMBENE had its start as a small painting of which I had taken a basic tracing. This tracing then was laid down on stone as a starting point. It allowed for an image, based on the already completed painting, to be considered in the light of the lithographic process, the memory of the place itself and the memory of the process that went to make up the original painting.

The other part of this construct was the opportunity to test out the medium in ways that I had not previously tried. In the case of this particular image it was to set the stone up as with an easel painting, and work on it as a painting, (with oil paint brushes) but with the added restriction of not reworking the image a great deal (not to deviate from the already finished painting) and yet allowing for a different image to emerge.
In some ways this is the least convincing image, the least controlled as a lithograph, and although aware of this I was prepared to risk the outcome. I did, however, produce a work which has become, for me, a reference point for using colour as metaphor. Being able to recreate the 'place' as colour, but not local colour, and at the same time not ignoring local colour, but enhancing the 'placeness' with a symbolic colour.

The first work to be produced at the studio, PORT HACKING TO TERRANORA was the first of two large lithographs. I wished to use the largest stones possible and to use the stone edge itself. Both large lithographs produced are bleed prints, where the image is printed complete to the paper edge. This differed from the Suite whose images were contained within a border. The idea for the production of this work was in some ways more conventional in that it was firstly a completed work on paper (mixed media) but both the work and the print itself derived from a composite of two different views, both facing west, both over-looking rivers in New South Wales. This composite 'placeness' was and is a most difficult approach and one which I have not resolved in my own experience, but was resolved well formally, in both the original image and in the lithograph itself. This image reproduced the original qualities of the drawing both in charcoal and pastel but leaving aside any of the collage in the original. Yet the scale of the two works was also different, adding to the lithographic production, and making of it, a work in its own right.

THE EUCUMBENE SUITE

These are works strictly from memory, and one that was less specific and more about the 'placeness' as there were no drawings or photographs or other images from which to construct. The works SILENT EVENING AND LAKESHORE are treated in a similar way in that they rely on crayon drawing directly on the stone, a more spontaneous approach which produces a more graphic image, flatter, less illusionistic, and made even more so with the colour areas printed.
from (light transferred) plate. This more mechanical process, then produced a tension between the sense of silent stillness: contemplative, less realist and the more individualistic/autographic areas of trees and clouds etc.

The lithograph SNOWGUMS is the most coherent of the suite as it is based on a convention that is, for me, more readily accessible and therefore less problematic. It is more in the vein of the abstract expressionist approach, the aesthetic of mark making, however it has the added advantage of being the memory of a particular group of trees and a particular site (not so much concern with Placeness as the Place). The last work FLAMES is still the most difficult for me to approach as it is caught between a more illusionistic deeper space and a flatter, more abstract convention, as well as a specific time frame ie when there was a fire at a particular time and in particular place. At the time that I was proceeding with these lithographs, I also produced a set of drawings in the park-grounds of my Paris studio. These were a continuation in the exploration of certain conventions, but from the more realist starting point, to the more subjective, and as I have already pointed out, re the Theoretical base for my work. As a whole I should add no more, except to say again that the works in and of themselves are more potent than my words, as to the continual assessment of both conventions and the approaches which the medium of Lithography may offer.
LAKESIDE, LAKE EUCUMBENE.
PORT HACKING TO TERRANORA.
SILENT EVENING.
SNOWGUMS.
FLAMES.
THE IMAGES FOR THE HERETIC

(The page numbers relate to the actual production of the Heretic)

The Heretic Images

Pages 9–10 of The Heretic.

I am fortunate

To hear the cry -- a confessional confidence,
Believe me! -- I am the doctor of sick souls,
I dispense the soothing balm of faith
And hope and Christian Charity.

Prior Gabrielli

IMAGE ONE

The first image in the production of the Heretic was to be a mixture of two characters, that of Prior Gabrielli and the person whom he represented, Pope Clement. The text above is that which is the link to the image. The image itself, like most of those chosen for inclusion in the book, are in one sense a homage to those artists from the European tradition, early modernists who have a stylistic influence or who have been influential in their own theoretical approach to printmaking (and therefore their art in general). Their own images were also taken on board when I was in the process of coming to terms with the text and the problem of Illustration. With hindsight, these influences become somewhat clearer and, of course, this facilitates a deeper understanding for the artist, who then can approach the next such project with greater insight.

George Roualt's images of Judges and Kings came immediately to mind. Not only was this stylistic as in this image on page 10 of The Heretic, but his impact has several important elements that impinge on the whole set of images, which
are not so obvious. If we take into account the actual scale of the plates that were produced for the Heretic, then they rely heavily on the scale of much of Rouault's own printmaking (eg., "The Miserere").

The other element was Rouault's own books, for example *Passion*, published by Vollard in 1939. The original Heretic plates were the same size as these. There was another area of interest that was also of a more technical nature. This was Rouault's use of a light-sensitive process by hand photogravure. He used the photo-mechanical reproduction of watercolour and oil works, worked over with multiple hand processes which changed them into completely new and provocative works.

Rouault is also significant, in an emblematic and philosophical way, because of the religious symbolism in much of his work and his more narrative approach, that itself became a schema which overlapped with the notion of the Heretic, Bruno as a religious figure/symbol. There are the more overt symbols of the SUN standing for the SON i.e. son of God, as in Rouault's work. In the case of the Heretic prints all the images have a metaphor that stands for God's spirit, taking the shape of cloud, sun, smoke incorporated into a more formal device i.e. the smoke that rises from the Vatican when a Pope is selected, as there is in page 10, it also must function as a formal device, in this case, one of balance.
Your wife is a noble spirit, purified
By daily sacraments, by prayer, good works
– And by a singular forbearance! Virtue
Goes out from her.

In this image, the influence is more unconscious, but after the event, Picasso comes to mind as formal interest, but significant in his most intimate connections i.e. Jacqueline Roque as inspiration as it were, for much of his portrait work. Glennis, my wife has a similar if not more encompassing effect on this image’s physiognomy. Also in this image a most important effect is the use of a particular red which was greatly enhanced by the printing of the same red twice, from the stone, so producing an even deeper, luminosity. This at the instigation of the master printer Jacques Champfleury.

The brethren wait. They have been pilgrims, too
they have a patience for the wander,
They know the grail-search must be maid alone.
They will not chide the prodigal, nor question him,
Enough that he is home...

The quote above is related to a question to Bruno as to where is Home! other than a descriptive idea for an image, BRUNO’S most poignant reply is, as in a day-dream, a physiological statement which has come together in this image,
courtesy of Morris West's lingering words, Bruno's day dream and Edward Munch's formal tension as in the psychologically moving, lithographic work 'The Cry' [whose work has links to the northern Romantic movement ]

The technique also coming through in this image relies on the underpinning etching process from the original plates ie the effect of buildings as if somehow melting, add to this day-dream quality

HERETIC IMAGE
Pages 50–51

Lust! that's a disturber, too,
I saw today a fellow cut from breast
To belly-button for a tavern girl-
But when you talk rebellion, heresy
And deep disorders -ah! That's another tale
Bruno

This image of the tavern girl I think is explained through the text but I would like to point out that as the Heretic images are, except for one, portraits of one type or another, the face stands as complex metaphor. In this case the alive-but-dead face, not unsympathetically printed dark grey, as distinct from the rest of the pinkishness of the body.
The prayer of Giordano Bruno,
Penny philosopher and one time priest,
Magician by repute and heretic
By imputation, fermenter of sedition,
Boozer, braggart, fraud, and merry-Andrew
Dancing his jig upon the mountain top,
Waiting for star-fire.......O God, if there be!
O Christ, if they did not kill you forever
On your Calvary! O mother of Christ,
Who saw what men could do to one who heard
An alien music! Bend to me, be tender.
I am blind and deaf and dumb. And yet,
I do see visions, shout a kind of praise,
Feel in my pulse apocalyptic drums.
Bruno

Again this image is a schema of two characters, Bruno and Mocenigo. It is the question of choice. The symbolism is both life and death, a positive-negative division, analogous to the formal approach to both sides of the face, turning the other cheek; that is, working in the negative on one side and positive on the other. The process is relief etching and the image is far enough from Matisse, I think, to stand alone.
HERETIC IMAGE
Pages 88–89

And I,
As papal Nuncio, here represent
That same high person Clement, by God's Grace,
Head of the Universal Church, With this
My patent, in the name of God, I say,
Giordano Bruno Shall immediately
Be put to the Question.

Taverna
This image, printed on copper plate and then modified to be printed from zinc, was the first of the images to be selected as being successful for the book. The symbol for God's spirit, ie the 'cloud', is formally and symbolically opposed to and separate from the rest of the symbols that make up the image. This image, and the next on pages 96-97 represent the inquisition. They contain within them all the symbols of their situation; both have a hand covering an eye, mocking their impartial judgements. For the lithograph pages 96 97 I used a quote from Christ, regarding the Pharisees as the motive for the symbolism in that Image.

Matthew 23:27

Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
You are like whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption.

Using the idea of whitewashed tombs, I wanted to approach this image, but particularly the face, in a way that would be a metaphor, comparable with that of Christ's.
Oh God! The innocence of scholars! Look!
You were a gift from heaven to Mocenigo!
He wants the favour of Rome. He thinks to buy it
With you, a bright new heretic!

Morosini

Here again the master printer’s experience and the cylinder flatbed press are of great benefit. The figure already being white, the decision was to print a pure white, which I was assured, (because the last colour printed was black) would pick up small amounts of the black, thus print the palest gray. This then had the required effect.

This image stands tombstone like, a parallel to Christ’s Pharisees.

HERETIC IMAGE
Pages 124-125

I wonder
How it will read five hundred years from now?
–To make a man confess a loving God
You burn him!

The image of Bruno, in this relief etching, tries to incorporate a network of symbols, with the more obvious metaphor of a crucifixion, then the rack, fire, smoke and cloud etc which appear are a culmination of the other nine works.
This work, along with that on page 127-129, is a summation of The Heretic.
Christ! What a choice to make. To smell the violets
Or the faggot-pile? To walk each day
In the green countryside, to feel the rain
Upon my face, chew on a wheat-stalk,
Watch the tender shoots of next year's grapes
Curl around the vine-pole, and the poplar trees.
—Or else, to make that long, last donkey ride
Between the pikemen to the stake, to hear
The shouting, and the chant of hypocrites,
To be a spectacle for animals
In human masks?

These two works again form, as it were, a set which intertwine symbols of hope, of Man's inhumanity and his choice, the images themselves and Bruno's words. In its way the work on pages 128–129 is appropriate as the last image, as its influence is that of Matisse, whose stylistic influence was very considerable. The subject matter is one that he regularly used, the view out the window, and as is mostly the case it encompasses those of the senses, all those things that Bruno has decided to relinquish, a choice that is not part of Matisse's art. Suffice to say that I have moved away from such "European" imagery since 1982.
I am fortunate
To hear the cry—a confessional confidence,
Believe me!—I am the doctor of sick souls,
I dispense the soothing balm of faith
And hope and Christian Charity.

Prior Gabrielli
Your wife is a noble spirit, purified
By daily sacraments, by prayer, good works
-- And by a singular forbearance! Virtue
Goes out from he
The brethren wait. They have been pilgrims, too they have a patience for the wander, They know the grail-search must be made alone. They will not chide the prodigal, nor question him, Enough that he is home...
Lust! that's a disturber, too,
I saw today a fellow cut from breast
To belly-button for a tavern girl-
But when you talk rebellion, heresy
And deep disorders -ah! That's another tale
Bruno
The prayer of Giordano Bruno,
Penn philosopher and one time priest,
Magician by repute and heretic
By imputation, formenter of sedition,
Boozer, braggart, fraud, and merry-Andrew
Dancing his jig upon the mountain top,
Waiting for star-fire.......O God, if there be!
O Christ, if they did not kill you forever
On your Calvary! O mother of Christ,
Who saw what men could do to one who heard
An alien music! Bend to me, be tender.
I am blind and deaf and dumb. And yet,
I do see visions, shout a kind of praise,
Feel in my pulse apocalyptic drums.

Bruno
And I,
As papal Nuncio, here represent
That same high person Clement, by God's Grace,
Head of the Universal Church, With this
My patent, in the name of God, I say,
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Curl around the vine-pole, and the poplar trees.
--Or else, to make that long, last donkey ride
Between the pikemen to the stake, to hear
The shouting, and the chant of hypocrites,
To be a spectacle for animals
In human masks?
A BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECTS

This part of the documentation will set out to give an overview of how the project got off the ground, the principle participants and the choice of the material. In order to do this, some information may seem overtly long and others too brief. The later will be rectified under other headings, or may be far too broad for the aims of this documentation.

This project came about with the meeting of several participants. One of these, James Taylor, is described by Rab Kilcullen, in the September/November 1988 *Craft Arts*, as 'an incorrigible bibliophile and passionate exponent of the contemporary book arts revival,' introduced me to the area of book arts.

My experience of contemporary book arts to that time was mostly aesthetic and limited to the "illustrations" of the modernists in Europe. After this, I became aware of typography, book design and the whole area of book arts as well as those who have worked in the book arts in Australia.

It is fair to say that at this stage I introduced James to the vast range of possibilities and techniques that Lithography has to offer and, from my experience at the Clot/Bramsen studios Paris, the realization that book size editions still could be produced. And that our two areas of expertise were more than compatible.

About this time James came into contact with Morris West who needs little introduction as an eminent Australian novelist. Morris was very supportive of James' ideas for the Australian book arts, impressed, as I was, with his 'Wayzgoose' journal of the book arts.

Some time after this James and I decided to work together on a project incorporating Australian artists with Australian poets, a landscape connection, in a limited edition portfolio, and to this aim started to research the costs and the possibilities. This gave some inkling of the difficulty of such a task (this project didn't get off the ground).
Some form of associated project was still being considered as I was thinking of participating in extra postgraduate work. In the discussions that followed, Jame's thinking was on similar grounds, and he approached Morris as to the possibility of using one of his text, with myself as artist, and James as maitre d'oeuvre.

The text that was offered to James was the Heretic, a play, for which Morris now had the copyright.

Why the Heretic? At this stage it is important to quote the preface, as this has made such an impact on both James and myself. This became a linch pin for the Images.
The Life of Giordano Bruno

It is the illusion of our time that the non-conformist is in the ascendant, that the heretic is the hero, and the revolutionary is the new redeemer. In fact, the odd man out has never been so much at risk or so competently menaced by that conspiracy of power which we are pleased to call government. The Marxist position is at least clear: deviate and you are damned -to expulsion from the party, to breadline subsistence, to a limbo of non -persons, to a brutal confinement, to death without honour. The democratic method is more subtle but hardly less effective.

The taxing authority may invade your most private transactions, and what it cannot prove it may presume, in default of contrary evidence. An employer may solicit, file and transmit, without your consent, the most intimate details of your private life- and your refusal to communicate them may provide a presumption of hidden delinquencies. The growth of large monopolies in communications has forced the protester onto the streets and parks, where his protest may easily be construed or manipulated into public disorder. A whole industry has been built around the art of affirmation, but the dignity of dissent is daily denigrated, the doubter is in disgrace because he demands time to reflect before he commits himself to an act of faith, and the liberty most laborious to maintain is the liberty to be mistaken. But the threat to the odd man out is not merely an external one. It is internal as well. So much diverse information, so many divergent opinions are poured into his eyes and ears that the effort to rationalize them all threatens, at times, his very sanity. Often his only salvation is to call a halt, to say " I do not know. I cannot commit until I do know. I will not commit without the time and freedom which you refuse to grant me."
I myself have been caught in this syncope. I myself have been subject to the 
most artful and powerful pressures to force me to proclaim that which others 
believe to be true, but which I cannot in good conscience profess.

This is why I wrote the story of Giordano Bruno, dead and burned for heresy 
three hundred and seventy years ago. I could not believe that any man should 
be required to sell his soul—however undeveloped—to anyone who promised 
him order, discipline, social acceptance and three meals a day. I had walked a 
hundred times past the brooding statue of Bruno in the Campo de’ Fiori in 
Rome. I had searched out his works and collected the fragmentary records of 
his trials in Venice and Rome. I found him, like all of us, a contradictory 
character: a muddled Philosopher, an arrogant scholar, a boaster and a poet, 
scared, venal, compromising, and yet, in sum, a figure of heroic proportions. 
He recanted once, after a short inquisition in Venice, and then, after seven 
years in the hands of the Roman Inquisition, refused a second recantation 
which would have saved his life and would perhaps have given him back his 
liberty.

I found in him: my fears, my doubts, my own wrongheadedness, my 
conviction that, soon or late, a man has to know a reason for living or dying. 
The reason may be wrong, but man’s right to hold the reason is inalienable. I 
wrote a play because in a book it is all to easy to succumb to the treacherous 
balance of rationality. I wrote in verse because I could express in no other 
way the turmoil of my own spirit. I wrote what I felt and what I believed, and 
I cared not then, and I care not now, how the writing is received I am on 
record now, through the friendship and co-operation of my publishers. I 
hope, one day, a great actor, may see Bruno as I see him, and play him as I 
wrote him. If not, so be it! I have walked for a space in a dark land and 
thanks to Bruno, I have survived the experience and live now a little 
humbler and much richer in Endurance.

Morris L. West. Sardinia, July 1969
My initial response to this Preface was one of agreement-interest. After reading other works by Morris, my opinion would have been that he was at his best as storyteller.

This work, a play, has special passion from Morris which has been evoked by his 'meeting' with Bruno. The author has added to the impact by drawing on his own heretical relationship with the Church, and my several meetings with the Morris have confirmed my belief that this was not only an important statement, but one I would very much like to endorse.

Before leaving this particular arena, I should like to let Bruno speak for himself.

"Much have I struggled though
   I would be able to conquer....
And both fate and nature repressed my
   zeal and my strength.
Even to have come forth is something,
   since I see that being able to conquer
is placed in the hands of fate However,
   there was in me
Whatever I was able to do, that which
   no future century
Will deny to be mine, that which a victor
   could have for his own:
Not to have Feared to die, not to have
   yielded to any equal
In firmness of nature, and to have preferred
   a courageous death to
A non-combatant life."

Giordano Bruno
COMPONENTS

THE EUCUMBENE SUITE,
A boxed set of lithographs and two larger [non boxed] lithographs.

The Eucumbene Suite printed on Velin Cuve BFK paper.
Consists of 100 copies, 30 copies of which are issued in portfolio 1-30, also two separate lithographs on Velin Cuve BFK in copies of 100.

Both, The Eucumbene prints and The Heretic prints were printed at the Atelier Champfleury, Paris, on Stone and Plate, the Relief prints were printed in Australia.

'The Heretic' being a play, by Morris west which I have illustrated, using the process of lithography and relief etchings.

The book consists of 276 copies in three editions
200 copies on Zerkall 145 gsm
Bound by hand in cloth over archival boards.
The Book is numbered 1-200 and signed by the author and artist.

50 copies on Velin d'Arches 160gsm archival boards.
solander box. hors commerce.
THE ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH TO THE PROJECTS

'THE HERETIC':

The Heretic was the most complex and difficult project I have had to deal with. It was never the less most stimulating, and although this "heading" may be slightly rambling, it is the unusual nature of this project, which made it worthwhile to document, as it is an important link to understanding the enterprise and the work as a whole.

Under the name of Southern Typothetae, which was the press name chosen by James Taylor, for a company/private press, dedicated to the production of Limited Edition Books of the finest quality, the 'Heretic' got its commercial start. The press approached each project on merits some projects started and sustained by James and others by both James and a financial backer who had partnered several other book projects. On finding out about this project, the financier, who will remain unnamed in this document, wished to finance 'The Heretic' despite the cost. For my part having completed drawings for submission to the publisher and to Morris West, as well as ten relief etchings all at some cost, this was welcome news. Believing at this stage that the printing could be produced only in Paris, I preceded with reworking the original plates and applying for studio space/accommodation in Paris, while James pursued contacts in Paris regarding printers for the Lithographs. He flew there to make tentative arrangements for the work. Also I had applied for the Moya Drying Studio in Paris through the Art Gallery of New South Wales at the Cif e International Des Arts and was fortunate enough to be granted a four month stay. This being achieved, more works were submitted to Morris for approval and papers of agreement signed between Morris and James. The only real procedural difficulties at this time occurred just as James and myself were intending to sign our contract, These were two-fold, as the financial backer wished to bring the date of the project forward and also he was the third name
to the contract and as yet had not signed. This being the case I was reticent, but in order to keep faith with all concerned I accepted the situation and relinquished my right to the Moya Drying Studio Paris. I then applied directly to Madam Bruno, who is the director of the Cité International Des Arts in Paris, in the hope that it would be possible to rent a French studio. This was a successful move. I continued proofing the plates and preparing to leave for Paris.

Two weeks before leaving, having rented my house, left my position at Wollongong University, School Of Creative Arts, and purchased my air line tickets, as well as relinquishing the Moya Drying Studio, the Financier refused to grant any funds or sign the newly reworded contract until a large amount of pre sales had been made. This was impossible, both in regard to the timing ie leaving for Paris and the other already put-into-place production plans. At this stage, if I had not had a commitment to the doctorate program I would have abandoned the 'Heretic' there and then and gone on to produce a new 'project' which I could have had some definite control over. However those still left in the Heretic project, decided to continue, and so look for new sponsors. This was helped by a company being set up to issue shares to people who wished to be part of the project. At this point I wrote to Dame Elizabeth Murdoch to outline the problems, and also to introduce James Taylor who would be able to detail to Dame Elizabeth a possible sponsorship for the 'Heretic'. This was successful, and the costs for the printing of the lithographs at the Atelier Champfleury in Paris were kindly paid for by Dame Elizabeth, with, I might add, no thought of recompense. The project then finally proceeded when I paid for the costs of going to Paris/accommodation etc., and in the hope that a company may take over the other expenses of the project.
My initial approach to the 'Heretic' was to use the lino cut in the relief print technique, and somehow amalgamate this or transform the process into a somewhat new process, when added to or in conjunction with lithography. But as often happens, the process itself suggested other possibilities. This is indeed what happened. One of my overriding concerns in printmaking at that stage was, and is even more now, to use mediums that facilitate a control that is as close as possible to that of drawing and or painting. The reason for this is the possibility of the continuous re working of the image so that the limited nature of the surface does not impinge unduly on inventiveness but takes into account the unique nature of the particular medium.

To make this as clear as possible, let me describe this control in different terms. In painting one is able to constantly attack the canvas with little regard for its ability to sustain the final image, hence the composition of the work can be reworked to produce the most sustained and coherent whole. This is of the utmost importance, in being able to take risks, which in the area of printmaking, is of the utmost concern, because the vulnerability of the image may effect ones risk taking and or inventiveness. Where real gains are possible, one should not be over ridden by the medium and therefore lessen the quality of the final endeavour.

After some time, frustration with the lino cut 'medium,' [although it is a most immediate process], and the situation mentioned already i.e. the ease of manipulation of the medium, led me to investigate other relief mediums and other artists whose work involves relief printing. This is when I came into contact with relief etching, both zinc and copper plates. This process was very close to what I had been looking for; the ability to be able to constantly rearrange the blockout medium with the use of brushes or any stick/rag etc.
This enabled me to treat the plates as if they were small, black and white paintings. as long as the plate was very clean to start with. In fact, in some ways it is even more versatile as one can wipe off part or all of the image and continue to work on a clean slippery stable surface. This image when etched would remain stable, and print consistently.

It is outside the scale of this documentation to present every aspect of these procedures nor do I think it necessary, but some areas impinge directly on the projects images.

This next area is a case in point.

While experimenting with this process using different block out mediums such as enamel paint and varnish, etc. I found that the paint peeled off where the bitumen did not, you could create very different areas in the one etching. If when the paint started to peel, it was then stabilized by painting over what was then left with bitumen and then re etched. The result was not that startling, but produced very evocative areas which were used to good effect. However the decision still had to be made concerning which printmaking process would be appropriate to the Heretic production. I had already decided to use Lithography for the 'Eucumbene Suite.' It seemed that one of the overriding reasons for the use of Lithography, was that the European lithography studios seemed the only ones that were capable of producing over three hundred images, hand printed, in up to six colours and within the bounds of any realistic price range, with colour being an important consideration. However a decision was made that we would use the best of the relief etchings, four or five works, printed in Australia, black on white.

The next step then was to continue the process of reworking the images and to expand on the number that I had already produced. At this stage the 'process'
again affected the outcome, reworking both zinc and copper plates and trying different acid strengths. From the outcome of these experiments some of my students became interested in the work and also began playing with these 'new' techniques.

One morning I noticed that a student had left a copper plate in the zinc etch solution over night. After my initial annoyance at this situation, I noticed the solution had eaten much of the copper away and that the solution had changed colour. Although I would normally have made a new batch, I decided to place an already defunct zinc plate into this copper saturated bath to see what would eventuate. On taking the plate out I could see that there was a film of copper particles covering the plate and that the solution was in fact completely made up of these particles.

The next observation was that the unprotected areas of the plate had been attacked in the most unusual way, not erased but treated in some way like electroplating, the effect being like that of an aquatint. I therefore placed a plate which I had been working on for the Heretic into this mixture. The most exciting thing about this [discovery] was when the plate was rolled up with ink and printed, it revealed a most delicate graded half tone and great possibilities for further investigation.

The continued working with this process produced another most exciting outcome. Using the same process as the one already mentioned I dissolved copper plates in a stronger acid mix, but in a smaller amount of liquid, hence a strong copper nitric acid mix, this then was used as a blockout. It produced a thicker dark solution like a paint, but unlike the half tone produced with the weaker solution. This blockout solution used with a fine brush etc. produced extremely fine tough acid resistance lines, much like dry point. But when rolled up and printed the same way as any relief block, produced lines that no other
relief technique that I have seen or used could produce. It is also fair to say that I have not come across any other documentation of this technique.

I wished to Document this process because I believe that this is a new technique, and I have looked at only the smallest of its inherent possibilities. The processes described were used in three of the original plates for the Heretic. None survived in their original state but the progression of the new technique is obvious in two of the final lithographic states for the Heretic.

I am at this moment working on another book, which will incorporate all of the above processes and possibilities of relief printing on plate.
The LIVRE D ARTISTE.

Initially, the context for the images came first, that is, the idea based on an ideal, brought to my attention by Matisse’s wonderful etchings of Mallarme’s "Poesies" and Rodin's lithographs for "Le Jardin Des Supplices". These works were my introduction to the Livre De Peintre/D’Artiste. What I had originally conceived of producing, was this type of artist's book, with some worthwhile text. However, an even more important concept at that time was the juxtapositions of the artists work, which are equal participants, and not Illustrations secondary to the text. The relationship between text and works related in an aesthetic/formal manner, This would be seen as paramount, Matisse seemed to work with the white page and black text as an equally important part of the overall image. This was my starting point. This concept was my major concern at the start of the project, and the subject matter I had in mind for the Heretic, was firstly 'Landscape', not illustrating the text, but as an equal presence. The idea of the 'desert' landscape.

As the research continued for the project, I realized two things that changed the context of my approach.

The first was that the project was a collaborative venture and that my control was limited to some degree. There were others designing the book style, type etc. The second was that they, along with Morris, had in mind a more traditional approach to the whole concept more closely illustrating the Text.

I will mention the work of two artists here, from very different backgrounds, who added to my reading and, therefore, the re-evaluation of my initial approach.

The first book that I considered, David Hockney's 'Grimm's Fairy Tales', offered
nothing technically new in the etchings or the book itself, although Hockney's comments did help. He had a reassuring openness with regard to looking at other illustrators' works (eg., Arthur Rackman), and the constant references to other artists both directly and indirectly in his works, Leonardo's compositions, Bosch, Magritte etc. This gave me the confidence to move more widely and to start to see other possibilities.

The next artist was William Blake in David Bindman's 'The Complete Graphic Works'. Blake's main interest for me was that he used relief etching methods for both images and words, and this started my interest in using metal plates and the possibility of using both image and text on the same plate. Blake's use of religious images was also of importance, when considering a work like the HERETIC.
There seems to be an area that needs some clarification and comment relating to the technique of lithography. This especially relates to the type of press that the Europeans and more notably the French, used from as early as 1896 and are continuing to use this century. The press in question is the cylinder flat-bed press which has produced much of lithographic work printed in Europe since then. As an artist who has printed more than a few of his own works on the more commonly acknowledged hand press or proofing press, as well as worked in Paris with the flat bed press, I believe that I am in a good position to comment.

Without overstating the case, very few books written on the subject ever mention this press, unless it is in passing reference to the history of litho presses in general. I wish rather to comment on its production qualities and effect on the artist, not to mention the printer/print workshop. To explain this press, as there is a singular lack of descriptions, I will expand on what it is not.

The press is not a proof press, either completely hand operated or motor operated. It is not an off-set hand operated or motor operated press. In fact this is a unique press, similar to an English type, printing press, 'Walfdale' being the most common brand name. The Litho press most known to me was made by MARNOINI- VOIRIN. This press prints both from stone and plates, as well as wood cuts and lino cuts. Printing size 65cm x 92cm.

This press then works for the artist in a true autographic way, prints as any proofing press does, ie reverses the image, and is operated by three printer/technicians. One of its main economic advantages is that of time saved due to the ink rollers operating automatically; that is the ink applied to the stone without the necessity of hand inking. Depending on who's hands, hand rolling some times creates unwanted problems and errors. The press has a semi-automatic feed which also speeds and facilitates more correct registrations.
These factors alone enable the artist flexibility in the number of colours that can be used ie many more in a shorter time.

But other areas are more technically interesting in that the weight of the press produces an image that impregnates the paper in a different way than a hand press. Also, the flat areas of colour are more consistent, due possibly to the friction generated by this press, producing a more consistent mix of colour, a different consistency?

It produced for me, in the Eucumbene Prints (eg., Snowgums) a marvellous combination of the deepest solid black and at the same time the most delicate wash, which could not have been achieved using a hand press. Like any tool this machine has particular possibilities which have been exploited in certain ways and with the collaboration of the master printer have made possible the production of works that could not and, more importantly, would not have been produced without this combination of speed, economy, and autographic authenticity.

In fact, without this combination, the cost alone would have meant that lithography would not have been able to continue in the manner that has produced many of the finest images of the 20th Century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Two views of Durras</td>
<td>mixed media on linen</td>
<td>1550x2450 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Casurina high tide</td>
<td>mixed media on linen</td>
<td>168x138 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Late moon rising</td>
<td>mixed media on linen</td>
<td>168x138 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dip in the road bend in the road</td>
<td>mixed media on linen</td>
<td>1240x1240 cm</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Flood weir</td>
<td>mixed media on linen</td>
<td>138x138 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>After burning off</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x61 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dust covered drive</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x61 cm</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>View from the Melbourne Express</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x61 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Down to Pebbly</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x61 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dam reflections</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x67 cm</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>A real presence</td>
<td>mixed media on board</td>
<td>61x67 cm</td>
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