Ideas and perceptions of the Australian landscape

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IDEAS and PERCEPTIONS of THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE

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Bill Hawthorn
October, 1987
PREFACE

This book is like an anthology of Australian landscape painting; it brings together for the student a range of works by artists of diverse backgrounds and different levels of commitment to the landscape as a source of imagery and it invites consideration of the paintings from a number of points of view.

The vigorous descriptions of the works together with the interesting black and white illustrations of them will focus the reader's attention on the particular quality of each. Armed with the insights and detail provided a student should find the works more accessible and more intriguing. In other words the book is an invitation to further study and to encourage this useful list of references and biographical information about the artists has been provided.

Bill Hawthorn brings a painter's eye to the often exuberant descriptions. At the same time he raises many issues (of conservation and exploitation, of relationship to the land, of the increasingly urban flavour of Australian life) which must be addressed not only by painters, but by everyone who lives in Australia. In choosing works which reflect such different attitudes to the landscape and to painting from artists of diverse ideological positions he has shown something of the scope of landscape painting in Australia.

Beverley Cook
The Australian landscape has exerted a powerful influence on the historical, contemporary and international dimensions of Australian painting. In this book Bill Hawthorn explores some of the ideas and assumptions which inform the creative response to landscape of a number of well known Australian artists. Some of these, notably Lloyd Rees, Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale and Arthur Boyd are now, in themselves, part of the historical consciousness of Australian painting, representing possibly what is termed a 'golden age' in more recent Australian art.

Others, such as Mac Betts, George Haynes and the influential Robert Juniper have celebrated the Australian landscape as the central theme of their artistic practice and have taken part in the forming of a most contemporary account of its significance. Other artists considered here have each brought a particular perception, a nuance of emphasis which identifies their singular contribution to particularly intractable subject matter.

The problem of painting Australian landscape was put like this by the late Sir Russell Drysdale, 'What the hell do you do with it .... there's all this great thing here and that bloody big blue thing up there ....'. So Fred Williams has done 'one thing' with it, infinitely subtle and memorable and the late Guy Grey-Smith another, of exquisite power. Tom Roberts asserts a link with Courbet and Von Guerard an association with the landscape of European Classicism.

It is reasonable to assume that, whatever critical interpretations, fashions or polemics may emerge, that the fact of the Australian landscape, its immensity and its paradoxes will remain a fertile source for the creative perception of Australian artists.

Gareth Morse  
Head of the Department of Art and Design  
Western Australian College of Advanced Education  
July 1987
The purpose of this book is to examine some of the ideas and perceptions that artists have had about the Australian landscape. There is a strong tradition in Australian painting of responding to the Australian bush and art historians often use landscape paintings and drawings created over the past 200 years to analyse, review and decipher the changing attitudes and perceptions of Australian society to its natural environment. It is these images which enable us to gain some insight into the 'sociology of knowledge' concerning Australian society. The fact that the vast mass of Australians live in suburbia, those vast sprawling housing estates that seem to spread endlessly around the major Australian cities that predominantly nestle on the coast, seems to have inspired very few of our visual artists. Forays and journeys into the interior or outback or other remote regions are made by many painters in order to recharge their creative batteries. All the artists featured in this book are concerned with the Australian landscape and we will see in their work a wide range of approaches and reactions to this vast landmass.

A paper (26th November 1981) delivered by Jenny Zimmer of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to the Royal Society of Arts, Commonwealth Section in London, developed the theme of 'The influence of Aboriginal Culture and the Landscape on recent Australian Painting and Sculpture'. In this, she claimed, "We white Australians are still at the mercy of the size and relative barrenness of the country and its unpredictable natural forces - just as the Aborigine has been for forty, or more, thousand years. But the Aborigines learned to move with the seasons, to travel light, to drift and survive. They achieved a harmony with nature which is being increasingly revealed as one of the most aesthetic achievements that can be credited to mankind anywhere". (Zimmer 1981: 133-134)

We, with our sophisticated technology do not drift, but survive because we re-arrange the environment. We create a new environment more akin to the more lush pastures and orderly gardens of England and Europe. Very few paintings by Australian artists have recorded the suburban sprawl. Is this because it is spiritually vacuous, already tamed, non inspiring or simply neatly recorded in the family photo album?

John Scott, in his book "Landscapes of Western Australian', suggested two major reasons why so many of Australia's artists turned their attentions to the landscape. The first was that Australian cities offer nothing unique in environmental terms. It is the surrounding bush, which is unique, not the residential and commercial architecture that is historically linked to European traditions. Secondly, there was and still is a need to tame or dominate the landscape. "It is likely that these elemental fears (of unlimited space, and an alien interior) acted on the collective unconscious and led artists to attempt to exorcise or tame their surroundings through pictorial representation". (Scott 1986: 6)

The reason for this need to control and dominate is one of survival, for just as Judeo-Christian man with his changing philosophies and social construction of reality saw the need to banish the gods from nature and substitute theories that would make a wholly explainable world, with man gradually replacing God as the chief knower and maker, then the artist reflected this in his approach to nature. "This Western, scientifically orientated tradition is one of prediction and control, leading to utility. The environment, so to speak, is worthy of its hire". (Ittelson, Proshansky, Rivlin and Winkel 1974: 18).
There are however, other reasons why Australian artists have turned to the landscape, one has something to do with the need to apologize for the changes we have wrought in a previously untouched and balanced environment. The Aborigines had an animistic relationship with their environment as is reflected in their art forms. This gave the environment spiritual qualities and powers. Contemporary Australians are struggling with developing a concept of an ecosystem in equilibrium after having seen the natural world as a resource to be looted. "There is at the present moment a definite movement towards representing once more the animistic mysteries of the land and its abiding spiritual presence". (Zimmer 1982: 141) "In fact, what I call 'animism' is the force which informs much of Australian's most potent and memorable art." (Zimmer 1982: 145). Well to invest life, soul and spirit into the Australian landscape, which is largely dominated by desert, and sparsely inhabited, but the recipient of occasional forays seems to be one way of comming to terms with the vast hostile 'terra incognita' of the interior. This love-hate relationship that many Australians have with their natural environment is reflected in our living patterns as we hang precariously on to the coast line, like thwarted lemmings in our endless green garden suburbs, high rise apartments and air conditioned units, all sustained in a more moderate climate than the interior.

Is this search for an animistic relationship with the environment a reaction to our Western scientifically orientated tradition of prediction and control leading to utilization? Is the concept of environmental exploitation and our being external to nature and largely indifferent to its well being no longer tenable? Is this what Russell Drysdale discovered and portrayed in his drought paintings of 1944/45? The natural environment is given to us, for us to control, but is independent of our human existence, or so it has been believed up until recently. To injure the environment was not to injure oneself, but often to enrich oneself. In fact, in medieval Germany forests were destroyed by Christian missionaries to prove that the woods were not sanctified and nothing dire would happen to people who destroyed them. (Ittelson et al 1974: 19)

In Genesis 1:28 it is recorded that God made mankind in his own image and said unto them "be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth". (The Holy Bible: nd 1) Whilst this may be interpreted in numerous ways, it is still distinctly different to some Eastern philosophies where man is seen not as a creature who is separated from his environment but as a part of nature's organic whole, a being, who sensitizes himself to a direct experience of the natural world without the need of scientific models to explain it. "His perceptions of nature are direct and organismic, his behaviour modeled ideally on the order of nature and directed toward the attainment of harmony with it". (Ittelson et al 1974: 56) It is interesting to speculate on what sort of landscapes the Chinese would have produced had they colonized the Australian land mass.

Australian artists then have been intrigued, mystified, scared, intimidated, excited and held in awe by various aspects of the Australian landscape; their experiences, knowledge, expectations, conditioning and perceptions have coloured their interpretations. Charles Darwin saw as the most remarkable feature of the Australian landscape, the extremely thin, sparse, uniformity of its vegetal cover. (Zimmer 1981: 139). More recently, Suzi Gablik, a London based art critic described her response to the landscape: "It was only when I touched the country - which hangs back aloof and unapproachable just beyond the cities - and encountered a landscape so fierce and primevally strange it frightened D.H.Lawrence that I felt myself in the presence of something uniquely Australian, a stored power that our civilization has so far not managed to obliterate." (Gablik 1981: 29)
It would seem that 200 years is not long enough for us European invaders, whether born and bred here or not, to come to terms with the Australian landscape. Some artists have seen it as exotic, but depicted it as they wished it to be, a land of Arcadian glades with European like trees and the odd example of antipodean flora and fauna. Others have grappled with the vast expanses, the grand panoramas which may be the quintessential view of Australia. "Australia is best seen this way - its vast expanses, sameness, immensity and overpowering qualities of distance are lost in the close up intimate view. The myriad details of sparse vegetation, rock formations, erosion patterns, is repetitive - it forms patterns of distinctive marks over the landscape." (Zimmer 1981: 139)

Whatever it is that artists see or relate to in the Australian landscape it seems that there are many diverse reasons for doing so. In 1963, John Pringle thought that whilst Australia is not a 'pretty' country with its often harsh, forbidding and monotonous regions, it is however, "the kind of landscape, monumental uncompromising and savage, which appeals strongly to artists." (Pringle 1966:12)

If this is so, many more landscape paintings should reflect these monumental and savage characteristics. On the other hand, Western European artists by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had come to see nature as representing a direct source of spiritual values and worthy of sensuous enjoyment.

Elements of this attitude can be seen in the work of Eugen von Guerard. His 'Mount Kosciusco', caught at a tenebrously romantic moment, breathes the secular religion of Caspar David Friedrich's landscapes." (Lynn 1977:8). Friedrich was the most purely Romantic of the German landscape painters and in his vision of the great forests one of the purest of European Romantics.

It would seem that the major problem our landscape painters face, is not the landscape itself, but the artist's educated vision. It is the burden of European tradition, or the opportunistic acceptance of the internationally accepted styles of painting and their concomitant theories that condition the view of our artists to the landscape. Certainly, elements of Romanticism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism, and Colour Field theories as well as the recognizable styles of well known overseas artists have impinged upon Australian artists in their interpretation of this unique environment.

The most rewarding works are those where artists have shown a singular commitment to the landscape and, searching deep within themselves over a long period of time, have developed an evolving relationship with those aspects of the Australian bush which haunt, disturb and inspire the need for visual expression in a way which is beyond the capacity of any contemporary artistic trend. These artists will find by experimentation, observation, study and endeavour those elements and their empathies which enable them to provide for us new visions and knowledge of the Australian landscape.

Scott has suggested that in this land dominated by deserts, it is, "man's desire for survival and dominance that has led artists like Drysdale, Juniper, Haynes and Williams to attempt to depict (it)". (Scott 1986: 7) This seems to suggest a form of exorcism, that is, the artists by depicting the landscape are able to survive and dominate in their relationship with an essentially alien and evil spirit infested environment. It may be however, that by painting the landscape a bond is established in which familiarity doesn't breed contempt, but respect, intrigue, wonderment and a rich and fuller understanding of both oneself and one's partner.
It is probably the ecological concept that an aesthetic harmonious relationship between man and nature has been and will continue to be dominant in the best Australian landscape paintings.

Heysen loved his massive redgums and celebrated this with light and majesty, equally Drysdale loved this red desolate eroded earth, alien to man and signalling the futility of human achievement. His love is expressed in the sombre desolation and isolation that pervade his paintings. Vila-Bogdanich's landscapes are expressed as the adolescent's enthusiastic love of discovering a new wonderous world of quaint organic forms, while as Feeney states, "In projecting my energies in the bush, in trying to find images for my feelings, I achieve an involvement of myself and my environment." (Feeney 1978)

The best Australian landscape paintings are children of a marriage between the artists and their landscapes.
A NOTE ON THE DRAWINGS

The drawings in this volume are intended to illustrate various aspects of Australian landscape painting. In no way should they be seen as reproductions of the artist's work, because by the very nature of isolating and analyzing various structural, compositional and tonal relationships and without trying to reproduce the works in colour, these drawings are simply interpretations of some elements of the total work. There is no totally adequate substitute for seeing the original work of art.
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"The mind is a stand of trees whose light limbs' delta can tie one star to another and oar their leaves to bring or brush away the sun, shed the same leaves in time, and shuffle bark down to shadow the harsh dwelling of their roots".

from Alec Choate's poem "The Mind of the Land".

Bright sunlight and dark shadows, often thought of as being characteristic of much of the Australian landscape, seem to have been major considerations in this landscape painting, 'Escarpment Sketch', 1974 by Greg Baker. The broken, vigorous, patchy application of the oil paint helps to suggest how bright sunlight on reflective surfaces can be seen to scintillate and bounce around creating patterns of light and shade. These are the qualities that are usually evident in most of Baker's paintings and pastels. Certainly other considerations such as the grandness of the towering eucalypts, the broken, ragged nature of the branches and the yellow grey-greens of much of the foliage have also been competently dealt with. Many viewers of this landscape painting should readily be able to identify with the typical Australian dead tree, the broken branches and litter of bark and twigs that cover the ground and the orange-red earth, characteristic of the Darling escarpment region near Perth (and of many other areas in Australia).

This painting is a very safe creation. The composition is strongly stable with the main focal point well reinforced and endorsed within the horizontal and vertical boundaries and yet a certain degree of energy is suggested both in the way the paint is vigorously applied and in the foreground trees, which seem to burst out of the picture frame that crops the tops and side branches of these trees.

The category 'Gum Tree School' may be applicable to this painting, for whilst it focuses in an energetic manner on such characteristics as the peeling bark, the dead branches and the soft pastel colours found in many eucalyptus tree trunks, it provides nothing of the haunting melancholy, the ancient weathered hardness of the dried bark, and the stoic quality of these surviving forest specimens. There is no evidence of the surrealist drama that Drysdale felt, or the utter remoteness evident in Nolan's landscapes or the romantic majesty as seen in von Guerard's paintings.

Greg Baker does show us however, that on a bright sunny day the characteristically Australian 'Gum Trees' can be aesthetically appreciated because of their ability to compliment man's re-organisation of the land's surface into fenced paddocks, tracks and roads. The remnants of the forest remind us in this case that we are masters of the environment and can conquer nature. We may choose what survives and what is destroyed. Here man has left a few great eucalyptus trees as sentinels to guard either side of the track. This is a landscape on the border of urbanization, it poses no threat, no mystery. Its satisfaction lies in its representation of recognizable Australian symbols, these Australian eucalypts; left to be admired for their strength and tenacity; remnants of a vast primordial forest.
Whilst most of Mac Betts' work is based on the Australian landscape, viewers should not expect to perceive highly recognizable forms. A skyline may be evident as in 'Pink Dunes at Hutt River Estuary', 1981, but much else is suggestion and innuendo.

Mac Betts shows in his work a love for physically manipulating the oil paints with a series of stains, washes and glazes with here and there areas of impasto paint, smudge marks and apparently impetuous brushed scribble marks. However, the choice and organization of colours is probably the most ravishing component of his work, for in the landscape depicted here, the sky is a wash of purple-browns with darkening areas of burnt umber. A small vermilion disc and a trace of cerulean blue lend sparkle to this swath of colour. Juxtaposed to the vermilion is a deliberate cobalt blue horizontal brush mark, mirrored lower down by a cadmium yellow dash from which peeps a trickle of watery crimson. Throughout the vast near white foreground suggested forms are created by the subtle emergence of pastel blues, mauves, ochres and greys. If there is anything Australian in this landscape it is not of a recognizable form of botanical or geological uniqueness. Mac Betts has no doubt responded emotionally to elements in the landscape, but these have been translated through his love of pigment into a stimulating, rich, visual composition that does little to enhance our recognition and knowledge of the landscape, but a great deal for our love of colour and our feeling for the suggestion and sensation of space. We could interpret many of the suggested forms as undulating sand dunes, with the emergence of some brackish brown water and some sparse earthy coloured plant forms, but this rationalization is probably irrelevant to empathizing with the masterly use of colour.
The exotic and decorative are features that Birch looks for in his landscapes. In this painting 'Monsoon', 1982 by Birch, based on his observations in the West Kimberleys, one can see a tropical richness depicted in the extravagant sky, the grassy greens of the mid-distance and the intense yellow-oranges and reds of the distant hills and some of the foreground grasses. The brilliant yellow orchid-like flowers, carefully delineated in the foreground, are reminiscent of Gauguin's paintings in the Marquesas, with their swirling patterns of exotic colours. "These Gardens of Eden with their trees, flowers, beds, lakes and hills often create a sense of delight and enchantment", (Hawthorn, 1982:3)

How representative of the Kimberley region is this landscape? Certainly the harshness of this area of the Australian landscape is missing. This painting has the lyrical quality of a garden of exotic splendour. It is romantic and constructed to give us a panorama of the distant grandeur of the sky and hills and the intimate close ups of the decorative tapestry like flowers. The design qualities predominate making the pattern of shapes rather flat and contrived rather than revealing structure. There are no harsh scintillating reflections of light or deep shadows, it is the richness of colour, the intricacy of shape and the flow of lines that are the most interesting elements for Birch. It is interesting to speculate on how Gauguin would have responded to this area of the Australian landscape and it is worth comparing how Birch and Durack have both handled the Kimberley region in their paintings and drawings.
Elise Blumann's painting 'River Banksia', 1948 is a striking painting in a style, that for most Western Australians, at the time it was created, was too adventurous and modern. What we can see in this painting is the result of two elements coming into contact with each other. These forces were an enthusiasm for the modern movement and the seeing of a new strange environment. They produced a unique series of images of some aspects of the Western Australian landscape.

Elise Blumann lived in Germany where she studied at the Berlin Academy of Arts and the Royal Art School, Berlin, during World War 1. As Anne Gray states, "the German expressionists and their precursors, Matisse, Van Gogh and Picasso, have influenced her either directly or indirectly". (Gray 1979:369)

The painting 'River Banksia', reveals her imaginative perception of some aspects of the Australian landscape. Although the subject is identified as a banksia tree, this is probably a mistake. The tree has an affinity with the melaleucas in two other Blumann paintings, 'Dying Melaleuca in Western Australia', 1946 and 'Melaleuca', 1940. Both these paintings reveal the same sparse clusters of foliage the same twisted, contorted trunk forms, the same broken abrupt branch, the same massive butt and the same close proximity to the Swan river.

Blumann's style of painting examined here, is brisk and purposeful, almost impatient. In fact it could be called a painted drawing for the brush has been used as a broad coloured crayon, useful for drawing outlines such as the heavy brown line around most of the tree, the blue line defining the horizon and the hatching marks across the foreground to suggest the grassy foreshore of the river. Even the sky and water reveal vertical hatched lines suggesting reflections in the water. They strengthen the two top corners against the bursting energy of the tree as it's flaying branches seem bent on tearing away from the imprisoned, rooted trunk.

Undoubtedly, these white to pinkish paper bark trees with their fine clusters of small leaves and their peeling bark and gaunt primordial appearance bathed in the clear Australian sunlight must have fascinated Blumann, whose energetic reaction was to capture dramatically and impulsively these strange forms, alien to European eyes.

If one looks at the landscape paintings of the British artists, Ivon Hitchens and Paul Nash during the 40's, one can see a comparable exploration of the English landscape in terms of modernist principles, but in Australia at that time, Blumann's work appears to be unique for, "Most Australian modernists of the 1940's were to see the landscape as the last resting place of failed hopes". (Bromfield 1984:12)

Bromfield asserts "her Australian landscapes are not 'alien' but serious and successful attempts to test the validity of modernism as a universal key to experience". (Bromfield 1984: 13)
Much of the Australian scrub country has a wild, tangled appearance, characterized by dead tree limbs and shimmering dry salt-lakes and stunted salt bush. In this landscape by Boissevain, the artist has chosen to place the lakes and bush in a square format pushing the tree line higher up the picture plane and patterning the fore and mid-ground with echoing part ellipses. Almost at the geometrical centre of the picture the silhouettes of two ibis-like birds make an interesting focal point, whilst the dominating textural area of the picture is the band of vegetation in the distance. This utilizes the techniques of brushing in the dark, broken, gaunt lines of dead trees against a pale pink-brown sky and scratching out the silhouettes of the leaning bent tree trunks in light colour against the burnt sienna background.

The colour is safe. This sunburnt landscape of predominant umbers, and siennas is given some relief with the pale blue water in the lakes pitted against the brown monotony of the bush. This colour arrangement is not natural because the bush usually is perceived as shades of grey-green with often the salt bush being a soft grey blue. But in order to establish a mood, the browns predominate as they have been applied by washing pigment on thinly and then wiping it off to suggest rather than define. For instance the lower foreground is almost abstract with a series of horizontal wiped areas superimposed with the scraggling branches of small shrubs. This out of focus hazy, messy, appearance characterizes much of the featureless, monotonous, insubstantial, broken quality of this type of Australian landscape.
SKY AND SAND ARE BANDS OF LIGHNESS

PALE BLUE WATER

POSITION OF WATER BIRDS
Arthur Boyd has developed a variety of interesting relationships with the Australian bush. These are reflected in his mid 1940's paintings of dense vegetation with its gloomy appearance, his early 1950's paintings of the Wimmera region of Victoria, his 1960's series of gaunt, tangled backgrounds to 'Lovers in a Landscape' series and his more recent 1980's treatment of the rocky headlands and forest in the Shoalhaven river area. Boyd's paintings reflect an interesting combination of his visual perceptions of various qualities evident in the Australian bush, with his own emotional and philosophical pre-occupations at the time of their creation. Numerous drawings, on which his pictures are based, reveals his concern for visual reality.

Much of Boyd's work shows the Australian bush as being primordial, with a darker aspect making "it an appropriate repository for mythical beings and events." (Haese 1981 : 211). It is often a hiding place for feelings and passions, or a scrubby, wild, untamed world, inhabited by demons, indifferent to the efforts and hopes of man to order and rationalize it. "The bush is a dark primordial wood inhabited by these dwarfs and demons that once populated the medieval imagination, a St Anthony's wilderness, full of strange devils." (Smith 1962 : 284).

In comparing Nolan's treatment of the Australian landscape with that of Boyd's, Pringle noted that, "With Nolan everything is light and glittering; with Boyd it is dark and secret. He follows the creeks and gullies where the trees stand close and the ferns grow tall and water splashes, half hidden from rock to rock. (Pringle 1966 : 39).

In this intimate and sensuous relationship with the bush, Boyd seems to have developed an affinity that may be similar to that which the Aborigines developed with the landscape. In Boyd's paintings, strange birds and animals (sometimes beasts) abound in the ungainly, twisted, broken vegetation that he often features. The Aborigines in their legends had stories about a crow man, an emu man, a bat man and dingo man. Are these some of the figures we could expect to find in Boyd's paintings?

Hughes referred to Boyd's mole-like figures as being animated by the same sap as the trees as they scurried and embraced in the dark forests. "Boyd painted a damp, opulent tangle of elemental trees, a vegetable morass in which all life, in its most delicate or monstrous forms, is emerging for the first time. His paint was appropriately dark and gluey, applied in a heavy impasto." (Hughes 1970 : 157).
Of course, these techniques used by Boyd are evidence of his continual search for the most satisfying mode of expression that will allow him to achieve his desired effect.

In the painting examined here, 'Floods', 1975, we see a sombre undifferentiated land mass, except for a treacly protruding form above a tangled mass of vegetation which occupies the middle one third of the painting. This strange primeval mass appears as if it were a monstrous serpent's head, peeping from its lair, whilst a bizarre spider/oaks plane like a dragonfly, flown by a demon eyed pilot hovers above the grotesquely distorted and stiff carcass of a distended bull floating upside down in the dark and glassy brown sweep of the swollen massed and sunless river. The river bank is broken by the gaunt stiff remains of tree trunks.

The whole horror of the imagery and the messy surface squiggles, scratches and awkward marks is underlayered by a beautiful, subtle and careful blending of three horizontal bands of honeyed colour. The colours of the sky and water are blended with a blade or flexible scraper, the soft delicate pink and blue sky being tied to the brown, umbers, ochres and siennas of the watery base. The central area, which is essentially grey is underlain by blues, pinks, greens, violets and yellows; over which the scribbled messy umbers and browns suggest the tops of foliage and white sticks suggest tree trunks. Boyd has created from this prosaic episode of a flood, a mystical event that reveals beauty in grotesqueness, harmony in trauma and an unforgettable image.

"Arthur Boyd was the first Australian artist of significance to realise the evocative, associational expression of this landscape". (Philipp 1967 : 40).
If Haynes finds that elements of the Australian landscape trigger off a vibrant colour response in his work, then in Arthur Cartwright we find Australian scenes that appear almost monochromatic. In the example selected here, 'Crusoe Beach', 1983, there is an exactitude of observation and a choice of subject matter that is full of mysticism and melancholy; it's moody atmosphere is cast in soft light like many a romantic English landscape.

Are these qualities discernable in the Australian landscape? Certainly Cartwright will probably convince many observers with his paintings around Denmark, Western Australia, that he has faithfully recorded that Australian landscape. The paper bark trees with their characteristic fine-textured foliage are shown by using rubbed-in umbers on the carefully prepared, textured boards, for one of the characteristics of much of the Australian bush is the sclerotic quality seen in the spiky leaf structures.

Cartwright has faithfully captured the stark white sinewy and flakey appearance of the paper bark tree trunks and their shaggy fine foliage in a safe overall harmony of umber green undergrowth with the atmospheric mistiness of distant hills, water and foliage. Whilst the sky is almost white it is not a glaring hard penetrating light, but soft and diffuse, the same sort of light that Frederick McCubbin enjoyed creating in many of his famous Australian bush series.

Cartwright's paintings are perceptive observations of what we see and can readily recognize. His tonality is correct, his textures skilfully suggested and his composition refined in classical terms. There is no flamboyance of colour or wildly expressive gestures to be found in these works.
Colour is a major component of this seascape by Chris Constable, who is both a painter and sculptor. Constable enjoys using vivid colours in his three dimensional creations as well as his paintings. This view of 'Cottesloe Beach', 1981, relies on the balance between a wedge of intense green, blue colour being supported by a vast mass of yellow ochres and neutralized soft pink browns and a horizontal band of sky blue. Not only does the carefully balanced colour arrangement, but also the strong compositional organization of the shapes result in eye movements that create a strong focal point in the top left hand area of the picture plane (see drawing).

There is a strong sense of movement in this painting, created largely by the repetition of the serrated edges and convolutions in the pattern of the wash of the waves on the wet shore, the dry shore sand, as well as the dunes and the racing clouds in the sky. The flow is a sweeping movement from right to left. The few white areas, (such as on the crests of the round clouds, the edges of the breaking waves and in the distance at the oil storage tanks in Fremantle) act as highlights again strengthening the wedge shaped movement to a focal point.

The hard line of the horizon, typical of the sea in these parts on a summers day, restrains the strong diagonal movement from below. Constable seems to have played with the subtle patterns of shapes created by the ceaseless moving of the waves as the receding and encroaching water reflects the blue sky and yet by moistening the sandy beach it darkens the colours through a range of greys to soft indian reds, a perfect foil to the intense green of the sea.
White edging of clouds leading to white petroleum storage tanks

intense dark blue-green

use of white edging of waves to lead to focal point

soft, warm pink in sand and sky.

dense green

series of rubbish bins used as dark marks to reinforce convergence to focal points

soft Indian red

blue reflections of the sky

White edging of clouds leading to white petroleum storage tanks

intense dark blue-green

use of white edging of waves to lead to focal point

soft, warm pink in sand and sky.

dense green

series of rubbish bins used as dark marks to reinforce convergence to focal points

soft Indian red

blue reflections of the sky
In this landscape painting, 'The field at St. Leonard's Estate', 1982, Phillip Cook has stressed in his composition the horizontal nature of the fields and the curved masses of the large trees. This painting is essentially about a man made landscape, a farm complete with live-stock and buildings, but Cook has chosen to stress the wonderful back lighting emanating from a semi-overcast sky, the lightest portion being on the horizon in the break between the trees. This white area is picked up by the white horse and the white object in the field in the foreground of the picture. The composition is deceptively simple showing three major regions, the flat foreground of low bushy blue shrubs, the mid-ground of dark circular trees and the horizontal blue and white layered sky. It is the intricate representational detail of the mid-ground that holds our attention with its pattern of lights and darks, of silhouetted tree trunks and branches, with the white horse against the dark background and the red roofed farm house, the strip of green of the fields and the light patches representing the reflection of light from the tin roofs of the out buildings.

Cook's style of painting relies on a traditional appreciation and ability to capture the tonal qualities of a scene, for this reason his work resembles Max Meldrum's 'Picherits Farm', 1910. The subject matter is also similar for they resemble an arranged landscape, an English, ordered, mellowed landscape. In fact many early Australian painters and draughtsmen looked for and indeed contrived these qualities in their representations of the Australian landscape.
RUSSELL DRYSDALE

A popular Australian painter, "Drysdale's relationship to his environment was easier to grasp than Nolan's", and, "between 1940 and 1947, (he) made it possible for other painters to react freshly to their environment by showing them new relationships with it." (Hughes 1970: 191)

What were these relationships? Robert Hughes suggests that, "by perfecting the animist view of nature, Drysdale brought to its peak a tendency which, - has long been central in Australian paintings." (Hughes 1970: 201). The embodiment of the landscape with spiritual qualities can be seen in Drysdale's theatrical arrangements of the huge dramatic boulders, the savaged torn tree stumps and roots and the eerie lighting that makes each landscape a stage setting for a drama that might take place. The remnants of the conflict between stationary objects and such cyclical elements as fire, tempest and sun can be seen in the stoically resistant ruins. All the forms are watching and waiting, bearing their battle scars impassively, knowing more encounters are inevitable. Albert Tucker and John Feeney have possibly shared similar insights about the Australian landscape.

With minimal seasonal changes in much of the Australian bush, it could be this passive indifference to changing weather conditions and man's presence that has caused some artists to articulate in their paintings this harsh resilience and impassivity to the external forces. Bernard Smith called this tradition the, "long established alternative to the fashionable convention of 'sunny Australia'. Australian nature, - was monotonous, unpicturesque, idiosyncratic, alien and hostile to man, inducing either loneliness and melancholy or nonchalant resistance." (Smith 1962: 245). This is the tradition that Drysdale found appealing and whilst the influence of other artists' work and art movements, (e.g. Graham Sutherland, early colonial painters, Modigliani, the Pittura Metafisica) can be detected in his work, his personal vision and search for the quintessence of the landscape has helped make him a part of our national consciousness. "We can no longer visualize certain aspects of our landscape and way of life except in terms of Drysdale's paintings. We have come to know them with Drysdale's eyes. It is almost as though Drysdale's paintings were the fruit of our personal knowledge, because they speak to us with a voice in which we recognize the characteristics of our own speech and the workings of our own mind." (Gleeson 1977: 83).

In 'Walls of China', 1945, examined here, the intense drama of the contorted tree form against the brooding red sky and the haunting sunlit white eroded land forms has a surrealistic dimension as the deep theatrical space is dominated by the claw like animated forms of the tree, which is crawling its way across the canvas. This type of landscape, "was a testament to the continuation of a pioneering struggle (whether humble or heroic, tragic or prosaic) in the face of harsh geographical and historical realities." (Haese 1981: 265).

For many appreciators of art, Drysdale was the first artist to tackle the Australian outback, not in the traditional romantic manner of Eugen von Guerard, but he, "was the first to apply the techniques and discoveries of modern painting to the ancient forms of the Australian outback." (Pringle 1966: 29).

"No landscapes except Drysdale has more convincingly suggested the monumental antiquity of Australian landscape, and its feel of arrested organic growth." (Hughes 1970: 92)
The endless, straight, dusty road, disappearing into the distance and the scratchy gaunt bush, all sticks and twigs and no foliage - more dead than alive, this is the country that Elizabeth Durack has depicted. It is the sheep station country of Western Australia. It is eaten out, a sense of abandonment pervades it with the starkness and futility that accompanies the bare cattle grid and fence separating one barren area from another equally barren area.

A composition of disarming simplicity, with one third sky and two thirds flat red landscape this painting shows the dessicated remains of the scrubby bush surrounding the piercing central triangle of the road as it wedges its way through the landscape with a severity and dominance that is only checked by its truncation at the white cattle grid. The apparent bisymmetry of the composition is offset by the great expanse of land on the right with the singular feature of an old abandoned vehicle tyre left rotting in the sun.

Durack has masterfully caught the vastness of distance, the anonymity and featurelessness of the countryside and man's general attitude to this type of country, a land to be travelled through as quickly as possible discarding remnants of civilization, but evidencing no signs of habitation.

The wild gesture-like configuration of the foreground tree-remains indicate the haphazard nature of growth in this country, the struggle and energy consumed in the distorted contortions of the branches as they struggle to grow from one season to the next.

The reader might consider how this country could look in Spring after a wet season when the ground could be a carpet of wild flowers and the bushes balls of blossom; it seems that most artists are not interested in the short lived glory and bountifulness of this region of the Australian bush, but only in the enduring struggle for survival in the generally prevailing harsh conditions.
Vast horizons and lazy clouds, forming and shaping themselves in unlimited space as they float majestically across the sky, seems to be the theme for this painting, 'Aerial Landscape Pilbara', 1980 by Nola Farman. There are no lush colours here; a soft haze pervades the land forms in their sombre browns and greys. The only distinguishable features in this barren land are the life giving water courses, rimmed by the clustered dots of vegetation. What a contrast this is to the massive slabs of rich intense colour used by Guy Grey-Smith to depict this country or the broken contrasts of light and shade and the complimentary colours used by George Haynes, or the subtlety of colour and texture as can be seen in the work of Fred Williams.

Farmer shows an objective detachment in this treatment of the landscape and yet the magic is found in the clouds, that vast flotilla of advancing forms that in this case have emerged beyond the picture plane; physically, as the clouds have been cut out of plywood and projected in front of the painting and in fact protrude above and to each side of the picture frame. This is the emotional impact, the sublime indifference of these temporal cloud forms as they shape and reshape themselves, free from the surface monotony of the Pilbara land forms.

It could be argued that Farman in her treatment of this Australian landscape depicts the general attitude of Australians to much of this continent. Like the clouds viewing the vast terrain from above and moving silently on, so to we humans move through this landscape in search of a permanent residence in the green forests or by the sparkling animated seas along the coastline. This is where the vast mass of Australians reside. The alien landforms, the vast barreness and inadequate water supplies of most of the Australian landscape is no place for permanent residence.
The Australian landscape in Feeney's painting 'Bird', 1981, is not the traditional gum tree, bush tracks, water holes, distant mountains and endless blue sky, it is the bush as one might feel it, a monotonous flat brooding land, indistinct in quiet blobs of endless grey receding to the curved horizon. These repeated blobs of the trees are symbols for the eternal indifference that undifferentiated landscapes can suggest to people. Interspersed amongst the trees the only other feature is the interminable ant hills, like minor megaliths patterning the countryside. There is no blue sky, only the red brown earth where the sky should be. The black and white bird dominating the central position in the brown sky is not recognizable as such, but like the aboriginal wandjina figures it could symbolize the flight of life over and above this uninhabited land. The pool of water, the only other feature in the painting, shows the bird's reflection, or is it the bird's spirit transfixed to the sustenance of life - water. Whatever it may be, its stark form is black, whilst that of the sky form is white. Amidst this sombre landscape the red ant hills are lit like beacons in the sinking sunlight as they glow in a sea of grey green blobs and the soft grey blue of evening shadows invade the fuzzy out of focus trees.

This landscape came not from a careful analysis of the tree structures, the geomorphology of the area or the study of light and shade patterns, but from reacting to sensations that are derived from first hand experiences in some of the more remote parts of Australia. The silence, the vastness and the insignificance of humans is difficult to accommodate without investing in the land a spiritual significance that counteracts the apparent indifference to mankind.

"Because I am tied to art, painting the outback is wish fulfilment, my walkabout. When I am in the bush my libido is freed of civilization and I regain my vitality." (Feeney 1978).
How important was the landscape to Guy Grey-Smith? For some viewers of his work, his landscape paintings may seem to have little connection with the Australian landscape; they probably appear more as abstract arrangements of chunky blocks of colour, yet his numerous trips to the Pilbara, the Murchison, the South West coastal region and the Karri forest and his numerous ink and watercolour drawings indicate his enthusiasm for landscape.

An observer of Grey-Smith's, 'Karri Forest', 1971, may be forgiven for not finding much in common in the painting with the notion of the vast cathedral like columns of white-grey tree trunks and the canopy of leaves found in the Karri forest. What has Grey-Smith done? Certainly he has indicated the vertical character of the tall forest trees, but the suggested tree trunks are in warm cadmium yellows and oranges, complemented by a lime green foreground and grey-blue background. The whole composition is a sensuous arrangement of yellow variations played against grey variations; sparkled with the occasional touch of black, white, alizarin crimson and mixtures of these colours. A suggestion of depth is created by the dominant tree trunk forms on the left cutting the picture plane from top to bottom, whilst in the central area, thin spindly trunks higher up on the picture plane suggest a degree of distance.

Viewers can probably sense Grey-Smith's love of the strong physical application of paint and his enjoyment of strong colour relationships, but it is doubtful if the qualities of the Karri forest in terms of light and shade, colour and grandeur of structure are shown as distinctly different to the qualities of the Pilbara with its vast open spaces, mesa type rocky structures and scrubby vegetation. All of Grey-Smith's later landscapes carry his personal style and are instantly recognizable as Grey-Smith paintings rather than having regional or natural landscape characteristics. Grey-Smith's search for a personal mode of expression lead him closer and closer to abstract arrangements of colour rather than a dependence on the external physical world of nature. The landscape acted as a catalyst for his expressive desires which were primarily to do with colour.
Hayne's handling of the Western Australian landscape has inspired many other local artists to follow his interests in light and colour. Jonathan Snowball, Nigel Hewitt and Eveline Kotai are some who have borrowed heavily from his observations.

The intensity of the Australian light in certain circumstances when it creates impenetrable shadows and glaring blinding surfaces suggests that in the harshest conditions the land has become bleached of colour leaving a world of black and white. This is what seems to have captured Hayne's attention. In fact, many of Hayne's charcoal drawings crystallize this perception into works of crisp intense black and white with no greys. In his paintings however, the use of intense, pulsating exotic colours gives the light and shade a rich new dimension. Haynes enjoys finding or inventing for the shadowy areas, intense blues, purples, reds, magentas and greens whilst in the light areas vibrant yellows, oranges, lime greens, soft pinks, and mauves coruscate over the surface of the canvas.

It is doubtful if many viewers would see these colours in the landscape, in fact one may wonder if indeed Haynes sees these colours directly or if what he sees acts as a catalyst to his experimenting with this vibrant range of colours.

In the landscape examined here, 'Canopy', 1985, another element in Hayne's work is apparent. This is the dramatic viewpoint. Haynes enjoys the unusual angle for example, peering out of interiors into the outside glare, looking up into the foliage, looking directly into sunlight or peering from behind objects, or looking down on roof tops. In this case the viewer is shown the marvellous sensation of being under a canopy of shimmering orange-green leaves in the open eucalyptus forest around Kalgoorlie. With an intense blue sky, white sunlit light reflecting clouds, the orange and green foliage floats in blobs down to the very low horizon and in the radiating light the long spindly tree trunks are ghostly in their soft pale mauves and purples against the golden light of the clearing and the distant forest edge. The shadowy base is in heavy green and orange browns anchoring to the earth the ghostly tangled network of limbs climbing skyward.

Whilst the decorative qualities of an Australian landscape have been utilized in terms of the rhythm of the branches and tree trunks, and the patterns of the foliage, the colour is not natural, its as Hayne's might wish it to be, its heightened romantic quality is somewhat akin to some of the French impressionists and yet the tonal balance is visually accurate.
NIGEL HEWITT

Sunlight and the starkness of a sunlit hillside in the Australian bush are qualities that fascinate Hewitt in this painting, 'Greenmount Hill mid Winter'. The trees are not massive, they are somewhat stunted with blobby tops and spindly leaning trunks that stick out of the ground in clusters crowning the summit of the hill with a ragged skyline. This is no well ordered, neat, nestling, copse of leafy canopied trees of intense green, but the drab olive-green, ungainly masses of eucalypts struggling for survival on a rocky hillside.

Because Hewitt is primarily a colourist, his observations of the foliage have led him to create a picture dominated by warm tones, the foliage is full of oranges, browns, umbers, magentas and muted greens, whilst the shadows beneath the trees instead of being dark and impenetrable, are cast in mauves and pinks against the cinnabar yellow greens of the fresh winters grass on the hillside.

Overriding his perception of the Australian landscape, theories of colour and tonality are applied to create a vigorous and intricate colour relationship that helps to make us aware of what might be seen in what for many may appear to be nothing more than a rather drab collection of trees. This flattened rather decorative treatment of the colour in the foreground hillside with the more traditional atmospheric perspective created in the distance beyond the hill, sets up an interesting dynamic tension in the painting. It is interesting to compare this work of Hewitt's with some of George Haynes' landscape paintings and landscapes of the Hiedelberg School.
HANS HEYSEN

For many observers of the Australian landscape it is Sir Hans Heysen, who, in his paintings, epitomized what they believe to be the essential qualities of the Australian bush. The Mount Lofty and Flinders Ranges of South Australia provided much of the inspiration for his carefully composed and consummately crafted landscape paintings. Certainly, Heysen in much of his work was able to infuse it with a sense of grandeur and nostalgia. The reality was that the land was increasingly being subjected to the ravages of farming and mining. With Heysen the golden light can be seen casting its glory, not over some ancient classical ruins, (as in the manner of Claude Lorraine) but over the majestic, gleaming eucalypts with their huge buttresses, gnarled peeling bark and their contorted limbs pushing into the golden sky. Australians loved it. The golden classical age of Australian landscape had arrived. It has been suggested however that, "The only deficiency of his art is that it has no imagination, and as a projection of a man's spiritual structure on an external world it is surely valueless." (Hughes 1970: 89).

Time of course will determine the value of Heysen's work, but irrespective of how great or unimaginative it may be, many Australians love his renditions of the Australian landscape. As Bernard Smith has remarked,"Heysen fashioned an image of the Australian landscape which has come to occupy a permanent place in the national imagination, to be the delight of ordinary people and the despair of the sophisticated." (Smith 1962: 113).

'Guardians of the Brackine Gorge', 1937, is a typical Heysen landscape; the centre of the picture is dominated by the upthrusting majestic barren eroded forms of a mountain silhouetted against a peerless blue sky and on either side two massive leaning tree trunks in the foreground act as guardians to this remote landscape. The strong pull to the right by the leaning trees is echoed in the thrust of the majestic mountains, but offset by the counteracting tree branch leaning back to the left. Scale is established by a white tree trunk centrally silhouetted in the distance against the majesty of the mountainous backdrop. There is a surety, deftness and lightness of touch in this watercolour, depicting the radiance of the clear light that etches the foreground trees and reveals the ravages of fire and drought that has left its mark in the hollowed and dead sections of the tree trunks. For in this landscape, as Heysen has remarked, "you see the bare bones of the landscape." (Thiele 1968: 196).

"The singular quality of Heysen's work is its endless preoccupation with light - light looked straight into, light slanting through leaves, lying sharply on ridges or sculpting hills, light seen through the dust or the haze of a bushfire, the light of the enveloping air itself." (Thomas 1977: 52).
The etching and aquatint examined here was created about 1828/29 and is entitled, "Swan River 50 miles up". It is believed that an original watercolour sketch by Dr Frederick Rushbrook Clause provided the basis for this etching by William John Huggins of 105 Leadenhall Street, London. It is meant to represent scenery that Captain Stirling would have encountered in his explorations up the Swan River in 1827. (Chapman 1979: 76 and 78). This redrafting from an original has allowed the etcher to tidy up the sketch's appearance, so that the river bank resembles a neatly organized park, by an "antipodean 'Capability' Brown", with leafy oak and elm like trees making a most pleasant environment, "a verdant idyll". (Scott 1986: 12). There appears to be no massive fire blackened trunks of jarrahs, red gum or blue gum trees, no straggly paper bark trees, or spikey banksias, no hanging sheoks, no tangled ti-trees or swampy rush covered embankments or impenetrable wattle thickets, just some quaint black boy plants and an odd Norfolk Island Pine or palm looking tree. "The palm-like tree is puzzling, but may have been painted in later when the artist's memory of the local flora has dimmed." (Chapman 1979: 78).

It is difficult to know just how the original artist perceived this part of the Australian landscape, but it is unlikely that contemporary observers of this etching would associate it as being distinctly Australian if the quaint kangaroos, black boys and black swans were removed, even with these obvious indigenous clues, the soft lighting and scenic orderliness makes the scene far removed from the landscapes of Heysen, Boyd, Nolan, Drysdale, or Williams. Possibly Peter Fuller is correct when he claims, "We have become peculiarly ill at ease in the nature that nurtures us, constantly worried that through our own actions we will cause it to fail, certain that no God resides within the rocks and trees to save and console, sure that not much is for the best in this our only possible world." (Fuller 1984: 14). Has the arcadian dream perished? It certainly seems that most of our major contemporary landscape painters feel so.

Confronted with the strange flora, fauna, and inhabitants of this continent, the early artists and recorders were faced with the difficulty of not just seeing what there was, but recording their observations in a manner acceptable to their contemporaries, who were accustomed to seeing images presented in a certain style and manner. We are all constrained by the expectations, conventions and manners of our time, so indeed the perception of the Australian landscape is an evolving developing process dependent on sensitivity of perception, courage of conviction, talent of expression and encouragement and recognition by viewers and a yearning for the unknown.
"Juniper has most successfully portrayed the particular character and nuances of Western Australian landscape - his landscapes have such a decided sense of region."

This is the opinion of Hendrik Kolenberg in his introduction to the Art Gallery of Western Australia's catalogue, 'Robert Juniper, drawings 1950-1980'. (Kolenberg 1980: 3).

Unquestionably some of the Western Australian landscape has been the subject matter of much of Juniper's paintings and drawings. In the painting 'Everlastings on Yalgoo Road', 1981, represented here, many of his attributes as a painter can be seen. There is a flat decorative quality to his work with shapes often having the appearance of being cut out and in fact stencils are often used, for it is the silhouette, the outline of trees, buildings, hills and figures that interest Juniper. In this painting, the outlines of these shrubby trees with their dancing legs and matted foliage suggest flocks of emus with their heads buried in the sand. The scraggly scrub country of the northern gold fields area is seen here with its openness, its fields of everlastings in white and gold and the low gigantic rocky conglomerate outcrops that break through this vast eroded flatish landscape.

Juniper is not interested in recording the sunlit patterns and shadows of the Australian bush, or the dancing light from eucalyptus leaves, or the drab green of foliage and intense reds of the earth and the vibrant colours of the yellow and pink everlastings. This is a carefully contrived composition with the colour relying on the harmony produced by the dominance of yellows and browns in the sky and throughout the painting. This is offset with the dark blue brown umber of the trees providing both a barrier and a portal to a vista of the distant orange rock against an orange, brown and yellow sky. Warm colours, but delicate and subdued, create for Juniper in this painting the atmosphere he desires.

Major items of interest for Juniper are the ungainly rhythms, the sadness and emptiness of the Australian bush and the intriguing shapes of its vegetation. Somehow he sees the land with a romantic, lyrical almost oriental eye, for his highly refined compositions are dependent on keeping the picture plane relatively flat. In fact, Juniper creates many of his paintings not at the easel, but on a table top, where he can walk around and look down on his work. It is the quality and organization of the surface texture and patterning that is an essential element in Juniper's treatment of the Australian bush.
Today one can still find examples of trees in the Australian forests that seem to epitomize Sydney Long's trees. What Long did according to Robert Hughes in 'The Art of Australia', was to give, "the 'soul' of the bush bodily form by turning the place into an Art-Nouveau Arcadia, populated by nymphs and satyrs." (Hughes 1970: 78-79).

Long's naked nymphs, were to him a natural outgrowth of the bush, an extension of its soul. This view by Hughes, is interesting when we compare it with John Feeney's view of the bush's soul as essentially a non European, an indigenous aboriginal symbolic representation, as in the wandjina spirit figures.

In the painting examined here, 'Pan', 1898, the strange growth patterns of some Australian eucalypts have been exaggerated and formalized into Art-Nouveau rhythms of sinuous lines, creating that decorative flat combination of negative and positive spaces familiar to us in the work of Beardsley and Mucha. The colour is moody, soft, evocative of arcadian glades in the evening, owing much more to European tradition than an examination of the blazing sunlight familiar to most residents of the Australian continent.

Certainly, the Australian bush, forest, landscape must have seemed mysterious and primordial to many Australian artists. The eternal problem is how to effect this in works of art through our observations and feelings. Sydney Long found the decorative qualities of Art-Nouveau and the dappled light of the Impressionists useful techniques in creating his interpretations of the antipodean landscape.
Jeffrey Makin in his treatment of the dense Australian eucalyptus forests. In his painting 'Sherbrooke Forest May 82', 1982, examined here, the upward thrust of these great poles is emphasized by their truncation, we only see the bottom 4-6 metres of these trees, how tall they grow is left to our imagination. The importance of their structure is emphasized by their repetition and their black outlines, each tree trunk being edged in black. Again a black horizontal line emphasizes the end of the flat foreground and the beginning of a background hill slope.

Colour in this painting is raw, almost crude, there are no white areas, the highlights of the forest are in cadmium yellow deep, unadulterated, straight from the tube. The midground is predominantly a dark blue and green, the background a lighter mauve and pink, but yellow dominates the foreground and dances over the mid and background colours. Immense strength and energy emanate from this landscape; the colours are raw, pulsating, applied with vigour. Perhaps this is applicable to the forests of the new world, they may not have the cold formality of the coniferous forests or the composure and elegance of the deciduous forests. Australians may in fact, still be coming to terms with the characteristics and qualities of their forests. Makin has suggested in his work that the forest has a brash rawness, that it lacks mellowness, that the observation of light and shade, the sensation of depth, the variation in textures, and the creation of mystery are all to be sacrificed for exuberance in this, the antipodean forest.
If Roberts captured "the crystalline hardness of midsummer sunlight," (Hughes 1970: 57), in many of his paintings, then McCubbin in his painting captured the soft even lighting of the overcast day; there are no deep inaccessible shadows, just a soft neutralized smudginess that pervades the backgrounds, whilst the foregrounds often depict the unruly, messy, spindly appearance of the undergrowth in many of the Australian eucalyptus forests.

Bernard Smith states that, "McCubbin appears to have been the prime mover in promoting the distinctly national quality of the Heidelberg School." (Smith 1962: 85). The problem of course is to define what is a national quality and if it applies to society then presumably it changes as society changes although qualities of the Australian landscape should remain fairly constant, changing slowly under the influence of spreading urbanization, agriculture, and the pastoral industry. Smith refers to McCubbin's "grey landscape undisturbed by changing effects of sunlight and shadow." (Smith 1962: 86). In fact, whilst Streeton and Roberts worked in Sydney producing "sparkling paintings of Australian sunshine." (Thomas 1980: 28), "Melbourne (and McCubbin) produced more sentimental, poetic twilights." (Thomas 1980: 28).

The melancholy stillness evidenced in many of McCubbin's paintings, is a quality in the Australian bush observed and remarked upon by numerous poets and writers. For example, Charles Harpur in 'A Midsummer Noon in the Australian Forest', wrote, "What a mighty stillness broods." This could be a very apt line to describe many of McCubbin's landscapes e.g. 'Lost', 1886, 'Down on his Luck', 1889, 'The Wallaby Track', 1896. A.D. Hope's poem, 'Australia', with its line, 'A Nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey', would describe much of McCubbin's landscape paintings.

The work examined here, 'Ti Tree Glade', about 1897, is typical of McCubbin's style. An overcast day, drab foliage, messy tangled undergrowth, producing a textured surface that catches the soft light breaking the leaves and twigs into dots of greyed colour. There is a hint of mystery, romanticism and loneliness in this somewhat intimate view of the glade. In fact it is a highly palpable emotional response to these typical Australian ti tree thickets.
"Many of his landscapes depict the stark immensity of the inland." (Gleeson 1977: 88). Undoubtedly this is true and it is hard to think of the inland land forms of Australia without reference to those bleak, monotonous, landscape paintings devoid of vegetation such as, 'Unnamed Ridge', 'Central Australia', 1949 and 'Musgrave Ranges', 1949, that Nolan has created.

"From 1946, when he made his first journey to the interior, to 1953 when he went to Europe for the second time, Nolan had one conscious aim— to paint the Australian landscape in such a way that its very soul would be revealed and, by doing so, to describe the essential experience of being an Australian." (Pringle 1966: 33).

Well it is difficult to know what the essential Australian experience is, but certainly the majority of Australians live in ordered suburban environments, contrived to minimize winter mud and the glare and dust of summer. Occasional forays into the outback generally remind Australians why it is that they cling so tenaciously to the continent's coastline.

Has Nolan revealed a love-hate relationship that Australians have with the natural Australian environment, an intrigue with the mystical qualities of this ancient land, once inhabited by an incomprehensible race of dark skinned peoples who moved through the landscape as spectres and shadows, for:

"In the silent lands
Time broadens into space."

the words of Les Murray in his poem, 'The Wilderness.'

Broad silent lands in limitless space seem to be qualities that Nolan has identified with and successfully re-created in many of his landscape paintings. Hughes believes, "Nolan rescued Australian landscape, at one stroke, from the blue and gold limbo into which it had fallen, and his paintings exhale that magical sense of first-time confrontation one sees in an early Streeton or Roberts." (Hughes 1970: 161).

In the painting examined here, 'Cape York Peninsula', 1949, the painting is deceptively simple, just limitless sky and a vast horizon on a featureless landscape inhabited by a few sparse strange tree forms. However, because the tree forms appear so bizarre, like cat-o'-nine-tails sprouting from the ground and dancing towards the horizon as the invisible wind tosses their fronds in the radiant sky above a forlorn sunless drab landscape, there is a mocking of our sensibilities for surely such an improbable landscape as this does not exist and yet the spots and stripes on the tree trunks, strongly suggest aboriginal body decorations and the trees take on the forms of camouflaged aboriginal dancers performing in a ritualistic ceremony. What Nolan has shown us is that our worst fears are true. This land is in fact as hideous, mysterious and inexplicably alien as we suspected it might be. No romantic blue and gold rinse will convert this land into an arcadian delight.
Frank Pash's Australian landscape paintings are faithful recordings of what could be termed the photographic view. In fact some of his landscapes are painted from colour slides. There can be great satisfaction in seeing that which is instantly recognizable and memorable as in his painting of 'Yet Unspoiled Arnhem Land', 1976. The towering abrupt cliff face in grey, mauve shadows with the sunlight catching protruding orange rock forms and the white wobbly tree trunks reflected in the swampy lagoon are typical of this area of Australia. Bathed in sunlight the landscape has the lushness of oil paint and bold brushstrokes producing a textured surface and freedom of focus that is alien to photography. In terms of lighting, form, scale and colour, at first glance, the painting is much the same as the view through a standard lens on a camera. This is a safe painting, the composition reflects a traditional landscape horizontality with sky, distance, mid and foreground areas. The eye movements are well orchestrated by the swing in the foreground water from the dominant clump of dark trees on the right to the broader mass of foliage and rock on the left. This is a safe secure well structured composition, the typical motoring tourists view of this landscape, not the expression of a mystical relationship with the land as can be seen in a Feeney or an expression of the land's abstracted essence as seen in a Fred William's or of the decorative qualities of a Sydney Long or Robert Birch. Pash's landscapes are a celebration of the skilfully crafted use of paint to meet a familiar perceptual standard, the instantly recognizable.
SKY: COBALT BLUE TO CERULEAN TO PALE TURQUOISE ON THE HORIZON

LONG SHADOWS
LIGHT FROM RIGHT HAND SIDE

CONTRAST OF WHITE TREE TRUNKS
AGAINST MUDDY GREY GREEN FOLIAGE
John Perceval has been reported as saying,

"Sometimes critics have wrongly seen my work as action painting; but at all times my work is primarily a response to the subject, to light and trees, or people etc. Whatever success it may achieve is due to a desire to equate the vitality, the pulse of life in nature and the world around us." (Plant 1978: 76).

Perceval's "landscapes show an intoxication with the artist's materials and the act of painting." In his landscapes of the late fifties he developed a love of the laced-paint surface and the use of ambiguous dots and curves. (Plant 1978: 78). If Perceval is intoxicated with the qualities of gestures and perhaps the exuberant cathartic release that painting in this manner can induce, why has he painted the Australian bush?, when as John Brack has suggested, "his personality, is in effect his actual subject." (Plant 1978: 83).

However most artists find that the world around us gives them an opportunity not only to record what they see, but what they think and feel about their surroundings and for Perceval the Australian bush has helped him convey, "the pulse of life in nature and the world around us."

'Black Cockatoo Flying Upstream', 1956, is a typical Perceval painting, deliberately untidy and tangled, using tempera and enamel paint to create the richly textured surface in which discoveries can constantly be made. In this case the remnants of a miner's habitat, the corrugated iron roof of a shed, the slag heap on the horizon, the ore bucket, the broken precariously tilting rail road bridge and the black cockatoo probably raucously calling as he heads out of the picture reminds us not of what we have seen, but rather felt in the Australian bush, which has been plundered by prospectors and miners.

Patrick McCaughey has seen the dramatic elements in this painting when he refers to, "The agitated stream, the overscaled bird flying upstream into obscurity and the tangled confusion of the bush and broken bridge all work(ing) towards a menacing landscape, alarmingly alive and animate even as decay sets in." (Plant 1978: 60).

We could see then, Perceval as attacking the Australian bush, usually working en plein air, "indifferent to iconographic form (which) has no relevance to him, for there is no gap in his work between perception and art: only a lyrical, and essentially physical, immediacy of direct involvement." (Hughes 1970: 235). Australia's vast empty, desolate and uninhabited spaces don't appear to engage Perceval, who seems to find the tangled undergrowth, the riotous wild flowers, the waving grasses, the bubbling water ways and exuberant animated twisting tree forms more to his liking. "When he paints, Dionysos stands at his elbow. The paint revels and dances, kicking its heels in a shower of sparks, spinning until the world dissolves and things that had their separate identities are fused in a scramble of atoms. Nothing is still. Every painting is a Dionysia." (Gleeson 1977: 95).
SHEO
ORE BUCKET
RIVER
RAILWAY LINE
Looking at the landscape paintings of Lloyd Rees we can find the work of an individual, who is able to bathe his landscapes in a soft pervasive light that catches the textured surfaces of foliage, roofs, stone walls, ploughed fields, clouds, rocks and moving water, suggesting rounded volumes and creating a living, moving drama often before a dark, dramatic and turbulent sky. Is this an aspect of the real Australian landscape?

Certainly, at particular times of the year, in certain weather conditions one can see the atmospheric effects that Rees lovingly creates in his landscapes. As Hughes has remarked, "The clear mild light of the Tuscan plain, with its soft but distinct contours, its grey-greens and Naples yellows and whites; these seeped through his Australian work, and Rees has tended, ever since, to see Australian landscapes through Italian eyes." (Hughes 1970: 91). This may be so for Rees has visited the Italian peninsular four times, 1923-24, 1952-53, 1959-60 and 1966-67. Lionel Lindsay in referring to Rees' Italian work spoke of how, "he catches the clear campagnan lights, the mild tones of Naples yellow, and faded whites, the sharp accents of cypress trees which spell Italy." (Free 1979: 32).

How does Rees himself feel about his approach to the Australian landscape? Is he aware of its seemingly infinite antiquity and its strange organic absurdities and other peculiarities? Rees states that, "In the field of landscapes I have been absorbed by the works of very many, ranging from the background landscapes of Italian fresco painters to Titian, Brueghel, Claude Lorraine, Rubens, - through to Constable, Turner, Corot, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Kokoschka and other contemporaries including the Australian school, from Streeton to Wakelin, Nolan to Boyd." (Free 1979: 101).

Rees called himself a landscape expressionist, although Bernard Smith sees in Ree's work a, "dark, evocative tonalism that is the hall mark of his romanticism." (Smith 1962: 275). Rees sees in his work open forms, overlapping and interweaving, which to him suggest metamorphosis and contrasts of the still and the moving, growth and decay, permanence and transience. (Free 1979: 80). Ultimately Rees confronts those aspects of the Australian landscape that are catalytic to his passion for rounded and diffused forms e.g. rocks, mountains, fields, rivers and tree forms and his feel for the textured heavily worked surfaces that he loves as he plays with the understructive, refining and etching in the surface detail like a palimpsest. It is not so much that he becomes increasingly aware of the unique qualities in the Australian landscape, but that he develops distinctive qualities in his own work that may be displayed through his creation of the Australian landscape for when working in his studio he uses his drawings, "to give association with the subject and revive the feel of it." "I never try to make the oil a transcription of the drawing - it must be an entirely separate creation," he has declared. (Free 1979: 78).
'The passing storm, Gerringong', 1943, displays his interest at that time in the moody light and drama deliberately created by the dark turbulent foreground and the darkening top corners so that the mirrored reflective water surface is contained and the hurried urgency of the man in his boat appears insignificant in the vast burst of light that illuminates the central region of the painting. This is hardly a recognizable Australian landscape, but a romantic allusion to the landscape as a vehicle for reflecting the drama of the changing light conditions and man's ordering of his environment by clearing and establishing a gentility to an otherwise indifferent landscape.
Robert Hughes in his book 'The Art of Australia', states, that Tom Roberts caught, "with steely precision, the flickering bronzes and greys of eucalyptus leaves, the impalpable blue haze of distances, the bleached clay banks and dry grasses at Eaglemont, and above all the crystalline hardness of midsummer sunlight." (Hughes 1970: 57)

Certainly for the first time in Australian art history an artist now grappled with the problem of how this intense, clear all pervading sunlight was able to bleach out the landscape. In fact it could flatten the landscape into a high key harmony of colours because with no moisture filled air, haziness and softness were inappropriate to creating atmospheric distance. In the dry hot air the swirling, blurring dust was the ingredient that suggested distance.

At first glance, 'The Break Away', 1891, examined here, appears to be almost monochromatic apart from its intense blue sky. Bleached yellow ochres and umbers and burnt siennas predominate. The midday sun's effusive light bleaches the land so the foliage of the trees, limp and blurred, hangs harmoniously with the broken broad brush strokes of the cleared paddock. Shadows are minimal although, "the distinctive purple-mauve and blue shadows are all results of his initial outdoor studies." (Clark and Whitelaw 1985: 137).

Much the same could be said about, 'Bushranging: Thunderbolt at Paradise Creek', 1894, a small painting in which the reflective rock face sweep most colours away from half the surface of the painting. "As clean as a whistle with its effortless brushing in," this painting, "reveals something of the joy through paint he and his contemporaries achieved." (Thomas 1977: 28)

The Australian landscape as seen in 'The Break Away', is a carefully observed backdrop for the drama in the foreground. The angular cantilevered gesture of the horseman is reflected in the streak of cloud across the azure sky. Roberts knew what was endearing to the increasingly urbanized viewers of his work and consequently his themes tended to romanticize and visually preserve a nostalgic aspect of Australian life rapidly disappearing or altogether gone.
The Australian forest depicted here is the Karri forest around Northcliffe in Western Australia. The visual elements that seem to have attracted Taylor are the mantles of varied green that create canopies over the understorey and the towering Karri trees. By way of contrast he has shown the starkness of the tree trunks, white and gaunt, often just the stumps or shattered trunk remaining. This is a land of dense growth and water holes reflecting the soft pastel colours of the tree trunks, these include soft yellow, pinks and grey blues as well as some icy turquoises.

Taylor has used a flat bristle brush producing chunky slabs of colour to create a sense of movement and dynamic structure within his painting. There is a sense of a swinging movement as the sky arches above the tree trunks, pushing outwards from the centre, the ground angles towards the intruding bush and a large tree on the left leans in slightly to hold the dynamic tensions within the picture frame. One way to describe this painting is to call it an impressionistic sketch broadly executed with a strong sense of direction and angularity in the blockiness of the forms. An interesting balance is suggested by the ascending tree trunk forms on the left and the descending tree trunk forms on the right, thus creating a continuous circular eye movement within the picture frame.

It is interesting to note that some of Taylor's sculptures that are usually concerned with aspects of the Australian bush, also exhibit a similar choice of colours and painting techniques although the colours are arranged more in line with the gradual transition to be seen in the colour spectrum of white light.

Certainly Taylor's observation of the subtle colour changes and the effects of sunlight are pre-occupations in his handling of this region of the Western Australian Forest. It is interesting to compare Taylor's and Grey-Smith's handling of the same theme, the Karri Forest.
Like many other artists in Australia over the past 200 years, Vila-Bogdanich brings to her vision of the Australian bush, her European (Yugoslavian) training and experience. In the pen and ink drawing considered here, 'The Thicket II', 1975, one can see a wall of banksia like plants, stark, stiff and impenetrable.

The author in a discussion with Vila-Bogdanich in 1984 recorded her as saying she had an, "eerie primeval feeling about the banksias." (Vila Bogdanich Exhibition, 1984). This feeling seems to be captured in this drawing with its spiky leaves, angular stiff stems, ungainly blobs and the lack of foliage. The plants almost appear like a wicker or brush fence and this is how Vila-Bogdanich saw them. A new land, raw, primitive plants, ungainly irregular, disorganised, not amenable to the ordering hand of man. Whilst banksias, when in full bloom have a richness of colour, red, orange, yellow, green and greys, Vila-Bogdanich has depicted them in stark black and white, a reminder of their capacity to burn, like much of Australia's vegetation. The tinder dry summer vegetation is readily inflammable as portrayed in a painting by von Guerard, 'Bushfire between Mount Elephant and Timboon, March 1857' and William Strutt's 'Black Thursday', 1862-4.

The initial inspiration for her etchings and drawings of the West Australian bush, "did not come from her personal observation of her new environment, but from the writings of Patrick White. She recalls:

"...as soon as I could manage to understand English well enough, I read Patrick White. I read Chariots of Fire. I found so much in it, which I could see in nature here. I couldn't believe he was so good, so exact in writing, in putting into words what he could see. I was fascinated ...and then I went into the bush to check out the things for myself and I found more than I could bear.

From then on I stated doing it ...fascinately...I couldn't stop it...I tried to match his novel. I tried to go so far...to see as he did....and put it graphically....there is so much of primal feeling in it....to me his book was trying to say something of our relations to that primal kind of origin in nature...

...I couldn't believe it, I was stunned. I just went into the bush, just looking at it....in Europe I had made a large number of plates and drawings related to the studies of bush, European bush. But it's so different, so kind, so mellow; so full of poetry, a very flowing thing.

Roses, and things like that. When I came here, I found more. These are the beginnings. I don't relate them to any roses of flowers or anything like that. I just happened to understand them....it was such savagery, such savage life...wildness and wilderness..." (Johannes 1984).

Footnote: 'Chariots of Fire', should probably have been 'Riders in the Chariot'.
The travelling exhibition of Eugen von Guerard's paintings and drawings that was displayed in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria in 1980/81 with an accompanying catalogue has done much to re-evaluate his contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the Australian landscape. The catalogue categorized his landscapes into, 'Australian genre paintings', 'Black native, White settler painting', 'Topographical paintings', 'Sacred landscapes', 'Romantic landscapes', 'Homestead landscapes', 'Suburban Coasts', and 'Sublime landscapes'. Certainly von Guerard's relationship to the landscape was a complex mixture of catering to market demands, utilization of his artistic training and philosophical attitudes, recording his observations of the settlers' relationships with their land holdings and the indigenous inhabitants and his quest for experiencing at first hand this strange new land. A great traveller, before leaving Australia he made 16 journeys from Melbourne between 1856 and 1876 to such places as Adelaide, the Blue Mountains, Cape Otway, Mt. Kosciusko, Mt Arapils, the Mornington Peninsular, Gippsland, Tasmania and New Zealand. In 1866-7 he published, "a series of 24 tinted lithographs illustrative of the most striking and picturesque features of the landscape scenery of Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, drawn from nature and lithographed by the artist with letter press descriptions of each view." (Bruce 1980: 138).

Undoubtedly von Guerard saw himself as making available to others views of the Australian landscape that he found 'striking and picturesque'. Daniel Thomas, as senior curator of the Australian National Gallery, found that in von Guerard's work there were five approaches to the Australian landscape. Firstly, he recognized the approach of the typical German Romantic whose powerful organization of pictorial forms signifies God's organization of Nature into coherent patterns. Secondly, he saw how von Guerard observed European settlement and accepted it as an aspect of God's planning despite its apparent disruption of the Aborigines and the native flora and fauna. Thirdly, the influence of seventeenth century masters such as Claude Lorrain was evident in his work. Fourthly, there was the topographical elements of recording accurately panoramas and views of towns, or rock formations or coastlines. Fifthly, there was evidence of the Italian myth, the enchanted landscape that had the poetic and dramatic potential of Greco - Roman Italy. (Thomas 1980: 20-21).

'Mount Kosciusko', (c 1864) was listed in the Eugen von Guerard catalogue as a 'Sublime Landscape', in other words it was seen as exalted, majestic, with awe inspiring grandeur and indeed many observers would agree with this description when looking at this view of Australia's highest peak with its surrounding panorama of endless mountain tops. Von Guerard has chosen to show a standing figure with his windswept cloak outlined against the snow, suggesting the lonely eerie nature of this Australian landscape. "The work has an atmosphere of 'weird melancholy' - a desolation and despair", and von Guerard stated that, "amongst its rugged and fantastic shaped crags and boulders the adventurous traveller learns to feel the full force of sentiment expressed by Childe Harold." (Bruce 1980: 74).
Von Guerard's love affair with the Australian landscape was both spiritual, artistic and scientific and so in his best work his microscopic detail, his careful observation, his meticulous technique and his feel for the drama in God the Creator's handiwork can all be seen.
In 1973 Daniel Thomas in, 'Outlines of Australian Art: The Joseph Brown Collection', claimed that, "Williams more than any Australian landscape artist has combined formal and technical strength with both art-historical learning and the most accurate observation. His pictures look right pictorially, but they also look amazingly right as observation of subtle Australian colours in bush vegetation and pastoral plains, of the way trees scatter and coalesce, and the way hills fall and skies press down. His ambition, observation and skill make his work the most significant recent addition to the continuing story of Australian art." (Thomas 1980: 62). High praise indeed. What then are these qualities in the Australian bush that Williams has observed and recorded? Where are the eucalyptus trees, mulga scrub, rocky outcrops, and eroded creek beds, bleached and bathed in the strong Australian sunlight? What we are likely to see is a canvas covered with murky squiggles, blobs, daubs and muddy backgrounds. (see footnote)

Gary Catalano has remarked that, "Williams is now widely regarded as possibly the best of Australia's painters" and that, "Williams current standing naturally reflects the widespread belief that his paintings have helped us to see the Australian landscape in a new way." (Catalano 1981: 86). Well what is this new way? Certainly John Brack referred to William's paintings in 1958 as being, "gloomy in the way the country is gloomy. Not prettiness, but truth." (Catalano 1981: 67). Is this discovery of its gloominess new? Surely many Australian writers, poets and musicians reflecting about the Australian landscape have remarked on its gloomy, ugly qualities? Even a visitor to Australia, D.H. Lawrence, in his poem, 'Kangaroo', was aware of the, "empty dawns in silent Australia", and Eleanor Dark in her novel, 'The Timeless Land', 1941, portrayed the vast gloomy quality that can be seen and felt in the Australian landscape.

Whilst the gloominess of the Australian landscape is not a recently observed phenomenon, it may be that Williams, more than any other artist has been able to reproduce that sensation with his sombre brown, grey and ochre landscape canvases with their judiciously placed squiggles, blobs, splatters, dots, flicks and tentative rubs. But not all of William's landscapes are gloomy, some are like a, "palimpsest of sensual delight, glowing with light and heat." (McCaughey 1980: 297).

It has been claimed that Williams arrived at his, "alphabet not through a nationalistic desire to interpret the landscape; (but) the inspiration rather lay in his consuming preoccupation with various media and the kind of marks they allow." (Catalano 1981: 67).

What is clear is that William's relationship with the Australian landscape over a twenty year period was an emotional, intense, searching, experimental journey that led him to produce a series of Australian landscapes probably unequalled by any other artist in their distillation of substructure, texture, colour, composition and motif development. "I've got rid of the atmosphere. I'm trying to incorporate everything there, so that all the atmosphere is reduced to one tiny spot of paint", he is quoted as saying. (Mackie 1979: 248)
The grandiose and majestic landscape seems not to have attracted Williams, he, "accepts the monotony of the Australian bush as a starting point. For him the sameness is not something to be set aside and ignored - it is the central theme of his art. Endless repetition has become a virtue and a source of beauty." "Williams paints concepts which have been synthesized from inumerable visual experiences." (Gleeson 1977: 102).

The painting examined here, 'Lysterfield II', 1972, shows a concern with basic structure, sky, land and water. The qualities of each have to be analyzed and harmoniously combined. The divisions are clear, weighted in terms of area and darkness at the watery base for stability. The land looks into the empty sky with its knotty tree symbols, whilst protruding from the water there are indications of submerged plant life. The textured surface of the land in contrast to the smoothness of sky and water is a cacophony of activity. Fallen tree stumps, decaying logs, protruding rocks, scrubby vegetation and the suggested line of movement across the land form are all jiggling together. The colours of the land are high keyed pastels, pinks, blues, greens over a freely brushed, varied ochre background. Emphatic blacks and whites and crimsons puncture the land mass, emphasizing the almost hidden intensities that can be found in this haphazard, messy, monotonous landscape. The search for significant, hierglyphic marks is evidenced in the landscape.

Footnote: Some of my students remarked once that they thought Fred Williams, 'Sapling Forest', 1962, was a close up view of a picket fence.
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Scott, J. (1986), Landscapes of Western Australia, Aeolian Press, Claremont.


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LOCATION OF PAINTINGS

1) Escarpment Sketch, 1974 - Greg Baker -
   Private Collection

2) Pink Dunes at Hutt River Estuary, 1981 - Mac Betts -
   Unknown

3) Monsoon, 1982 - Robert Birch -
   Unknown

4) River Banksia, 1948 - Elise Blumann -
   Unknown

5) William Boissevain -
   Unknown

6) Floods, 1975 - Arthur Boyd -
   Western Australian College of Advanced Education

7) Crusoe Beach, 1983 - Arthur Cartwright -
   Unknown

8) Cottesloe Beach, 1981 - Chris Constable -
   Unknown

9) The field at St Leonard's Estate, 1982 - Phillip Cook -
   Unknown

10) Walls of China, 1945 - Russell Drysdale -
    Art Gallery of New South Wales

11) Elizabeth Durack -
    Unknown

12) Aerial Landscape Pilbara, 1980 - Nola Farman -
    Unknown

13) Bird, 1981 - John Feeney -
    Unknown

14) Karri Forest, 1971 - Guy Grey Smith -
    Unknown

15) Canopy, 1985 - George Haynes -
    Unknown

16) Greenmount Hill mid Winter, 1980 - Nigel Hewitt -
    Unknown

17) Guardians of the Brackine Gorge, 1937 - Hans Heysen -
    National Gallery of Victoria

18) Swan River 50 Miles Up, 1828/29 - William John Huggins -
    Collection of the Hon. David Wordsworth & Mrs Wordsworth

19) Everlastings on Yalgoo Road, 1981 - Robert Juniper -
    Unknown
20) Pan, 1893 - Sydney Long -  
Art Gallery of New South Wales

21) Ti Tree Glade, 1897 - Frederick McCubbin -  
Art Gallery of South Australia

22) Sherbrooke Forest May 82, 1982 - Jeffrey Makin -  
Unknown

23) Cape York Peninsula, 1949 - Sidney Nolan -  
University of Western Australia

24) Yet Unspoiled Arnhem Land, 1976 - Frank Pash -  
Private Collection

25) Black Cockatoo Flying Upstream, 1956 - John Perceval -  
Australian National Gallery, Canberra

26) The Passing Storm, Gerringong, 1943 - Lloyd Rees -  
Mr Godfrey R. Donaldson, Melbourne, Victoria

27) The Break Away, 1891 - Tom Roberts -  
Art Gallery of South Australia

28) After the Rain, 1976 - Howard Taylor -  
Unknown

29) The Thicket 11, 1975 - Memnuna Vila Bogdanich -  
The Art Gallery of Western Australia

30) Mount Kosciusko, c1864 - Eugen von Guerard -  
Australian National Gallery, Canberra

31) Lysterfield II Landscape, 1972 - Fred Williams -  
Unknown
BIIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BAKER, Greg:
Born 1951, West Midland, Western Australia.

BETTS Mac:

BIRCH, Robert:
Born 1939, Midland, Western Australia. 1963-66: Studied painting and printmaking at Harrow School of Art, Middlesex, U.K.
1977: Study tour to Egypt and Middle East.
1979: Drawings and watercolours in Indonesia.
Numerous one man exhibitions at such places as John Gild Galleries, Old Fire Station Gallery, and Gallery 52, Perth and a solo exhibition in Broome as a result of being the guest artist for the Shinju Matsuri (Festival of the Pearl).
BLUMANN, Elsie:
Born 1897, Parchim (Mechlenburg), East Germany. 1917-19: studied at the Berlin Academy of Art. 1920: travelled and painted in Italy. Returned to Germany, studied and painted at Hamburg Academy of Art. 1924-36: occasional trips to Italy, France, Spain and Switzerland. January 1938: arrived in Western Australia. 1950-52: paintings exhibited in Paris, London and Mainz. 1969-75: lived in Germany, but returned to Perth in 1975. 1976: first major exhibition for eighteen years, a retrospective, held at Gallery G. 1979: exhibitions were held at the Miller Galleries, Perth and the Abecrombie Galleries, Sydney. 1984: a retrospective exhibition was held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Represented in the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the University of Western Australia, the National Gallery, Canberra and many private collections.

BOISSEVAIN, William:
Born 1927, New York, U.S.A.
1947: studied at the Academie des Beaux Arts and at La Grande Chaumiere, Paris. 1948: studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. 1949: arrived in Western Australia. Has had one man exhibitions at the Skinner Galleries, Perth; Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney; Lister Gallery, Perth; Earl Gallery, Geelong. 1961: Helena Rubinstein Prize for Portraiture 1971: Perth Prize for Drawing International. Represented in the National Gallery, Canberra; the Art Gallery of Western Australia; the University of Western Australia and the W.A. Institute of Technology and many other private and public collections.

BOYD, Arthur:
Born 1920, Murrumbeena, Victoria. Studied at the National Gallery Art School for a year of night classes. At the age of seventeen he went to live with his grandfather who taught him the rudiments of paintings in the Heidelberg impressionist tradition. Lived in London from 1959 and returned to Australia in 1975. Has been honoured with three retrospectives; the Whitechapel Gallery London, 1962; the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1964; and Edinburgh, 1969. Represented in the Australian National gallery, Canberra; major galleries in England, Europe and U.S.A.; most regional galleries; and universities, corporate groups, and private collections in Australia and overseas.

CONSTABLE, Christopher Roy:  
Born 1941, Kempsey, N.S.W.  

COOK, Phillip:  
Born 1949  
DRYSDALE, Sir Russell:

DURACK, Elizabeth:
Born 1916, Perth, Western Australia.
Held her first one-woman show at the Art Gallery of W.A. in 1946. Has had over 47 solo shows throughout Australia. A retrospective exhibition was mounted by the Art Gallery of W.A. in 1965. She participated at the World Trade Centre, New York, 1979. Represented in the Art Gallery of W.A.; the University of W.A; Murdoch University; the W.A. Institute of Technology; the National Collection, Canberra; the Art Gallery of N.S.W; the Art Gallery of S.A; the University of Texas, Austin, U.S.A; and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

FARMAN, Nola:
Born 1939, Subiaco, Western Australia.
1962–66: graduated in fine Arts from College of Art, Ontario, Canada. Tutored in sculpture and drawing at W.A.I.T., Perth Technical College, Fremantle Technical College, Balcatta High School, and Claremont Art College and numerous Summer Schools and workshops. One woman shows at the Old Fire Station Gallery, Perth 1971; Collectors Gallery, Perth 1977; Gallery 52, 1980, 1984. Represented in the V.A.B. Collection; W.A. Institute of Technology; the University of W.A; Crown Law Department; the Western Australian College of Advanced Education; Alcoa (Australia) W.A.; Hale School Chapel; Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust and Servite College, Western Australia.
FEENEY, John:  Born 1941, Western Australia. Studied commercial art at Perth Technical College 1959-60. Has been painting full time since 1972; study tour around Australia 1979. Held one man exhibitions at the Old Fire Station Gallery, Perth in 1973 and 1974; Churchill Gallery, Subiaco 1976 and 1978; Amity Craft, Albany 1978; Fremantle Galleries, Sydney, 1979 and 1983; the Howard Street Gallery, 1986. A review exhibition was held at the Fremantle Art Gallery in 1978. Represented, Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre, University of W.A., City of Fremantle Collection, Salek Minc Collection and the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

HAYNES, George: Born 1952, Western Australia.
Solo exhibitions at Millery Gallery, Perth 1978, 1979;
Artist's home 1981, 1982; Fremantle Arts Centre, 1983.
Numerous mixed exhibitions including the Archibald Prize,
Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Representations: City of Fremantle Collection, Dampier Salt, Fremantle Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, State Government Insurance Office, W.A., Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

Represented in the Art Gallery of W.A.; the National Gallery of Victoria; the Art Gallery of South Australia; Australian National University, Canberra; the University of W.A.; Adelaide University; S.A.; Mertz Collection, University of Texas, Austin, U.S.A.; the White House Collection, U.S.A.

HEYSEN, (Sir) Hans: Born 1877, Hamburg, Germany.
Arrived in Adelaide, 1883. 1893-94: studied watercolour painting in James Ashton's 'Norwood Art School' one afternoon a week. 1894-1898: studied part time at 'The Academy of Art' and 'South Australian School of Design'.
1899-1903: studied in Paris at the Académie Julian and Ecole des Beaux Arts. Visited Holland, U.K., Germany and Italy. On his return to Adelaide established his own school of drawing and painting. 1908: moved to Hahndorf, in the Mount Lofty Ranges, which was to be his home for the rest of his life. Solo exhibitions included Steamship Buildings, Adelaide 1904, 1905; the Guild Hall, Melbourne 1908; Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne 1912, 1915; Gayfield Shaw's Gallery, Sydney 1920; Fine Arts Society's Gallery, Melbourne (retrospective) 1921; and 20 more one man shows in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, London, and Hahndorf before his death in 1968. Made a Knight Bachelor in the Queen's Birthday Honours list 1959. Won the Wynne Prize for landscapes. Represented in all State Galleries, regional galleries and many private collections.
HUGGINS, William John:  

JUNIPER, Robert:  
Born 1929, Merredin, Western Australia.  
1943-47: studied commercial art and industrial design at the Beckenham School of Arts, Kent, England.  
Represented in the National Gallery, Canberra; the Art Gallery of W.A.; the Art Gallery of N.S.W.; the National Gallery of Victoria; the W.A. Institute of Technology and many private collections in Australia and overseas. Winner of the Wynne Prize in 1976 and 1980 as well as a number of major sculpture commissions.

LONG, Sydney:  
Born 1871, Goulburn, New South Wales.  
Studied at the Sydney Art Societies School, 1907: joined Julian Ashton as a teacher at the Sydney Art School until 1911 when he went to London, England and studied under Malcolm Osborne, R.A.  
Elected Associate of the Royal Society of Painters and Etchers in 1920, and exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy, Royal Glasgow Institute, Royal Academy, London and Paris Salon. Returned to Australia 1925 and was made president of the Australian Painters-Etchers Society. Winner of the 'Wynne Prize' in 1938 and 1940. Died 1955. Represented in the Victorian, South Australian, Queensland, Western Australian, Tasmanian and New South Wales State Galleries; Bendigo, Newcastle and Ballarat galleries and Victorian and Albert Museum, London and Mitchell Library, Sydney.
MAKIN, Jeffrey:
Born 1943, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.
1960-65: studied art at the National Art School, Sydney.

McCUEBIN, Frederick:
Born 1855, West Melbourne, Victoria.
1867-70: Attended evening classes at the Artisans School of Design in Carlton. 1871: enrolled at the Gallery School where he remained a student for fifteen years. In 1885 with Roberts and Abrahams, he established the first Box Hill Camp. 1886: Appointed drawing master at the Gallery School, a post he held until his death in 1917. August 1889, he produced five paintings for the 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition. Exhibited regularly with the Victorian Artists' Society; was elected president in 1893 and again from 1902-4, 1908-09, 1911-12. 1900: visited Tasmania. 1907: first and only journey to Europe. Represented in all Australian State Galleries and many regional galleries as well as Parliament House, Melbourne.

MOLAN, Sidney:
Born 1917: Melbourne, Victoria.
NOLAN, Sidney (continued)

Christopher Day Gallery, Sydney 1983 and 1984. Represented in the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; National Collection, Canberra; all state and provincial galleries; Mertz Collection U.S.A; and many commercial and private collections in Australia and overseas.

PASH, Frank:


Represented in the Leeds Art Gallery, U.K.; Martini Galleria, Italy; Vatican, Rome; Parliament House, Perth; Western Mining, Perth; and numerous other governmental departments, business corporations and private collections.

PERCEVAL, John:

Born 1923, Bruce Rock, Western Australia. Self taught painter, potter and ceramic sculptor. A member of the celebrated Melbourne group, which included Arthur Boyd, Sidney Nolan and Albert Tucker. In 1944 he was a group founder of the Murrumbeera Pottery. His first one-man show was held at the Melbourne Book Club in 1948. Since then he has held regular exhibitions throughout Australia as well as at the Whitechapel Gallery, London 1961; Tate Gallery, London 1963; Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil 1963; Zwemmer Gallery, London 1964; Mertz Collection, Washington D.C., U.S.A. 1967. Represented in the National Gallery, Canberra; the State Galleries of N.S.W., Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia; Australian National University, Canberra; Monash University, Victoria; University of Melbourne; University of W.A.; Toronto Art Gallery, Canada and Australian regional galleries, and private collections around Australia and overseas.

TAYLOR, Howard:  
Born 1918, Hamilton, Victoria.  
1932: family moved to Perth, Western Australia. 1937: enlisted in the R.A.A.F. 1940: captured and interned in a P.O.W. camp in Germany. 1946: enrolled as a part time student on a R.A.A.F. rehabilitation grant at the Birmingham College of Art. 1949: arrived in Perth, Western Australia. First solo exhibition at Newspaper House Gallery, Perth. Other one-man shows include Newspaper House Gallery 1951, 1953; Library, Adult Education Building, Howard Street, Perth 1956; Skinner Galleries, Perth 1957, 1960, 1970, 1974; University of Western Australia (Festival of Perth) 1971; Undercroft Gallery, the University of Western Australia, 1977; Architective Building, the Western Australian Institute of Technology 1978; Coventry Gallery, Sydney 1978; Quentin Gallery, Claremont, Western Australia 1981; Old Court House Art Centre, Busselton, Western Australia 1982; The Art Gallery of Western Australia, (retrospective exhibition) 1985. Represented in the Art Gallery of W.A., the Tasmanian National Gallery, Wollongong Art Gallery, the Western Australian Institute of Technology, the University of Western Australia, the Visual Arts Board of the Australian Council, the Western Australian College of Advanced Education and numerous corporate institutions, state and local government departments and private collections.

VILA-BOGDANICH, Memnuna:  
Born 1934, Mostar, Yugoslavia.  
VON GUERARD, Eugen: Born 1811, Vienna, Austria.
1830: studied in Rome. 1832: travelled extensively with his father throughout southern Italy and Sicily. 1838: Eugen left Naples after his father's death and went to Dusseldorf, his father's native city. 1839: He exhibited landscapes painted in Italy at the art club in Leipzig. 1840-46: studied at the Kunstakademie at Dusseldorf, including new classes in landscape under Johann Wilhelm Schirmer. 1852: arrived at Geelong from London, England prepared to go to the newly discovered goldfields, in Victoria. 1854: married and settled in Melbourne as a painter. 1855-1876: made numerous sketching trips in Australia, and New Zealand to scenic areas. Exhibited paintings with the Victorian Society of Fine Arts; the Royal Academy, London 1865; Exposition Universelle de Paris 1867-1878; the Victoria Academy of Arts Exhibition in Melbourne, Dusseldorf and Vienna 1872; the London International Exhibition 1872; the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition 1876; Sydney International Exhibition 1879. In 1881 he resigned his position from the National Gallery of Victoria 1882; sailed to Europe. 1885: exhibited in the Victorian Jubilee Exhibition in Melbourne. Died in London 17 April 1901. Represented in the National Library of Australia, Canberra; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Art Gallery of N.S.W.; Auckland City Art Gallery; Ballart Fine Art Gallery; La trobe collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Geelong Art Gallery; Art Gallery of South Australia; Art Gallery of Western Australia; Joseph Brown Collection, Melbourne and numerous private collections.

WILLIAMS, Fred: Born 1927, Melbourne, Victoria.
SOURCES OF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Information has been culled and sifted from exhibition catalogues, correspondence and discussions with various artists and the following useful references:-


Hawthorn, B. (1982), Some Contemporary Western Australian Painters and Sculptors, Apollo Press, Nedlands, W.A.


Scott, J. (1986), Landscapes of Western Australia, Aeolian Press, Claremont, W.A.

BILL HAWTHORN  ATD, AIT, BA, MSc

Currently full time lecturing in Painting, Visual Enquiry, Drawing and Contextual Studies (History and Art Criticism) at the Churchlands Campus of the Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

He has held numerous one and two man exhibitions, in Perth and Sydney, of his paintings, drawings and sculptures. He has given public lectures and courses in an appreciation of the work of Western Australian Painters and Sculptors. He has written a book, "Some Contemporary Western Australian Painters and Sculptors", published by Apollo Press in 1982. He has made films, videos and directed the making of numerous video tapes on the work and exhibitions of Western Australian Painters and Sculptors.

He organized a photographic exhibition of Australian Sculptors' work at a Biennial Sculpture Symposium held in New Orleans, U.S.A. in 1976.