

Flying Over

City of Fremantle Art Collection 1 August – 20 September

This exhibition presents a selection of artworks from the City of Fremantle Art Collection which draw attention to a range of ideas about mapping connections to landscape, expressed through pattern and mark making.

Landscape or Country as expressed by Aboriginal people, is a concept which carries complex social, historical and geographical meanings.¹ The representation of landscape is a valued medium of cultural exchange and social practice expressing visual appropriation, identity and ownership of the physical world. In the minds of eighteenth century Europeans, the process of representing the space at the bottom of the earth known as 'Terra Incognita' or 'The Great Southern Land' was an action that implied control, accumulation and confinement and above all involves consumption: representations are put to use in the domestic economy of an imperial society.² In order to 'see' Australia, the invaders created maps and paintings of the landscape in a European style, recording romantic visions of native inhabitants, plants and animals: a 'terra nullius' space under cultivation.

An understanding of landscape however, extends beyond the study of geography, natural reoccurring events or history of topographical and pictorial representation. Our foremost and intimate connection with landscape is largely framed by experiences and memory of moving through it. Traversing landscape creates a sequence of moments or a narrative order for the spectator - where one view disappears as it is replaced by new ones. These events of going from one place to another offer a transforming experience, where significances of the places are interpreted in relation to each other and as sequences or pathways along which places are linked. In Aboriginal Australia connection to Country is an important foundation of culture. The continuing practice of people returning to Country, remarking significant routes to places of kinship, of tracing dreaming stories from one place to another, underpins a shared visual and oral narrative tradition which links Aboriginal people to the land. The act of moving through landscape is a significant cultural experience and as valued as arriving or staying at a place.

Helicopter Tjungurrayi and Elizabeth Nyumi Nungurrayi make prints about their father's and mother's Country near Balgo Hills, Kimberley, north Western Australia. Both leaders in their community, their work represents particular places and stories which reinforce their relationship to and knowledge of the nomadic traditions of their ancestors. Tjungurrayi's horizontal bands of vivid orange in *Jupiter Well* 2002, reveal sand hills as seen from above with a centrally located black mark representing a permanent waterhole, the location and dreaming of which is very important to his people. Similarly, Nungurrayi's untitled screenprint is concerned with stories of the bush foods belonging to her family. Her mature style is defined by layered dotting, creating a matrix of pulsating colour, which represents her Country bursting into life following the wet season.

Doug Chambers is an artist who has worked consistently with themes of movement and flight often expressed through a physical and experimental approach to his work. In *Flying Over* 1976, a layered spread of paint, mark making and collage, assisted by the artist walking across the canvas, suggests a topographical perspective, filtered from an experience of air travel or perhaps contemplation of the natural world as evidenced by the image of a (Tiger) moth's cocoon.³ In contrast the grey paper support of Domenico de Clario's watercolours transfix ghostly memories of a drive along Victoria's Great Ocean Road. In *Two Small Trees*, soft gestures of light and dark are delicately infused with the distinctive mineralised shimmer of graphite.

Attention to representation of space and time are referenced in the work of Arthur Russell and Susan Pickering. Arthur Russell's linear profiles read as a measure line and large forms as time signatures in his reassembled landscape. Placement of monolithic stones echo in an agricultural landscape reminiscent of those cultivated spaces he grew up with in Wickiepin, a Wheatbelt town in south east Western Australia. Musician and visual artist, Susan Pickering's evocative and ambiguous image suggests layers of rhythmic interpretation which imply an ethereal landscape, communicated through her sweeping gestures upon the etching plate.

For more information about the City of Fremantle Art Collection please pick up a copy of *Fertile Soil: 50 Years of the City of Fremantle Art Collection* available from *Found*, the Arts Centre's shop or *Revealing the Collection* from this Gallery or visit the webpage freofocus.com.au and follow the links to Arts and Culture.

¹ William Thomas Mitchell describes in his book 'Landscape and Power', 1994, that landscape is an instrument of cultural force and tool in the creation of national and social identities.

² 'Shadow of the West: An interview with Edward Said', *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*. Eds. Russell Fergusson, William Olander, Marcia Tucker and Karen Fiss, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York and The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1990, p94

³ Margaret Moore, 'Douglas Chambers: A Survey', *Art Gallery of Western Australia*, 1992, p10

Flying Over – Check list

All artworks are from the City of Fremantle Art Collection, listed alphabetically by artist, image/plate dimensions are given as height by width in centimetres. Images courtesy and © the artist.

Doug Chambers (1935-)

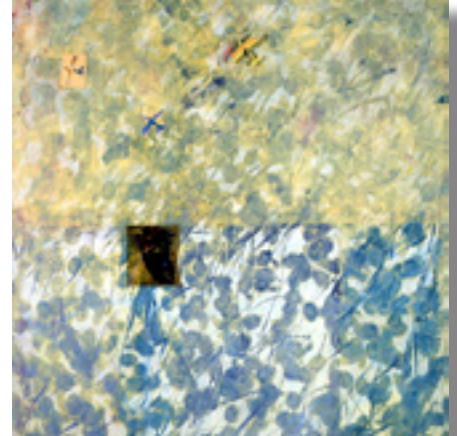
Flying Over 1976
acrylic & oil paint, collage on canvas
193.5 x 170 cm
no. 24

Domenico de Clario (1947-)

Two Small Trees
watercolour & graphite
48 x 57.5 cm
no. 31
gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984

Domenico de Clario (1947-)

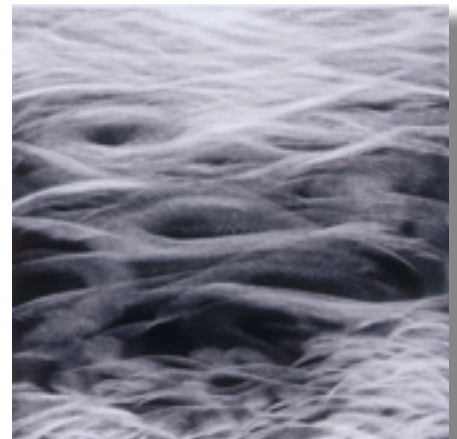
Great Ocean Road
watercolour & graphite
48 x 57.5 cm
no. 32
gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984



no. 24

Elizabeth Nyumi Nungurrayi (1947-)

Untitled 2002
screenprint ed. 11/99
33.5 x 50 cm
no. 1056
acquired from the Fremantle Print Award, 2003



no. 1022

Susan Pickering (1953-)

Fluent 3 1999
burnished aquatint ed. 23/35
55.5 x 56 cm
no. 1022
Print Council of Australia commissioned print, 1999



no. 706

Arthur Russell (1927-2009)

Untitled 1980
gouache
33 x 34.5 cm
no. 704
donated by Rie Donaldson, through the Cultural Gifts Scheme, 1994

Arthur Russell (1927-2009)

Untitled 1980
gouache
33 x 34.5 cm
no. 706
donated by Rie Donaldson, through the Cultural Gifts Scheme, 1994

Helicopter Tjungurrayi (1947-)

Jupiter Well 2002
etching ed. 1/50
73.9 x 38.9 cm
no. 1058
acquired from the Fremantle Print Award, 2003