

'SIGHT REGAINED' EXHIBITION

# HOLLOWAYS SMOTJOWS



## Artists and architects

Augustine Dall'Ava  
Ivan Rijavec

Julie Irving  
Felicity Scott and Stephen O'Connor

John Nixon  
Allan Powell

Domenico de Clario  
Greg Burgess

Akio Makigawa  
Denton Corker Marshall

Brett Jones, Sarah-Louise Stubbs  
and Robin Metcalfe of Paradox Design  
Leon van Schaik

David Band  
Vanessa Bird and Kirstin Thompson

James Clayden  
Nonda Katsalidis

Louise Forthun  
Eli Giannini

Imants Tillers  
Alec Tzannes

Curator:  
Jacqueline Wajsbrem

Committee:  
Anne Carragher  
Kurt Esser  
Max Halley  
Dr Maurice Rosenbaum

Consultant:  
Dr John C Welchman

## Sight Regained

'Sight Regained' takes its place within and against the traditions of visual modernism that have fetishised sight as the optic of quality and site as the locus of self-reference. It brokers an opposition to the old aesthetic in which sight is cut off from the everyday strategies of common knowledge, and place is made over in the image of an iterated Utopian Formula. In paying homage to the creation of new sights/sites we have before us so many celebrations of new becomings in vision. Accordingly this exhibition is preoccupied with the specificity of sight, yet it looks equally onto the site-specific. It is formed around the exchanges and processes of looking (again).

In confronting the possession, loss and re-possession of our most precious faculties we are faced by an idea (and a practice) with immeasurable dialectical power. We are faced, indeed, by a project in which the crucial metaphysical oppositions of western culture - light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, blindness and illumination - are short circuited by a remarkable knight's move of modern technological insight and personal determination.

The collaborative pieces in the exhibition offer several challenging mediations of the sheer shock of this Enlightenment Dream of closing out the darkness of the world. They achieve this by means that are both literal and metaphoric. Some are confrontational, edging us abruptly into spatial dislocations that mimic the suddenness of the rise and fall of sight. Some are allegorical machines for mapping out the consciousness of seeing. Others are more blatant and more subtle, suggesting their own improvised negotiations between the coordinates of space, site/sight and shelter: they take on such entropic imaginings as the commodifiable phantasy of the dark represented in the Noir Gate of Paradox/van Schaik, or the interlocked 'Cathedrals' of Burgess/de Clario.

Yet the compelling diversity of responses by the artists and architects in 'Sight Regained' to the empowerment of sight/site does not overwhelm one fundamental concern - that of the euphoria, the sublimity, the passionate release and ecstatic communion that attends the passage from non-sight to looking, from darkness to light. I have already termed this a kind of shock, but it is also a bliss and an epiphany. What we have before us is an ocular sculpture of possible firebursts and speedy abysses moulded from the scintillating shook foil of sight.

Dr John C Welchman, July 1992, Monash University

---

Note: The present exhibition is intended to support and benefit the remarkable achievements in research and fieldwork of Professor Hollows in the area of ophthalmology, and offers no endorsement of or engagement with his public statements concerning medical ethics and funding.



Acknowledgements:

*'Sight Regained' brings together some of Australia's most innovative artists and architects in a collaborative project that pays tribute to decades of dedicated and moving work by Professor Fred Hollows in the prevention and cure of eye disease in underprivileged communities worldwide.*

*His charitable work is well known and has been acknowledged with numerous honours and medals, including Australian of the Year in 1991.*

*The concept behind the exhibition 'Sight Regained' was designed to compliment the work of Professor Hollows.*

*Together with Max Halley I have enlisted the support of the business and arts communities to form a committee of interested people whose aim was to organise a collaborative exhibition between architects and artists as the focus of a fund-raising effort to support his work.*

*I would like to thank Anne Carragher, Kurt Esser, Simon Gough and Ian Samuel, all of whom played a major role in putting together the exhibition. Thanks also to Naomi Cass, Dianna Gold and Christine Adams for their valuable contributions.*

*My sincere appreciation must also go to the Anne and Stuart Purves of Australian Galleries who have made the gallery resources readily available to me. My thanks are also due to the staff of Australian Galleries, Marie-Claire Courtin, Jane Dahlsen, Michael Howard, Tom Spender and Jane Wright.*

*I would also like to acknowledge the designer Garry Emery for the considerable time, effort and commitment which he has contributed to this catalogue and exhibition, and to Dr John Welchman, cultural critic and art historian of Monash University who provided the brief for 'Sight Regained', and helped us all by opening up the project to a range of stimulating critical possibilities.*

*Finally and most importantly I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the artists and architects. Without their support this exhibition would not have been possible.*

Jacqueline Wajsbrem: Curator

**Fred Hollows statement**

*It is a sad fact of life in the third world that those people who are cataract blind (a condition that occurs when the front eye lens becomes opaque) have a mortality rate twice that of a sighted person.*

*The sight of a cataract blind person can be easily restored surgically with the insertion of a small plastic intra ocular lens. These lenses cost up to \$300 in Australia.*

*Each year millions of people become cataract blind and most cannot afford intra ocular lenses to restore their sight – every year 3,500,000 in Africa, 33,000 in Nepal, 130,000 in Vietnam lose their sight.*

*Our team is working to transfer skills and technology to the third world so that sight can be restored at a cost cataract blind people can afford. That cost is around \$5 per person.*

*Surgeons from Eritrea, Nepal and Vietnam have been trained to do modern cataract surgery. Low tech intra ocular lens factories are being built in Wollongong near Sydney.*

*The first lens factory will be producing intra ocular lenses in Eritrea by the end of this year. The surplus will be sold to Nepal and Vietnam.*

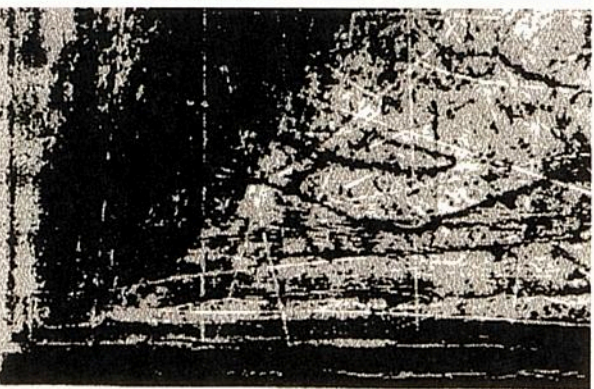
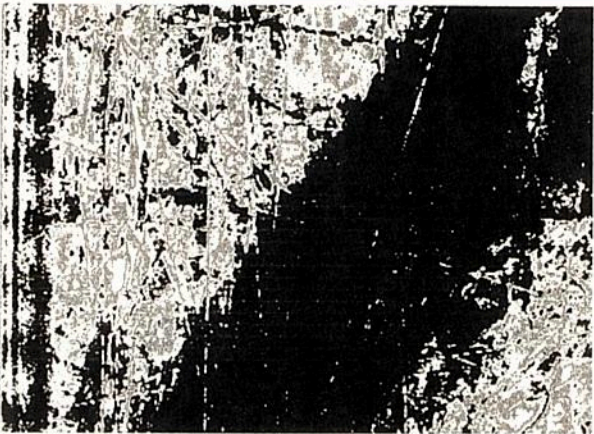
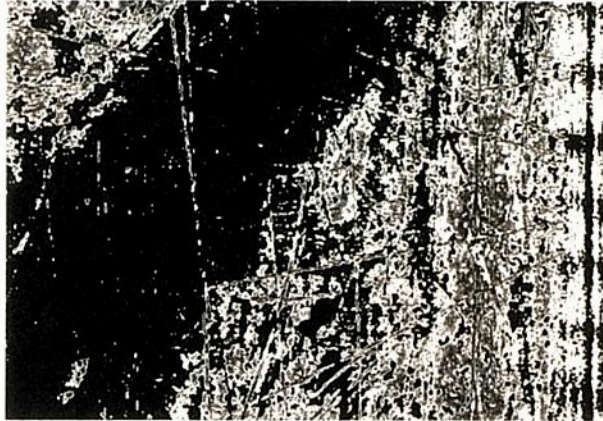
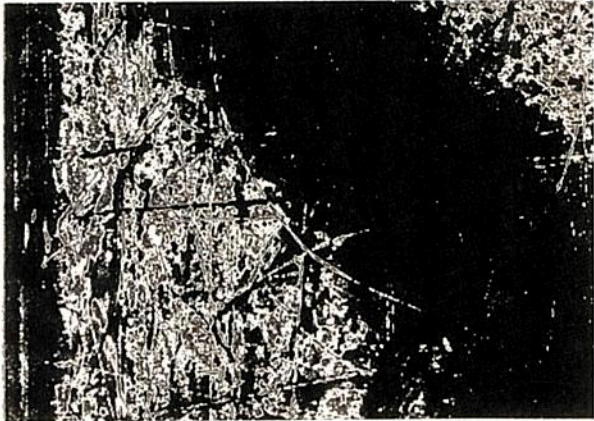
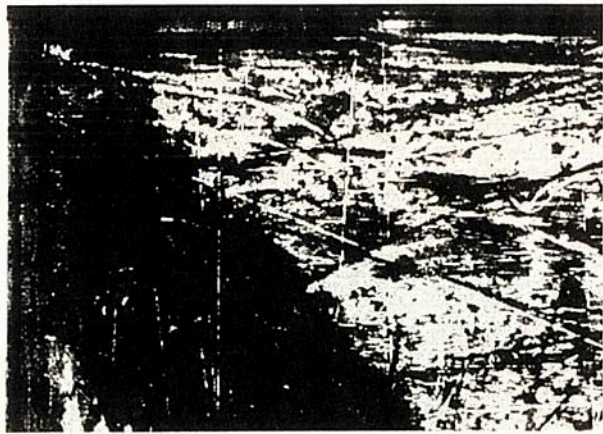
*Eventually the Nepalese, Eritreans and Vietnamese will supply intra ocular lenses throughout other third world countries.*

*Your support will ensure that many thousands and ultimately millions of people will have their sight restored.*



**Julie Irving, Felicity Scott and Stephen O'Connor**

**Medium** 1992, Mixed media  
**Size** 4m width x 2m height

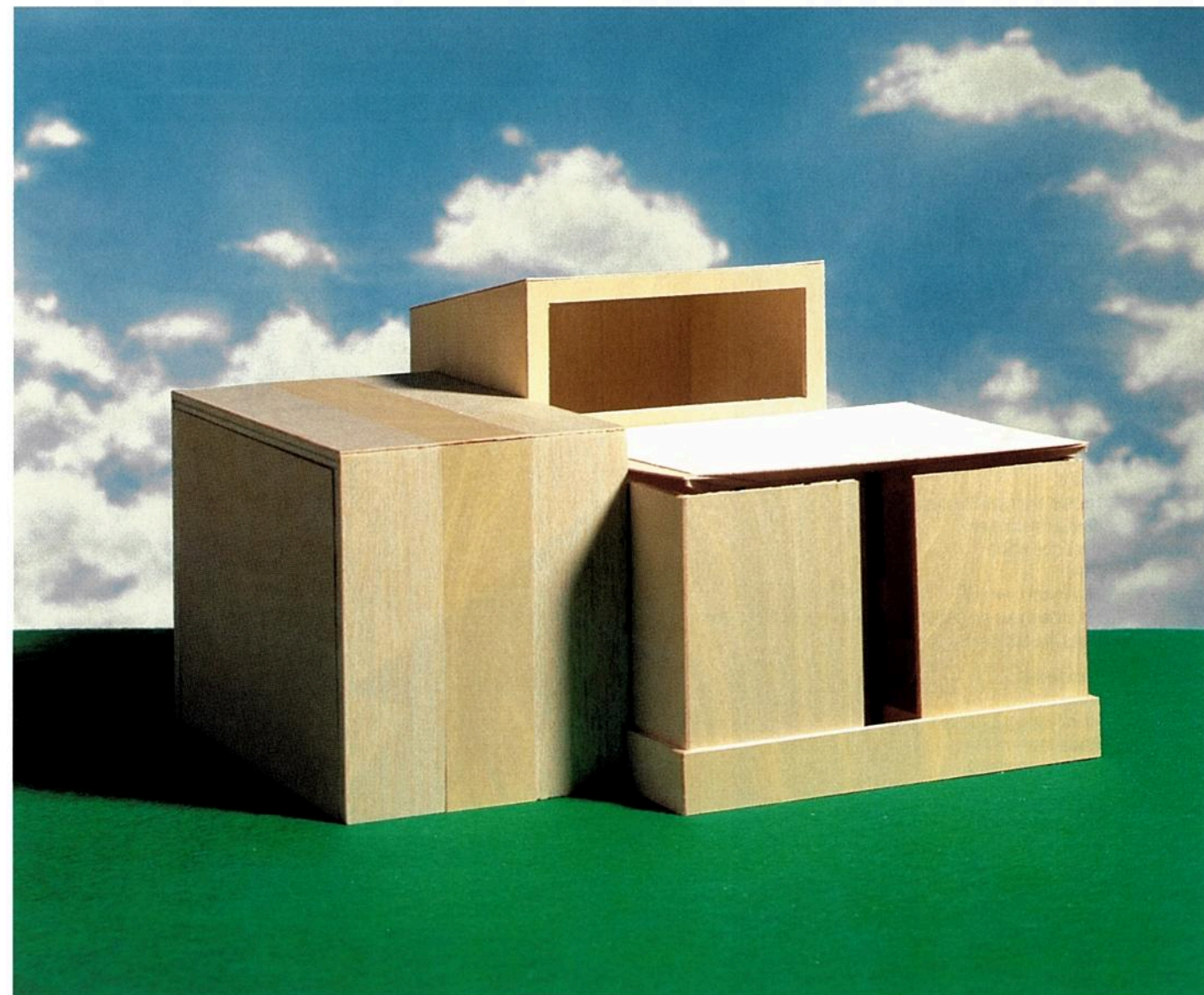


Photography: David Simmonds



**John Nixon and Allan Powell**

**Size** 1992, 2m height, 5m width and depth 1.5m



Artist represented by Anna Weis, City Gallery  
Photography: Graham Baring

**Domenico de Clario and Greg Burgess**

*Sight informs the Inner Cathedral.*

*Site forms the Outer Cathedral.*

*These Opposites are synthesised in the Mandorla,*

*through a process of increasing integration,*

*to finally regain an Indivisible Whole.*

**Title** Cathedral, 1992

**Statement** 'Draw,' the blind man said.  
So I began.  
First I drew a box that looked like a house.  
It could have been the house I lived in.  
Then I put a roof on it.  
At either end of the roof I drew spires.  
  
The blind man felt around over the paper.  
He moved the tips of his fingers over the paper,  
all over what I had drawn,  
and he nodded.  
  
'Close your eyes now,'  
the blind man said to me.  
I did it.  
I closed them just like he said.  
'Keep them that way.  
Don't stop now.  
Draw.'  
So we kept on with it.  
His fingers rode my fingers as my hand went over the paper.  
It was like nothing else in my life up to now.

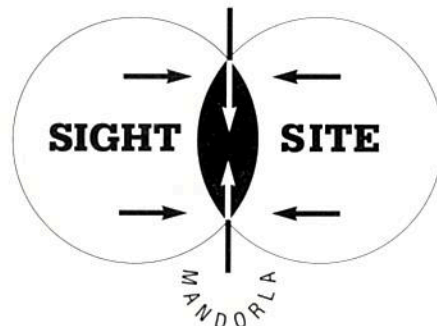
Then he said,  
'I think that's it.  
I think you got it,' he said.  
'Take a look.  
What do you think?'

But I had my eyes closed.  
I thought I'd keep them that way a little longer.  
I thought it was something I ought to do.  
'Well?' he said.  
'Are you looking?'

My eyes were still closed.  
I was in my house.  
I knew that.  
But I didn't feel like I was inside anything.  
'It's really something,' I said.

*Raymond Carver, 1983  
From 'Cathedral', First Published in the  
United States of America in 1983  
by Alfred A. Knopf Inc.*

**Medium** Steel tubing and clear polycarbonate gym weights



**Technical assistance and construction:**

Peter Felicetti  
Peter Randall  
Andrew Otto  
Francois Levy  
Peter Ryan  
Smith weld  
Wiretainers  
Vickerys  
Resiplex  
Austeng  
Wentworth Green (Transport)

**Materials:**


Victorian Institute for the Blind  
Julie Bain  
Malcolm Rust  
  
Tubemakers  
Mike Doubleday  
  
Ampelite  
Hank ver Hergen  
  
Polycarbonate of Australia  
Daryl Murray  
  
Sports Kinetics  
Michael Gearon



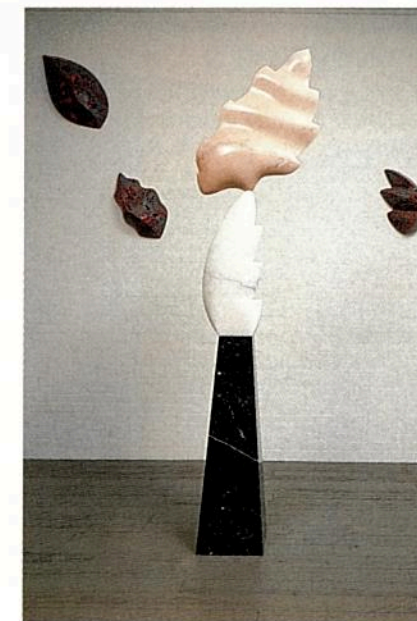
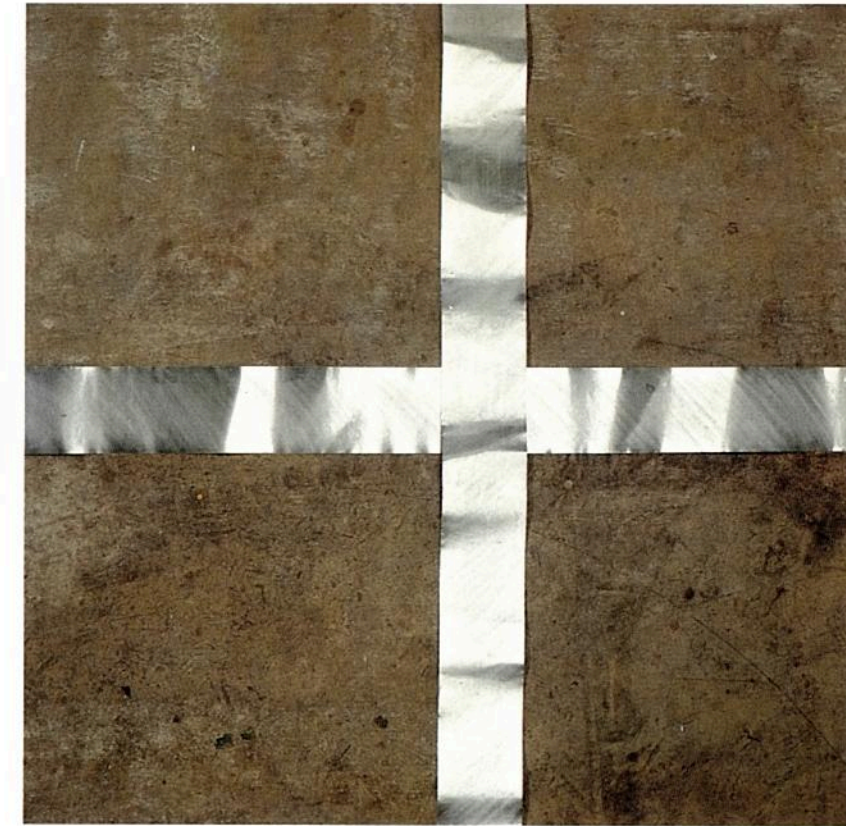
**Akio Makigawa and Denton Corker Marshall**

**Medium** 1992, Marble and steel  
**Size** 3m width x 3m length x 3.5m height

↓

<b>Statement</b>	Architects' →	Grid		Artist →	Work
		Space	+		Objects
		Object	makes		Space
		Object	is		Space
		Space	is		Art
		Grid	is		Space

↑





**Brett Jones, Sarah-Louise Stubbs, Robin Metcalfe  
of Paradox Design and Leon van Schaik**

**Title** 'Noir Gate', 1992

**Statement** At First you won't be able to spot the difference!

With the urban Freeway, the Shopping Mall is the ubiquitous space of the day. The people of the Edge Cities of Santa Monica, Milton Keynes and of Melbourne, make public their status through movement in cars on freeways that take them from one private destination to another; and they are liberated from the multivalent privacy of their electronic networks by parking and debouching into malls or airports: the meccas of free choice.

Malls, however, like airports, carefully restrict that freedom. Only shopping for things and destinations is allowed. The walk across the tarmac to the soaring barrel vaults does not lead to a cathedral of unbounded space, but into forced passages between shops. An illusion of spaciousness does abound, but the palms and planters and fountains serve only to constrict and closely define movement into prescribed patterns desired by the management. No protest march could surge down these passages, no dance of triumph could float unencumbered across these shiny floors. No lonely reverie could survive the wholesome impellers of these places: Sit and Eat, Do and Shop.

'Noir Gate' is different! In this Mall of Malls the elements are familiar but the incidental-compellers (planters, seats, pools, signs) drift in a vast space. The only palms and fountains to be seen are reflections in the mirror pools: reassuring remembrances of malls-past, their heads are tossed by real storms. Glittering expanses of floor invite impromptu explosions of dance. Huge vaults tower above, and on the far side we see discreet signs, seemingly the size of business cards, that suggest that pleasures of a more intimate scale lurk beyond the perimeter colonnades. Yet unimagined possibilities allow us to forget that we came to shop. We approach a sign and read it in the hopes of being reminded of what supposed lack brought us here. The glossy black boards direct us back to images of ourselves - to creches, to health centres for men, women and children, to orientation classes, to cafe bars, to arcane arts centres, to electronic libraries, to book binders, to violin repairers, to turners of old fans into real toys, to carpet repair shops, to watch makers who mend, to shoe exchanges, to exotic baths, to dementia gardens, to meeting houses for chess players, to language restoration centres, to the Portuguese grilled fish oven. Cradles of painters in white overalls paint the endless trusses over and over again. Manure is dug into the flower beds by municipal gardeners in khaki boiler suits.

No food is sold for consumption off the premises. Refrigeration is unheard of. Nothing made off the premises is proffered: at the back of restaurants we glimpse the pigsty, the hen coop and the asparagus bed. Vans park under olive trees and between orange groves. The weather drifts, seeps, and oozes in, and teams of sweepers in long aprons wipe away desert dust, autumn leaves, and droplets from spring showers. As night falls candles are lit. Parts of the vast dome become dark! Alcoves are illuminated by the bonfires of picnickers. Flares from the doors of pizza ovens, opened by sweating bakers in T-Shirts and jeans, shine across the floor at regular intervals, the beams of light marking the time on the dial of the floor. The only sound is that of chatter, and footfalls are the aural definers of the extent of the great space. People linger on the upper galleries overlooking the scene. Some are outside their front doors, some are in their offices, some are hard at work in their sweat-shops, some are staying in the hotel. A rooftop canal affords a view of the red and white streams of the freeway heading to a horizon that is fixed by Noirstone, ten miles away through the frothing palm-heads, silhouetted against the orange glow of the city that does not sleep.

No one goes home.

This is 'Noir Gate'!

**Medium** Medium, Craftwood, aluminium, paint and glass

**Size** 1.8m width x and depth 2.8m x height 2m

Photography: David Simmonds





**David Band, Vanessa Bird and Kirstin Thompson**

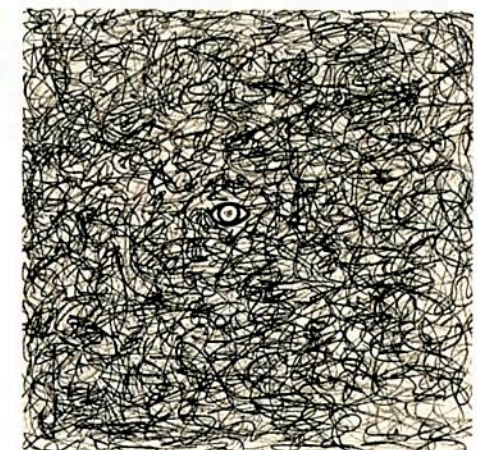
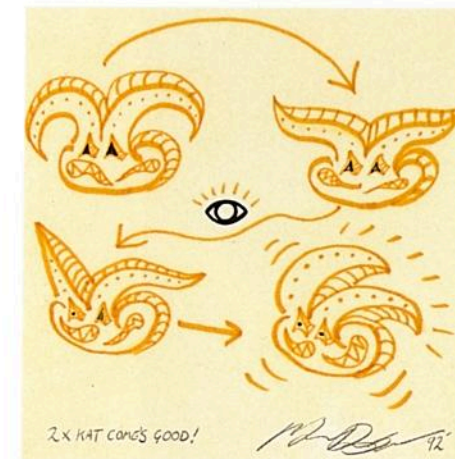
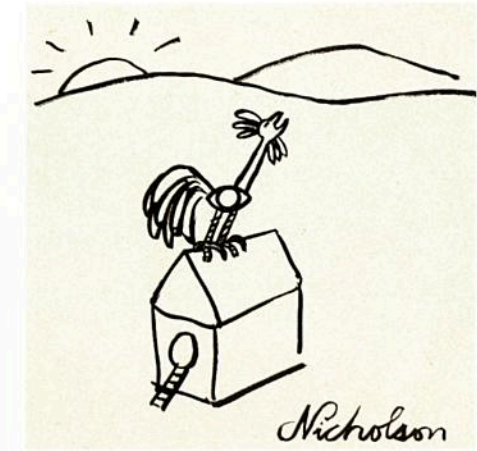
Our Project responds specifically to the invitation to participate in a collaborative charity exhibition. The success of a charity is dependent on the breadth of the audience. We extended this and the notion of collaboration by inviting a range of people to respond to our project of 'Sight Regained.' In addition to these original works we have produced a range of affordable goods and advertisements in the public realm to extend our site of intervention. We would like to thank all those who participated.

**Medium** 1992, Recycled paper, vinyl stickers, t-shirts, billboard

**Size** 900 x 1100 mm (Dimension of Poster) 360 x 400 mm (Dimension of Framed Works)

**Participants:**

- Phillip Adams
- Marianne Ballieu
- Karen Casey
- John Clarke
- Marcus Davidson
- Esther Edquist
- Grant Featherston
- Wendy Harmer
- Anderson Hunt
- Inge King
- Mirka Mora
- Val Morgan
- Callum Morton
- Peter Nicholson
- James Smeaton
- Ron Tanberg
- Bob Thompson
- Jana Wendt



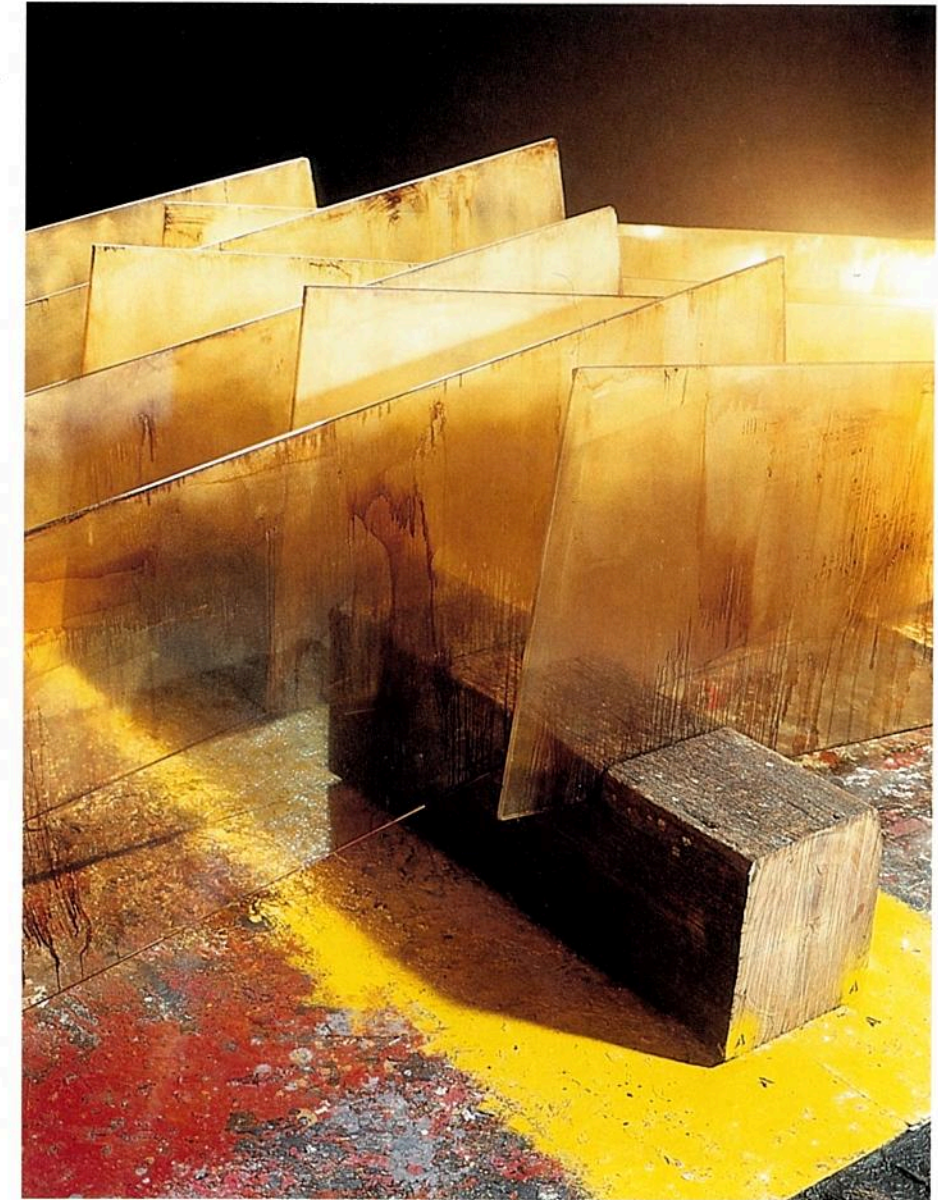


**Nonda Katsalidis and James Clayden**

**Medium** 1992, Wood, glass, rubber, roadmarking paint and bitumen

**Size** 4800 x 2400 x 700 (height)

there are many histories  
How can we think  
sight and non-sight  
light and dark  
colour and non-colour  
Looking and seeing  
Dreaming  
with closed eyes  
Not in the dark but in the dark  
with opened eyes.  
the dream about no dream  
Everything had vanished  
What can empty be





**Eli Giannini and Louise Forthun**

**Statement**

The collaboration of artist and architect has to stem from a genuine search for extending and discovering  
and interdependence of complex values and cultures that link the work of the protagonists.

**Medium** 1992, Acrylic on canvas

**Size** 1.97m width x 2.3m height x 3cm depth.





## Imants Tillers and Alec Tzannes

**Title** 'The Gate', 1992

**Statement** We have explored one way that art and architecture can be integrated in everyday projects in the city.

We have made a work of art that contributes to the workings of the city and becomes part of the street, the arcade, the edge of the park, the entry and the public area of an interior to a building.

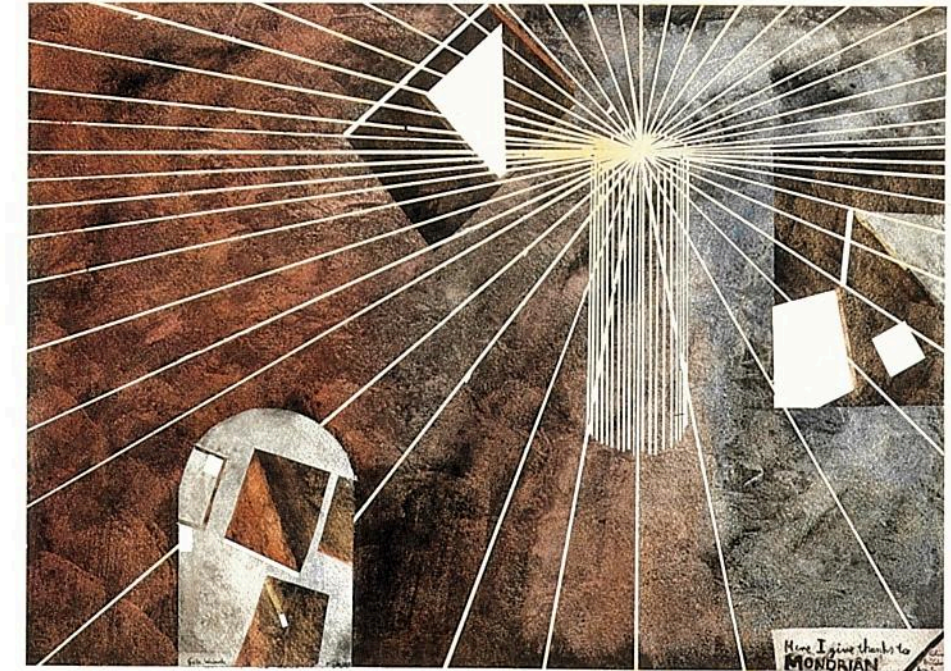
We have made architecture that contributes to the expression and meaning of the work of art by providing structure, light, indirect reflected light and particular penetrations, materials and details.

The architecture has created a role for art for the people of the city to experience. Art forms a key element of the street, a city wall or public room. The art is made for the city and the architecture; mediating between the two, between the public and the semi-private, between ideas, space and light.

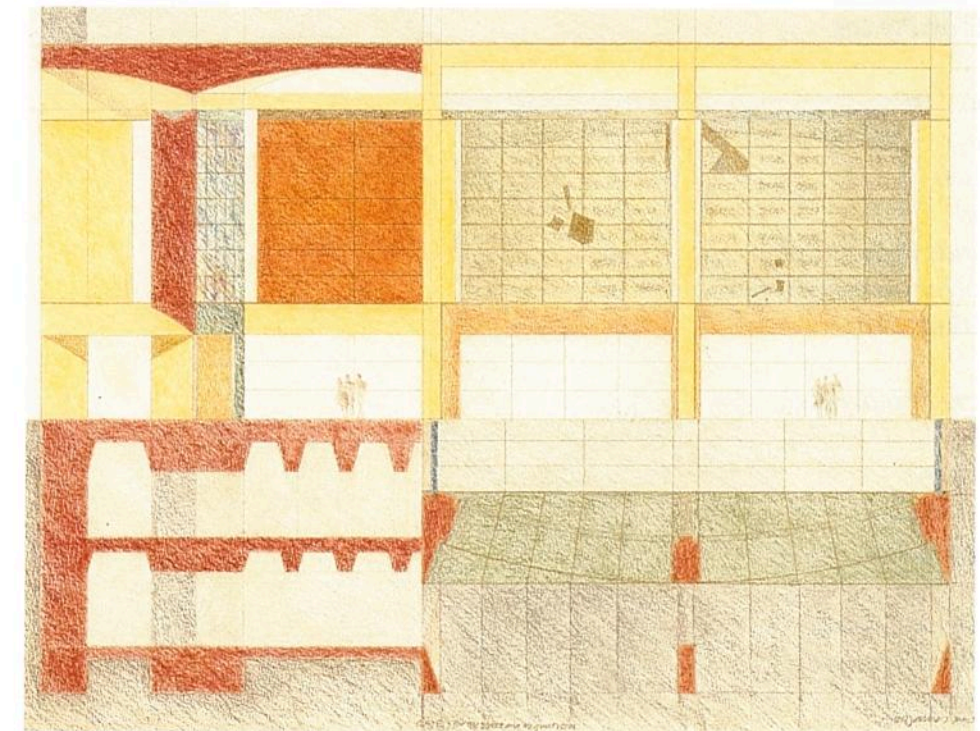
For us it is quite natural to work in this way, combining the two disciplines and using each as necessary to enrich the expression of the built environment.

**Medium** Pastel, acrylic and gouache on arches paper

**Size** 1.52m width x 55cm height.



GATE





## **Sponsors**

**Arthur Andersen**  
**Australian Galleries**  
**Christie's Australia**  
**Drawn Circle Pty Ltd**  
**Emery Vincent Design**  
**Galleries Magazine (Paris)**  
**MSS Security Services**  
**Phillips Fox Solicitors**  
**Project Security**  
**Staunton Signs**  
**Vaughan Printing Pty Ltd**  
**Westpac Gallery**

*AAA Body Works Cars Pty Ltd*  
*AdverType Group Pty Ltd*  
*Alexander J Cook Pty Ltd*  
*BHP*  
*Caffe e Cucina*  
*Classic Colour*  
*CSR Wood Panels*  
*CSR Craftwood*  
*David Simmonds Photographer*  
*Faculty of Environmental Design  
and Construction, RMIT*  
*French Style*  
*Graham Baring Photography*  
*Market Timbers*  
*Nine Darling Street*  
*Pre Press Network*  
*Topshot Photographics*  
*Traveland*  
*Tubemakers Metal Centre*  
*Twites Art Picture Framers*  
*Venture Holidays*

COLOUR SEPARATIONS KINDLY DONATED BY PRE PRESS NETWORK. TELEPHONE 874 8477  
PRINTING KINDLY DONATED BY VAUGHAN PRINTING PTY. LTD. TELEPHONE: 817 4483