

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

*Col Jordan*

*Colin Lanceley*

*Janie Hann*

*Kate Briscoe*

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KATE BRISCOE

COL JORDAN

COLIN LANCELEY

TERENCE O'DONNELL

1 SEPTEMBER - 22 SEPTEMBER 1984

*Peter Power*

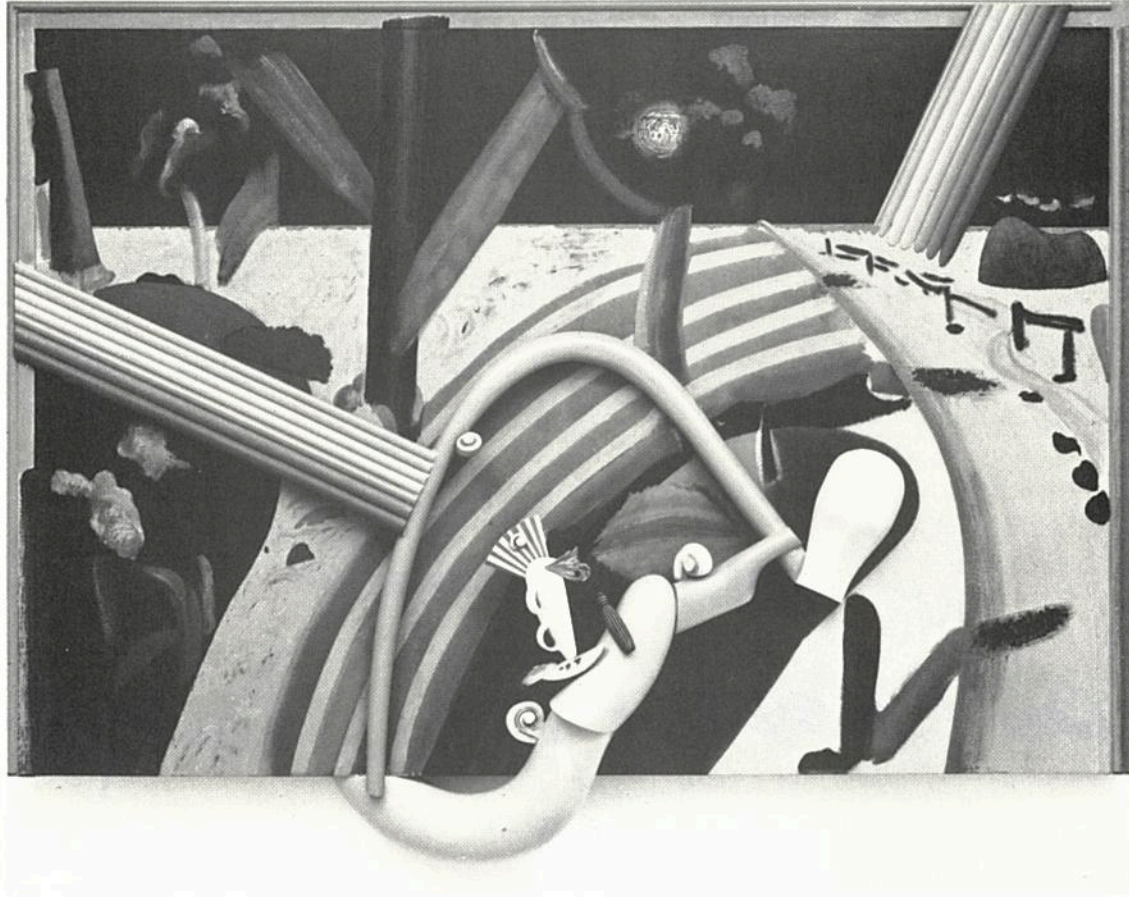
*David Price*

*Charles Lane*

*Ally Gault*

**IDG**

IVAN DOUGHERTY GALLERY  
CITY ART INSTITUTE  
SYDNEY COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION  
cnr Albion Avenue & Selwyn Street  
PADDINGTON NSW 2021



COLIN LANCELEY. "Nocturn" (After a painting by D. Davies, 1891)

## INTRODUCTION

Legend has it that Hephaestus, the smith god, drove a wedge into Zeus's skull to relieve his raging headache. From the fissure Athena was born; she sprang forth as a handsome young woman, dressed in armour and holding a spear. This phenomenon of a product emerging in a mature state without an antecedent process of development is, however, more common in the realm of legend than in the field of art. Many, perhaps most, works of art are the end product of a metamorphosis which may involve the use of sketches or photographs as an aide-memoire, compositional or structural diagrams, notations which tease out colour possibilities, or preliminary studies in various media.

In arranging this exhibition, no consideration was given to the gathering of a group of works which would hang amiably together. Indeed the four painters invited share little common ground, ranging from the representational to the abstract, from the formal to the informal. But in producing the paintings exhibited, all have worked through a range of preparatory stages which elaborate or refine the initial concept.

This exhibition traces those developmental processes.

Peter Pinson.



To obtain this sense of emergence, of becoming, of definition in the making there is a lot of underpainting, of colours floating above and into submerged colours. Lest this become a little vaporous and amorphic a line makes a sudden boundary or, in the large white area of "Malolo", grows impatient and dives and swirls.

I suppose these two works, grand without a hint of the grandiose, intimate despite their scale, are, in some ways, about flotsam and jetsam, fluctuating tides, white waters unfurling and sweeping thinly; all is in flux and form is transient. The stick—maps are quite the opposite, signifying that areas have been traversed before, while the monotypes are energetic evidence of strongly reinforced forms. On the other hand, a book of sketches shows sinuous lines or ripples of water, snaking their way, minute waves, or caught in cups of rock.

Maybe all this is too lyrical, too idyllic, because a Sepik River carving of four hooked beaks in the studio, begins to nurture more menacing associations; is there a repressed aggression? Probably not, but areas are not fragile and dainty; they seem to want to join or annex other territories, albeit by unobtrusive means. The flux is probably more directed than first meets the eye.

Indeed, how does Work in Progress progress? The most celebrated use of the term was James Joyce's for pre-released sections of "Finnegans Wake" and that is a work the analysis of which is in infinite progress.

How works progress is an intricate question even if Kate Briscoe supplies substantial clues... but, then, no great art, or anything else, can be defined by an account of its origins.

Elwyn Lynn.

#### CATALOGUE :

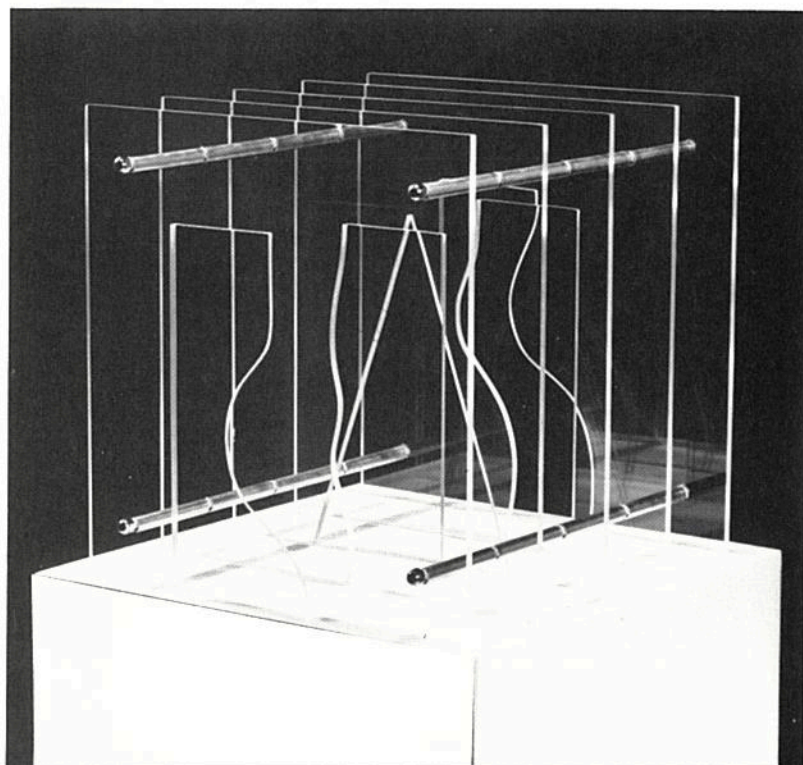
1. Malolo 1984. Oil & acrylic/canvas 213x154cms.
2. Naviti 1984. Oil & acrylic/canvas 213x154cms.
- 3,4,5,6 Untitled monotypes. Mix. media/paper 45x40cms each.
- 7,8 Untitled. Mixed media/paper
9. Group of collages. Mixed media/paper. 20x20cms.
10. Sketchbook drawings. Various media/paper 38x55cms.
11. Two sheets of photographs. c70x98cms.

Also displayed will be a group of found objects, many of maritime provenance. These pieces played a role, in some instances direct, in other instances peripheral and atmospheric, in the conception and development of the paintings.

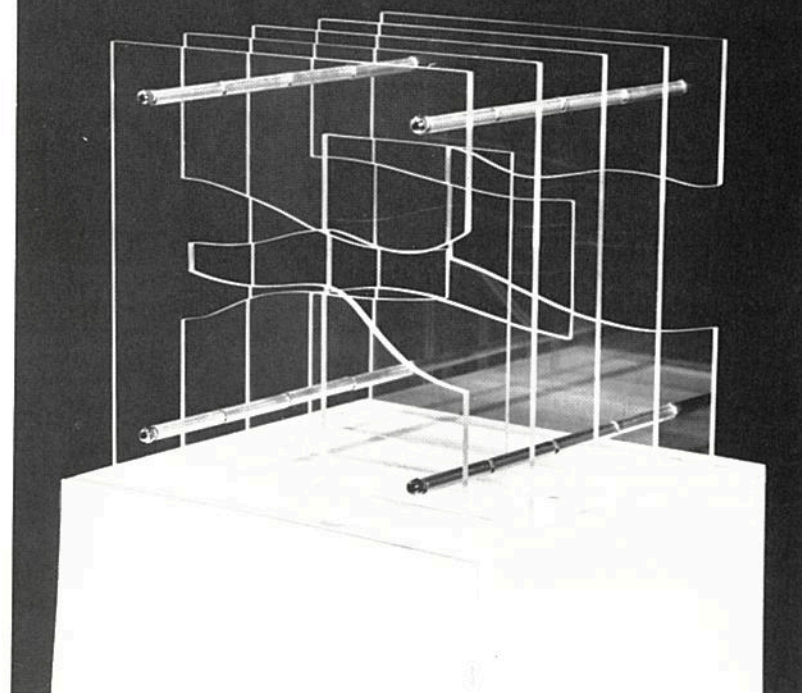


Table of found objects - Kate Briscoe's studio.





COL JORDAN  
"Windows 1"



COL JORDAN  
"Windows 11"

## COL JORDAN

Born 1935

1954 -1955 Studied Balmain Teachers' College

1957 - 1962 Studied Sydney University (part time)

First Solo exhibition : 1966 (Watters Gallery, Sydney)

I have always been fascinated by the ambiguities which exist in our attempts to perceive what is real. Given the same stimuli, we see, hear and understand things differently. Our common surroundings are perceived through filters of experience which change and adjust messages. It is this idiosyncratic view of the world which makes us human.

Given this preoccupation it should not be surprising that paradox and ambiguity are the themes which motivate my work nor that I should choose "Windows" as the title for the works in this exhibition.

A window is a paradox. It is substantial yet its substance is destroyed by the transparency of glass.

It exists to allow light and the images outside to penetrate and illuminate an inner recess, yet simultaneously its surface can be a mirror.

It generates no light yet it can flash with all the brilliance of an arc lamp.

The impurities in a sheet of glass can redraw an outline.

This passive accessory to domestic comfort can, by its activity rearrange the way we see our surroundings.

It is ten years since I last worked in three dimensions but when I began work on the pieces in this exhibition two dimensions seemed inadequate for the problem I set myself.

Those earlier pieces consisting of layers of coloured acrylic sheet provided an ideal starting point for the "windows".

This time I was not concerned with colour but with transparency. The new works needed to exist as light and be perceived in the combination and subtle distortion of the images they reflected.

The way in which light refracts through acrylic sheet also gave me the chance to create a kind of "landscape" within the windows themselves. The edges, some straight, some organically curved became lines. It became possible to think of each piece as a drawing in space.



In its original state acrylic sheet is coated with a protective layer of brown paper, so until the work is cut, polished and ready for assembly I could not anticipate the optical distortion created by each transparent sheet acting as a lens.

Those distortions change as the viewer moves and help prevent simplicity becoming predictability.

In the past my sculpture grew out of my work as a painter. In this series the process was reversed.

The linear quality of the sculpture prompted me to experiment with the idea of drawing on a large scale. Since the freestanding works used only the colour of the reflected environment, it seemed appropriate that the major wall pieces to accompany them should be similarly spare in the use of colour.

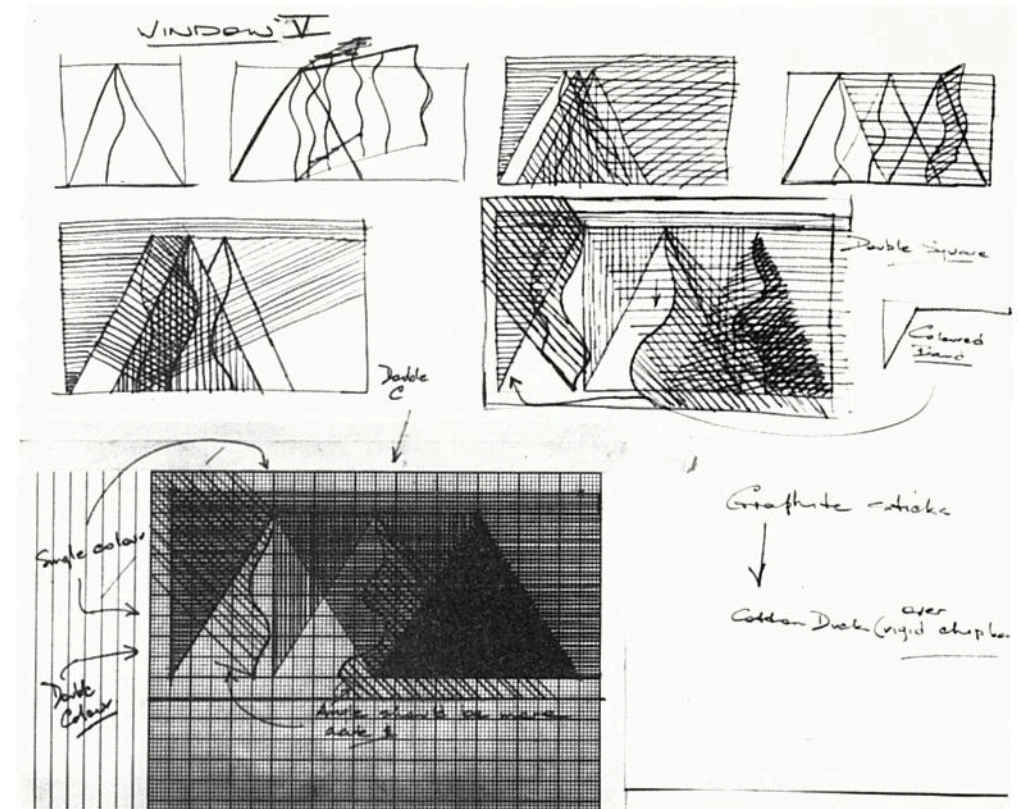
I have already referred to these wall pieces as "drawings" which is, perhaps a misnomer. They certainly incorporate the traditional medium of graphite and consist of a tracery of lines, but in "Windows V and VI" lines are not used to define the borders and details of an image. Repeated lines define spaces. Images appear only because smaller units tend to be seen as larger completed wholes.

With the exception of the two working diagrams, each of the finished works included in the exhibition exists as a series of layers or strata.

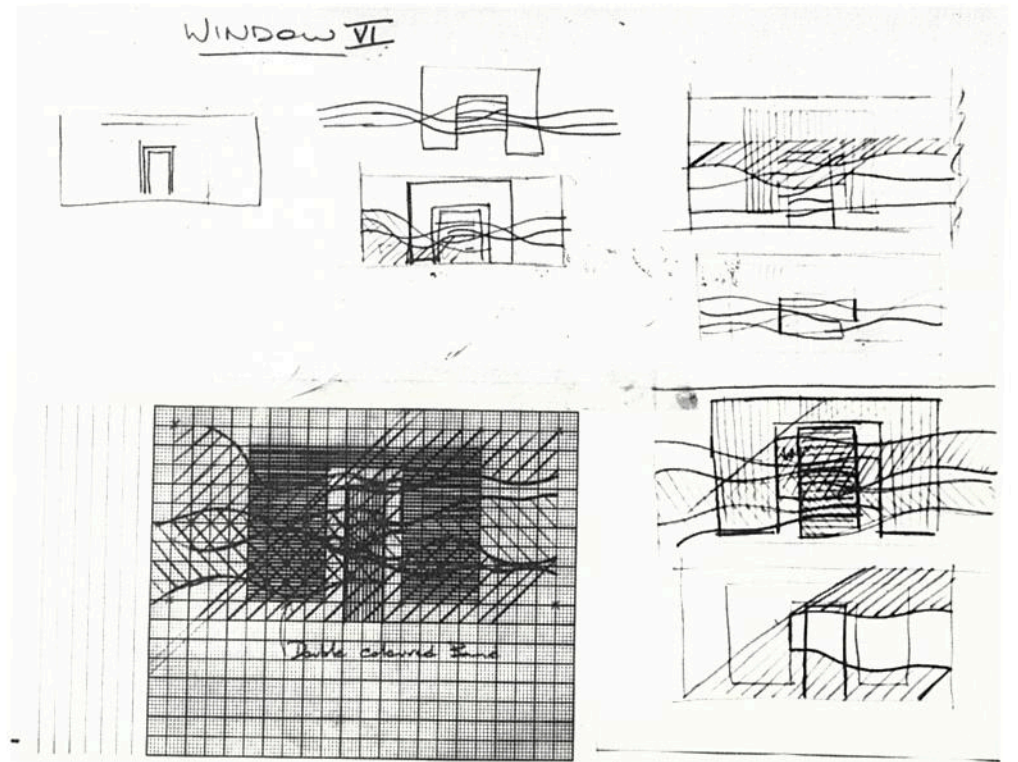
If the works are successful it is because each layer can only establish its identity by association with the other layers which make up the work. Perhaps there could be an analogy between this integration and that which takes place in the act of perception.

CATALOGUE :

- 12 Windows 1. 1984  
Acrylic sheet, steel, aluminium. 30 x 30 x 30cms.
- 13. Windows 11. 1984  
Acrylic sheet, steel, aluminium. 30 x 30 x 30cms.
- 14. Windows V - Preliminary Diagrams. 1984  
Graphite and crayon on paper. 39.5 x 55.5cms.
- 15. Windows V1 - Preliminary Diagrams. 1984  
Graphite and crayon on paper. 39.5 x 55.5cms.
- 16. Windows V. 1984  
Graphite and acrylic paint on cotton duck. 122 x 244cms.
- 17. Windows V1. 1984  
Graphite and acrylic paint on cotton duck. 122 x 244cms.



COL JORDAN' "Windows V - Preliminary Diagrams".



COL JORDAN. "Windows V1 - Preliminary Diagrams".



## COLIN LANCELEY

Born 1938, Dunedin, New Zealand

1940 Moved to Sydney, Australia

1956 - 1960 Studied National Art School, Sydney

1965 Travelled to Europe and settled in London

1981 Returned to Australia

First significant exhibition : 1962 "Imitation Realists", Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and Rudy Komon, Sydney.



COLIN LANCELEY. "Dust in Sunlight and Memory in Corners".

The Art Gallery of New South Wales has recently hung a newly-acquired large painting by Colin Lanceley. Its title is a phrase from T.S. Eliot's "Ash Wednesday" - "where three dreams cross between blue rocks" - a rather cryptic title for a painting which clearly refers to the Blue Mountains but is not a landscape in the conventional sense.

It has to be admitted that his work is not always easy to understand. The elegance, joyful colour and careful craftsmanship are immediately striking but the imagery, drawn and carved with an hallucinatory precision, can be opaque - for many it needs time and repeated viewing. But when it finally clicks in the mind's eye the rewards are immense.

Lanceley's 'structured paintings' as he describes them - a painted, contoured canvas incorporating sculptural shapes and images - had evolved from the work of the Annandale Imitation Realists as he, Mike Brown and Ross Crothall had styled themselves as students in the early 60's and stung to fury most of the Sydney and Melbourne critics with their collages of junk, kitsch and cast-offs. These were images of an Australia far removed from pastoral idylls or the wan appeal of the Sydney Charm School. But in spite of the savagery of some of these works ("Love Me Stripper" in the National Gallery in Canberra is one of them) some are also very funny. Humour and absurdity were to remain a strong flavour in his work.

Inevitably the interests of the three Imitation Realists diverged in the next year or so and for Lanceley collage became a philosophy, a way of viewing the world. He steeped himself in the music of Bartok and the poetry of Eliot - their bringing together of fragments and images from very different and supposedly incompatible sources seemed to justify and illuminate the direction his own painting was taking. The larrikin love/hate images of Australia were subsumed into paintings, assemblages and sculptures whose meaning was less direct. He began to explore ways of bringing the painting and sculpture together in 'structured paintings' - a new-minted surrealism seemed to be the direction.



Lanceley went to London in 1965 by way of an Helena Rubenstein Travelling Art Scholarship. He had won this in 1964 with five assemblages/sculptures which had predictably outraged the popular press (Australia was then still in the throes of the joyful Philistinism that Barry Humphries had so gleefully identified). His career seemed to be following the classic simplicities of the bad bio-pic - arrival in London with introduction to well-known and respected art critic John Russell - critic admires work - introduces him to London's most prestigious gallery, the Marlborough - exhibition - good reviews (a few nasty ones to keep the plot moving) - a prize at the Edinburgh Festival - exhibitions in Europe and New York.

But the pace faltered as his novelty passed — London in the 60's was a voracious novelty-monger. Work of such complexity and originality needed time to absorb. He remembers wryly - "As Jonathan Miller said, every artist needs a Niagara of constant praise and it had slowed to a trickle." But a gradual and ever-widening interest and respect from other artists, critics and collectors around the world gave him the confidence to develop his 'structured paintings' without compromise. "That direction for me seems to offer a tremendous poetic licence - endless speculation and experiment with form, with less reliance on antecedents." But he is the last artist to dismiss antecedents - they are his artistic lifeblood. "Ruskin said that one can only be original within a tradition. For painting to make sense, to communicate, it must have a shared language." His "shared language" derives from the European Moderns he feels closest to - Braque, Picasso, Ernst, Miro - "They provide the most exciting intellectual and spiritual challenge there is." This perhaps rather sets him apart from most other Australian painters - an unashamed believer in (and developer of) the European tradition in an artistic milieu largely oriented towards America or Nationalism.

Returning to Australia in 1981 turned out to be something of a personal crisis. "Switching countries was more difficult than I ever dreamed, but I felt I needed to be in touch again with my own history as an artist and that has turned out to be the biggest plus." His work since his return has a new density and richness that brings together the two halves of his life - growing up in Australia and maturing as an artist abroad. The alienation and intense *deja-vu* of returning here has been fruitful. He has further developed a theme that first appeared in his work in the early 70's, the idea of landscape not as description but as a sense of place, with its associations, symbols, "poetic reconstructions of experience." Abroad he had found that certain places he came to know well continued to stir his imagination, suggesting images and shapes, a particular mood or intellectual response. "I find that certain images have a way of bringing the experience of a place alive. The elements are 'put together' in such a way as to convey feeling, the way a poet uses words to convey a heightened sense of a situation, as Eliot combines disparate images in collage fashion. If the painting works it can become a focus for the observer, give him the experience."

Many images or elements reappear in widely different paintings. For instance the fantail 'bird' which appeared in drawings about the landscape of Gloucestershire ten years ago has turned up again in the Blue Mountains painting, the striped furrows in "Chablis" become shafts of light in his Arnhem Land painting, "Dust in sunlight and memory in corners." This underlying "language" becomes richer as its elements reappear in new conjunctions, make new associations.

The titles are oblique but carefully chosen to provide a key to the imagery or personality of the work. The puns and twists of some of them signal the multiple intention - humour is a serious business, disarming but dislocating as well. When at time an apposite title cannot be found Eliot's Collected Poems has provided a sort of I Ching.

At present he is working on a series of seven lithographs on the theme of place - almost a roll-call mustering memories of places that have meant most to him in the years abroad: Chablis, Mojacar, Matala, Gloucestershire - and some here that have acquired richer meaning for him since his return. They are a kind of self-appraisal of his way of seeing the world prompted by his return to Australia.

The composer Sir Michael Tippett writing in his collection of essays "Moving into Aquarius" concludes that the artist's function in society is still what it always was: "To create images from the depth of the imagination and to give them form .. images of the past, shapes of the future. Images of vigour for a decadent period, images of calm for one too violent. Images of reconciliation for worlds torn by division. And in an age of mediocrity and shattered dreams, images of abounding, generous, exuberant beauty."

It is a good summary of Lanceley's own artistic credo, and a description of his best work.

David Spode.

#### CATALOGUE :

18. Nocturn (After a Painting by D. Davies 1891) 1981  
Oil on carved wood and canvas. 135 x 178cms.
19. Dawn Chorus. 1978  
India inks and crayon on paper. 107 x 239cms.
20. Dust in Sunlight and Memory in Corners. 1983  
Oil on carved wood and canvas. 177 x 192cms.

Also displayed will be a group of "fragments and references" which were employed in the development of the works.





TERENCE O'DONNELL.  
"Southern Outcrop - The Olgas".



TERENCE O'DONNELL.  
"Rockform - Uluru".



TERENCE O'DONNELL.  
"Round Mountains - Uluru".

## TERENCE O'DONNELL

Born 1942, Sydney

1963 - 1966 National Art School

First Solo Exhibition : 1971 Arts Council Gallery, Sydney

Throughout his career Terry O'Donnell has directed his attention almost exclusively to the natural Australian environment. Although, soon after graduating from the National Art School he produced a number of works which were done as a result of a visit to New Guinea.

Having developed a formidable skill as a draughtsman, it is not surprising to see this fully employed in the very convincing realist images that characterise his work. It is not surprising also that the images and subject matter should reflect O'Donnell's deep fascination with animals in general and Australian fauna in particular. This subject area has occupied him for many years and even during a short period in the early seventies when he produced a series of hard-edge abstract paintings he continued to refer to nature with patches of loose brushmarks breaking across the otherwise flat surface of the painting. These brushmarks in themselves were evocative of dappled light on foliage or the momentary flash of plumage.

The natural affinity with birds and animals was too strong, it seems, to remain suppressed or disguised. Nourished by a sojourn on the Kydra River, near Nimmitabel in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains, O'Donnell produced a series of works about birds and animals that were to lead to a decade of drawings, paintings and, more recently, etchings in which he has endeavoured to extract and express the nature of these subjects.

The current works are in response to a very different set of stimuli. In the winter months of 1983, O'Donnell travelled, for the first time, through Central Australia. And, like many before him was profoundly affected by the vast and ancient interior. It brought about a reconsideration of ideas and reappraisal of his native landscape. In a region of violent extremes and monumental phenomena the most awesome and impressive features remain. Ayres Rock and the Olgas. They were indeed so for O'Donnell and although he has worked from landscape before, it is unlikely that he has been confronted with subject matter of the magnitude and complexity of these great monoliths.

There are additional problems for the artist, especially one dealing in realistic images, in such popular and familiar symbols. There is pressure, both self imposed and external, to avoid apparent eclecticism and restatement of other artists' work. Yet it seems at first that the magnitude and very nature of the subject demand a literal translation. Standing in that vastness one feels obliged to attempt to recreate every nuance of the form, colour and surface and not to allow any of the magic to



escape. One is seduced by the spectacular effects of light, of heat and cold and great age, and the slow, cracking dryness of an exhausted land supporting only the merest and most fragile of growth. There remains an overwhelming sense of mystery and otherworldliness. It is not hard to accept this place as sacred as indeed it is.

However, it is not until the artist has moved on, away from the "tyranny of the subject", and the passage of time has allowed an emotional stability that reasonable perspectives can be brought to bear. Attitudes and ideas need to be sifted and gradually firmed to form the nucleus of the works.

It is the evidence of this process that we witness in the exhibition. Over the twelve months O'Donnell has made a great many small paintings, drawings and scribbled notes. These are of course in addition to drawings done in situ and several roles of exposed film which serve primarily as memory aids. With these and the exploratory drawings and a few collected mementoes, the artist's response has been gradually developed and shaped into a coherent and expressible form.

It is here that he stands alone with his decisions and from here that his ideas must be honed into an acceptable statement. Acceptable to the artist, that is. It was at this point that O'Donnell made the major step of dropping the literal image and threw out topographical exactitude, letting intuition and emotional response play a greater part.

As a result we see these expressive works and a real attempt to recreate the "experience" of the place. This is the first step away from the realist image in O'Donnell's work for a decade or more which would suggest the nature of the bond between artist and subject matter and the importance of that relationship.

Chris Gentle.

#### CATALOGUE :

21. Desert Drawing 1 1984, Charcoal/paper 56x3x38cms
22. Southern Outcrop-The Olgas 1984, Charcoal/paper 57x76.4cms
23. Rockform-Uluru 1984. Charcoal/paper 28.5x38.2cms
24. Round Mountains 1984. Charcoal/paper 57x76.4cms.
25. Pink Landscape 1984. Oil/canvas 55.7x71cms.
26. Dark Mountain-from the south at sunset 1984. Oil/canvas 71x71cms.
27. Orange Landscape—Mt.Wulpa & Mt.Olga from the West 1984 Oil/can 68.5x81
28. Uluru Landscape No.1-Southern white morning 1984 Oil/can.137x152cms.
29. Uluru Landscape No.2-Red mountains 1984. Oil/canvas 122x173cms.
30. Uluru Landscape No.3-Desert Rockforms 1984 Oil/can.3panels ea.71x76.5cms.



TERENCE O'DONNELL. "Desert Drawing 1"



KATE BRISCOE

Prizes: 1975 Cathay Pacific Prize; 1976 Wagga Wagga Purchase Prize; 1979 Maitland Purchase Prize.

Public Collections: N.S.W. Government; Newcastle Regional Gallery; Wagga Wagga City Council; Maitland City Council; Chartwell Trust, New Zealand; Townsville Teachers' College; Artbank.

Selected Bibliography:

Lynn, Elwyn, Sydney Scene, Art International, June 1975  
Bonython, Kym, Modern Australian Painting, 1970-1975, Rigby, 1976  
Kempf, Franz, Contemporary Australian Printmakers, Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1976.

Kate Briscoe is represented by Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney.

COL JORDAN

Prizes: 1965 Wollongong Prize; 1956 H. C. Richards Prize; 1967-1969 R.A.S. Prizes, Sydney; 1968 Maitland Art Prize; 1968 Muswellbrook Prize; 1970 TAA "Australian" Prize; 1971 Gold Coast Purchase Prize; 1971 Flotta Lauro Travelling Art Scholarship; 1973 Wollongong Art Purchase Prize.

Public Collections: Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Queensland Art Gallery; Newcastle Regional Art Gallery; Ballarat Art Gallery; Wollongong Art Gallery; Christchurch Gallery, New Zealand; Maitland City Collection; Muswellbrook City Collection; Coolangatta City Collection; University of Sydney Collection; Canberra College of Advanced Education; Western Australian Institute of Technology; University of Western Australia; Sydney Teachers' College; William Balmain College of Advanced Education; I.B.M. Collection; B.H.P. Collection.

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Horton, Mervyn, Present Day Art and Australia, Sydney Ure Smith, 1969.  
Luck, Ross, A Guide to Modern Australian Painting, Sun Books, Melbourne 1969.  
Gleeson, James, Modern Painters 1931-1970, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne 1971  
Smith, Bernard, Australian Painting 1788-1970, O.U.P., London, 1974  
Bonython, Kym, Modern Australian Painting, 1970-1975, Rigby, 1976.  
Scarlett, Ken, Australian Sculptors, Nelson, Melbourne, 1980  
Bonython, Kym, Modern Australian Painting, 1975-1980, Rigby, 1981.

Col Jordan is represented by Holdsworth Gallery, Sydney

COLIN LANCELEY

Prizes: 1963 Young Contemporaries Art Prize, C.A.S., N.S.W.; 1964 Helena Rubinstein Scholarship; 1967 Edinburgh Open 100 Prize, Edinburgh Festival; 1968 Second Annual Graphic Prize, Krakow: Prize for Best Suite of Prints ("Miraculous Mandarin") and Musee Silesienne Purchase Prize; 1980 Europe Prize for Painting (2nd Prize) Ostend, Belgium; 1983 Faber-Castell Prize for Drawing.

Public Collections: Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; Baltimore Museum, Baltimore; Museum Gornoslaskie; Bytom, Poland; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; Kunsterein, Hamburg; National Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Stedelijk Museu, Amsterdam, Museum Narodowe, Krakow; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Felton Bequest, Melbourne; Albion College, Michigan; Art Gallery of New South Wales; Newcastle Regional Gallery; Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris; Museum Narodowe, Posnan; Ballarat Art Gallery, Victoria; Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria; Museum Narodowe, Warsaw; Queensland Art Gallery; Bezalel National Museum, Jerusalem; Contemporary Art Society, London; Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria; Arts Council of Great Britain; Art Gallery of Western Australia.

Selected Bibliography:

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Hughes, Robert, Colin Lanceley, Between Painting and Sculpture, Studio International, March 1966.  
Hughes, Robert, The Art of Australia, Penguin, 1966.  
Alvarez, A., Catalogue Introduction, one man show, Bonython Gallery, Sydney, March, 1970.  
Smith, Terry, Interview with Colin Lanceley, Other Voices, Sydney, August 1970.  
Spencer, Charles, Colin Lanceley, Monograph, Editions Alecto, London 1973.  
Greer, Germaine, Catalogue Introduction, one man show, Realities Gallery, Melbourne, August 1976.

Colin Lanceley is represented by Macquarie Galleries, Sydney.



TERENCE O'DONNELL

Prizes: 1966 Stocks and Holdings Painting Prize; English Speaking Union Travelling Art Scholarship and Park Regis - Canadian Pacific Painting Prize; 1970-1971 Ashfield Art Prize; 1970 Otis 70 Film Prize; Script Screen and Art Film Prize.

Public Collections:

The Australia-Japan Foundation, Tokyo; The Alice Springs Art Foundation; Wyong City Council; City Art Institute, Sydney; Regent Hotel, Sydney; Art Bank;

Selected Bibliography:

Bonython, Kym, Modern Australian Painting, 1970-1975, Rigby, 1976  
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Terence O'Donnell is represented by Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney.

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