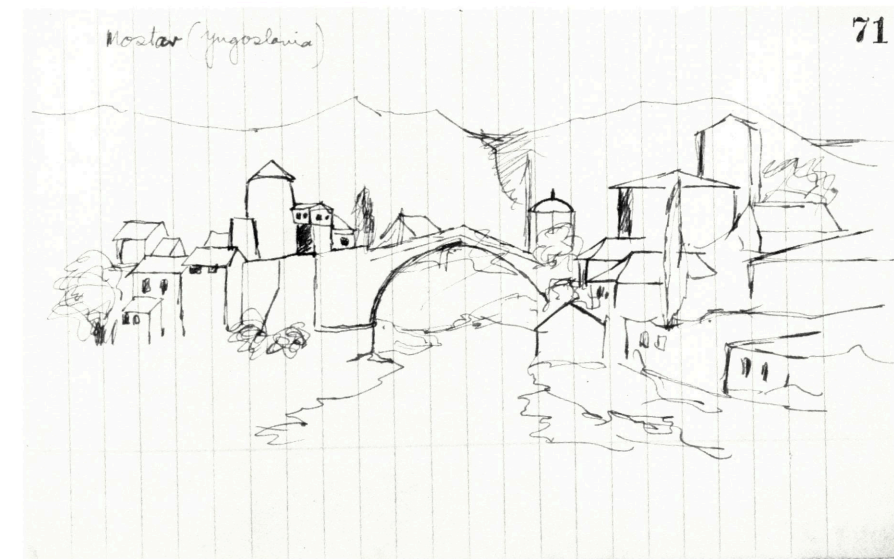




S A R A J E V O

Sarajevo



Elwyn Lynn *Mostar* 1945 ink drawing from notebook

First Strike for Peace

'It has been suggested that survival is the only modern topic, and artists seeking immortality in the nuclear age must confront the notion that there may be no prosperity. In this context, art can be seen either as an escape or as a strike for peace. It is the artist's job to conceive the inconceivable, and to move us—to move us closer to realisation, to empower us to imagine, even to imagine the most dreadful things. But artists are as scared as everybody else to get too close to the fires of extinction.'

'First Strike For Peace' was the title of an article by Lucy Lippard published in *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, 1985. Part of this article is quoted above. Ten years later it provided me with a framework for my ideas about the intersections between art and life which in turn gave me the confidence to curate *Sarajevo*.

Sarajevo had its origins from a meeting between myself and Swiss/German artist Miriam Cahn in her studio in Basel September 1992—the beginning of the first winter during the siege of Sarajevo. For the first time in my life I was in very close proximity to death and destruction and was struck by the significance of this war for all of us. Miriam Cahn was making art that responded to the horror of this conflict, which started me thinking about the role art has to play in meeting the human and political needs of communication and recognition.

Sarajevo has grown out of my response to this experience. In 1995 I decided to bring together artists, writers, historians, educators and curators in Australia to share ideas about the devastating effects of war and the role that art can play in demonstrating the horrors of war. I do not intend simply to condemn, condone, or justify any of the many players in this particular tragedy. This exhibition tries to expose visually what happened or can happen when people fail to prevent or to end war. Future generations will see the wars of this century through artists' eyes as well as that of the media. There will always be a space for imaginative visions unrestrained by urgent news deadlines.

'In August 1939 Sir Kenneth Clark, then Director of the National Gallery in London, approached the Ministry of Information with the suggestion that it form a committee to advise on the employment of artists to record the war ... simply to keep

artists at work on any pretext, and, as far as possible, to prevent them from being killed.'¹ When I approached artists to make art about war I hoped to show the world what war does and, as far as possible, to prevent us all from being killed.

Artists were invited to contribute to *Sarajevo* if their previous work and/or current work addressed issues of identity, humanity or militarism, and offered diverse insights into key social issues arising from the war in Bosnia. Two of these artists, Peter Pinson and George Gittoes, have held positions as official military artists with the Australian Defence Forces; six artists, Elizabeth Ashburn, Elwyn Lynn, Ian Howard, Enid Ratnam-Keese, Denis del Favero and Dianna Wood Conroy have dealt with the theme of particular wars including the Long March, the Vietnam War, the Kurdish conflicts and the African Civil Wars; finally, I have addressed the general theme of the plight of humanity in the face of horrific conflict. The nine artists work in a variety of media and have differing political and poetic intentions. They are among the relatively few contemporary Australian artists who are willing to demonstrate a deep concern for the effects of current warfare in their work. As a totality, their work reflects the many-sided nature of the tragedy of war. Their diverse visions complement and enhance each other, giving to a profound and disturbing understanding of war.

Sarajevo's and Bosnia's struggle is our struggle. It is the struggle of the world for peace, democracy, cultural diversity and tolerance, particularly against fascism. I do not believe that art has the power to change the course of history, or even to stop the recurrence of the atrocities that have gone on in the former Yugoslavia. But art can cast light on this subject by moving the viewer emotionally, spiritually and intellectually and by prompting discussion and debate.

Vivienne Dadour
Exhibition Curator

Note

1. *World War Two*, 1989, catalogue, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, p.1.

Sarajevo

Sarajevo is not just a place, a name inscribed in blood in the pages of recent world history; it is also a symbol of our general ignorance of and indifference to distant conflict and tragedy. Last year Susan Sontag deplored western intellectuals' almost total lack of involvement in the war in Bosnia, contrasting it with the pivotal role played by so many shining lights of the 1930s in the Spanish War of Independence.¹ Australians of all heights of brow have been even less committed. Not only has there been minimal involvement by intellectuals in the fortunes of the former Yugoslavia but, perhaps partly as a result, a blanket of silence now seems to have been dropped over the entire subject. Despite a continuing European commitment, Sarajevo and Bosnia have virtually disappeared from Australian newspapers and TV, and hence from public consciousness.

I have certainly been as ignorant and uninvolved as any North American intellectual Sontag could cite. That my words appear here is primarily due to my admiration for local artists who assert that Sarajevo is a crucial part of our lives too, along with a conviction that art has a crucial role to play in defining the values of any society. My conversion to this particular cause, however, resulted from Vivienne Dadour's selfless and passionate dedication to it over several years, coupled with an inability to suggest an acceptable substitute in response to her compelling invitation to contribute to her show. Only an ocean of emptiness surrounding the topic could make my interest in 'Death and Art in Australia'² appear relevant to Sarajevo. The commemorations of death with which I am most familiar are memorials common to most Australians: pious, accepting, mainly Christian, tombstones and monuments scattered throughout the land in their thousands; paintings, sculptures and drawings depicting Australians (mainly men) actively participating in overseas wars and achieving heroic dimensions in death; and a few almost forgotten tributes (especially by women artists) to the sacrifices made by those on the home front in Australia, Britain and other Commonwealth countries during those wars.

Until quite recently, affirmation, hope and nobility were part of almost every Australian memorial to the wartime dead—values underscored by the conviction that, however great the sacrifice, these deaths had meaning for the protagonists and would improve the future for the survivors. Such sentiments are so far from death (and life) in the former Yugoslavia as to add a surreal dimension to the already irreconcilable differences between Sontag's 'There and Here'. To the rest of the world, especially those of us in the comfortable, hedonistic antipodes, life in wartime Sarajevo was 'inconceivable'—an adjective repeatedly and despairingly used by writers on the spot such as Janine di Giovanni, who reported on the siege for the London *Times* then wrote a book to convey something of the experiences, feelings and (living and literal) deaths of many of the people of all ethnic groups whom she had come to know.³

Art certainly seems irrelevant when there is not enough food, warmth or water for survival, when people are living in overcrowded basements of ruined buildings with death from

snipers, cold or malnutrition ever-present. Nevertheless, even under the bleakest conditions, some sufferers remained convinced that the arts—those core activities which distinguish humanity from beasts—could not be abandoned. To have allowed the culture that defined them to disappear would have meant that the enemy had won, regardless of the outcome of any battle. Di Giovanni writes of the woman editor who kept the daily newspaper going throughout the war despite the lack of every facility, and of Boyan and Dada Hadzihalilovic, designers of the posters 'that were to become the symbols of the war':

'At the beginning, we were shocked and scared,' [Boyan] says. 'But ten days after the war started, we began to make the posters in impossible conditions. We had to, you know, to do something for the town.'⁴

Artists on the other side of the world also wanted 'to do something for the town', to keep its memory alive in a country where forgetting and mindless materialism are too often prioritised without the excuse of any all-consuming struggle to survive. Visual propaganda produced 'under siege' has immediate value and effect, yet images made retrospectively as 'symbols of the war' can be even more powerful reminders of the 'inconceivable' for distant viewers emotionally inoculated against reality by a daily dose of TV. Moreover, art alone can capture a specific war-torn moment or place for all time, as Picasso's *Guernica*, that icon of the Spanish Civil War, so famously demonstrates.

Not that the artists in this exhibition wanted to produce *Sarajevo* 'masterpieces'. These works may be monumental in scale, but their contents argue against the bombast of conventional monumentality. Perhaps their chief common characteristic is that all assert the importance of commemorating specific people, places, moments and events outside the experiences of the majority of Australians, not simply as a reminder of our common humanity but also to provide a counterbalance in a culture obsessed with forgetting the past, even its own. Australians have historically shown little interest in heritage, least of all that of some distant place with which they have little direct involvement. This exhibition, by a group of artists resident in Australia, none of whom is Yugoslavian in origin or descent, is therefore both timely and exceptional. Their commitment to Sarajevo (as both place and metaphor) proclaims that not everyone is indifferent to the destruction of life and culture in other parts of the world. On the contrary. It gives visual expression to the belief of the seventeenth-century English poet and divine, John Donne, that 'no man is an island'—that every death diminishes each and every one of us.

These artists offer a splendid variety of personal responses to Sarajevo's recent history in their work, but they do more than that. All are responses in which their (our) location, culture and values are inextricably mingled. While reacting to the universal and eternal subjects of war, militarism, racial conflict and suffering as seen in Sarajevo, this art is equally relevant for us as Australians in 1997. In content, style and/or theme, each contains some warning against destructive passions that loom perilously close to our own shores. Lest we forget!

Several works in the exhibition incorporate motifs from the classical language of western monumental art—plinths, triptychs, banners, altars and burial cloths signifying death and sacrifice. Such universal symbols link past and present, 'There and Here', but they can nevertheless be dangerously rhetorical devices used to divide rather than unite. As such, contemporary artists tend to interrogate their meanings even while using them, sometimes with laconic irony. Elizabeth Ashburn's sardonically anti-monumental sepulchres made of cheap recycled wood evince both sympathy and revulsion for our compelling desire to valorise the dead through grandiose monuments in which individuality is obliterated by the idealising of generic virtues like 'sacrifice'.

Peter Pinson notes the loss of cultural heritage in war due to 'the irreconcilability of national differences' in reading the meanings of words (like 'sacrifice'). The central painting in his large, brightly-coloured triptych—a form most familiar in western art from the medieval altarpiece—depicts the Old Library at Sarajevo before the bombing, emphasising the loss of cultural continuity in the destruction of the building's contents along with its historic architecture, yet at the same time memorialising that very heritage against forgetting, if only in two dimensions. Unlike Ashburn's sinister empty coffins, Pinson's library is an unambiguous reminder that the contributions of the dead and the unborn, as well as the living, disappear with the annihilation of cultural icons.

Using sources which are more generic and distant in time, though located far closer to home, are Diana Wood Conroy's multi-media banners. They incorporate quotations from classical antiquities which came to the Australian War Memorial as trophies of World War I: a plaster cast of a Greek inscription to the young soldiers who lost their lives fighting the Persians in 5th century B.C., a Corinthian funerary vase, a Palmyra woman's funerary bust. The artist chose these images because of a common thread in their inscriptions to the dead in battle and to the mothers of the dead, i.e. the central idea of Greek tragedy, that of 'tyche' or fate—another powerful universal. However, looting art in wartime, then legitimising this activity by installing the 'souvenirs' in a monument whose creation epitomises respect for nationalist and militarist values, is surely another parallel.

The paintings by George Gittoes, probably the best-known Australian artist to depict Bosnian life and subjects from first-hand experience, lie at the opposite end of the spectrum. More surprisingly, so do Elwyn Lynn's abstract, metaphoric paintings. They are not at all realist in content and could hardly be more diverse in style, yet they too are about war's protagonists and victims. The artist, who died in February this year, selected and commented on these images in August 1996: *Metempsychosis (Migration of Souls)* suggests the spiritual dimension of death while *Prisoners*, Lynn wrote, is 'about the disintegration of personalities, a genocide through the crushing of personalities (I think).' Although comparably abstract in style, Vivienne Dadour's paintings quite literally represent the 'war-torn', the survivors whose lives and identities are forever ripped apart by their experiences.

Enid Ratnam Keese's mixed media images also emphasise erasure—the unknown children killed in war forgotten in our concern for the lives and welfare of our own children, yet paradoxically remembered in that common bond. Her *Missing Numbers*, 1, 2, 4, 6 and 9—a mnemonic for the six children killed in the snow on a Sarajevo street on 22 January 1994—are broken

up and partly obliterated by overlaid prints, drawings and photocopies of Australian children, along with images of children from other war-torn countries, a palimpsest that both separates and unites us across time and space.

Ian Howard's giant photographs comparing the strongly institutionalised political scene of late Communist Yugoslavia with the chaos of today also focus on youth, but in a far more specific, accusatory way. These images proclaim that the seeds of the present are invariably found in the past, in this case in the frightening generation of ideologically indoctrinated, militaristic youth whom Howard encountered when travelling in the former Yugoslavia in 1984. By the 1990s those teenagers participating so obediently and uniformly in ceremonies commemorating the fourth anniversary of Tito's death would have been key players in the demise of the state through a welter of racial hatred.

An even more explicit opposition to symbolic representations of the innocent victims of war can be seen in the selection of photographs from *Motel Vilina Vlas*, Dennis Del Favero's gruesomely beautiful response to the Bosnian rape camps. The full series consists of twelve large unframed photographs in shades of pink and blue, with a pink text under each main photograph describing the taking of a town, the incarceration and rape of a Serbian soldier's Muslim girlfriend, and the castration and murder of his brother for refusing to rape. It too emphasises the appalling results of placing ideology above humanity.

These artists believe that art can make a difference, that its power to visualise cross-cultural connections without taking sides or attempting to provide easy solutions is a strength that helps unite us, whatever our origins or homeland. It also points a moral for this specific audience and this place, for our need as artists or art historians to speak out when our appreciation and tolerance of religious and racial diversity is threatened by noisy ideologues. As the historian Glenda Sluga from 'the smaller, quieter Australian Slovene community (to which I do—and do not—belong)' commented in 1994:

London, Melbourne, Sydney have nothing, and everything, to do with Yugoslavia. The war is undermining the language of pluralism and multiculturalism at the same time as it is reminding us of the worlds we might lose or have already lost.⁵

Joan Kerr
Centre for Cross-Cultural Research
Australian National University

Notes

My thanks to Vivienne Dadour for supplying me with literature, references, conversation and enthusiasm for this task, and to the artists (especially Vivienne) for assistance and inspiration in carrying it out.

1. Susan Sontag, 'There and Here', *HQ* May/June 1996, 20-22.
2. 'Death and Art in Australia' was the title of a lecture I delivered at ANU Canberra School of Art last year and the subject of a catalogue essay I wrote for *Death*, a national travelling exhibition curated by Eileen Chanin in 1996.
3. Janine di Giovanni, *The Quick and the Dead* (London: Phoenix, 1994).
4. Di Giovanni, 175.
5. Glenda Sluga, 'Twenty Thousand Ks from the Warzone', in *RePublica* ed. George Papaellinas (Sydney: Harper Collins, 1994), 108. My thanks to Jane Lydon for this reference.

Vivienne Dadour



Fractured selves (detail) 1997 mixed media panels (detail) 150 x 600 cm

'He was a refugee.

'I looked at him and he looked at me. I took a picture. We said nothing. His look said it all. I knew that he felt as if he were being pilloried and that he did not know what he had done to deserve it ... I knew that in this war, in varying degrees, everybody would be a victim if not a refugee ... Seeing that poor man at the Ljubljana bus station made me realise that I did not know if I saw a Croat or a Bosnian or a Serb or an Albanian or a Gypsy or a Jew. I saw a man who might have been any of the above and who was forced to flee because of his identity. He was yet another victim of the war in progress.'

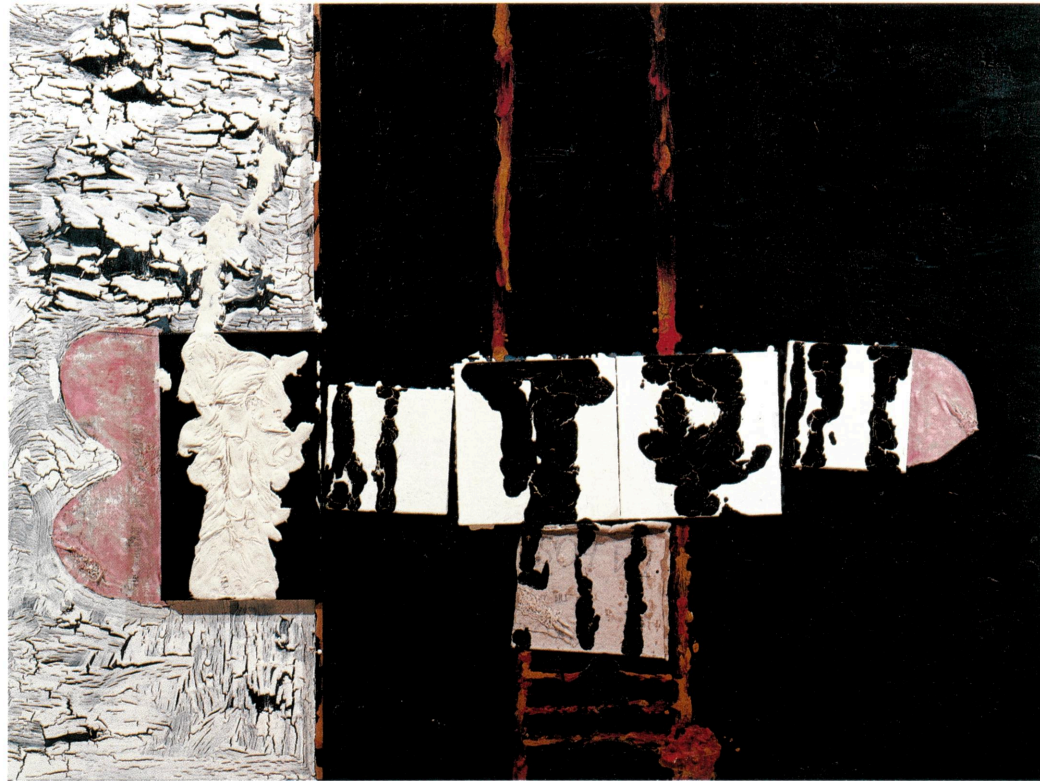
(Charley G. Cupic, *Mirages and broken mirrors: the victims in former Yugoslavia*, 1995, Altamira, Lausanne, p 146)

The images of broken, lost people from former Yugoslavia like those photographed by Charley G. Cupic represent for me the violence and suffering inflicted on the individual by politics, by history and by society. I have created images which reflect my

feelings on these issues and for the most part are denunciatory rather than affirmative. When I react to the subject of war my most immediate and enduring thoughts and feelings are of mortality, vulnerability, and victimisation. For me the victims are the essence of war. *Fractured Selves* is about these victims.

Dealing with the subject of Sarajevo I have had to contend with the morality of using the suffering of others to make art as well as the relevance of making paintings in relation to existing photographs. During the past two years I collected newspaper and magazine articles and slowly began to see these images as documentary material which could be absorbed into my working processes. The sense of actually witnessing an event in the media photographs is re-imaged in my paintings and this transformation opens up an emotional and intellectual relationship to the war that photographic documentation does not allow. These processes became a metaphor for fragmentation and disintegration and a commentary on the lives of ordinary people.

Elwyn Lynn



Prisoners 1995 mixed media on canvas 150 x 200 cm

Prisoners is about the disintegration of personalities, a genocide through the crushing of personalities...Of course countries can do it by becoming totalitarian destroyers of individuals.

The soul, the spirit of freedom, of respect for humans and

humanity seems able to integrate, to survive in various ways, a quite mystical notion, but we are often surprised to find freedoms and tolerance re-affirming and re-manifesting themselves.

—Artist's letter to Vivienne Dadour, August 1996

Enid Ratnam-Keese



Missing Numbers (detail) 1997 mixed media 150 x 280 cm

These works concern children in war. Numbers and figures, partially concealed, are overlaid with prints and drawings by Australian children and images of other children from war-torn countries.

The major work is a print/drawing on joss paper, laminated on canvas which includes the numbers 1, 2, 4, 6 and 9. The entire work concerns six children who were killed in the snow on the streets of Sarajevo on January 22, 1994.

The second group of works, six wall-mounted boxes, includes a child's prayer to the guardian angel with text: '... watching beside me ... Fold Thy wings round me ... ever this day be at my side to light and guard ...' and drawings of angels by local children. These drawings are overlaid with images of children from Sarajevo. In this group of works I have also incorporated elements from a family photograph which my father carried in his wallet during

the war in 1943.

The surface of the final panel is etched and inked with drawings and texts.

These works are not meant to be didactic or political; they attempt to register the confusion and childish bewilderment at promises of divine protection unfulfilled, and of living in an unstable world in which childhood has become a precarious time.

Acknowledgments

Time magazine December 12, 1994 and February 8, 1993
Life magazine December 1995 (photographs by Louis Jammes)
 The *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 25, 1994
 Drawings by Andrew Keese and Melissa Carter (early drawings)
 Alexandra and Andrew Scott (recent drawings)

Dennis Del Favero



" we had been attacking the town for weeks "

Motel Vilina Vlas series 1995, Type C photograph 190 x 100 cm

The *Motel Vilina Vlas* series is based on extensive research undertaken by the artist in the former Yugoslavia during the autumn of 1994 along with a study of testimony which was submitted to the War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia,

The Hague. The series is currently on a tour of twelve museums and public sites in Europe. It was featured as part of a joint project with Jenny Holzer in the Battle of the Nations War Memorial, Leipzig, during 1996.

Ian Howard



Yugoslav Youth 1984 1997 MMT Print 350 x 450 cm

While travelling throughout Eastern Europe in 1984 I was surprised by the frequent clandestine criticism of local communist governments and the all pervading hegemony of the Soviet Union.

Also communist, but beyond direct Eastern Block control, the men and women of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia appeared split between staunch patriotism (a national ideology forged by Josip Broz Tito who had recently died) and restless expectation (individual opportunism predicated upon a naive

reading of the West). I recall at the time feeling uneasy about this powerful contradiction, made potentially volatile by a regional history steeped in civil and military conflict.

For me landscape, through its relative longevity, is an easy purveyor of the experience of history, where as people, perhaps because of their fleetingness of mind and body, seem destined to ignoble gestures.

George Gittoes



Smoke oil on canvas 1996 168 x 179 cm

I lived and worked in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in April and May 1996. Much of the city was destroyed, yet people still struggled to continue with their every day lives. Through a friend, I was able to rent an apartment, which, though the front door and facade were riddled with machine gun holes, still had a roof and some useable rooms.

I travelled to Bosnia, self-funded, to research my art subjects. As I have been a consistent on-site witness of all of the regions of conflict and attempted peace keeping in the last decade, it was important to this period of my work that I also spent some time in Bosnia. By masquerading as a refugee, I was able to travel by bus to such devastated areas Srozda, Mostar and Bihae. In the process I developed close contact with many of the worst victims of the war, especially the children in the orphanages to which I was taken.

The images which resulted differ from those I created out of experiences in places such as Nicaragua, the Philippines, Somalia, Cambodia, the Middle East, South Africa, Mozambique and Rwanda. In Bosnia I was faced with the problem of finding a language which could express the shattered and destroyed minds of people who had endured four years of siege and civil war. The external damage of buildings and vehicles could easily be depicted; but with people it was necessary for me to fracture and reposition elements of their faces—including the device of representing two different individuals' faces in one—in order to begin to communicate the psychological damage.

From the Bosnia Diary
28th April 1996

Today is the Islamic holiday Durban Bajram—which refers to Abraham's (or Ibrahim's) trial by God, when he was asked to sacrifice his only son. God took pity on Abraham and allowed him to substitute a goat.

In Sarajevo Kurban Bajram has become a day of the dead—where families have a meal together then visit the cemeteries. This is the first year when it has been safe to go out in the open without the fear of snipers.

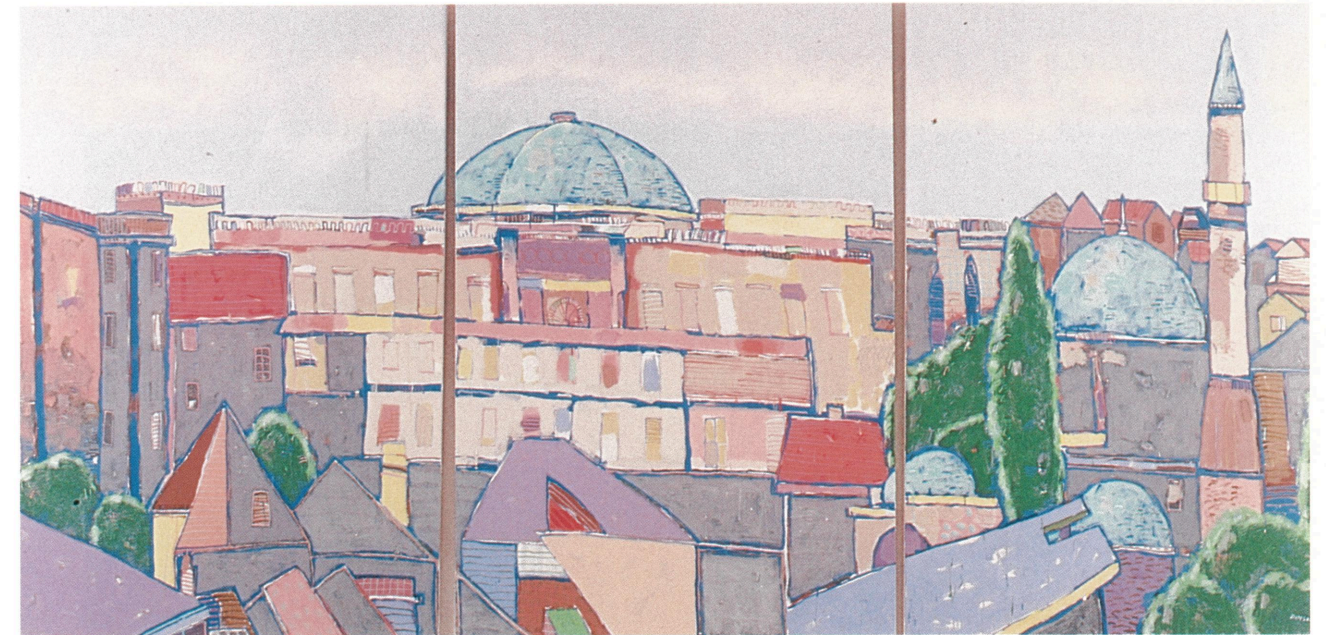
Improvised graveyards are everywhere—including whole soccer grounds and children's play parks. It is spring, making the grass an unnatural green to Australian eyes. Bright wild flowers are blossoming and every family comes with beautiful bunches of tulips, roses, daffodils and irises.

I felt self conscious as an outsider and was inhibited about drawing or photographing the sadness of the families.

But there was one young woman named Chia, who I found it impossible to pass by without making some attempt to capture her image. She was crouched near the grave of her brother. She was having a smile with him. She had planted a burning cigarette in the earth of the grave and was smoking another herself.

When Chia inhaled her cigarette the gesture seemed to say she was sucking his spirit into her while memories of him filled her mind. When she exhaled, it was like she was giving him back to the earth and the feeling of loss over and over again.

Peter Pinson



Sarajevo library, before the bombardment (detail) 1996-7 acrylic on canvas 180 x 513 cms

For many, the tragedy of Sarajevo centres on the human dimension of suffering, dislocation and expulsion. My painting in this exhibition addressed the tragedy of cultural loss, particularly the destruction of irreplaceable architectural heritage.

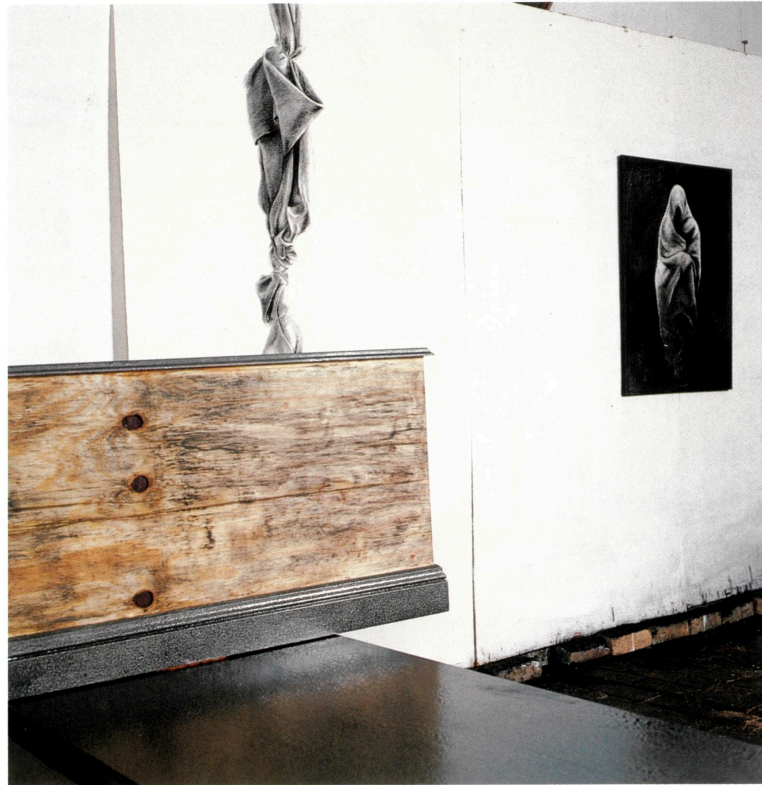
The painting evokes the Sarajevo cityscape prior to the Bosnian conflict. The dominating building is the Library (which would be extensively damaged during the conflict). Its role as a repository for cultural material renders it a poignantly fitting symbol for the vulnerability of cultural achievements in the face of warfare.

The architectural destruction of Sarajevo may not rank with the destruction of Constantinople, and indeed some of the city's architectural beauty had already been compromised by the crass high rise apartment buildings constructed under Tito to house the incoming tide of people from the countryside. The city even

boasted a monument to the nationalist who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, an act that ignited the fuse of a World War. Nevertheless, there was much that was picturesque, and the engrossing jostle of styles reflected the city's tricultural character. Architecture is evidence and a measure of cultural achievement, values and imagination. The loss of their compatriots through death or emigration may have left the people of Sarajevo grieving; the loss of their architectural riches has left them culturally impoverished.

The wing canvasses bearing the work "narod" refer to the Slavic work for "people" or "nation". It is a concept that can celebrate difference, uniqueness and pride in cultural or racial character. In Bosnia it has come to be used to describe and explain the irreconcilability of nationalist groupings.

Elizabeth Ashburn



Interrupted lives; Sarajevo 1997 wood, charcoal, paper (detail) dimension variable

During the war in Sarajevo the artists continued to make work. Izeta Gradevic' was an artist living in Zagreb in 1993. Every day she worked making a lot of drawings, photographs, paintings. In her letters to friends abroad she said she had 'no idea what for. With no reason. To save my mind? To find sense in the chaos? To have proof of my existence in hell? To say: yes, I was there.' (Izeta Gradevic' Letters from the Siege in *Lusitania* #5 Fall 1993, pp.61-71).

What meaning can there be for Australian artists who are so remote from this conflict, when they join together to make work about the war in Sarajevo? Once before Sarajevo was the fuse that unleashed the First World War. Awful individual losses, suffering and devastation took place on the battlefield and on the home front. It has been estimated that in the four and a half years of 'total war' eight million men were killed in actual fighting, with another seven million permanently disabled and a further fifteen million more or less seriously wounded, the vast majority of whom were in the prime of their productive lives. If the civilian casualties through what is called war induced causes such as disease, famine

and privation are added to these deaths, as well as the dreadful influenza epidemic of 1918-19 the final casualty list for the period 1914-1919 is possibly as high as sixty million people. The First World War has been seen as a self-inflicted blow that greatly reduced world regard for the civilisation and influence of Europe.

By 1939 Europe was again the site of another major war that grew to be global in scope and effectively caused the passing of the European age in world affairs. After two wars of such destruction how could the recent conflict in Sarajevo have happened again? Is it because the ordered, harmonious classical surface of Europe exists in dramatic tension with disorder and chaos? The war in Sarajevo illustrates so completely that moment when the externally civilised and the internally barbaric erupt. Again there is violence and for many an interrupted life.

The classical facade has ruptured again twisting and writhing; pedestals and coffins thrown together. This installation seeks to expose that stink of decay and savagery, these myriad bodies tumbled into the earth in numbers far beyond our capacity to comprehend.

Diana Wood Conroy



These by the Hellespont lost their glorious youth (detail) 1997
woven tapestry fragment on painted canvas (acrylic, gesso and gouache) 46 x 180 cm

How can loss be apprehended and made tangible? The pain of war and destruction is an ancient pain.

Trying to remember and give perhaps some historical depth to the anguish of Gallipoli, soldiers returning from the 1914-1918 war to Australia brought back an odd collection of artefacts from the time of late antiquity. These objects are now housed in the heart of the War Memorial Museum in Canberra. They include pieces of marble grave inscriptions, a broken column base, a pyxis or lidded base full of earth, an enigmatic portrait bust of a woman and a large mosaic from Shellal in Jordan with serene images of abundance and fertility shattered by the wheels of a gun emplacement. There is also the plaster cast of an inscription to the dead killed in the famous battle of the Greeks against the Persians in 480 BC, amongst all the other more recent lists of the dead in the War Memorial.

Old images can be re-invested with personal meanings. Women stand by unable to stop the killing of all we really have,

our children, our marvellous boys so full of hope and possibilities. Women in ancient Sparta who died in childbirth were given honours equivalent to a hero dying for his country. Children are our country. One of the images here is from an archaeological photograph of the excavation of a woman's pelvis containing the bones of her unborn child.

Archaeologists study loss with objective and meticulous description of the fragments of what remains. The woven fragment against a drawn background concentrates attention through the tiny interlockings of warp and weft. The allure of woven tapestry comes from its obsessive construction, dense colour and substance, and a layered surface. The ancient deity in charge of weaving, Athena, was also the goddess of war, clad in helmet with spear and shield, goddess of breaking down and building up. Tapestry can talk of destruction in terms of minute construction: it is an ordering process imposing a grid on the chaos of loss.

Artists' Notes

ELIZABETH ASHBURN

Solo Exhibitions

- 1987 *Death and Enclosure*, First Draft Gallery, Sydney
Enclosure, installation with Anne Mossey, The Performance Space Gallery, Sydney
- 1988 *Immediate Life*, First Draft Gallery, Sydney
Death Cycle, Fluxus, Kelly Street Kolektiv Gallery, Sydney
- 1993 *The New Landscape*, First Draft West, Sydney
- 1995 *Bodies*, Gallery 483, Sydney

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 1989 *Artist and Child*, Cell Block Gallery, East Sydney Technical College
Towers of Torture, Power Gallery, University of Sydney
- 1990 *Pink Summers*, AFI Foyer, Paddington, Sydney
Bald Archie, Art Space, Sydney
- 1991 *Last Show*, First Draft West, Sydney
Artemis Continuum, Balmain Watchhouse, Sydney
- 1992 *Artemis Returns*, Balmain Watchhouse, Sydney
Manu et Mente, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 1993 *Virtu*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 1995 *Interlude*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 1996 *In Process*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 1997 *Working Women*, King Street Gallery, Sydney

DIANA WOOD CONROY

Solo Exhibitions

- 1981&83 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 1985 Old Bakery Gallery, Sydney
- 1992 *Archaeologies: Images, Vestiges and Shadows*, Wollongong City Gallery
- 1993 *Unwritten Country*, The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong.

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 1989 *Designed and Made*, Crafts Council of NSW Gallery, Sydney
- 1990 *The Staff Show*, The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong, NSW
- 1990 *The Lie of the Land*, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney
- 1991 *The Book and Print Show*, The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong.
- 1994 *The Art of the Object*, touring South America
- 1995 *Crossing Borders: Contemporary Australian Textile Art*, touring USA
Archaeologies—Structures of Time (with Sharon Marcus), Oregon, Portland, USA; The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong.
- 1996 *Below The Surface*, Goulburn Regional Gallery, NSW and national tour

VIVIANNE DADOUR

Solo Exhibitions

- 1989 *Epistles*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1991 *The Speaking Body*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1992 *Facets and Moments*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1993 *Paris Suite*, Gallery 483, Sydney
- 1994 *Renewal*, Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1995 *Certain Selves*, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney
 Master of Fine Art presentation, UNSW College of Fine Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1997 *Fractured Selves*, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney

Selected group exhibitions

- 1989 *Fishers Ghost Art Exhibition*, Campbelltown Regional Gallery (awarded first prize, works on paper)

- 1990 EMR Gallery, Sydney
Abstract Papers - 12 Sydney Artists, Firstdraft West, Sydney
Awareness Raising, Firstdraft West, Sydney
 Triangle Artists Workshop Exhibition, New York, USA
- 1991 *Alice Prize*, Alice Springs, NT
- 1992-93 *Young Dissonants*, Student Gallery, UNSW College of Fine Arts, Sydney
- 1993 *Sulman Prize*, Art Gallery NSW
- 1994 *October*, Cell Block Gallery, National Art School, Sydney
College Fine Arts Alumni Exhibition, UNSW (awarded first prize)
Four New Artists, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney
Gallery Artists, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney
Working Girls, Campbelltown City Art Gallery (works from the permanent collection to celebrate International Womans Day)
Sulman Prize, Art Gallery N.S.W.
- 1997 *Gallery Artists*, King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney
Working Women - 7 contemporary artists, King Street Gallery, Sydney
War drawings, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
 Represented by King Street Gallery on Burton

DENNIS DEL FAVERO

Solo Exhibitions

- 1984 *Quegli Ultimi Momenti*, Australian Centre for Photography
- 1985 *Scenario N.5*, Australian Centre for Photography
- 1987 *Linea Di Fuoco*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- 1990 *Diario Per Una Vita Nuova*, Art Gallery of New South Wales and Mori Gallery, Sydney
- 1993 *Prima Facie*, Wollongong City Gallery, NSW
- 1995 *Motel Vilina Vlas*, Mori Gallery, Sydney
- 1996 *Motel Vilina Vlas & Prima Facie*, Munchner Stadtmuseum, Munich.
Motel Vilina Vlas, Galerie Andreas Weiss, Berlin; Via Farini, Milan.
Coming Apart (with scenario URBANO), Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 1990 *Aurora Australis*, Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver
Fragmentations and Fabrications: Recent Australian Photography, Art Gallery of South Australia
- 1992 *Working in Public* (with scenario URBANO), Artspace, Sydney
- 1993 *Hypothetically Public* (with scenario URBANO) Lewers Bequest Gallery, NSW
Dante, Chiostrri di San Francesco, Ravenna
Australian Made, College of Applied Arts, Prague
- 1994 *Biennale of Australian Art* (with scenario URBANO), Art Gallery of South Australia
Reflected Light, National Gallery of Australia
True Stories, Artspace, Sydney
- 1995 *Art Cologne*, Cologne
- 1996 *Sex and Crime*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover
Battle of the Nations War Memorial, Leipzig (joint project with Jenny Holzer)
Remote Connections, Neue Galerie, Graz; Waino Altosen Museum, Turku; Teddy Kolleck Stadium, Jerusalem
- 1997 *Remote Connections*, Nikolaj Contemporary Art Centre, Copenhagen
Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Australian Art, National Gallery of Victoria.
Body, Art Gallery of NSW
Fotofeis, Edinburgh and Glasgow
 Represented by Mori Gallery, Sydney & Galerie Andreas Weiss, Berlin

GEORGE GITTOES

- 1970-71 Co-founder, with Martin Sharp, of Yellow House, Sydney
- 1971-79 Regular one person exhibitions of painting, photography and 16mm films (winner *Fisher Ghost Art Award*, photography and film awards)
- 1976 Exhibited world's first multi-coloured hologram, developed with CSIRO
- 1979 Created first of many large scale outdoor theatrical events for the first Sydney Festival and Sydney Dance Company.
- 1980-89 Regular exhibitions of paintings
 Produced, directed and shot over ten documentary films for television (broadcast on major networks in Australia, USA, UK)
- 1987 Lived and worked in Nicaragua - marking a new direction in painting
- 1988 Lived and worked in the Philippines - collaborating with Filipino artists and exhibiting with the Black Artists of Negroes
- 1990 Yellow House retrospective, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Winner, *Fishers Ghost Art Award*, Campbelltown City Art Gallery
- 1991 Touring exhibition of Heavy Industry, State Library of NSW and tour
Blake Prize, Blaxland Gallery, Sydney (winner)
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (winner)
- 1993 Began *Realism of Peace* series, visiting Somalia and Cambodia
- 1994 Travel to Western Sahara, Algeria, Sinai, Israel, Southern Lebanon, Gaza and South Africa. Exhibited works from these locations.
 Participated in Australian exhibition *Identities*, Taiwan
- 1995 Travelled to Rwanda, Mozambique. Artist in residence, The Philippines
Realism of Peace, national tour
Blake Prize, State Library of NSW, Sydney (winner)
- 1996 Travel to Bosnia, UK, Germany
- 1997 *Documenta*, Kassel, Germany
 Chris Deutscher Fine Art, Melbourne

IAN HOWARD

Solo Exhibitions

- 1989 *Intelligences of an Underground Man* (touring survey exhibition), Centre for the Arts Gallery, Hobart College Gallery, South Australian School of Art, Adelaide Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth
- 1990 *Out of the Cities of Hope* Watters Gallery, Sydney
- 1990 *Decor* Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne
- 1992 *one WORLD* (Touring Exhibition) Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
 Watters Gallery, Sydney
- 1993 *Images of the 20th Century* Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne
- 1994 *The Aesthetics of Death* Watters Gallery, Sydney
- 1995 *LAND • PROPERTY • POWER* Savode Gallery, Brisbane
- 1996 *Prisoners of Reason, Slaves to the Heart* Watters Gallery, Sydney

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 1989 *Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Australian Art*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra
- 1991 *Off the Wall, In the Air: A Seventies Selection*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
- 1992 *IN BLACK AND WHITE*, Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney
- 1992 *Artists' Regional Exchange*, ARX3, Perth
- 1993 *Borders of the Mind*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Noosa.
- 1993 *Identities: Art from Australia* (touring exhibition) Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong
- 1994 *Political Boats*, Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane
- 1994 *Aussemblage!* Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
- 1995 *Solitary Confinement*, Boggo Road Goal, Brisbane
- 1997 *Vietnam Voices*, Casuala Powerhouse, Sydney
 Represented by Watters Gallery Sydney

ENID RATNAM - KEESE

Solo Exhibitions

- 1981 Blackfriars Gallery, Sydney
- 1984 Wagner Gallery, Sydney

- 1985 Wagner Gallery, Sydney
- 1987 Wagner Gallery, Sydney
- 1989 Bonython Meadmore Gallery, Sydney
- 1992 *Transformations*, Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery, NSW and Studio 1, Canberra
- 1993 *Time Past; Time Present*, Rimbun Dahan Gallery, Malaysia
- 1996 Werrington TAFE

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 1990 *The Twenty First Alice Prize*, Northern Territory
Portia Geach Memorial Art Award, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Carte Blanche, Anima Gallery, Adelaide
- 1993 *Transformations to Memorial*, Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Gallery, NSW
- 1994 *Through Women's Eyes*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Fremantle Print Award, WA.
Jacaranda Drawing Prize, Grafton, NSW
Twenty Fifth Alice Prize, NT
- 1995 *Through Women's Eyes*, Queensland Art Gallery

ELWYN LYNN

- Born 1917, Canowindra, NSW. Died 1997, Sydney
- 1938-41 BA, Dip Ed, Sydney University and Sydney Teachers' College
 Began painting in the mid-forties. No formal art training
- 1955-79 Editor of Contemporary Art Society Broadsheet
- 1963 Art critic, *Sunday Mirror*
- 1964-65 Art critic, *The Australian*
- 1966-73 Art critic, *The Bulletin*
- 1966-78 Associate Editor of *Quadrant*, Editor 1978-1981
- 1969 Art critic, *The Nation*
- 1969-83 Curator of Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney
- 1975-81 Advisor to Ljubljana Print Biennale, Yugoslavia
- 1975 Awarded Membership of the Order of Australia
- 1976-80 Chairman of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council
- 1977 Mid career retrospective exhibition of 50 works, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 1989 Honorary Doctor of Letters, University of Sydney
- 1983-95 Art critic, *The Weekend Australian*
- 1994 Emeritus Award, Australia Council

Solo Exhibitions

- From 1958 Elwyn Lynn had 49 solo exhibitions in Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Cologne Germany, including the 1991 Retrospective 1956-1990 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Wagga City Art Gallery and Bathurst City Art Gallery.

Recent Group Exhibitions

- From 1947 Elwyn Lynn participated in over 150 group exhibitions in Australia, New Zealand, England, Brazil, Indonesia, Warsaw, Poland and Germany.
 Represented by Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

PETER PINSON

- Appointed Official Military Artist, Australian Defence Forces in 1985, the first such appointment in peace time.

Solo Exhibitions

- 1977 Warehouse Gallery, Melbourne
- 1982 *Paintings and Drawings 1979-1982*, The Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1983 *Artists' Houses Series*, The Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1986 *Peace and War Series*, The Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1987 The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong, Wollongong
- 1989 The Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1990 The Painters Gallery, Sydney
- 1992 Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Art Gallery, NSW
- 1993 *Drawings 1968-1992*, National Trust of Australia (NSW) property "Vienna", Sydney
- 1995 *Paintings from "Riversdale"*, Woolloomooloo Gallery, Sydney
- 1997 235 Nelson Street Gallery, Annandale
 Orange Regional Gallery

Sarajevo

Exhibition Dates:

Ivan Dougherty Gallery
The University of New South Wales
College of Fine Arts
22 May–21 June 1997

Long Gallery, Faculty of Creative Arts
University of Wollongong
9 October –10 November 1997

Bathurst Regional Gallery, Bathurst
12 December 1997–1 February 1998

Curator: Vivienne Dadour
Catalogue design: John Dunn, Piper Press

Cover: Elwyn Lynn, *River of Bones, Sarajevo, Quartz Quarry After
Fire* 1996 (mixed media on canvas, 150 x 200 cm)

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One of the rewards of working on this exhibition has been the opportunity to meet with so many artists of integrity. To Liz Ashburn, Ian Howard, Dennis Del Favero, Peter Pinson, Elwyn Lynn, Enid Ratnam-Keese, George Gittoes and Dianna Wood Conroy - thank you for having the vision and the courage to participate in this exhibition. To Lily Lynn - thank you for your generosity lending Elwyn Lynn's paintings, allowing his work to feature on the cover and sharing his experiences during World War Two in Bosnia through his drawings.

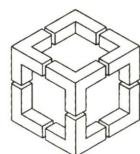
Vivienne Dadour



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