

# In and of this place

Curated by  
Jessica Clark

NETS  
VICTORIA.

**BENALLA ART GALLERY**

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This exhibition project has been planned, researched, and developed on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. As the curator, I acknowledge and pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to the wide-ranging traditional lands on which the included artists live, work and create.

I encourage you to take a moment to also acknowledge the Country on which you are currently viewing this exhibition from today.

– Jessica Clark

Benalla Art Gallery, NETS Victoria, and the artists and curator of 'In and of this place' respectfully acknowledge and celebrate the continuing culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia. We extend this respect to all First Nations people across the world.

## **Cultural Warning**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this exhibition and its collateral materials includes the names of those who have passed.

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Cover artwork:  
Albert Namatjira, *Talipite Gorge*  
*Western McDonnell Ranges* 1945-53  
watercolour on paper  
55.5 x 37.6 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Ledger Bequest 1993  
© Estate of Albert Namatjira/ Copyright Agency 2021.

## Artists

Charles Blackman

Arthur Boyd

Lorna Chick

Grace Cossington-Smith

Maggie Nakamarra Corby

Janet Dawson

Deanne Gilson

Hans Heysen

Robert Juniper

Richard Larter

Beaver Lennon

Djambawa Marawili AM

Roy McIvor

Danie Mellor

Alison Murray

Albert Namatjira

Anne Ovi

Gloria Petyarre

Emanuel Phillips Fox

Angelina Pwerle

Lloyd Rees

Tom Roberts

William Robinson

Keith Stevens

James Tylor

Judy Watson

# Preface

NETS Victoria, in partnership with Benalla Art Gallery, are pleased to present *In and of this place*, an online catalogue exhibition curated by palawa curator Jessica Clark as part of the 50/50 exhibition series.

Instigated as an online exhibition with the physical and travel limitations that COVID-19 brought, 50/50 is an innovative exhibition series that sees curators partnered with a regional gallery to explore their existing collection. Jessica Clark's exploration of Benalla Art Gallery's Collection demonstrates fresh perspectives on their large Australian landscape collection.

*In and of this place* features selected works from Benalla's extensive collection of Australian landscape paintings, each of which is paired with a contemporary work by a First Nations artist. Coupled together, these pairings consider the artists' entanglement with country – divulging relationships that go beyond the confinements of property lines and aesthetic validation.

Jessica Clark's nuanced curation of *In and of this place* threads links between imagery and colour throughout varied expressions of the Australian landscape. Jessica writes "Every work of art painted in response to Country signifies at least two things, human presence and perception"; considerations that go beyond the standardised definitions of landscape painting.

While NETS Victoria ordinarily focuses on physical exhibitions, the impacts of COVID-19 has been felt far and wide, and as a sector we have had to pivot and reimagine what is possible. Excitingly, this provides an opportunity to work with pre-existing collections. Existing in its entirety digitally, we hope that the catalogue's reach will be furthered by its online accessibility.

During the lockdowns throughout the country, encounters with the land became essential to wellbeing, and overall health. When the city shut down, the parks, wetlands and bush remained places of sanctuary and of reflective renewal. With restrictions, our networks of social relations were remapped online. *In and of this place's* online format expands upon what was initially a limitation delivering a dynamic reflection of contemporary and archival works.

On behalf of NETS Victoria, I would like to extend deep gratitude to Jessica Clark, Benalla Art Gallery, and its Director Eric Nash. We are proud to have supported *In and of this place* and its exploration of the Australian landscape tradition. We see this catalogue as an invigorating and honest reflection upon the varied approaches to interpreting the Australian environment furthered by a First Nations understanding of place and country.

**Jenna Rain Warwick**

First Nations Engagement Coordinator | NETS Victoria

# Foreword

With works spanning three centuries, the Benalla Art Gallery Collection invites consideration and appreciation of both the natural and cultivated Australian landscape.

The Collection provides an insight into the infinite potential of the landscape. From the sparing and ominous rural setting depicted in Charles Blackman's Landscape, *Avonsleigh*; to Lorna Chick's *Wooleen* from a helicopter – inviting our bodies and spirits to soar; to William Robinson's enveloping, shifting, mesmerising depiction of the untouched Mount Tamborine; we begin to understand the limitless diversity of the landscape itself, of how we may connect and engage with it, and how artists have chosen to depict it.

The exhibition *In and of this place*, conceived and curated by the incredibly talented Jessica Clark, pairs key works from the Benalla Art Gallery Collection with an outstanding array of contemporary works by Aboriginal artists. Through these deliberate pairings, Clark further explores the "varying perspectives and representations of Country", deftly drawing out connections between the respective pairings, and the exhibition as whole, to consider notions of time and place, body and spirit, and the interconnectedness of all things.

Benalla Art Gallery is honoured to have been invited to participate in NETS Victoria's 50/50 exhibition series, and thanks NETS Victoria and the project's funders, Creative Victoria, for this rare opportunity.

Most pertinently, Benalla Art Gallery thanks the exhibition's Curator, Jessica Clark, and all of the participating artists for so skilfully contributing their creative energies, and thus enabling us to perceive both the Benalla Art Collection, and our surrounds, anew.

**Eric Nash**

Benalla Art Gallery | Director



# In and of this place

*“An ancient land, Australia has always been more than a sunburnt country<sup>1</sup>.”*

Every work of art painted in response to Country signifies at least two things, human presence and perception. As a particular convention in Western art history, the term landscape is typically defined as a representation of scenery in the ‘scope or range of vision<sup>2</sup>’ of an artist’s point of view. In reality however, an artist’s work in response to their surroundings, is so much more than a mere representation of the landforms and features that cover the earth’s surface.

The history of Australian landscape painting – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – reflects the ever-changing and also unchanging relationships between people and place<sup>3</sup>. Artists have sought inspiration here since time immemorial, as not only a means to document their physical reality in two-dimensional form, but also to express their relationships, concerns, and experiences of and with place.

Works of art created in response to an immediate or remembered environment, hold within them a complex range of understandings that are of course representative, but also corporeal – existing in multiple dimensions and from a range of cultural vantage points that extend well beyond the immediate presence and appearance of place. From an Indigenous perspective, to render Country is to surface *“the unseen forces that laten in the ground, move through the body, and into the physical and visual realm<sup>4</sup>.”*

*In and of this place* is an online exhibition that has been developed in partnership with Benalla Art Gallery as part of NETS Victoria’s 50/50 exhibition series. The exhibition features a selected group

of works by Australian artists from Benalla’s extensive collection of landscape painting, that have each been paired with a contemporary work of art by Aboriginal artists that respond to Country. Together, they present a journey through the Australian landscape – across, below, and above its surface – through varying representations of the land that transcend the physical reality of place.

Spanning three centuries of Australian art in the ‘landscape tradition’, each pairing embraces non-linear notions of time – the curatorial act of pairing the works connecting varying times and places, while provoking reflection on human-landscape relationships. The meaning and intent of each work of art – both from the Collection and the Contemporary pairings – present two unique but also linked visual responses to Country that are expanded and activated as the exhibition’s visual and intercultural exchange unfolds. Collectively, they initiate an expanded way of seeing, understanding and exploring the Benalla Collection and Country through the heart and lens of Australian artists both past and present.

The works of art that feature visually interpret the earth’s topographies, geographies, its natural seasons and cycles, and reflect on humanity’s place in the natural world.

They are not only illustrative of a time and a place, but also culturally and creatively constructed representations of each of the artist’s cumulative experiences, the visible and invisible. Together, the works exist as unique repositories of memory and meaning that

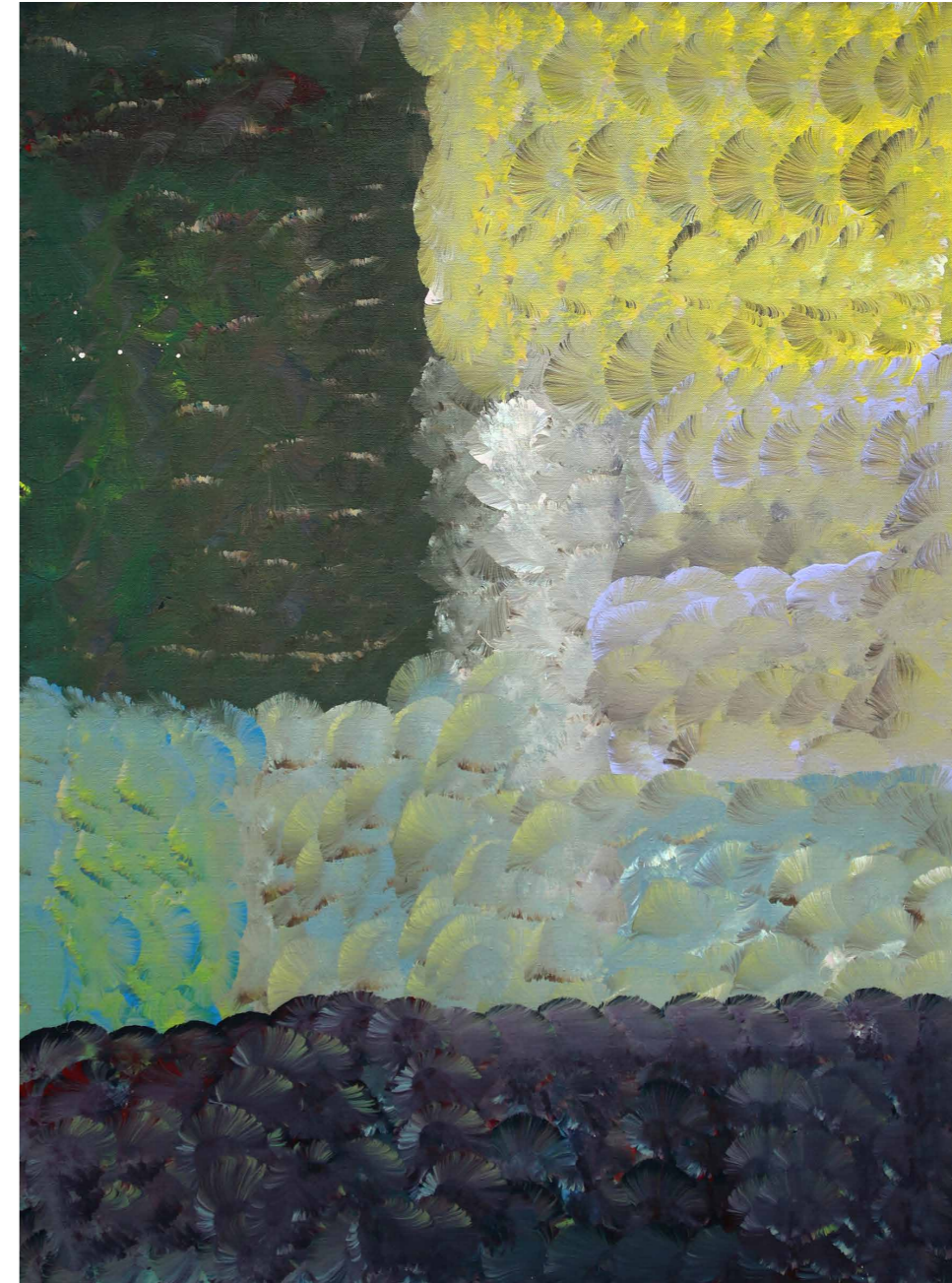
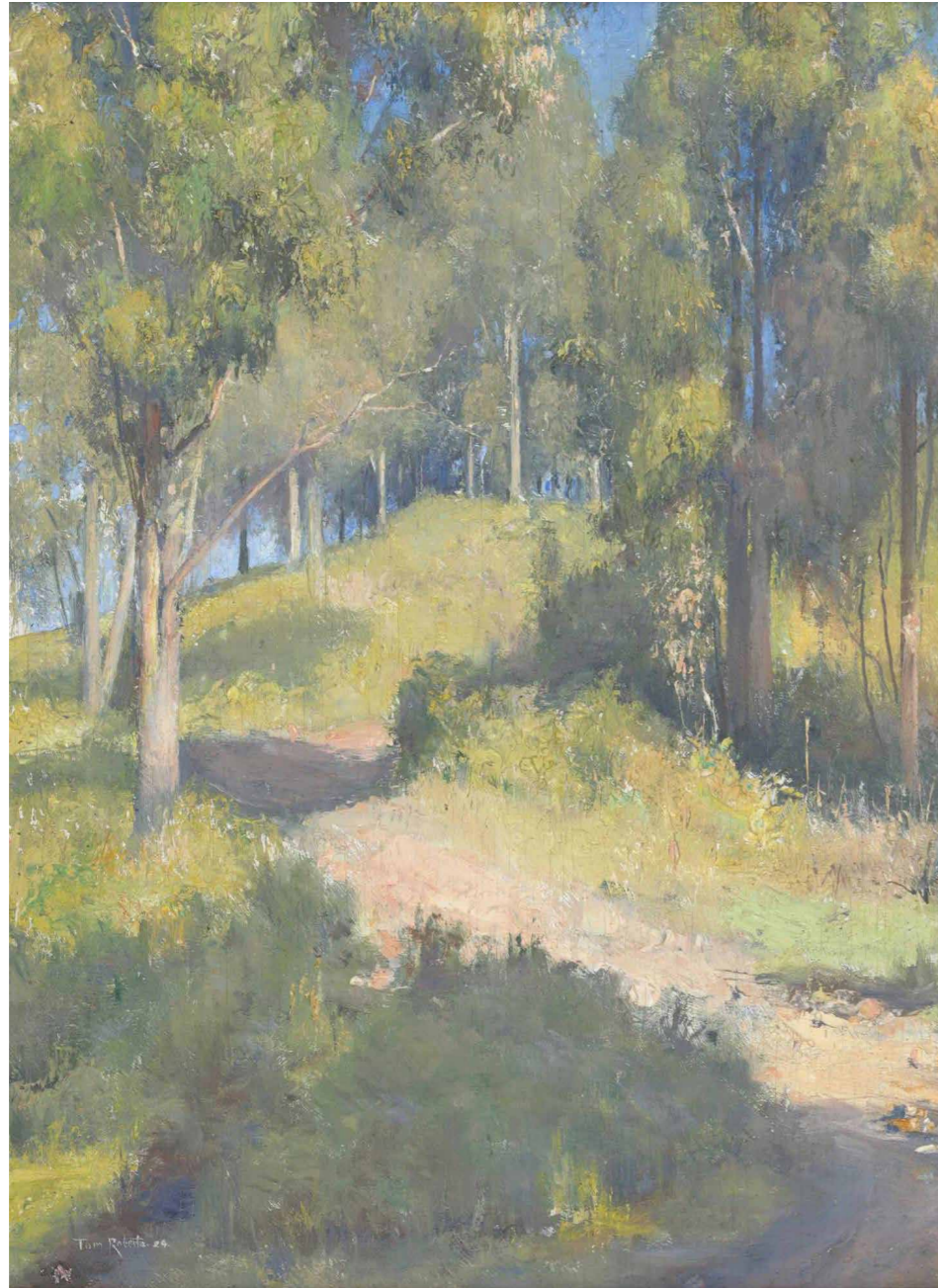
make tangible the interconnection and interaction of people and place – contributing layered perspectives from multiple times and places that locate our relationship with Country as fundamental to our identities and ways of life.

Australia is a geological wonder, an ancient and varied landscape of unique and diverse oases that stretch the country from ocean to outback, active and alive with both spirit and story. This land and all its forms are interconnected, enmeshed within its rhythmic cycles and seasons that enact for us, an expanded system of belonging.

At its heart, *In and of this place* centres on these interrelationships between people and place, drawing focus to the myriad of ways artists express their seen, lived and felt experiences of the Australian landscape through art-making. The exhibition embeds each individual artist’s perspective and practice within a complex, intercultural and interconnected web – one that is entangled with the notion of the multiple in history and in reality, and explores the influence of humanity on the environment, but also its influence on us.

The artist and artwork texts that follow invite the viewer to engage with the works of art individually, within their pairings, and as a group, in relation to their own locality, and residual memories that connect them to place.





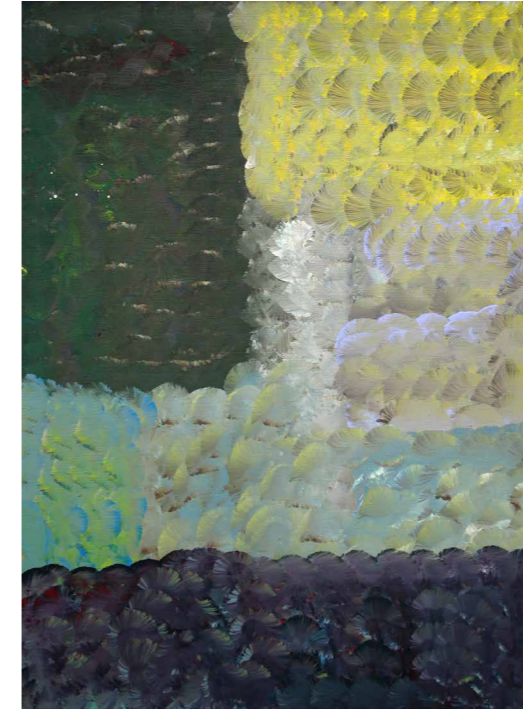




Tom Roberts  
*Kalorama in the Dandenongs* 1924  
oil on plywood  
45.5 x 35.5 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Ledger Gift, 1978.  
Pictured on page 10.

**Tom Roberts** (b.1856-1931) was born in Dorchester, England – immigrating to Australia with his family in 1869, and settling in Collingwood on Wurundjeri Country, in Naarm (Melbourne). He is most notably remembered for his instigation of the Heidelberg School of Australian landscape painting that prioritised painting outside (*en plein air*)<sup>5</sup>. He enjoyed the quietude and the natural beauty of the Australian environment, and its unique character – his astute visual observations of its atmosphere, colour, and light translating moments of the rapidly changing landscape of his home and abroad.

Roberts' *Kalorama in the Dandenongs* depicts a light-filled landscape of tall slender gumtrees and green grasslands that frame a gravel path which winds up through the centre of the work, over a rise, and out of view. The work is evocative of Roberts' experience lived and felt – the location depicted was not far from his home in Kallista on Wurundjeri Country<sup>6</sup>. His distinct ability to capture the changing effects of light on the landscape, conveys both the stillness and the movement of the trees in the bushland; the warmth of the afternoon sunlight passing through their branches; and the shade they cast deep within the undergrowth.

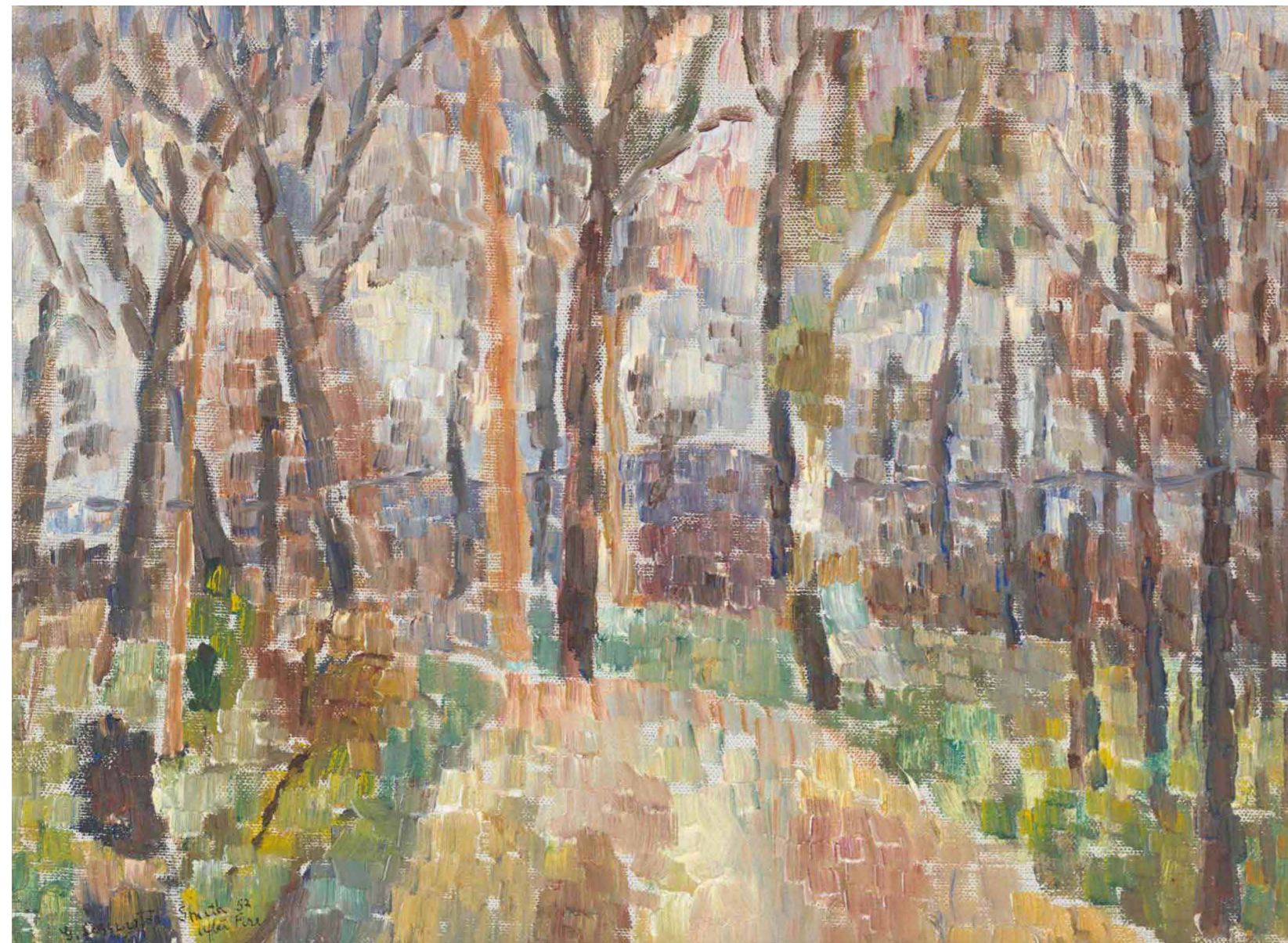


Gloria Petyarre  
*Aknangkere Growth* 2011  
acrylic on linen  
89 x 120.5 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and Art Mob.  
Pictured on page 11.

**Gloria Petyarre** (b.1945) was born in the region of Utopia that is located 270km northeast from Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Her language is Anmatyerre and her Country is Aknangkere. Petyarre is well-known for her vibrant Bush Medicine Dreaming paintings capturing the colourful seasonal changes of the leaves of a particular type of shrub that has powerful medicinal qualities<sup>7</sup> – her vibrant and varied brushstrokes filling each of her canvases with brightly coloured and highly gestural stippling to represent the plant's growth, and seasonal change.

Petyarre's *Anangkere Growth* embraces a similar colour palette and subject to Roberts, though from a much closer perspective. Her blended brushstrokes range from dark through to light green, their sectioned edges blurring the lines between. In this work, Petyarre draws focus down within the undergrowth of the bushland throughout her homeland in Utopia – deeper, darker greens are representative of the burnt, blackened areas of a recent cultural burning, while her light-yellow greens are suggestive of the regeneration of new growth after a fire<sup>8</sup>. Her work reflects on life of the land to which she and her people belong.









Grace Cossington-Smith  
*After the fire* 1952  
oil on canvas on board  
31 x 43.5 cm  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection Ledger Gift, 1980  
© Estate of Grace Cossington-Smith.  
Pictured on page 14.

**Grace Cossington Smith** (b. 1892-1984) was born on Cammeraygal Country in New South Wales – growing up in her family’s home at Neutral Bay in Sydney on Gadigal Country before moving to Turrumurra on Darug Country where she lived for most of her life. Cossington-Smith was a brilliant colourist and an important figure in the early Modernist art movement in Australia<sup>9</sup>. Cossington-Smith drew inspiration from her surrounds, painting her home, the landscape, and Sydney city-life. Her works can be characterised by the use of bright expressive colour applied in broad brushstrokes.

Cossington-Smith’s *After the fire* exists as a first-hand response to the devastation caused by bushfires that swept the surrounding areas of her home in Turrumurra, and its aftermath<sup>10</sup>. Her layered brushstrokes and bands of un-mixed colour render a burnt landscape with signs of new growth, that offer hope and reflection within the cyclic and seasonal patterns in nature. Cossington-Smith’s rhythmic and faceted planes radiate light and energy – the scorched bushland is sprouting new green leaves, the path forward and through, lined by the profusion of lush green grassland that has since re-generated.

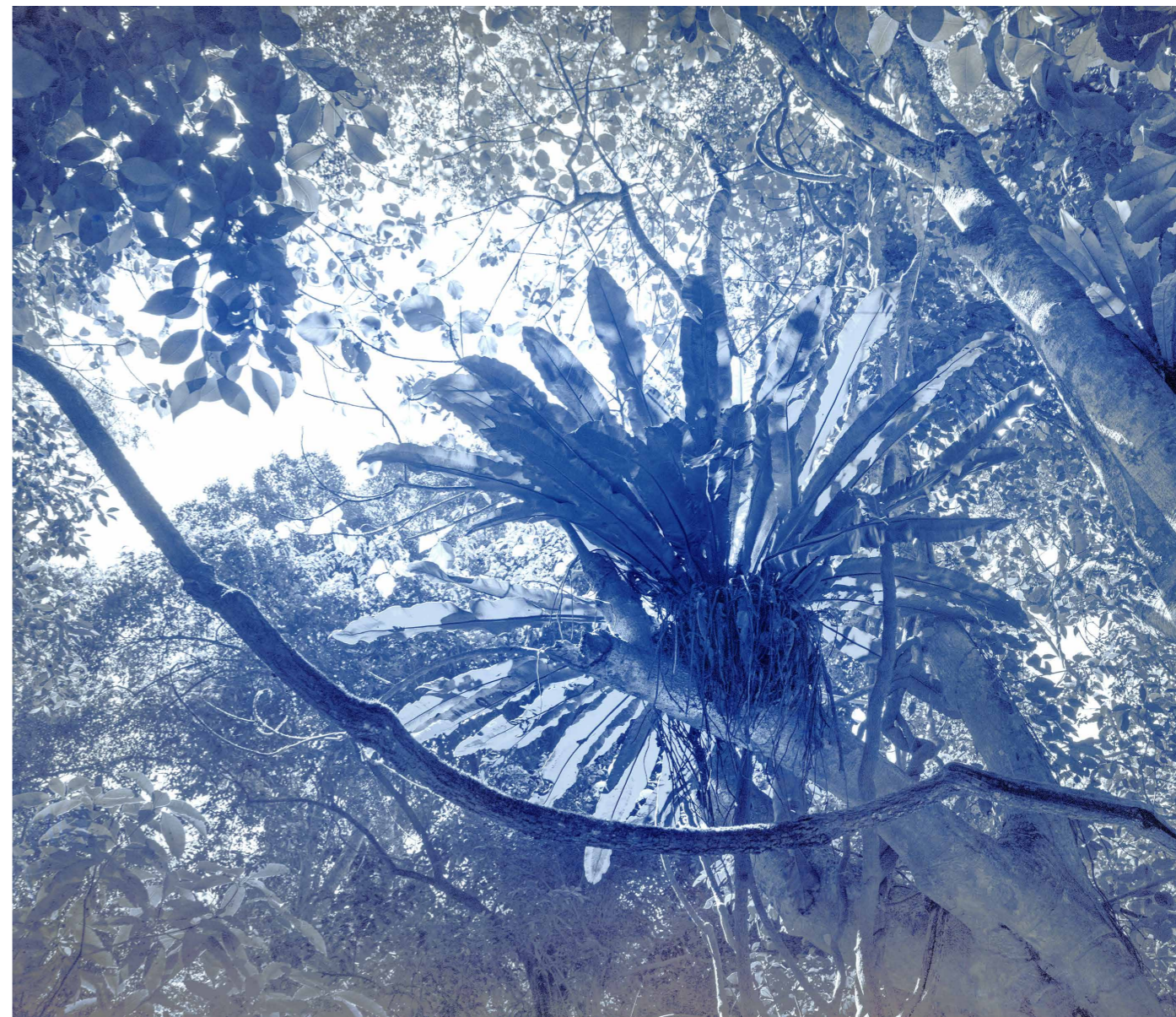


Djambawa Marawili AM  
*Gurtha (Fire)* 2012  
earth pigment on bark  
157 x 85 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist, Buku Larnggay  
Mulka Centre and Vivien Anderson Gallery.  
Pictured on page 15.

**Djambawa Marawili AM** (b. 1953) was born in Baniyala in Eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Marawili is an acclaimed painter, sculptor and printmaker, and senior law man – his principal roles are as a leader of the Madarrpa clan, a caretaker for the spiritual well-being of his own and other related clans, and an activist and administrator between non-Aboriginal people and the Yolngu (Aboriginal) people of North East Arnhem Land<sup>11</sup>. Marawili’s art is one of the tools he uses to lead, and to protect the cultural knowledges passed down to him by his father.

Marawili paints the accumulated knowledge, the spiritual dimension, and sacred law of his homeland handed over to him by his ngalapalmi (Elders)<sup>12</sup>. Here the past, present, and future coalesce. *Gurtha (Fire)* features Marawili’s recognisable strings and swathes of diamond patterning, a sacred diamond design that tells an important creation story for the Madarrpa people. The tongues of the fiery ancestral flames that Marawili has painted, stretch up and pulsate outward, their linear patterning infilled with his meticulous cross-hatching, and imbued with the spiritual in nature – the fire is said to have swept the lands and brought people together in the wake of its devastation.





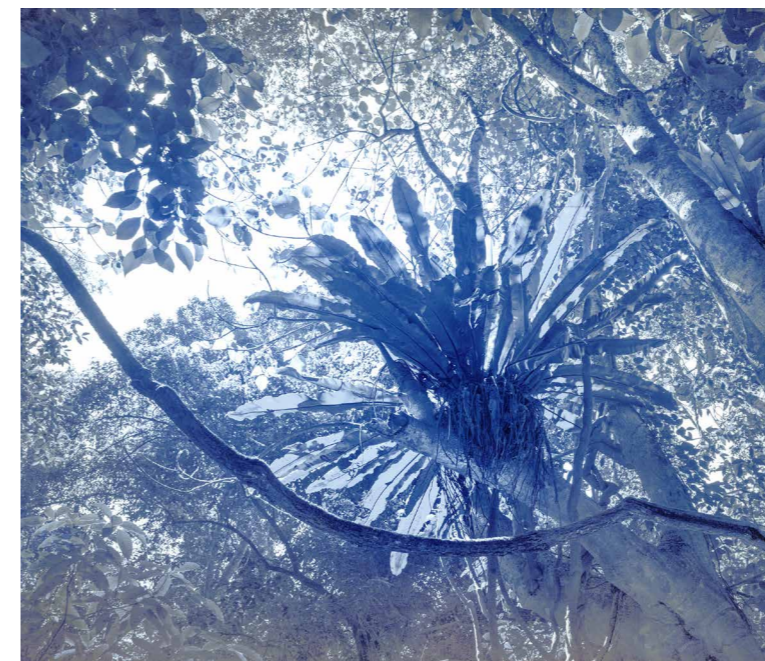




William Robison  
*Towards Tamborine* 2001  
oil on canvas  
137 x 183 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection  
Gift of Mr L. Gordon Darling, 2001  
© William Robison.  
Pictured on page 18.

**William Robison** (b.1936) was born in Meanjin (Brisbane) in Queensland. He began painting in the 1960's while working full-time as a school teacher. Inspired by his homelife, love of music, and the immensity of Australia's ancient landscape, Robison's stylistic shifts throughout his career run parallel to changes in his location; the farm-scapes of his home in Birkdale on Quandamooka Country, epic multi-perspective landscapes of and within the Gold Coast Hinterland on Yugambah/ Kombumerri Country, his beachscapes at Kingscliff on Bundjalung Country, and more recently, still-life works that he now paints living in his suburban home in Meanjin<sup>13</sup>.

Robinson's *Towards Tamborine* features a multi-perspective and panoramic view of the Gold Coast Hinterland, and its dense and far-ranging rainforests that cover Mount Tamborine. His rotating composition presents a view from above, below, within, and out toward the horizon, where multiple viewpoints and perspectives meet and merge as one. Robison's skewed perspective is evocative of the cyclic revolution of the earth, the ever-changing nature of life on the planet, and our place within the greater cosmos. The landscape unravels a deeply personal and almost spiritual response to the environment – its complex geology, botany and meteorology<sup>14</sup> and his immersion within it.



Danie Mellor  
*Symphony (romance)* 2016  
C-print on metallic photographic paper  
120 x 140 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.  
Pictured on page 19.

**Danie Mellor** (b.1971) was born in Mackay on Yuwibara Country in North Queensland. He is of Ngadjon and Mamu heritage and currently lives and works on Tharawal Country in Bowral, New South Wales. Mellor's multidisciplinary practice explores intersections between contemporary and historic culture while considering legacies of cultural memory and knowledge. His practice focuses on the historical intersections of people, ideas and culture – creating works that draw upon multiple traditions and perspectives to explore changing conceptions of the landscape<sup>15</sup>, and also its deep memory, spirituality, and mystery.

Mellor's *Symphony (romance)* immerses the viewer deep within North Queensland's rainforests, surrounded by lush vegetation that has been encompassed by the canopy extending above. The worms-eye perspective from the ground up guides the eye towards the sky, induces a meditation on life in the forest, forever moving, changing, and never set – drawing focus to the magnitude of the natural world. Mellor's unspoiled paradise is rendered in his trademark iridescent blue and white palette that locates the landscape as a spiritual and living entity. The development of this work explored the sensuality of landscape and nature, along with the presence of decay and growth. Mortality and cycles of life are present in the rainforest ecology that consumes and births itself, proposing an existence independent of our perception of what the natural world may appear to be.









Arthur Boyd  
*Riversdale Hill, with Flame Trees*, n.d.  
 oil on composition board  
 91.7 x 122.4 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Gift of C.J.R. Ansett in memory of his wife  
 Nancy, 1984  
 © Bundanon Trust.  
 Pictured on page 22.

**Arthur Boyd** (b.1920-1999) was born on Boon Wurrung Country in Murrumbidgee, Victoria. He was a painter, potter, and printmaker who grew up within a family of artists. His works drew great inspiration from the Australian landscape, seeing Boyd experiment with a range of styles and techniques throughout his career to create emotive and deeply personal responses to particular places. After travelling Australia and abroad, and serving in the army, Boyd eventually found home at Bundanon on Wodi Wodi Country in New South Wales – an estate located along the Shoalhaven River where he continued to paint up until his death in 1999<sup>16</sup>.

Boyd's *Riversdale Hill, with Flame Trees* depicts a landscape well-known to the artist – the view from his beloved home and estate at Riversdale. The work features an open grassland framed by two central Flame Trees and three white birds in flight. The landscape is backgrounded by Riversdale Hill in the morning light, defined by the Shoalhaven River that runs horizontally through the middle of the canvas – its deep dark blues and purples stretching towards the centre to replenish the earth. Boyd spent much of his time outdoors absorbing the natural environment, observing the river and its patterns, and as such, this work is representative of his connection with this place.



Judy Watson  
*sacred water* 2010  
 pigment, pastel and acrylic on canvas  
 212 x 213 cm.  
 Courtesy of the artist and [Milani Gallery](#).  
 Pictured on page 23.

**Judy Watson** (b.1959) was born on Wakka Wakka Country in Munduberra in Queensland, and currently lives and works in Meanjin (Brisbane). Her matrilineal family is from Waanyi Country in north-west Queensland. Watson's creative practice spans painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpture and video, and is inspired by traditional culture – engaging with the hidden histories of Indigenous experience, particularly those of women<sup>17</sup>. She imbues her works with the notion of collective memory, her creative outcomes materialising as layered impressions of past presence on the landscape.

Watson's *sacred water* presents a simultaneous view from deep within, and up above a shimmering indigo pool of water. The canvas has been intuitively rendered in the studio with the layering of purple pigments that move from dark to light and are overlaid with veils of yellow ochre that ripple across the surface – indicating the light of the sun or moon and stars and illuminating the reflective qualities of water. *sacred water* is a manifestation of Watson's memory flow in response to live-giving freshwater and saltwater sources visited and returned to throughout her life<sup>18</sup> – echoing the fluidity of remembering in process and outcome as it washes over the body and settles again deep within the subconscious.









Charles Blackman  
*Landscape, Avonsleigh* 1957  
 oil on paper mounted by composition board  
 97.4 x 128.8 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection, purchased with Advisory Council Funds, 1978  
 © Estate of Charles Blackman.  
 Pictured on page 26.

**Charles Blackman** (b.1928-2018) was born in Harbord on Dharawal Country in Sydney, New South Wales, though he grew up in Queensland before returning to Sydney to work as an illustrator. Blackman was a self-taught painter, dedicated reader, and excellent draughtsman, creating imagery – often in series – that reflected personal, literary, and musical themes<sup>19</sup>. His works often embodied notions of urban loneliness and alienation, depicting dark, eerie and empty landscapes that are at once provocative and psychological. In 1951 he moved to Naarm (Melbourne), joining-up with a group of artists, the Antipodeans who engaged the conflicting social and political realities of the time.

Blackman's painted *Landscape, Avonsleigh* during a six-month stay in the Dandenongs – having grown-up in Carlton in Naarm (Melbourne), this would be Blackman's first time in the country<sup>20</sup>. In the foreground, an old homestead and its surrounding landscape has been painted in muted blue and yellow tones. The home sits alone amidst a deserted landscape backgrounded by rolling hillsides and a stream of dark and undulating evening clouds. Blackman's restrained use of colour conveys a haunting emptiness, drawing to the fore notions of isolation and introspection – his response to the experience of the landscape late at night<sup>21</sup>.



James Tylor  
*Whalers, Sealers and Landstealers (The Well)* 2014  
 daguerreotype  
 11 x 14 cm.  
 Monash Gallery of Art Collection  
 Courtesy of the artist and [Vivien Anderson Gallery](#).  
 Pictured on page 27.

**James Tylor** (b. 1986) was born in Mildura on Latji Latji Country in Victoria, though spent his childhood on Paakantji Country in Menindee in far west New South Wales. He currently lives and works on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country in Canberra. Tylor is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice explores Australian landscape, social history, and cultural representations through the perspectives of his multicultural heritage that comprises Nunga (Kurna), Māori (Te Arawa) and European (English, Scottish, Irish, Dutch and Norwegian) ancestry<sup>22</sup>. His creative works focus largely on the colonial history of 19th century Australia, and its continual effect on present day issues surrounding cultural identity and the environment.

Tylor's *Whalers, Sealers and Landstealers (The Well)* features a similar composition to Blackman's, though the landscape in Tylor's case has been imprinted onto a metallic plate through the daguerreotype process – creating a highly detailed image of a remote homestead situated within a rising hillside and backed by a vast sky that is interrupted by a series of bullet holes scattered throughout the righthand-top corner. Tylor has a personal connection to the conflicted history of the Country that features, the lands of the Gunditjmara people – in 1834 two commercial sealers and whalers took claim of the area, part of which now belongs to his family<sup>23</sup>. *Whalers, Sealers and Landstealers (Well)* is Tylor's way of reckoning with the past and present of this land.









Lloyd Rees  
*Mountain slopes, Tasmania* 1973-75  
 oil on canvas  
 96.5 x 127 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Ledger Gift, 1976  
 © Estate of Lloyd Rees / Copyright Agency, 2021.  
 Pictured on page 30.

**Lloyd Rees** (b.1895-1988) was born in Yeronga on Jagera Country in Meanjin (Brisbane), Queensland – mainly living in Sydney on Gadigal Country before spending his later life in nipaluna (Hobart) with his son and family. He was a skilled painter, draughtsman, and printmaker dedicated to depicting the effects of light on the landscape<sup>24</sup>. His works were not limited to a particular style of place, though the changes in his approach throughout his lifetime can be attributed to his gradually deteriorating eyesight. He lovingly represented the Australian landscape, focussing his works on exploring the relationship between man and nature, and forever seeking a harmony and balance between the two.

*Mountain slopes, Tasmania* by Rees offers an idyllic view of the mountain slopes in the south-east of lutruwita (Tasmania). Rees has covered the landscape in a light-drenched blue haze that envelops the canvas, his softly blended pastel hues and lively brushstrokes invoking the essence of place, the light and spirit within nature and in all things. The ancient rockface in the foreground conveys notions of deep-time, permanence and grounding – presented as a symbol for the composition of the earth, and its part in the universe – while the rippling currents of the Derwent River flow in and out towards the horizon line in the background.

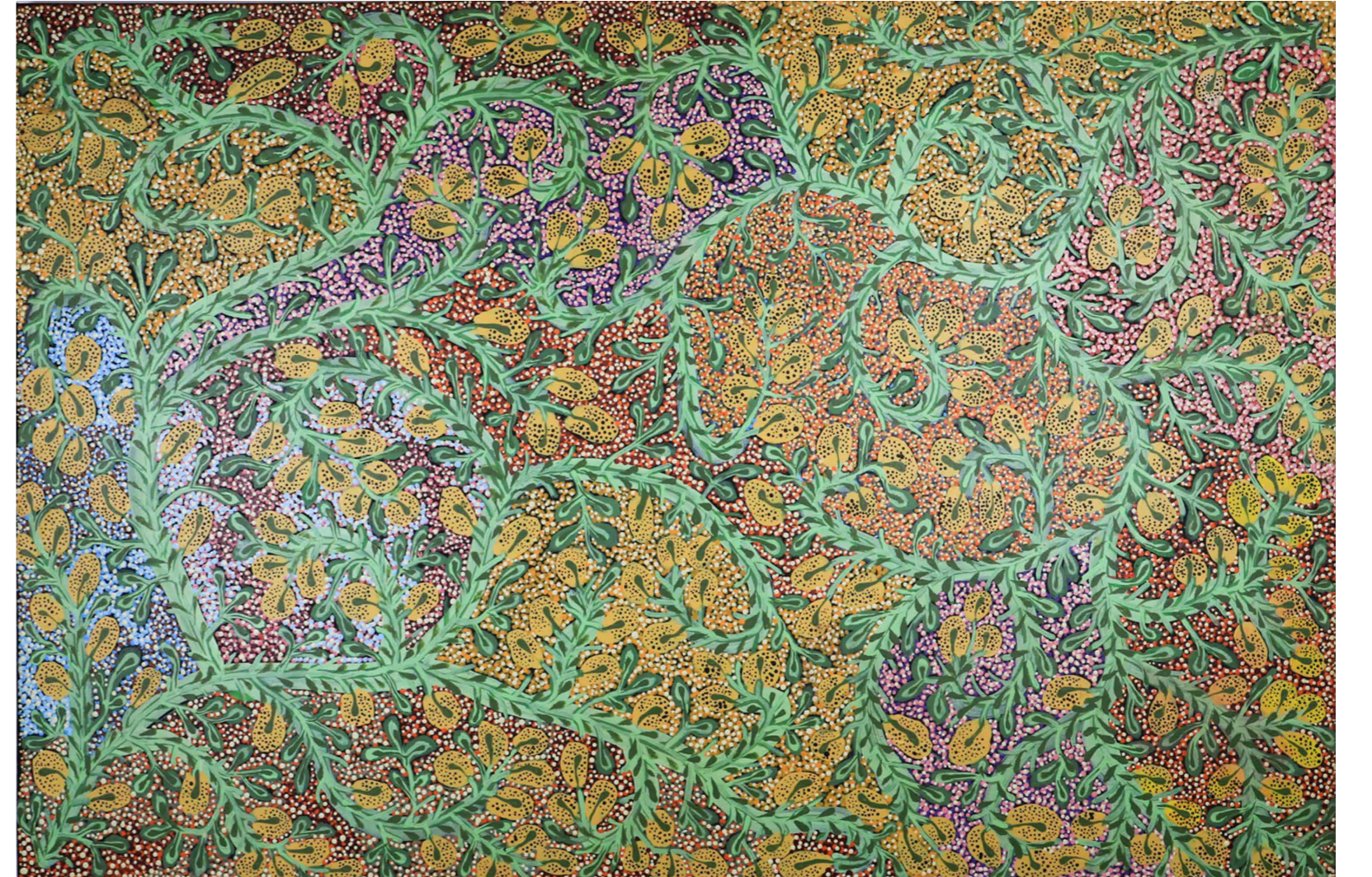


Beaver Lennon  
*Beginning of the Bunda Cliff* 2013  
 acrylic on canvas  
 66.5 x 105.8cm.  
 Courtesy of the artist and [Arts Ceduna](#).  
 Pictured on page 31.

**Beaver Lennon** (b.1988) was born on Kurna Country in Adelaide, South Australia. He is a Mirning and Antikirinjara man who has lived most of his life in Ceduna on Wirangu Country in South Australia. Storytelling is central to Lennon's practice that ranges from portrait to landscape painting, pottery and sculpture. His earlier works were inspired by his grandmother's Dreaming stories of the Bunda Cliffs, though is now influenced by his grandfather's Dreaming – Malu Tjuta (many kangaroos)<sup>25</sup>. Lennon's landscapes capture the distinctive open skies and vast expanses of Country with an extraordinary depth and detail that attests his connection to Country.

Lennon's *Beginning of the Bunda Cliff* captures an almost aerial view of the weathered escarpment that sweeps the western part of South Australia's coastline, and out and across to the south-eastern corner of Western Australia's border. Lennon's signature realistic style of painting and astute observational recording offers an intimate view of the landscape, mapping his deep connection and response to Country. The distinctive open skies and vast ocean expanses are captured with an extraordinary depth of detail in the afternoon light – emphasising the constant rush of the waves that have ensured the changing shape and forms of the cliffs over time.









Lorna Chick  
*Wooleen from a helicopter* 1976  
 oil on canvas  
 60.5 x 106.5 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection  
 © The Estate of Lorna Chick.  
 Pictured on page 34.

**Lorna Chick** (b.1922-2007) was born on Yorta Yorta Country in Wangandary, Victoria. She spent her entire life living on a farm in Victoria's Northeast, not far from Wangaratta. Chick was a self-taught artist who began painting in her forties, developing her own unique style and colour palette through her love of painting her surrounds<sup>26</sup>. Her work is often framed within the naive school of painting due to her flat panoramic vistas and almost topographical aerial perspective. She was extremely passionate about the environment, capturing her beloved surrounds with extraordinary and minute detail.

*Wooleen from a helicopter* by Chick presents a panoramic view of Laurie Ledger's<sup>27</sup> station in North East Victoria. The elevated farming land, rolling hills and rugged ranges in the background are rendered with meticulous detail, Chick's vibrant palette depicting nature at its brightest and sunniest. Her minute observations of daily farm life – of sheep and cattle grazing, flowers and trees blooming, and station workers carrying out their daily routines – stretch the entirety of the canvas, offering a unique insight into the artist's immediate environment undergoing rapid change.



Anne Ovi  
*Pumpunya (bush vines)* 2020  
 acrylic on canvas  
 120 x 80 cm.  
 Courtesy of the artist and [Warlayirti Artists](#).  
 Pictured on page 35.

**Anne Ovi** (b.1966) was born in Derby in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She currently lives and works on her traditional Walmajarri Country around Mulan Community. Ovi has been painting since 2015, developing a recognisable style that is intricate, organic, and highly detailed. She typically paints the story for bush medicines and bush foods that can be found on Walmajarri Country – representing the plants that grow here, their growth cycles, and related cultural knowledges. Ovi is currently working as part of a team of women artworkers assisting with the re-opening of the Mulan Arts Centre. She is also an active and celebrated member of the Paraku Rangers Indigenous Protected Areas group, having worked as a ranger there since 1991<sup>28</sup>.

Ovi takes a similar approach to detail and space in her work *Pumpunya (bush vines)*, though from a much closer perspective. The Pumpunya is a native bush vine that grows throughout Ovi's homeland of Paruku (Lake Gregory), the fruit, seeds, leaves and branches of which are all utilised as a food source and also medicine<sup>29</sup>. Her zoomed-in, bird's eye view of the Pumpunya draws the eye deep within its growth cycle – the twists, turns, and bright yellow fruit sprouting along its branches that sprawl outward and inward, leaving no space unturned. Ovi's free-flowing, organic patterning traces the vine's growth-path, depicting an intimate and interconnected study of the landscape, and nature's enduring imprint.





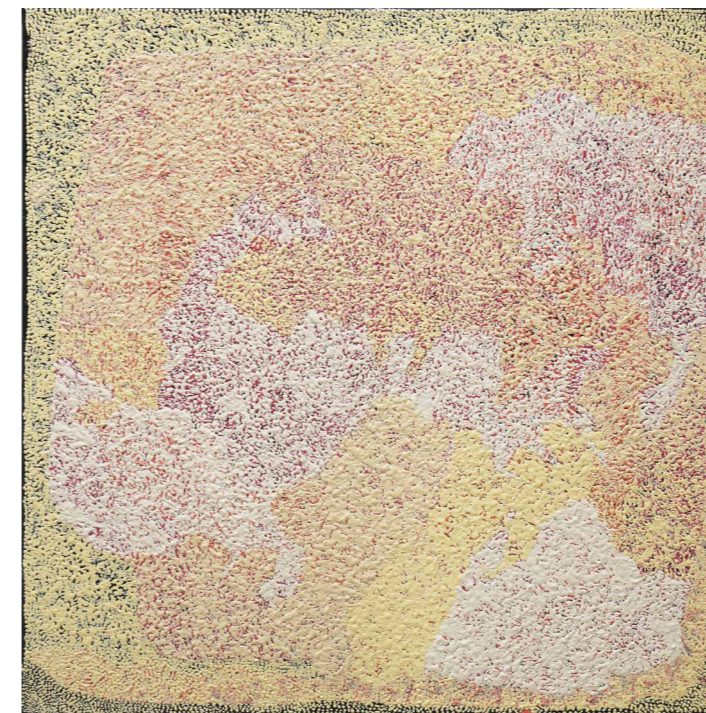




Hans Heysen  
*Spring in the bush, Hahndorf* 1929  
watercolour on cardboard  
32.1 x 39.6 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Ledger Gift, 1980  
© Estate of Hans Heysen / Copyright Agency, 2021.  
Pictured on page 38.

**Hans Heysen** (b.1877-1968) was born in Hamburg in Germany, and immigrated to Tartanya (Adelaide), South Australia with his family in 1884. He married and settled in Peramangk Country in Hahndorf – the landscape of which was the focus of his work for many years. Heysen was a master watercolourist who portrayed the South Australian landscape in all its different seasons. A conservationist at heart, his highly-detailed and light-driven works humanised the great gums of the Adelaide Hills – his highly skilled watercolour application, imbuing them with distinct qualities of endurance, resilience, and grandeur<sup>30</sup>.

Heysen's *Spring in the bush, Hahndorf* depicts a sunlit bushland filled with gum trees that have been painted in delicate watercolour pinks and blues that denote their strength, delicacy and beauty. The foreground hosts a monumental gum portrayed in all its specificity – its trunk accompanied by a group of cattle resting underneath the shade its branches have cast. A light impression of a fence line appears behind the trees, establishing a border between the dense bushland in the distance, and the grassland in the foreground which has almost been stripped bare. Heysen was a devoted conservationist who employed his artistic practice to advocate for the preservation of the unique environment of his beloved Adelaide Hills<sup>31</sup>.



Maggie Nakamarra Corby  
*Yalke (bush onion)* 2020  
acrylic on linen  
56 x 56 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and [Tangentyere Artists Aboriginal Centre](#).  
Pictured on page 39.

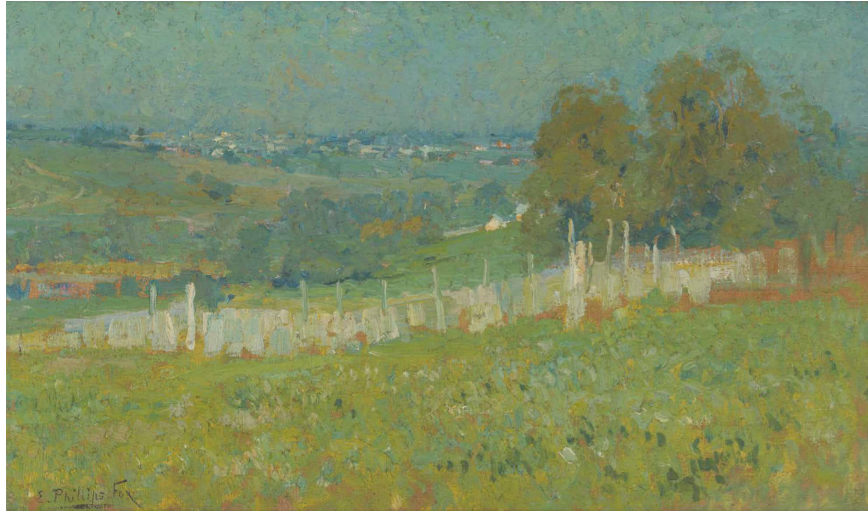
**Maggie Nakamarra Corby** (b.1951) was born at Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) in Central Australia. She is the eldest daughter of renowned Papunya Tula artist Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula. After shifting between Mt Liebig, Papunya, Kintore and Kiwirrkurra, Corby – now in her senior years – has moved to Mparntwe (Alice Springs), and paints at Tangentyere Artists daily. Her father was a senior Law man, Rainmaker, and Custodian of the Water Dreaming, an important site of Kalipinypa – this season of abundance caused the song cycles of the Water Dreaming performed in ritual to resonate in her imagination and paintings of Country<sup>32</sup>.

Corby's soft yellow hues, from light cream to bright yellow, envelop the canvas in *Yalke (bush onion)* – forming an interconnected system of organic shapes which appear to hover across the surface of her delicately layered yellow tones. While these abstracted forms are suggestive of a topographical view of Country unbound by borders, this work also holds within it important cultural knowledges, passed down to her by her mother and grandmothers<sup>33</sup>. The yalke (bush onion) is a traditional and native food staple for Corby's community, with the potential to germinate, proliferate, and nourish – the landscape here becomes an index of resources and meaning, embedded with the vital information necessary for people to survive this land.









E. Phillips Fox  
*From Charterisville* c. 1900  
 oil on canvas  
 35.5 x 61.0 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection Ledger Gift, 1993.  
 Pictured on page 42.

**Emanuel Phillips Fox** (b. 1865-1915) was born in Fitzroy on Wurundjeri Country in Naarm (Melbourne). He was an artist and an art teacher – teaching at a number of suburban design schools while painting landscapes around Melbourne and in Gippsland<sup>34</sup>. In 1887 he travelled to Paris for further study, settling in St Ives in Cornwall which was one of the key centres of *plein air* (outside) painting in England. He returned to Naarm in 1892, and in 1893 he established the Melbourne School of Art with fellow painter Albert Tucker<sup>35</sup>. In Australia and Europe Fox painted landscapes, genre scenes and portraits – his signature Impressionist technique, composing animated scenes of everyday life that focussed on absorbing the play of light, atmosphere and vivid colour around him.

Phillip Fox's *From Charterisville* depicts an elevated view of the artist's home estate on Wurundjeri Country, looking out over a growing Naarm (Melbourne) city and the Yarra Valley. Fox's vibrant and rhythmical style, broken brushwork, and palette of cool tonal blues and greens, capture an atmospheric rendition of place in the early evening light. His artistic vision of harmony and security is signified by the lush green grassland in foreground that is interrupted by an impression of a white picket fence that follows the downhill slope from right to left. Fox's estate extended well beyond this point though; his farmhouses, cottages, extensive gardens and orchards extending down the hillside and toward the edge of the River that acted as a boundary point.



Alison Murray  
*Cattle Station* 2010  
 acrylic on canvas  
 103.5 x 155.5 cm.  
 Courtesy of the Artist and [Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre](#).  
 Pictured on page 43.

**Alison Murray** (b. 1967) was born in Tully on Gulngay Country. She is a Girramay and Jirrbal woman and Traditional Owner of the Murray Upper area near Cardwell in North Queensland. Murray is a painter and potter with an eye for detail and a good understanding for composition, colour and pattern making<sup>36</sup>. Her strong connection to family, place and heritage is her creative inspiration – drawing from her traditional stories, and the places where she lives, works and camps for her inspiration. She has devoted her practice to landscape painting and her life to farming – having grown-up and worked on multiple cattle stations<sup>37</sup>. She is currently working at a fruit farm in the Murray Upper area, while continuing to paint at Girringun Art Centre.

Murray has been working on varying farms in North Queensland and the Northern Territory since she was nine years old. Her painting *Cattle Station* hosts a drove of cattle grazing under scattered trees and at watering places that stretch the dusty, cleared and rising hillsides that extend out toward the ranges – the work is actually a combination of farming landscapes that Murray has worked at over the years. In this work, the beginning of the farmland is signalled by a wooden fence that snakes from right to left in the foreground – Murray has been fortunate enough to access these varying lands on account of her employment, however many local community members that have ancestral connections have not<sup>38</sup>.









Robert Juniper  
*North West Landscape* 1977  
 oil on canvas  
 58.5 x 89.1 cm.  
 Benalla Art Gallery Collection purchase with assistance from the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1977  
 © Estate of Robert Juniper / Copyright Agency 2021.  
 Pictured on page 46.

**Robert Juniper** (b.1929-2012) was born in Merredin on Njaki Njaki Nyoongar Country in Western Australia. He studied in England before returning to Australia to begin his career as an art teacher and landscape artist. Juniper's creative practice spanned painting, printmaking, illustration, and sculpture, and he is best known for his evocative and expansive depictions of the West Australian landscape. Juniper's works often take an aerial perspective of place and introduce figurative and decorative elements – his sprawling compositions embrace the enormity of the West Australian landscape, depicting its layers, rhythms, contrasting colours, and the harmony he felt working within it<sup>39</sup>.

Juniper's *North West Landscape* embodies an intuitive and personal appreciation of Western Australia's expansive landscape. Juniper's soft purple hues sweep across the picture plane, the separation between the body of water in the foreground and the vast sky in the background only made clear by the subtle yellow-green organic line that indicates the water's edge. Overlaid across the landscape are a series of gestural markings that initiate a high point of view and instil place with both movement and life – ripples in the water, a series of figures exploring the Country in the distance, and a sparse grouping of tall trees that stretch up toward the sky – all invoking notions of 'the known and unknowability'<sup>40</sup> of and within the landscape, beyond the horizon line.



Deanne Gilson  
*Wadawurrung Camping Alongside Werribee River* 2015  
 white ochre, acrylic, gold leaf, and charcoal from my fire on linen  
 120 x 150 cm.  
 Courtesy the artist and Wyndham City Council.  
 Pictured on page 47.

**Deanne Gilson** (b.1967) was born in Naarm (Melbourne) on Wurundjeri Country. She is a Wadawurrung woman living on her ancestral Country in Ballarat, with an artistic practice that includes painting, sculpture, drawing and installation. Her works draw from her spiritual connection to Country and culture, and act as an acknowledgement of lived experiences of the past, present and future from an Indigenous perspective<sup>41</sup>. Gilson's work relies heavily on the use of symbols and form as a metaphor for the body, is focussed on the reclamation of cultural artefacts, stories, and symbols, and driven by Aboriginal women's business, identity, and connection to Country, before and after colonisation.

Deanne Gilson's *Wadawurrung Camping Alongside Werribee River* was created in response to the artist's experience working with a team of archaeologists conducting an artefact survey of the area. Gilson's representation of her experience features a large Manna Gum Tree on the riverbank in the foreground that is overlooking a central repository of cultural objects that were found at the site. These artefacts are encompassed by a golden countryside covered in yam daisies – an important food source for the Wadawurrung people – that has been layered with gold leaf, a colour signifier representative of the gold rush and thus, colonisation. Overlaid throughout the landscape are a series of Impressionist brushstrokes in bright and light blue – combining Western, contemporary and ancestral markings to reflect Gilson's identity and connection to place. Together, they bring to the fore the ebb and flow of the river water and acknowledge the thriving and fluid Wadawurrung culture that continues today<sup>42</sup>.









Richard Larter  
*Slips & Slides with Cycloidal Shifts* 1982  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
172 x 181.5 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Gift of the Visual Arts Board of the  
Australia Council, 1984  
© Estate of Richard Larter / Copyright Agency, 2021.  
Pictured on page 50.

**Richard Larter** (b.1929-2014) was born in Essex, England – immigrating to Australia, and settling in Yass on Ngunnawal and Country in south-eastern New South Wales in 1962 to take up a teaching position. Larter’s creative practice was diverse, including painting, printmaking, photography, performance, and film. His work was inspired by popular culture, music, politics and society, the natural environment and his personal relationships. He was a remarkable colourist and a technical innovator who was also influenced by developments in mathematics and physics<sup>43</sup>, and by the landscape near his home in Yass.

Larter’s *Slips & Slides with Cycloidal Shifts*, exists as a colourful and immersive response to his local landscape in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales – presented as a purely abstract painting inspired by his personal experiences of place<sup>44</sup>. The mosaic-like rainbows of interchanging colour have been made possible through Larter’s use of small sponge rollers that layer each band with varying gradations of tone. The resulting landscape of overlapping swatches and arcs of colour sparks the imagination as much as the eye, drawing focus to the seen and unseen light and energies that rhythmically pulsate through and within the landscape<sup>45</sup> – instilling both the feeling and experience of place.

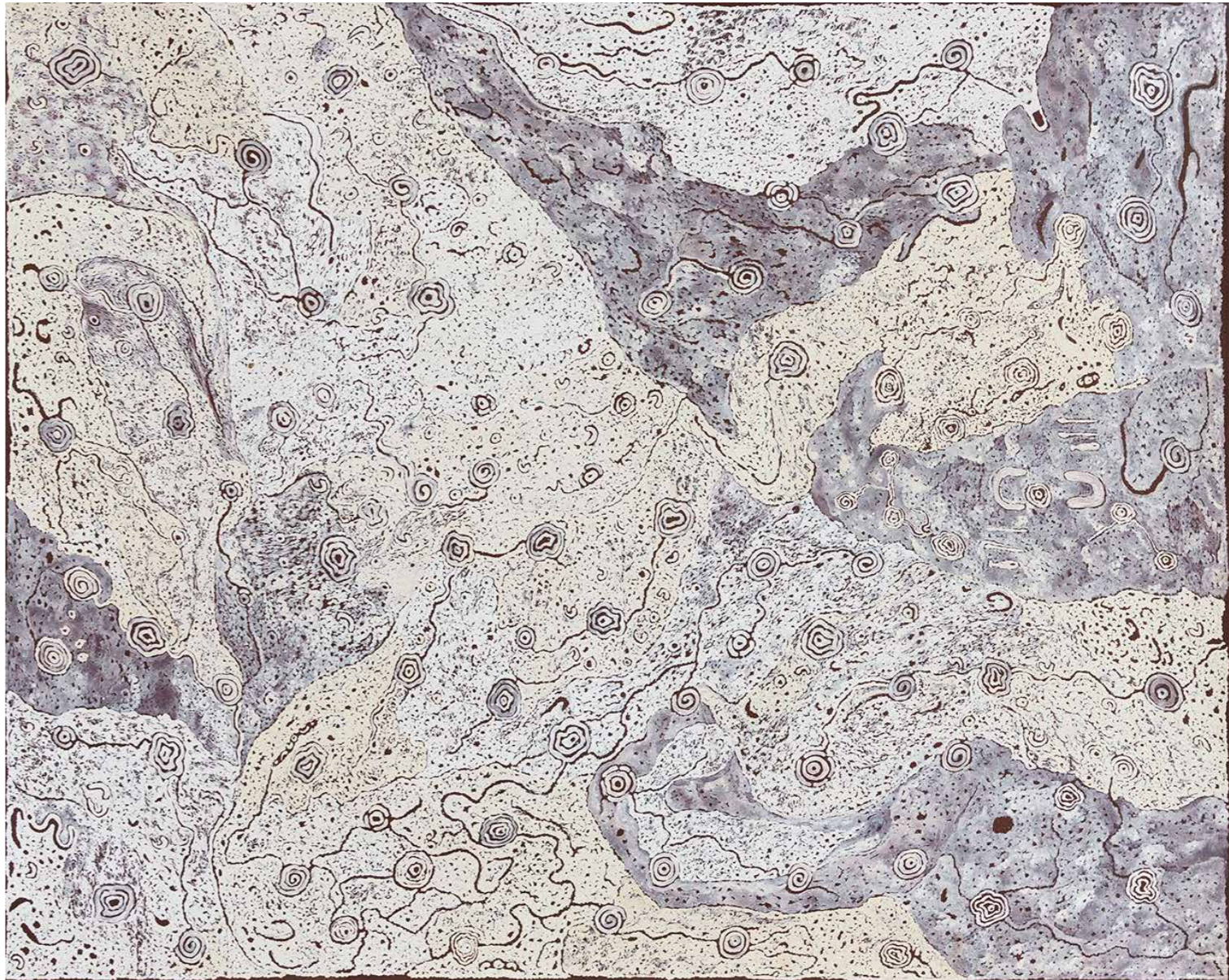


Roy Mclvor  
*Nature's Bounty* 2013  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
120 x 120 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and [Vivien Anderson Gallery](#).  
Pictured on page 51.

**Roy Mclvor** (b.1934-2018) was born at the Hope Valley Mission on Thubi Warra Country in Cape Bedford on the Cape York Peninsula in far North Queensland. He was a senior Guugu Yimithirr man of the Binthi clan who dedicated his life to the promotion of Indigenous art and culture. Mclvor has produced a body of work that is colourful, experimental, and illustrated his love and respect for nature<sup>46</sup>. He drew his inspiration from his traditional lands, creating works that are underpinned by the traditional art and culture of his ancestors, while exploring the contemporary social landscape of his community in Hopevale.

*Nature's Bounty* by Mclvor is a colourful and joyful mediation on the 'dynamic order' and splendour of the natural world. The predominately pastel orange-pink painted canvas has been over-painted with a series of dense but harmonious organic lines and shapes that flow from edge to edge, top to bottom. These forms are intricately detailed with both cultural and contemporary markings that Mclvor has described as “a dance between tradition and contemporary life on the land<sup>47</sup>” – they channel the deep emotion he felt while travelling his homelands. *Nature's Bounty* is a vibrant and contemplative work that speaks to the interconnectedness of all things and revels in the beauty and bounty of the natural realm.





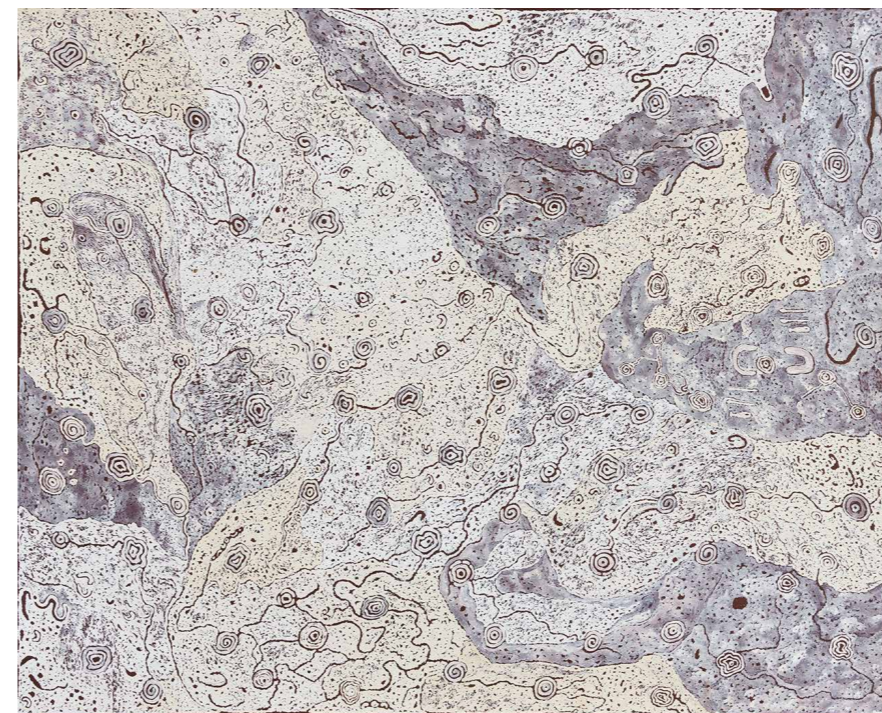




Janet Dawson  
*Morning Star* 1997  
oil on canvas  
30.5 x 30.5 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection, Gift of the artist and Michael Boddy  
in memory of Pamela Gullifer, 1997  
© Janet Dawson / Copyright Agency, 2021.  
Pictured on page 54.

**Janet Dawson** (b.1935) was born in Sydney on Gadigal Country, spending her early childhood on Wiradjuri Country in Forbes, New South Wales before moving to Wurundjeri Country in Naarm (Melbourne) in 1941. Dawson is well-known as a finely trained tonal realist and a pioneer of abstract painting in Australia. She found inspiration in her surrounding landscape and its changing seasons after her move to Binalong on Ngunnawal Country in rural New South Wales in 1974. Dawson is an avid cloud-watcher known for her soft palette and her shifting skiescapes<sup>48</sup>. She currently lives with her family in Wallington on Wathaurong Country, where she continues to draw and paint.

Dawson's *Morning Star* presents a view from above, a picturesque cloudscape of soft purple and blue tones that holds within it the morning star shining bright. Dawson's astute tonal observations of the changing conditions of light through the clouds manifests their ephemeral nature – continually moving, shifting, and adapting in response to the sky's circulating air flows<sup>49</sup>. Her soft and subtle gradations of pastel colour conjure the elemental forces that are in perpetual fluctuation with the earth below. Dawson instils within her work the sense of wonder and imagination that cloud-watching inspires, while presenting a non-linear impression of Country that is in constant motion.



Keith Stevens  
*Nyapari Tjukurpa* 2019  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
121 x 152 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist, Tjungu Palya and Vivien Anderson Gallery.  
Pictured on page 55.

**Keith Stevens** (b. 1940) is a Pitjantjatjara artist born in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the far north of South Australia at Granite Downs cattle station. He is a respected senior man in traditional law and a strong community leader who comes from a strong artistic family. Following in his parents' footsteps he was mustering at an early age and had no schooling until moving to Pukatja (Ernabella) as a young boy where he attended the mission school<sup>50</sup>. Stevens' family would travel for weekends to their traditional homelands of Piltati and Iwarrawarra, eventually moving to Piltati Creek at what is now the Nyapari Community where he still lives, and works at the smallest APY art centre, Tjungu Palya.

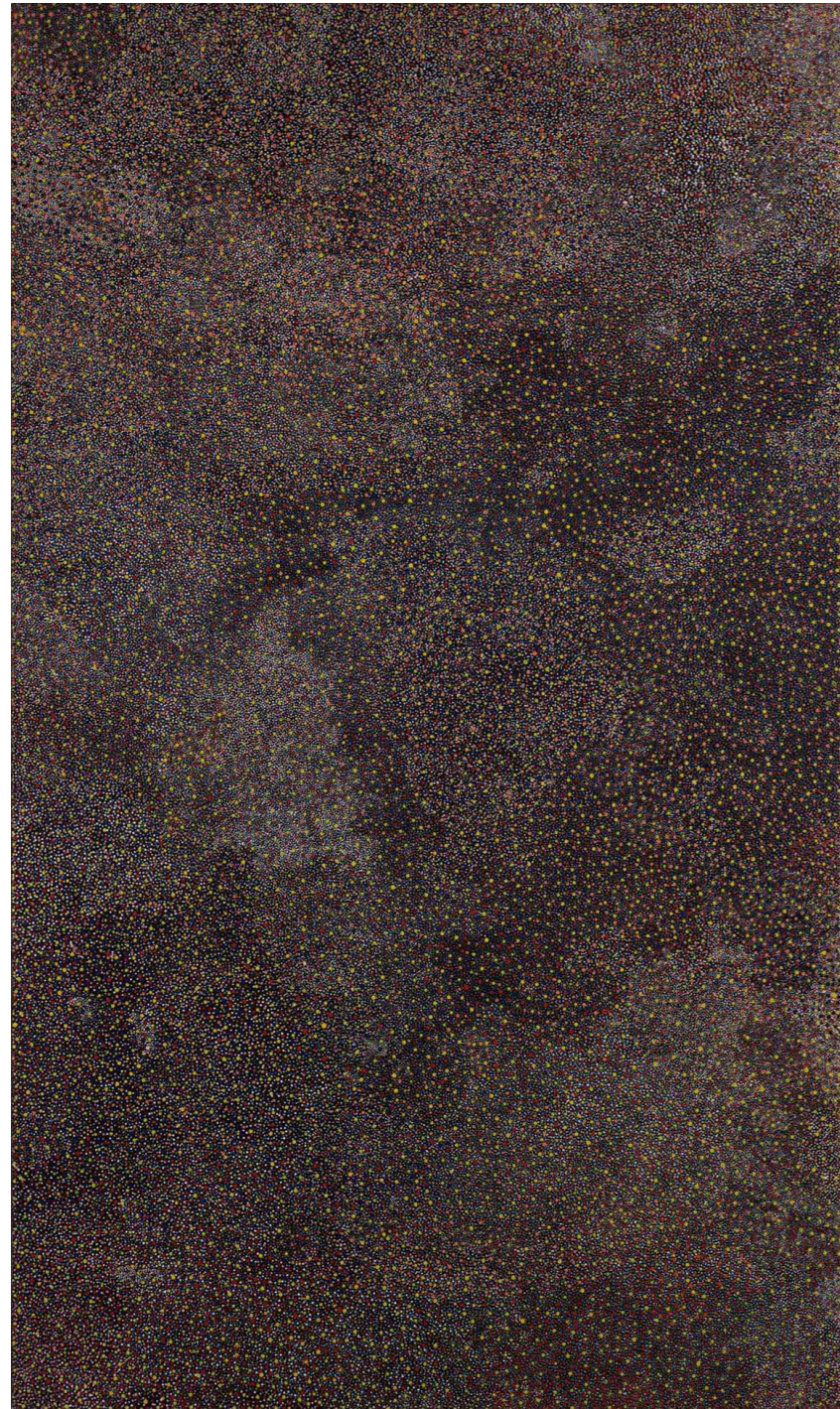
*Nyapari Tjukurpa* by Stevens features a painterly depiction of the sacred Songlines embedded within the Piltati Creek site his Nyapari community calls home. The work initiates a visual map of the terrain at Piltati, the location of a major ancestral narrative – the *Wanampi Tjukurpa* (Rainbow Snake Ancestral Men Dreaming)<sup>51</sup>. Stevens' layered depiction of Country traces the sinuous and serpentine landforms of his homelands, it's fine variations of ashy detail and tone – ranging from deep to light purple with creamy highlights – accentuate the earth's expansive geographies through a veil that imbues the surface with a pulse, indicating the full range of ancestral and human activity occurring at both a minute and monumental scale<sup>52</sup>.



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*"We are the land, the land is us<sup>53</sup>."*

Angelina Pwerle  
*Bush Plum Dreaming* 2006  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
199.5 x 119 cm.  
Benalla Art Gallery Collection Gift of William Nuttall, 2008  
© Image courtesy the artist and Niagara Galleries.

## Curator's Thank You

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I would like to acknowledge the contemporary artists whose works feature in the exhibition, thank them for sharing their hearts and minds through their practice, being open to this framework for presentation, and the opportunity to bring their works together in dialogue with the Benalla Art Gallery Collection.

I extend my thanks to the incredible art centre managers and gallery staff who work tirelessly to represent and support many of the artists whose works are included. I am so thankful for you all and your part in making this exhibition happen.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the exhibitions partners; NETS Victoria who have spear-headed this project – in particular Director Claire Watson and First Nations Engagement Coordinator Jenna Rain Warwick – and express my gratitude for all the support and guidance from Benalla Art Gallery Director Eric Nash, and Education and Public Programs Curator Shanley Cleeland who have both been incredibly generous with their time and in sharing their knowledge of the Collection.



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and

Benalla Art Gallery  
Botanical Gardens  
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[www.benallaartgallery.com.au](http://www.benallaartgallery.com.au)

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NETS Victoria pays tribute to the ongoing culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) Peoples of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which our office operates.

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