

# I Hope That I Have Got Some Art

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## Abstract

In this thesis I have researched what I believe is the powerful, catalytic effect of poetry on the creative work of some artists. I have chosen three, Australian painters; Sidney Nolan, James Gleeson and Brett Whiteley. I have looked carefully at how the works of various poets have influenced and inspired these artists.

I have put forward the idea that this engagement with the poetic realm has greatly enhanced the artist's creative form-making.

Indeed these artists have acknowledged their strong links with the world of poetry. I have touched very briefly on the ideas of some renowned philosophers who stress society's need for fine works of art. In my opinion great works of art can come from this linking of painting with poetry and therefore, this nexus is to be encouraged.

I have in my own painterly works looked to the poets for inspiration. In *The Wimmera Series* of landscape works, I read Brian Edwards' and Homer Reith's poetry, and found in their imagery a rich source of creative ideas.

I continued to read the works of the poets and found that the poetry of Ezra Pound, Dante Alighieri, Judith Wright and the works of many others, were an inspirational and catalytic force. I have also discovered on this artistic journey that the very writing of poetry, my own attempts in this field, seemed to bring to my painting, a sharper, a more analytical and critical focus.

Renowned art critics and art historians have criticised contemporary art for its lack of the poetic, and its boring shallowness. I would urge artists to engage with the poetic realm, and this interplay between painting and poetry, may produce fine works of lasting greatness.



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## **Glossary**

Amphora: A two handled, narrow-necked vessel for holding wine or oil in ancient Greece.

Ekphrastic Poem: A poem written about a particular art work.

Hieroglyph: Writing in which the symbols are pictures of the things they stand for.

Icon: An image, picture or other representation.

Logos: Word, speech, discourse.

Stamnos: A vessel for carrying water in ancient Greece.

## Preface

The poet, Wallace Stevens, speaking at the Museum of Modern Art New York in 1951, referred to the interchange ‘between one art and another (as), migratory passings to and fro, quickenings, Promethean liberations and discoveries’.<sup>1</sup>

This notion of the creative movement between painting and poetry has long fascinated me, and I realized that I had been working with poetry as an energizing force in my own paintings for some time. Indeed, I have found that the words of the poets have continually influenced my way of seeing the world and my way of putting this vision onto paper. This has, I believe, brought a more rigorous approach to my artistic works, and it seems that the engagement with the poetic state has allowed me to transcend the more banal and mundane experiences of life, and thereby achieve some art.

Somewhat paradoxically, perhaps, the genesis of this investigation had its roots in the obverse process; the creation of poems about works of art . As a child, I deeply loved poetical works, and I was fortunate in being introduced to great poetry by my parents and teachers at primary and secondary school. I recall that in the French language class we were asked to learn Charles Baudelaire’s poem “Chant d’Automne” and to recite it competently. I still read this poem and find it wonderfully evocative and regard it as an exquisite masterpiece. Because of this early experience, it was not difficult in later life to move to Dante, Pound, Wright, Edwards, Reith and L.M. Raine, and to find much inspiration in these works. In fact, in the early part of this research project, I set about writing poems about paintings, aiming to achieve a poetic feeling in order to gain more insight into these fine works. It has been said that you should stand before a painting as you would stand before a king or emperor. Be silent and still and wait till the king (the painting) deigns to speak with you! I have followed this dictum, looking closely at a painting, carefully researching its background and then producing a poem. Here are two such examples of this process.

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<sup>1</sup> Steele, *Plenty Art into Poetry*, 14.

## The Shutters

They are posed exquisitely,  
An elegant trio at the Tate.  
Hand on hip, a Madonna  
In a gothic S curve, She is  
Dolce, yet full of style and verve.  
To look is to admire.

Whilst the wooden shutters  
hold back the unusually bright fire of  
Sunlight, that tips the shadow  
Of the green, lily vase  
Across the yellow book.  
He lolls lord-like on the  
Chrome-legged chair,  
With a certain, ironic look,  
aware that he must hold  
the cigarette with a nonchalant air.

Like her, he too  
Gazes at the viewer,  
Whilst the sunlight  
throws his shadow  
on the softness at his feet.  
The white telephone could ring  
But who would disturb that  
Which is so seemingly complete.  
Percy sits on the man's knee  
Still as any stone cat (or painted),  
Absorbed in the pattern of trees,

Where a dove moons, murmurs  
perhaps happily, And beyond  
The corners of the sky and air  
A whole temperate day waits  
for Mrs Clarke,  
Who is not really Mrs Clarke,  
But the artist's model  
A certain Miss Celia Bertwell.  
And Mr Oswald Clark  
Is he there?  
The cat perhaps is Percy  
But who knows,  
As he wisely continues  
To pose,  
And stare  
And only he perchance.  
Senses a slight frisson  
In all that painterly air.



*Mr & Mrs Ossie Clark and Percy*

David Hockney b1937

Oil on Canvas 214 x 365cm

Painted 1970-1971

## The Conception of a God

Nothing of poverty's nothingness  
Here, but something to be announced  
In a sun-silvered season.  
Outside of time's reign  
The high flown archangel  
Touches down,  
In a mist of flowers,  
Wings glittering,  
Like snow on distant hills,  
Or castle towers.  
He greets St. Emidius,  
Who is burdened in beautiful brocades,  
of red inclining to purple,  
And the two friends discuss ecclesiastical things,  
Foreign powers or Trade.  
A peacock's tail fans out  
And enunciates patterns,  
With a wind-lifted crimson tapestry,  
Awry on a balustrade.  
While in a glassy blaze of light,  
a golden, aureoled dove  
circles and startles

Lesser birds into confused,  
White flight.  
The archangel enlightens the lady,  
Assures her that there is nothing odd  
In a virgin becoming,  
the mother of a god.  
Then he and the gold-lit aureoled dove.  
Last seen in Ascoli Piceno  
In the Marches leave,  
In a close conversation  
About Divine Love.  
The lesser doves resume their litany  
Of coo-pee-coo,  
While the pale lady  
At the prie-dieu,  
Quite reflective,  
Absorbed in the text,  
Like Crivelli is getting things  
into perspective.



*The Annunciation with Saint Emidius*

Carlo Crivelli,

Circa 1430 – 1494

Egg tempera and oil on canvas

Transferred from wood, 207 x 146.7 cm

The National Gallery,

London.

It was during this experience of looking closely at paintings, and then writing my poems about them, that I found that I was focusing closely on the form, line, colour, balance and composition of the work, entering more deeply into the life and strength of the painting. As a result of this experience of translating paintings into poems, I found that, later, when I was working on my own painterly art works, I brought to the work a more demanding approach. I began to expect more of myself and attempted to achieve greater unity and cohesion in the paintings, *as if there was some sort of poetic form behind them*, and this raised the question of whether this experience had been shared by other painters.

What eventually emerged from these musings is a more formal research direction that has informed this investigation. If the reading of poetry was such a powerful source of aesthetic inspiration for my own paintings, was this the case for other recognized Australian artists? Whilst throughout the course of this creative research I have looked at the works of many artists, I have chosen to focus on the work of James Gleeson, Sidney Nolan and Brett Whiteley. These three outstanding Australian painters have, I suggest, demonstrated in their work the powerful linking of poetry with painting, and the following dissertation records my attempt to more clearly articulate this poetry/painting nexus.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

In this investigation of the interaction between painting and literary text, I shall be specifically considering the nature and practice of the artistic translation of poetry into painting. As part of the investigation, I ask whether the nexus between the two art genres could be claimed to be one of the creative, aesthetic forces contributing to the form making for some recognized Australian painters. At the same time, I shall be reflecting on my own artistic practice with the aim of gaining insights into how the interaction between painting and poetry might serve to energize my own artistic works.

To begin this introduction to the investigation, I will look briefly at some examples of the historic nexus of poetic text and painterly image, sweeping across time from antiquity to the present day.

In the chronology section of the exhibition catalogue *Between Poetry and Painting*, held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts London, Dom Sylvester Houèdard mentions that the artist Kandinsky said that ‘there are no autonomous arts’.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Houèdard goes on to say that the ‘Icon and logos are one’<sup>2</sup> and in this context refers to the ancient Sesostris panel (1950 BC) where ‘a lion is represented as a pure picture hieroglyph’.<sup>3</sup> David Sanderson in *The Art of Egyptian Hieroglyphics* writes of the detail of hieroglyphs in the White Chapel, of Sesostris 1 (1950 BC), (Figure 1) where the hieroglyphs are pictorial images of great skill and art.

This is a clear example of where icon and logos have certainly crossed over; this reciprocal relationship is a feature of the exquisite vase paintings of ancient Greek artists. It is this early recognition of the oneness of the meta-concepts embedded in the picture (painting) and the writing that underpins

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<sup>1</sup> Reichardt, *Between Poetry and Painting*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Reichardt, *Between Poetry and Painting*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Reichardt, *Between Poetry and Painting*, 2.



this tradition of artists borrowing from, or at least deriving creative energy from, various written works.

Indeed, many of the painters of antiquity took a great deal of their inspiration from the Homeric epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which is probably testimony to the cultural importance of these works to the ancient Greeks. A beautiful piece of early work illustrating the interplay between painting and poetry is the *Ship with Odysseus and the Sirens* (475 BC) on a stamnos, a painted vase, currently held on the British Museum (Figure 2). This is a remarkable translation of the original text to painted image, resulting in an aesthetically integrated work of fine art. Ironically, perhaps, the drawing seems exquisitely right even though 'the sail is still spread out in the wrong direction for sailing'.<sup>4</sup>

Another example of poetry and painting intermingling is on an amphora, a vase from Melos, showing *Hermes visiting Calypso* (600 BC). Scheffold comments that the florid style of this vase (Figure 3) 'is very well suited to the encounter on the paradisaic Isle of Ogygia,'<sup>5</sup> and goes on to quote the words of Homer that are translated so finely into paint:

Hermes the messenger marveled as he stood,  
But when he gazed in wonder at everything,  
He stepped inside the spacious cave,  
The fair Calypso did not fail,  
To recognize him,  
For the Immortals always,  
Recognize each other....

Most welcome guest,  
God of the golden wand,  
It has not been your custom,  
To come to my home....  
But follow, I will provide food and hospitality

(*Odyssey* V 75-8 87-91)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Richter, *Perspective in Greek and Roman Art*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Scheffold, *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art*, 95.

<sup>6</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, cited in Scheffold, 96.

An ancient wall painting found in a house on the Esquiline Hill in Rome known as *Odysseus and Laestrygon* is an example of the Odyessian landscapes now held in the Vatican (Figure 4). These have been described as ‘pictures filled with diffused light in what may be called an impressionistic manner’<sup>7</sup> and in this particular work Odysseus is shown with the legendary cannibalistic race of the Laestrygon, mentioned in book x of Homer’s *Odyssey*.

In the Medieval Period, we see in many examples of illuminated manuscripts – these great works of European book painting show a marvellous linking of poetry and painting. In the British Library collection there is an item titled *Les livres des Histoires* (1406), in which a painting *The Siege of Troy*, French (414 fols Stowe M.S. 54, F 186b) shows Greek Trojan forces described by Homer ‘appearing here in the guise of knights of the age of European chivalry and romance’.<sup>8</sup> This anachronistic representation of the battle scene (Figure 5) is nevertheless a graceful painting where the soldiers die elegantly and the horses wear gaily coloured caparisons.

Another manuscript in the British Library Collection deals with the work of the Italian poet Dante Alighieri’s *The Divina Commedia*. This manuscript includes a section of the marvellous *Scenes from the Inferno, Minos Judging; the Condemnation of the Carnal sinners; Dante in a faint*. (Italy c1370 178 fols, Additional, M.S 19587, F.8.) (Figure 6). In this manuscript lines from the poem are printed on the painted representation, speaking of the torments and lamentations that are graphically depicted.

In the same library is a manuscript painting titled *Petrarch and Laura*, (88 fols Additional M.S 38125 F. 58.) that shows the poet talking with his lover.

This manuscript also contains some of Petrarch’s sonetti and canzoni. The miniature shown here (Figure 7) is gemlike in its sparkling blues and yellow. It

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<sup>7</sup> Richter, *Perspective in Greek*, 48.

<sup>8</sup> Backhouse, *The Illuminated Page*, 141.

is an example of a vibrant translation of text into paint. It accompanies the poem

“Trionfo della Morte”. We see in the painting Petrarch talking with his dead, loved one Laura. The artist illustrates in this a picture of the calm, spiritual form of love, that is referred to in the poem. The church is painted in the background, the spire pointing towards heaven and reflecting the serious, religious nature of the “Trionfo”.

*The Birth of Venus* (1484) by Botticelli is an exceptional example of the power of a poetic text to inspire a painter. The following words by Poliziano the poet to Lorenzo the Magnificent, ‘provide the immediate inspiration for Botticelli’s picture’<sup>9</sup>:

Propelled by soft Zephyrs a maiden,  
Of almost unearthly beauty,  
Comes gliding over the sea.

Holding her hair together with her hand,  
And with her left covering,  
Her delicate breast,  
She steps from a shell onto the beach,

That covers itself with fragrant flowers,  
Beneath her foot steps.  
Here the three hours receive her  
And array her in a pearl, embroidered cloak.<sup>10</sup>

Other examples include Dosso Dossi’s representation of *Circe and her Lovers*, now in the National Gallery Washington DC, which took inspiration from the passage in the *Odyssey* where Ulysses arrives at Circe’s island to find that she has changed her men into various, docile animals; Titian’s *Venus and Adonis* (1553), painted for Phillip the second, King of Spain, it is claimed, sprang from Lodovico Dolce’s poem “Favola di Adone” (1545), with which Titian may have been familiar<sup>11</sup> and Dürer’s *The Rape of Europa* (1495), it is clear, owes much to Ovid. Indeed, this Roman poet was often a

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<sup>9</sup> Hindley, *World Art Treasures*, 158.

<sup>10</sup> Hindley, *World Art Treasures*, 211.

<sup>11</sup> Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods*, 215.

literary source for Renaissance artists, and in this case there is an image of Europa in book VI of the *Metamorphoses*, where, it has been observed, 'Ovid emphasizes that Europa drew up her feet, so as not to get them wet...(and)...Dürer could solve the problem only by having her kneel on the bull's back.'<sup>12</sup>

Whilst Western art has seen a rich crossover between painting and poetry, whether it was episodes from Homeric epics on ancient Greek vases or the production of brilliant Renaissance paintings based on the works of poets dealing with classical themes, this is not a culturally specific practice. In the ancient east many poems and other texts were written directly on the painting.

Chu Ta created the marvelous *Stone Painting* (c. 1694) (Figure 8). On the leaves of the An Wan album, the evocative poem reads:

I heard you can play the flute well,  
But there was no trace of you anywhere.  
You boarded the boat, then left by carriage,  
Just listening- the host and the guest<sup>13</sup>

Wang Shih-Shen (1686-1759) painted the *Blossoming Plum Scroll* (Figure 9) on which are the following lines of a poem:

A myriad branches criss cross,  
Their wintry hue deep in the water,  
Walking on a stream's bridge at dawn,  
Ice cracks under my staff.  
My old friends are mostly far away,  
But seem as close as these plum blossoms.  
Why should one fear the spring cold,  
And lie abed in the thatched chamber.<sup>14</sup>

This is a splendid example of the fusion of poetry and painting, and it has been remarked that in such works 'image and text, the poem the painting and

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<sup>12</sup> Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods*, 162.

<sup>13</sup> Watt, *The Translation of Art*, 73.

<sup>14</sup> Watt, *The Translation of Art*, 132.

the calligraphy are complimentary elements of an aesthetically integrated creation.<sup>15</sup>

In the following chapters, I shall research this interplay between text and painted form in the various works of selected Australian artists using a construct suggested by the philosopher Herbert Marcuse. He argued that in the area of creative endeavor that 'images of harmony preserved in the imaginary world of art..... Would serve as criteria for judging everyday objects and activities.'<sup>16</sup> Whilst this is perhaps a somewhat high ideal to place on the artist, I would hope that my creative enquiry at least demonstrates that the on-going aesthetic interplay of painting and poetry has been a creative catalyst in the form making of some Australian painters.

In this regard, the three Australian painters that I have chosen to assist in this investigation are: James Gleeson (1915- ); Sidney Nolan (1917-1992); and Brett Whiteley (1939-1992).

The selection of James Gleeson was supported by the comments of Bruce James, a recognised authority on Australian Art. In Lou Klepac's book *Australian Painters of the Twentieth Century*, James claimed that 'Gleeson's drawings, collages and paintings emerged; unmediated from his deepest imagination- a creative reservoir equalled only by the greatest of our twentieth century cultural form givers.'<sup>17</sup> It is this particular observation of the deepest imagination -a creative reservoir that makes Gleeson so attractive for this study. Sidney Nolan, a well recognised contemporary artist has also been included, partly because, as Klepac asserts in his article on Nolan, that he was a 'solitary genius who single handedly changed the direction of Australian Painting... and at a comparatively early age produced a series of painting so innovative that they remain today, half a century later, as fresh

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<sup>15</sup> Watt, *The Translation of Art*, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Feenberg, *Heidegger and Marcuse*, 137.

<sup>17</sup> Klepac, *Australian Painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, 127.

and as exciting as any work done before or since.’<sup>18</sup> In addition to this useful testimony, critic Robert Hughes wrote of the thing that Nolan has that ‘eludes the most ravaging critic- Nolan’s Lyricism’,<sup>19</sup> which is redolent of the poetic mind. Finally, Brett Whiteley has been included in the study because he is another exceptionally creative form maker. Robert Hughes, writing in *The Bulletin* (1965) suggested that Whiteley’s outstanding act as a painter ‘is the decision not to be original – not to narrow his style into the crippling uniqueness of a trademark, but to keep it open and to preserve the flow of ideas between his art environment and his own experience.’<sup>20</sup>

James Gleeson writing in the *Sun- Herald* 21 June 1971 under the banner ‘A Closer look at Whiteley’, said ‘He shines as no other Australian artist has ever shone’. Again Whiteley’s creative mind is in evidence here, and I find his work particularly sensuous and lyrical whilst being, at the same time, intellectually demanding.

These three artists are widely recognised as outstanding Australian painters, and represent conveniently the contemporary state of Australian art since their lives span almost the entire twentieth century. They appear to draw upon a rich reservoir of creativity, and each artist has acknowledged their great love of poetry and their paintings have produced exceptional levels of fine artwork. Consequently I have in my own painting, turned to the poets for inspiration, hoping to find there that rich, productive reservoir.

It is this regenerative interplay of poetic text and painted imagery that I shall be considering in the following chapters. The earlier quote of Kandinsky that ‘There are no autonomous arts’<sup>21</sup> is central to the notion that poetry and painting can blend and merge in a sort of aesthetic osmosis. In this

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<sup>18</sup> Klepec, *Australian Painters*, 137.

<sup>19</sup> Hughes, *The Art of Australia*, 227.

<sup>20</sup> Klepec, *Australian Painters*, 235.

<sup>21</sup> Reichardt, *Between Poetry and Painting*, 1.

investigation, I shall be describing how text and image work in my own paintings as a way of understanding the creative link between poetry and painting in the works of painters who were deeply interested in both art forms. The investigation begins in the next chapter where I will look at other scholarly contributions to the question of the nexus between written text and painted form.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

The question of where the creative moment is born is one which has attracted much attention. Stephen Spender says 'the work of art is the result of an emotion which the poet [or artist] has about ideas or religion'<sup>22</sup>. He cites T.S. Elliot as saying 'I have the A Minor Quartet on the gramophone... I should like to get something of that into verse, before I die.'<sup>23</sup>

The novelist Leo Tolstoy quoted in Sesonske's *What is Art and Essays about Art*, is I think talking about the creative act, when he says one has 'to invoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds or forms expressed in words, transmit that feeling.'<sup>24</sup>

William Wordsworth writing in his *Observations, Prefixed to Lyrical Ballads* saw all good poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings... never produced by any variety of subjects, but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had also thought long and deeply.'<sup>25</sup> In his fine poem "The Daffodils" I think he is writing of the sort of thing which prompts the creative act:

I wondered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils

...

I gazed and gazed but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Spender, *Eliot*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> Spender, *Eliot*, 128.

<sup>24</sup> Sesonske, *What is Art?* 411.

<sup>25</sup> Sesonske, *What is Art?* 263.

<sup>26</sup> Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury*, 280.



Again when he writes of the young woman “The Reaper” singing in the field:

And as I mounted up the hill,  
The music in my heart I bore  
Long after it was heard no more<sup>27</sup>

Here Wordsworth seems to be describing those feelings that prompted the creative act of poetry writing.

Joshua Reynolds wrote in his *Discourse XIII* of the importance to the artist of storing up

The first thoughts, that is the effect which anything produces on our minds, on its first appearance, [that] is never to be forgotten, and it demands for that reason, to be laid up with care... [and] these ideas are infused into [the artist's] design without any conscious effort, but if he is not on his guard, he may reconsider and correct them, till the whole matter is reduced to a common place.<sup>28</sup>

Reynolds wrote also of the importance to the artist of accumulated experiences and it was he said ‘our happiness to draw upon such funds.’<sup>29</sup>

Reynolds also writes of the importance of taking advantage ‘of the use of accidents in a creative work’<sup>30</sup> and these could prompt further aesthetic creativity.

I am arguing that poetry has fuelled the creative act for some Australian artists and that it has been a powerful catalyst. It has energized much creative achievement, giving to the artist a wealth of rich thought, to be laid by for future reference or to be instantly acted upon in their aesthetic form making. I believe that this translation of the poetic feeling into their works, has helped them to create outstanding art.

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<sup>27</sup> Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury*, 276.

<sup>28</sup> Reynolds, Joshua. “Discourses” in *What is Art??* 175.

<sup>29</sup> Reynolds, Joshua. “Discourses” in *What is Art??* 175.

<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, Joshua. “Discourses” in *What is Art?* 181.

The critic Donald Kuspit talking about poetry, feels that the American artist Kaprow has in his works 'dispensed with poetry without even pretending to be poetry or to see the poetry in prosaic life.'<sup>31</sup> In contrast in *The New Subjectivism* Kuspit praises the work of Robert Kushner. He mentions *Artemis* 1987 a work in acrylic, metal leaf and mixed fabrics. He stresses that he understands Kushner's works as poems 'an enchanter's poem [that] has creative power... of wisdom's reparative power of life.'<sup>32</sup> He also approves of Nancy Spero's *Codex Artaud XXIV* (1972) seeing the poet Antonin Artaud as 'her Virgil'<sup>33</sup> in her art-making journey.

The critic, Peter Timms argues the case for creative works that are 'more poetic, romantic and idealistic art'<sup>34</sup>. He admires a certain installation piece because it is "a kind of visual poem".<sup>35</sup> Timms quotes the American critic Hartman who talks of 'the fateful question of culture, we know that what is at stake is poetry...the faculty of wonder itself.'<sup>36</sup> It interesting that Patrick McCaughey reviewed Timm's book and said it is 'a nonsensical book'<sup>37</sup> I do not agree, since I think there was much that made good sense. Timms writing in *What's Wrong with Contemporary Art?* points out that in the visual arts rigorous scholarship and intellectual discourse should be found in the art schools. He regrets any commodification and trivialisation of the world of art, and he questions whether describing the world we already know, *ad infinitum*, without variation, is limiting art's expressive powers. Sometimes, he says, a pipe is just a pipe.

Stanford in *The Enemies of Poetry* writes about Gotthold Lessing's *Laokoon*. In the *Laokoon* Lessing quotes Simonides' aphorism: 'Painting is dumb poetry

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<sup>31</sup> Kuspit, *The End of Art*, 63.

<sup>32</sup> Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*, 474.

<sup>33</sup> Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*, 268.

<sup>34</sup> Timms, *What's Wrong With Contemporary Art?* 13.

<sup>35</sup> Timms, *What's Wrong With Contemporary Art?* 104.

<sup>36</sup> Timms, *What's Wrong With Contemporary Art?* 172.

<sup>37</sup> McCaughey, "Two bob each way", 11.

and poetry speaking painting'<sup>38</sup> and goes on to point out that notwithstanding, the complete similarity...the two were different both in the objects which they imitated and in the mode of their imitation.'<sup>39</sup> Lessing sees poetry as a dance of words where the reader of the poem 'makes his own visualizations'.<sup>40</sup> He describes the painter's pictures as 'being prefabricated for the viewer'.<sup>41</sup> He typifies painting as static, while poetry is kinetic, but both give pleasure. I am not asserting that a poem must be seen as a painting or vice versa, but that there can be a nexus between the two arts, and that this can produce fine works of art.

I have sought inspiration from the poets because according to Keats, it is the 'wording of his own [the poet's] highest thoughts.'<sup>42</sup>

Reeves when writing about poetry says 'Poetry is not simply verse'<sup>43</sup> it is a thing of great significance. I certainly have found that poems teach and open our minds to much that is beautiful and/or erudite, enchanting or profound.

The German artist Anselm Kiefer in his paintings 'restores the literary with a vengeance, suggesting that the visual arts are incomplete- even inept without it'.<sup>44</sup> In an interview with James Gleeson in 1986, art researcher Lou Klepac

asked Gleeson directly 'How important have poetry and literature been to you as a painter?'<sup>45</sup> Gleeson replied 'I believe literature has played an enormous part in shaping the way I feel and think. You should expand yourself through what you read.'<sup>46</sup> This shows that Gleeson himself recognized that poetry,

and indeed literature generally, have been a powerful catalytic force in his work. An excellent example can be seen in Gleeson's fine painting *Something is going to fall like rain* (1982-83) (Figure 10) where we can feel

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<sup>38</sup> Sesonske, *What is Art?* 170.

<sup>39</sup> Sesonske, *What is Art?* 170.

<sup>40</sup> Stanford, *The Enemies of Poetry*, 99.

<sup>41</sup> Stanford, *The Enemies of Poetry*, 100.

<sup>42</sup> Reeves, *Understanding Poetry*, 121.

<sup>43</sup> Reeves, *Understanding Poetry*, 121.

<sup>44</sup> Kuspit, *The New Subjectivism*, 109.

<sup>45</sup> Klepac, *James Gleeson*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Klepac, *James Gleeson*, 12.

the strong impact of the translation of poetry into a painting, resulting in a striking work.

The story behind this painting was partly revealed by the work of Kolenburg and Ryan who wrote about Gleeson's collage works done between 1975 and 1977. On some of these collages there were 'hand transcriptions of poems, his own or those by favorite poets such as T.S. Eliot, John Donne, William Blake and Italo Calvino.'<sup>47</sup> Noting that Gleeson wrote his own poetry, Kolenberg and Ryan feel that 'this writing poetry [and] art criticism... sharpened his powers of synthesis and analysis.'<sup>48</sup> In this regard they quote from W.H. Auden's powerful poem (incorrectly referred to as "The Witness") "Choruses From The Dog Beneath the Skin".

The sky is darkening like a stain;  
Something is going to fall like rain,  
And it won't be flowers.<sup>49</sup>

Gleeson used the line 'Something is going to fall like rain' as a title for one of his most powerful works. In fact, Gleeson further explained that it 'was one of the key poems that I discovered many years ago that had an effect on me, like the T.S. Eliot poems.'<sup>50</sup>

Author Renee Free asked James Gleeson If the literary side of surrealism [was] important to him? Gleeson, a skilled surrealist artist, replied:

In writers like Pound and Eliot, Joyce and Kafka, Roussel, Lautreamont, Rimbaud, Auden and Lorca, I found ways of exploring the unknown territories outside the pale of everyday reason. I was fascinated by... verbal collage in the early T.S. Eliot poems and in Apollinaire's 'Alcools'. The dissonances, free associations, the stream of consciousness-all these were weapons to be

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<sup>47</sup> Kolenberg and Ryan, *James Gleeson Drawings for Paintings*, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Kolenberg and Ryan, *James Gleeson*, 16.

<sup>49</sup> Kolenberg and Ryan, *James Gleeson*, 75.

<sup>50</sup> Kolenberg and Ryan, *James Gleeson*, 75.

used in the raids on the unconscious. I wrote a lot of poetry at the time, sometimes inserting the written words into a context of drawing.<sup>51</sup>

Here again is an expression of Gleeson's own understanding of the impact of the written text upon his creative self, and his insistence on the strong association between the surrealist genres is unmistakably present. At one point, Free quotes from Gleeson's own surreal poem "All the Safe Ways Corrode", where the lines seem to speak clearly about Gleeson's strong, sometimes frightening, imagery:

All the safe ways corrode.  
The hour's selvedge is the time of life  
And for life, the perilous and the eating of time  
When edges scrape holes in our shadows  
To let in fear.<sup>52</sup>

A further link in this argument is provided by an interesting work by Gleeson in a study for *Madam Sophie Sesostoris (a pre Raphaelite Satire)* (1947-48) (Figure 11). The title is taken from a character in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. This picture, done in pen and sienna wash, although tiny is nevertheless powerful enough to hold the viewer's attention. It appears to be almost scribbled on a note pad, but the composition and its strong lines give a real sense of chaotic power and human tragedy.

Further, Gleeson's painting *Phlebas the Phoenician* (1951) (Figure 12) may well have been inspired by Eliot's; Section IV "Death by Water" in *The Waste Land*. The tall, handsome youth lies across the sand, as if carried there by the strong currents, the pattern of an unnatural mosaic across his body suggesting death.

Bruce James see James Gleeson as 'having a creative reservoir equalled only by the greatest of our twentieth century cultural form givers; Arthur Boyd

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<sup>51</sup> Free, *James Gleeson Images from the Shadows*, 37.

<sup>52</sup> Free, *James Gleeson*, 20.

say, or Sidney Nolan.<sup>53</sup> Referring to the ink and wash works produced in 1938 and 1939, James opines that Gleeson has blended the ideas of “Apollinaire...Le Compte de Lautreamont and William Blake as well as the crucial Eliot” and ‘they succeed in conveying the complexity’<sup>54</sup> of Gleeson’s sources. I suggest that it is this blending, this nexus of painting and poetry, that produces the richly, layered works of an aesthetic wholeness in the oeuvre of painter James Gleeson.

In similar fashion to Gleeson, Sidney Nolan’s work appears to mingle paint and poetry as easily as water mixes with wine. Sayers, in his essay titled “Kelly’s words, Rousseau and Sunlight” quotes from Nolan’s poem “Fragment at Glenrowan “. Sayers believes that it is this ‘intensity of mood [in the poem] that lies at the heart of all the paintings in the outstanding Ned Kelly series.’<sup>55</sup>

Fragments of bone  
And armour of burning.  
Relics are now done.  
The mind past turning.

...

Seventy years past.  
And the sunlight burning  
The gun still fast  
And eyes past yearning.<sup>56</sup>

Here, the interplay is between Nolan’s own poetry and painting, and whilst the effects are immediately obvious, some critics, interestingly, do not always stress this connection. For example, in his review of Nolan’s work, Moorehead skates lightly over ‘the reading and writing of poetry.’<sup>57</sup> In a similar off hand way, in their book *Fantastic Art*, Schurian and Grosdenick do but look briefly at Sidney Nolan and merely mention that he was ‘reading a

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<sup>53</sup> Klepac, *Australian Painters of the Twentieth Century*, 127.

<sup>54</sup> Klepac, *Australian Painters*, 129.

<sup>55</sup> Sayers, *Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly*, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Sayers, *Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> Melville, *Ned Kelly: 27 Paintings by Sidney Nolan*, 8.

great deal<sup>58</sup> and seem to prefer to stress the apparent influence of the Italian Renaissance on his work.

In contrast, Nolan writing about his own work, heavily emphasises the crossover between painting and poetry. For example, Nolan, referring to his painting *Heidelberg* (1942), says 'It was a time when poetry and art and camping out were all one,'<sup>59</sup> in addition Lynn observes that Nolan was interested in the way in which the poet Rimbaud 'exorcised clichés from thought and language,'<sup>60</sup> further suggesting that the opening lines of Robert Lowell's poem "The Vanity of Human Wishes, A Version of Juvenal's Tenth Satire" shows the 'attitudes that lie at the base of or below the beguiling surface of Sidney Nolan's paintings.'<sup>61</sup> The following lines here are an extract from this work:

In every land as far as man can go,  
Far from Spain to the Aurora or the poles,  
Few know, and even fear choose what's true.  
What do we fear with reason or desire?  
Is a step made with without regret? The gods  
Ruin whole households for a foolish prayer.  
Devoured by peace, we seek devouring War,  
The orator is drowned by his Torrential speech,  
The gladiator's murdered by his skill at murder.  
Throw Hannibal on the scales how many pounds  
Does the great captain come to? This is he  
Who found the plains of Africa too small.

...

What a face for painters! Look  
The one eyed leader prods his elephant!  
And what's at the end?<sup>62</sup>

This inspired attitude may well have influenced Nolan's *Shellburst Soldiers II*, (1962) (Figure 13)

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<sup>58</sup> Schurian and Grosenick, *Fantastic Art*, 70.

<sup>59</sup> Lynn and Nolan, *Sidney Nolan- Australia*, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Lynn and Nolan, *Sidney Nolan, Australia*, 19.

<sup>61</sup> Lynn and Nolan, *Sidney Nolan, Australia*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> Lynn and Nolan, *Sidney Nolan, Australia*, 19.

The renowned art critic Kenneth Clark stated categorically that ‘The fact is Sidney Nolan is a genius.’<sup>63</sup> I agree with this claim, suggesting that his genius finds its special genesis in the successful and remarkable blend of painting and poetry. In a similar vein, critic Robert Hughes, in his essay, “Irrational imagery in Australian Painting”, thought that Nolan had little technical virtuosity to exploit, but ‘what he sought was a poetry of the event,’<sup>64</sup> and further, Janet Clark’s *Nolan: Landscape and Legends* has an essay by Patrick McCaughey that sees ‘the truest poet in the Nolan of the 1950s and 60s, when experience triggers memory and the desire to recall it.’<sup>65</sup>

Looking at paintings from these years it seems that one can only but agree with McCaughey. The work *Boat* (1959), done in polyvinyl acetate on hardboard (Figure 14), is a brilliant work evoking the power of the ocean. The blueness has dark depths that give great strength to the work. Hints of undergrowth or sea weed catch the light. The boat is empty, anchored on its deep, black shadow.

This is a masterly work and is, I suggest, full of resonances that underscore Patrick McCaughey’s description of Nolan as the ‘truest poet.’

Similarly, Nolan’s painting of a poet entitled *Rimbaud at Harar* (1963) is both a lyrical and strong work (Figure 15). The poet Rimbaud is shown near thorny vegetation. He is naked and surrounded by threatening thorns and spikes, while the environment around him seems to swirl in a rush of desert wind and moving sand.

Rosenthal, writing about Nolan, stresses the serious, aesthetic involvement that Nolan had with poetry. Rosenthal notes that the book *Paradise Garden*,

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<sup>63</sup> Lynn and Nolan, *Sidney Nolan*, Australia, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Hughes, “Irrational Imagery in Australian Painting”, 154-159.

<sup>65</sup> Clarke, *Sidney Nolan: Landscape and Legends*, 11.



'is essential to any understanding of Nolan,'<sup>66</sup> and that 'some of the crayon drawings are reproduced on transparent paper, so that they can be imposed on the printed text of the poem.'<sup>67</sup> He quotes from "Sky-Blue", a poem by Nolan:

Tremulous and painting  
She found me  
Mixing on the table  
The mountains  
And the mist.<sup>68</sup>

Further in Rosenthal's account of this blend of painting and poetry, there is also an examination of Nolan's reference to Yeats' great sonnet "Leda and the Swan" (1923). Rosenthal argues that it was Yeats and not, as some believe, Rainer Maria Rilke, who inspired Nolan to paint the Leda series. One of the most poetically inspired of these works is the *Leda and Swan* (1960) Dye on paper (Figure 16). Rosenthal goes on to quote the lines of Yeats which he thinks are central to this series:

Being so caught up  
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?<sup>69</sup>

Usherwood, in *Nolan's Nolans: A Reputation Reassessed*, writes that

"Indeed there is not a single major series of painting [by Nolan] which one cannot trace back to a specific starting point in his reading: William Blake for the early tent painting ... Rilke and Rimbaud in the Wimmera... Robert Graves for Gallipoli, the mythical Australian poet 'Ern Malley' for Australia and Robert Lowell in Europe are the tip of a huge iceberg of books."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, 228.

<sup>67</sup> Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, 228.

<sup>68</sup> Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, 228.

<sup>69</sup> Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, 145.

<sup>70</sup> Nolan, *Nolan's Nolans: A reputation reassessed*, unpaginated.

In addition, Brian Adams says Nolan 'had access to an extensive library at Heide,'<sup>71</sup> where he read Joyce, Blake, Verlaine and Rimbaud.

The weight of opinion here is clear, suggesting that Nolan was sensitive to, and affected by, the written text from a number of sources. Indeed, as if to tie these threads of discussion together, it is singular that Nolan once remarked 'Reading Rimbaud one got art.'<sup>72</sup> In doing my own works I, also, have read many poets and I hope that I have got some art.

The final artist of my chosen triumvirate, Brett Whiteley, is another example of an Australian artist who I claim has looked to the poets for inspiration. Indeed, it has been suggested by Sandra McGrath, a member of the museum of Modern Art International Council New York, that 'the figures of Rimbaud and Baudelaire... for Whiteley both have been luminary mentors... In Baudelaire Whiteley found a being whose fascination with Good and Evil, deep sensualism and nervous sensibility matched his own.'<sup>73</sup> This commitment is made almost palpable in Whiteley's *The Portrait of Baudelaire* (1970) (Figure 17). Done in oil and mixed medium, this work is a frenetic, fiery, orange world, where Baudelaire's head seems to rise out of the naked body of the dusky Jeanne, his lover. A pink almost transparent dove bends and pecks into a creamy, frangipani flower, as lines of movement flash or explode across the three panels. A blue river-like tree runs down the side of the painting. Whiteley found Baudelaire marvelous: 'How he got his words right. The sizzling, unexpected alive lightning of his work....He gets me alive',<sup>74</sup> said Whiteley.

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<sup>71</sup> Adams, *Such is Life*, 46.

<sup>72</sup> Nolan, *Nolan's Nolans*: unpaginated.

<sup>73</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 126.

<sup>74</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 129.

Whiteley had gone to Fiji in 1969 and there he did what he describes as typically “Baudelairean poems of the landscape”.<sup>75</sup> The critic Elwynn Lynn said of Whiteley that some of Whiteley’s paintings are visions of life as hell as valid as Baudelaire’s”.<sup>76</sup> McGrath believes that Whiteley identified with Baudelaire’s

burn, the high spirit, the sizzling unexpected- all qualities that transform his own paintings and drawings into the wondrous works they are...when he has got it ‘right’. In Baudelaire’s poetry the rhapsodic cadences which interweave magic and mystery, evil and good, death and life, sensuality and sensation become the themes Whiteley has evoked in paint and ink.<sup>77</sup>

I would suggest that Baudelaire’s poem “Autumn Song” seems to permeate Whiteley’s *Each time* (1971) Ink on rice paper (Figure 18):

All winter will return into my soul:  
Hate, anger, horror, toil, and sudden chill,  
And, like the sun in its Antarctic hell,  
My Heart a red and frozen block, is still.

...

I love the greenish light of your long eyes,  
Sweet beauty, but today all saddens me,  
No love or hearth or the boudoir satisfies  
My soul like radiant sunshine on the sea.

...

Tout l’hiver va rentrer dans mon être: colere  
Haine, Frissons, horreur, labeur dur et forcé,  
Et, comme le soleil dans son enfer polaire  
Mon Coeur na sera plus q’un bloc rouge et glace.

...

J’aime de vos longs yeux La lumiere verdatre  
Douce beaute, mais tout aujourd’hui m’est amer,  
Et rien, ni,votre amour, ni le boudoir, ni l’âtre,  
Ne me vaut le soleil rayonnant sur la mer.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 94.

<sup>76</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 104.

<sup>77</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 130.

<sup>78</sup> Richardson, *Baudelaire*, 110.

Whiteley in his travels, visited Harar in Ethiopia partly because the French poet, Rimbaud, had lived and traded there. In his note book, Whiteley wrote out a quote from the poet:

Sea air will burn my lungs, strange climates will tan my skin....and above all to smoke; drink liquors strong as boiling metal...I will have gold....the thing for me is a very drunken sleep on the beach.<sup>79</sup>

Not surprisingly perhaps, in the light of this observation, Whiteley's *Portrait of Arthur Rimbaud* (1971) (Figure 19) is a wild almost, surrealistic work. Sky and ocean contrast with a bright, orange mountain or dune shape. Curves suggest the female form and lava seems to pour into the image while lightning is hitting the ocean, prompting McGrath to comment that 'Rimbaud's very existence is in some form a justification for art in Whiteley's terms.'<sup>80</sup>

In reference to the painting *Alchemy* (1972-73), Whiteley makes a link to the following quote of Plato, which is concerning the nature of a poet: 'There is not invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses and the mind is no longer in him....'<sup>81</sup> With some hindsight, it is possible to surmise that this notion may go some way towards explaining Whiteley's acceptance of his addiction to drugs. In addition, in an interview in the documentary video 'Difficult Pleasures'<sup>82</sup>. He claimed that he used chemicals to pull the work out of himself. It is my contention that it was also the poets Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Verlaine who were additional strong, effective catalysts in Whiteley's paintings.

As with Nolan, Whiteley also wrote his own poems. This is a brief quote from a poem for Wendy Julius Whiteley, his then wife:

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<sup>79</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 166.

<sup>80</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 166.

<sup>81</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 149.

<sup>82</sup> Featherstone, Don. Director, Featherstone Productions, Melbourne, 1989.

but union, swift unison find  
That love that leaves free yet  
Powerfully binds  
Two people exactly  
To the rhythm..... Time.<sup>83</sup>

Both Nolan and Whiteley in their writings demonstrated a poetic sensibility which permeated their artworks.

As quoted in the preface, in 1951 Wallace Stephens read a paper at the Museum of Modern art in New York on “The Relations between Poetry and Painting” in which he observed

The world about us would be desolate except for the world within us, There is the same interchange between these two worlds that there is between one art and another, migratory passings to and fro, quickenings, Promethean liberations and discoveries.<sup>84</sup>

This nexus of painting with poetry, it is to be hoped, will continue to help artists to produce fine art works. The philosopher Marcuse believed that the ‘images of harmony,’<sup>85</sup> the balance the rightness of an art work’s composition, may instill in the spectator a positive feeling for the harmonious, the balanced, in the workings of human life on this planet. If the interplay of painting with poetry can produce outstanding works of art, that have this redemptive effect, then it is to be encouraged.

The examples chosen for discussion in this Literature review have stressed the notion that, for some contemporary artists, painting and poetry are intimately interrelated at the creative level, suggesting that these sister arts can blend into each other and fine works of art can result. It is this translation of one art into another that is at the heart of my own painterly works, and this notion will be explored in more detail in the next Chapter.

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<sup>83</sup> McGrath, *Brett Whiteley*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> Steele, *Plenty Art into Poetry*, 14.

<sup>85</sup> Feenberg, *Heidegger and Marcuse*, 137

## Chapter 3 Methodology

'The arts aspire if not to complement one another at least to lend one another new energies'.<sup>86</sup>

As part of my method of creative inquiry, I have looked to the works of various poets and artists to energise my painting.

For my *Wimmera Series* of paintings, I have looked to artists who produced paintings of this region. Sidney Nolan worked in the Wimmera and Robert Hughes says that Nolan's landscapes 'surpass Drysdale's painting of the early forties in sheer, poetic invention.'<sup>87</sup> Sidney Nolan's *Boy in Township* (1943) deals with a child caught in a bushfire, whose body was mummified by the heat. The child seems to float through the heat at peace and serene. Areas of the painting appear to be escaping from the figurative, into the world of abstraction.

Another artist whose works I have studied carefully is Philip Hunter. A recent series of his paintings has centred on the Wimmera. 'Hunter's art is not topographical. He is not so much interested in place as in experience of place.'<sup>88</sup> Hunter in order to explain some aspects of his paintings of the Wimmera, quotes from Wordsworth. In "The Prelude" Wordsworth wrote:

At once some lonely traveller. I was lost, Halted without  
An effort to break through; But to my conscious soul I now  
Can say I recognize thy glory: in such strength of usurpation,  
When the light of sense goes out, but with a flash that has  
revealed the invisible world.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Coven, *Baudelaire's Voyages*, 24.

<sup>87</sup> Hughes, *The Art of Australia*, 191.

<sup>88</sup> Haynes, "Philip Hunter" *Exhibition Catalogue Canberra 1998*

<http://www.timolsengallery.com/artists/images/hunter/hunter.htm> (accessed 2007)

<sup>89</sup> Crawford, *Wimmera: The Work of Philip Hunter*, 23.

*Night Wimmera V* (2000) oil on canvas is a vivid painting that seems to enter an invisible world – wave like patterns flow over vague shapes (Figure 20). Tiny comma like creatures flee into darkness. The composer Jonathon Mills sees Hunter's *Wimmera Series* as experiencing 'landscape as locality as poetry and as enigma'.<sup>90</sup>

Like Brett Whitely and many other artists, Hunter read the French poet Baudelaire and his *Cythera* series reflects this interest in poetry. Indeed I have found that looking at Nolan and Hunter's work has been an energizing experience. But numerous artists have helped shape my painterly works: My Lecturers in painting Doug Wright and Anne Saunders, and the works of Philip Hunter, Sidney Nolan, James Gleeson, Lloyd Rees, Willem de Kooning, Attersee, Richter, Anselm Kiefer, Goya, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Watteau, Rubens, Botticelli, Mantegna, Piero della Francesca, Giotto and The cave painters at Lascaux. The list is almost endless because looking at every fine painting drives home what James Joyce called the 'rhythm of beauty',<sup>91</sup> by which is meant the 'formal aesthetic relation of part to part in any aesthetic whole or of any aesthetic whole to its parts or part'.<sup>92</sup>

Desiderius Orban writes about the

well designed work, where form and colour are related to each other, as well as having a balance of their own. The design is the inner tension ... it keeps the work together and forces the spectator to see the whole work as a solid unit.<sup>93</sup>

I find that when looking at paintings I am searching for that unity of design and therefore with each work I can learn something about the world of art-making, and visiting art galleries has been an invaluable source of learning about drawing and painting. I wish to be open to any new, creative ideas found in contemporary overseas art. Orban believes that 'Things which are

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<sup>90</sup> Crawford, *Wimmera*, 24.

<sup>91</sup> Bell-Villada, *Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life*, 181.

<sup>92</sup> Bell-Villada, *Art for Art's Sake*, 181.

<sup>93</sup> Orban, *Understanding Art*, 48.

strange when new will become self evident in time'.<sup>94</sup> Perhaps they will, therefore reading through overseas contemporary art magazines is an enlightening experience. The erudite articles and state of the art photography allow for new and/or illuminating insights into painting and drawing.

Some resources that have helped with the more technical aspects were books on painting, methods and materials. The Complete Book of Artists' techniques by Kurt Herberts has been informative.<sup>95</sup>

Part of my methodology when art making is to put down on the paper or canvas the idea, or thing about which I feel strongly. It may be a blend of the figurative and abstract. I use oil paints on Fabriano paper and on Cordenons Watercolour paper or on newspaper, canvas or occasionally on board. I apply the paint with brushes, knives, squeegees or with the hands, over layers of gesso, a commercially produced blend of glue and plaster. I also use charcoal on paper, pastel and gouache.

My methodology is also in seeing the importance of the frame. Sometimes I have drawn a line that runs on the edge of the painting itself and things can break out or over this line, but the frame outside the painting is important. I have considered the way Attersee has a simple, grey, wooden frame as in the mainly grey and lemon painting *Nacht butter Night Butter* (2001) (Figure 21). Another painter Howard Hodgkins often incorporates the frame itself as a part of the whole painting. The problem of the frame is an interesting one, as the frame may well be the stage upon which the painting is played out, or it is the window into the painting. With the *Wimmera Series* I will use as a frame a cardboard mount only.

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<sup>94</sup> Orban, *Understanding Art*, 39.

<sup>95</sup> Herberts, *The Complete Book of Artists' Techniques*.



In order to energize my own work I have found the work of Brian Edwards and Homer Reith to be fine sources of inspiration (Figures 22 and 23). They have both written about the Wimmera and I discovered that reading and rereading their work added a metaphysical richness to the memories that I had of journeys through that evocative place. I found in Reith's *A Locale of the Cosmos. An Epic of the Wimmera*, images so poignant or striking that they have remained in my memory, the ideas have permeated into my painting. The following lines are taken from *A Locale of the Cosmos*:

and the day with its last calico gleam lingers  
thinking about it  
the cobweb of its hours clinging like a promise to what  
it can't remembering promising  
something more tenuous than a hope  
that this night may for once be prevailed upon  
to keep at bay  
despairs onset  
the only thing that makes life possible  
a year five years ten perhaps  
and the ivy runs wild over the wall  
the hard cold ground grows harder  
colder than ever

and the soul's is only a reflected light  
all cast and filigree of lead light  
of iron and half light  
the road has vanished into a tangle of wrong turns  
and only the poplars swaying  
in the wash up of the road  
retain a sense of their place and métier  
understand the order of things.<sup>96</sup>

I also looked to the poetry of Brian Edwards for inspiration for my paintings of the Wimmera.

I found inspiration in the lyrical and celebratory poem "Glenorchy":

The morning comes with diamonds.  
There are sheets of ice on the frog ponds, trceries of

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<sup>96</sup> Reith, *A Locale of the Cosmos*, Unpaginated.

spiderwork along the gates and fences, and  
you read your breath in the cold air".<sup>97</sup>

Winter comes not with discontent but with rejection.

At the bus stop, kids play cricket,  
their wicket a peppercorn tree by the Royal,  
their pitch a mix of bitumen and gravel,  
their run-up restricted by a gutter.

They wait for the school bus.  
One has cracked ice from a puddle.  
There are cobwebs on the fence line,  
and the cows snort great clouds of steam.

The river is rising.<sup>98</sup>

Edwards moves easily in the world of his memories. In the following lines he evokes summer in the Wimmera:

And you remember midsummer heat with hot northerlies,  
blasting the landscape, bending trees  
and filling the air with dust.

...

But she returns with the north wind  
just a suggestion amongst dry leaves  
a motion in dry, summer grass.<sup>99</sup>

As I worked on my paintings I can echo again the words of Norman Lindsay. 'I've taken so much from the poets'.<sup>100</sup> Indeed there is in my methodology much to be said for 'the variety of assorted images and concepts a single poetic image may evoke in the mind'.<sup>101</sup>

I have looked to *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound for much inspiration. This is perhaps one of the finest, long poems ever written. In this work Pound refers to many artists: Canaletto, Fra Angelico, Uccello, Pisani, Botticelli, Velasquez,

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<sup>97</sup> Edwards, *All in Time*, 61.

<sup>98</sup> Edwards, *All in Time*, 81.

<sup>99</sup> Edwards, *All in Time*, 64.

<sup>100</sup> Howarth, Barker, *Letters of Norman Lindsay*, 373.

<sup>101</sup> Howarth, and Barker, *Letters of Norman Lindsay*, 373.

Titian, Bronzino, Rembrandt, Delacroix, Manet, Degas, Munch, Laurencin, Vlaminck, Picabia, Sargeant, Seurat, Gainsborough.

On reading *The Cantos* I have found much exquisite imagery. I have incorporated some of the images of Towers, banners, the cat on the iron railing and the ocean into my paintings.

We have lain here amid Kalicanthus and sword flower  
The heliads are caught in wild rose vine  
The smell of pine mingles with rose leaves  
O Lynx, by many  
of spotted fur and sharp ears.  
O Lynx, have your eyes gone yellow,  
with spotted fur and sharp ears?<sup>102</sup>

Wave, colour of grape's pulp  
Olive grey in the near,  
far, smoke grey of the rock-slide,  
Salmon-pink wings of the fish – hawk  
cast grey shadows in water,  
The tower like a one-eyed great goose  
cranes up out of the olive-grove,

And we have heard the fauns chiding Proteus  
in the smell of hay under the olive trees,  
And the frogs singing against the fauns in the half-light.  
And...<sup>103</sup>

And the palazzo, baseless hangs there in the dawn  
With low mist over the tide marks;  
And floats there nel tramonto  
With gold mist over the tide-mark.  
The tresserae of the floor, and the patterns.  
Fools making new shambles;  
night over green ocean,  
And the dry black of the night.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 491.

<sup>103</sup> Pound, *The Cantos*, 10.

<sup>104</sup> Pound, *The Cantos*, 98.

In the paintings inspired by Pound's imagery (Figures 24-29), I have blended the representational with the abstract, trying to achieve balance and harmony between the two styles. Painting, scraping, blurring the work I aimed to pull the work, together, and achieve unity.

In addition to Ezra Pound's *Cantos* I have drawn on the works of many poets and their writings have shaped my painterly works. Ezra Pound's *Cantos* were invaluable, so were the works of Dante Alighieri, Martin Johnston, Wallace Stevens, Kantor, W. H. Auden and also the works of L.M. Raine, Peter Steel, Cavafy, Judith Wright, Brian Edwards, Homer Reith and Antonin Artaud, Kantor and Cavafy.

My *Ruined by the Thing we Kill Series* (Figure 30) is based on the poetry of Judith Wright and loosely on the poetic, sculptural/architectural works of Anselm Kiefer. Judith Wright's poem "Australia 1970" has been a pivotal form of inspiration.

Die wild country, like the eaglehawk,  
dangerous till the last breath's gone,  
clawing and striking. Die  
cursing your captor through a raging eye.

...

Suffer, wild country, like the ironwood  
that gaps the dozer-blade.  
I see your living soil ebb with the tree  
to naked poverty.

...

I praise the scoring drought, the flying dust,  
the drying creek, the furious animal,  
that they oppose us still;  
that we are ruined by the thing we kill.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Hall, *The Collins Book of Australian Poetry*, 207.

In my *Ruined by the Thing we Kill Series* I have sometimes kept to the colours of dust clouds and of eagle hawks. The funereal colour of black or dark purple is used to solemnize the death of the iron wood and tiger snake.

In my paintings I have aimed for a quite complex organization. I would wish for a sense of some movement in space with a wide play of atmosphere throughout the work. No area of painting should be over weighted, as an overall unity is necessary. I do not want too much order, but I must avoid chaos. Throughout the series I would hope to suggest some of the forms of nature, thus I have occasionally moved away from abstraction towards more figurative work.

In some of my paintings I have found the exact positioning of a square or a circle, to be of some significance. I had thought of the square as suggesting the man-made, whilst the circle suggested the world of nature. It is interesting that Russian avant-garde artists, early in the twentieth century, espoused a similar thought.

The curved lines for them suggested the caprices of nature, whilst the square's straight lines suggested a world 'structured according to the laws of man.'<sup>106</sup> The artist Malevich worked with the square, but also depicted the circle shape. For Malevich 'Nature emerges further and further from the old, green world, the world of flesh and bone and is approaching that moment when the green world will be as extinct as the primeval landscape.'<sup>107</sup> In my paintings the circles often affirm the old, green world and I would not wish to see it become extinct.

In my methodology I also make use of change – the accident. It is a method rather similar to that of the poet Paul Valéry.

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<sup>106</sup> Birnholz, "On the meaning of Kazimir Malevich's white on white:", 12.

<sup>107</sup> Birnholz, "On the meaning of Malevich's", 14.

He says that we can take Advantage of the precious accidents chance affords. We oppose the natural chaos of the mind, but make use of that providential and more over indispensable chance, since without it 'we should be without mind'. What the (artist) exploits is not chance in general... but the fortunate accidents, the favorable encounters the opportunities.<sup>108</sup>

Some of the works suggest a type of landscape. It would be hoped if the spectator has a destructive or indifferent approach towards the environment, that they would see and gain an understanding that the 'perception itself would incorporate aesthetic criteria and inspire a very different attitude toward the world'.<sup>109</sup> It is to be hoped that the paintings and the words of the poets reflect the subtle beauty and the difficult complexity of the environment, so that areas will not be desecrated, eroded areas will be regenerated and the works of nature respected.

I have as part of my method of creative inquiry, read the opinions of art critics. The editors of *Modern Painters* autumn 2004 asked three of its regular critics to talk about painting today. Barry Schwabasky found the most nimble energetic, spontaneous, awkward, tempestuous spirit in the work of eighty years old Jeffrey Camp. He had a recent show in the friend's room at the Royal Academy it was called 'Love in the friend's room', but Schwabasky thought 'that it could only have been a kind of reticence that had kept it from being called fucking in the friend's room'.<sup>110</sup>

He found the exhibition full of rich sensuality and Blakean mythology – it is interesting that he mentions the poet Blake. Lance Esplund says that the painters he admires 'explore the poetic realm of mystery and possibility'.<sup>111</sup> It is always heartening to see the critics referring to the poetic. This adds ballast to my belief that the nexus of poetry and painting can be a very fruitful event.

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<sup>108</sup> Hytier, *The Poetics of Paul Valéry*, 152

<sup>109</sup> Feenburg, *Heidegger and Marcuse*, 137.

<sup>110</sup> Schwabasky, "Fresh Paint", 70.

<sup>111</sup> Esplund, "Fresh Paint", 73.

My method of working incorporates (along with paint, brush or fingers) much reading. Art will always be more than technique, it is a thing of the mind. I have also found that a useful method of working is to use photography. I photograph the works, and then it is easy to look at the works, without having to be in the studio. The small parcel of photographs is easily accessible and the work can be scrutinized and judged whenever one has the opportunity. The photograph can highlight glaring misdirections and weaknesses.

As part of my method of working, and acknowledging the link between much painting and poetry, I displayed art-works in the “Window” Project of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. With the paintings, there were also displayed some extracts from the poems that energized the works. Dr. Brian Edward’s lyrical poem “Glenorchy” inspired the large oil painting *Out In The Paddock* (2007) and Dr. Homer Reith’s *A Locale Of The Cosmos an Epic of the Wimmera* inspired the oil painting *Working The Winds* (2007). In my dark abstract series *Ruined By the Thing We Kill* (2007). I have taken the title of the series from Judith Wright’s poem “Australia 1970”. This brilliant poem is full of wisdom and intellectual vigour. It is an example of the poet as ‘unacknowledged legislator of the world’<sup>112</sup> Had we noted the dried up creeks, the miles and miles of land denuded of trees, the disappearance of wild life we may have perhaps shaped a far more sustainable world. My paintings also speak of this vision of a blighted landscape.

I have also looked at the great Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* and this has energized my *Hell is Other People series* (Figure 31). I have aimed at getting a sense of air and smoke surging through the black and white works.

I have as part of my research noted that painters were not only inspired by poetry, but wrote their own poetry. Gleeson is an excellent example and as

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<sup>112</sup> Oxford English Dictionary (1989). Second Edition Vol. 2, 968.

already mentioned in the Literature Review the critics Kolenberg and Ryan felt that his writing may have sharpened his powers of 'synthesis and analysis'<sup>113</sup> in his painterly works. As part of my creative research, I also wrote poetry and I found that the hard, intellectual, creative work encouraged me to focus a more intellectual, critical approach to my works. What was I saying? Was I achieving in a small way, at least, 'the poetic state, a transcendent experience of life'.<sup>114</sup> In this way I hoped to get some art.

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<sup>113</sup> Kolenberg and Ryan, *James Gleeson*, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Martin and Booth, *Art Based Research*, 139.



## Chapter 4 Conclusion

Jeffrey Coven, writing about Baudelaire, said that ‘the response of artists to his poetry was a seedbed for cross fertilization of art forms’.<sup>115</sup> Coven asserts that the great, artistic genius ‘Cézanne read and re-read Baudelaire’s poems and obliquely in his painting we hear poetry’.<sup>116</sup>

In a letter to his son, Paul Cézanne commented: ‘One of the strong is Baudelaire... and he doesn’t go wrong in the artists he admires’.<sup>117</sup> Cézanne himself wrote poetry. “Charade 43” is a fine poem illustrating his strong feeling for landscape and showing also the influence of Baudelaire:

Ce temps où nous allions sur les prés de la Torse  
Faire un bon déjeuner, et la palette en main,  
Retracer sur la toile un paysage rupin:  
Ces lieux où tu faillis te donner une entorse  
Dans le dos, quand ton pied glissant sur le terrain  
Tu roulais jusqu’au fond de l’humide ravin,  
Et “Black”, t’en souviens-tu! Mais les feuilles jaunies  
Au souffle de l’hiver ont perdu leur fraîcheur.  
Sur le bord du ruisseau les plantes sont flétries  
Et l’arbre, secoué par les vents en fureur,  
Agite dans les airs comme un cadavre immense  
Ses rameaux dépouillés que le mistral balance.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Coven, *Baudelaire’s Voyages*, 29.

<sup>116</sup> Coven, *Baudelaire’s Voyages*, 15.

<sup>117</sup> Rewald, *Cézanne Letters*, 329.

<sup>118</sup> Rewald, *Cézanne*, 366.

Those times when we went into the meadows of La Torse  
To enjoy a good lunch, and palette in hand  
To paint again on canvas that plush landscape.  
Those places where you nearly twisted your back,  
Your foot slipping on the ground,  
You rolled into a damp gully.  
And “Black”, Do you remember! But  
Yellowed by the breath of winter,  
The leaves have lost their freshness.  
Beside the stream the plants have withered.  
A tree like some huge skelton is  
Shaken by the tempestuous wind,  
Its bare branches, tossed  
To and fro by the Mistral.  
Tr. U. Calderone

I have been researching this seedbed of cross-fertilization in the work of mostly Australian painters and also in my own work. I believe that this nexus of painting and poetry enriches the respective art forms of creative expression, and I would encourage students of painting to copy the example of Sidney Nolan, James Gleeson, Albert Tucker, Cézanne and numerous others and study the great poetic works of literature. Indirectly or directly they may find strong, creative forces to draw upon.

The painter Anselm Kiefer is known for radical, new ways of looking at painting. He does not see himself as a painter in the sense of a Matisse or Picasso. He needs nature to work with him in a very practical manner suggesting that the artist can use the weather, the heat and the cold 'sometimes leaving my canvases out in the rain. I put acid, earth and water on them... I don't use paint, I use substances.'<sup>119</sup>

In this radical approach to painting he often finds poetry as a source of inspiration. He was intrigued by the Russian poet Khlebnikov and did a series of Khlebnikov paintings. He admired the works of the Jewish poet Paul Celan. His exhibition Für Paul Celan was shown at the Thaddeus Ropac and Yuon Lambert galleries in Paris in 2006.

This cross fertilisation is, in my opinion, a very fruitful way of enriching the artist's works of art. I do not of course assert that it is indispensable. Artists who are disinterested in the poetic state may indeed produce works of art, but time will decide what lasts the distance and holds good. Numerous artists have turned to the poets for energy and discovery and brief listing of names in an Australian context may illustrate my point:

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<sup>119</sup> Wright, "The Ruins of Barijac", 71.

Salvatore Zofrea did the fine painting *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1974), a painting based on the poet C.P Cavafy's poem of the same name. *Zofrea's Jocasta* (1974) was inspired by Homer. *Male Nude* (1974) was again based on a Cavafy poem: "One of their Gods":

The passers by would gaze at him  
And one would ask the other if he knew him  
And if he were a Greek from Syria or a stranger.<sup>120</sup>

In *The Nation Review* June 7-13 1974 Zofrea is referred to as 'an Italian born painter working in Sydney devoted to the Greek poet Cavafy'.<sup>121</sup>

Wendy Stavrianos did her recent series of gatherer figures and these were inspired by the lines of T.S Eliot's "Prelude IV": The worlds revolve like ancient women Gathering fuel in vacant lots.<sup>122</sup>

John Olsen's painting *Dry Salvages* (1956) is inspired by T.S Eliot's poem of the same title, whose theme is suggested in the line: 'The river is within us, the sea is all about us'<sup>123</sup>. He also read the work of Dylan Thomas: "Under Milk Wood" and it suggested to him 'he possibility of a new direction'. In Olsen's *Opera House Journal, Salute to Five Bells*, he is talking of his painting and also of how he interpreted Kenneth Slessor's poem "Five Bells" – Olsen believed that poets should have a place in that fine Opera House. Interestingly enough, Olsen also mentions in the Journal that the painter John Bracks had a favourite poet; he was the Englishman Spenser.

Lloyd Rees did a great deal of reading especially the English classics. Free said that Rees' painting *St Brigid's Church Red Hill* (1916), was commenced

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<sup>120</sup> Claire and Waldmann, *Salvatore Zofrea*, 89.

<sup>121</sup> Claire and Waldmann, *Salvatore Zofrea*, 44.

<sup>122</sup> Cree and Drury, *Australian Painting Now*, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Spate, *John Olsen*, 6.

at the time he was reading Milton's "Allegro". Rees spoke 'of the poets with words or with paint'<sup>124</sup> and in my opinion Rees was a superb poet with paint.

The painter Arthur Boyd collaborated with the poet Peter Porter to produce major works: *Jonah* (1972), *The Lady and the Unicorn* (1975), *Narcissus* (1984) and *Mars* (1988). Boyd said that 'the whole of each group of poems always gave me all I needed to create'<sup>125</sup>.

Bruno Leti produced the Neilson Lines, a series based on the poetry of John Shaw Neilson, dealing with the Mallee country of northern Victoria.

John Shaw Neilson also influenced the creative works of Charles Blackman. 'Blackman's acquaintance with Neilson opened yet another door'<sup>126</sup>, and it has been suggested that it may well have very strongly influenced his series of schoolgirl paintings.

Mary Eagle writing about the oil paintings of Conder said 'altogether three paintings in the 9 x 5 *Impressionist Exhibition* referred to Herrick', the poet. Conder painted *Where the Wattle Blossoms Wave* (1890) after a poem by Adam Lindsay Gordon. 'Within a year of arriving in France Conder's work had become intensely poetic.'<sup>127</sup>

Sasha Grishin writes about John Wolseley's painting *From Bendigo to Kyoto in search of Basho* (1983 -84). Grishin says that Wolseley wrote his own haiku on the corner of this work:

Hard by a hint  
Of their early death  
Cicadas singing in the trees. <sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Rees, *The Small Treasures of a lifetime*, 82.

<sup>125</sup> McKenzie, *Arthur Boyd*, 146.

<sup>126</sup> Moore, *Charles Blackman, Schoolgirls and Angels*, 6.

<sup>127</sup> Eagle, *The Oil Paintings of Conder*, 29.

<sup>128</sup> Grishin, *John Wolsely Land Marks*, 109.

Mike Parr, the artist, wrote his own poems, but had a rather ambiguous approach to the art of poetry. In his installation work *Event* (1971) two rooms were covered with sheets of paper on which was written the word poem. He then set fire to the walls. He, it seemed was protesting at 'the restraint of language and structure.'<sup>129</sup>

Norman Lindsay may no longer be a fashionable artist, but he too, turned to the poets. In a letter to the poet Rosemary Dobson he said 'I've taken so much from the poets',<sup>130</sup>. Reading his letters you can understand his love of poetry.

He requests works in English on the French poet Francois Villon. He mentions amongst others Yeats, Browning, Petronius, Robert Burns, Francis Thompson, Douglas Stewart, Ken Slessor, Chris Wallace Crabbe, Judith Wright and Rosemary Dobson.

The artist Arthur Streeton took with him volumes of poetry on his painting expeditions. Indeed he said 'works of great verse (filled) my mind with their truth and beauty.'<sup>131</sup> Streeton read, amongst other great poets, Shelley, Wordsworth and Tennyson. The titles of his paintings were often lines from the poems. The title of his painting: *The Gentleness of Heaven is on the Sea* (1895) is taken from Wordsworth's magnificent "Evening on Calais Beach". Likewise "the extended 'title' of catalogue no 33 in (an) exhibition"<sup>132</sup> is taken from the same poem and reads as follows:

It is a beauteous evening calm and free;  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Bromfield, *Mike Parr*, 21.

<sup>130</sup> Howarth and Barker, *Letters of Norman Lindsay*, 475.

<sup>131</sup> Lane, *Australian Impressionism*, 268.

<sup>132</sup> Lane, *Australian Impressionism*, 266.

<sup>133</sup> Lane, *Australian Impressionism*, 266.

In my own painting I have found that the richness of imagery in poetry has been a source of revelation and beauty. Likewise the complexity of poetic ideas has energised my work.

Artists and poets sometimes differ as to which art has the greatest power of expression – Ezra Pound feels that

The artist working in words may cast on the reader's mind a more vivid image... by mentioning them close together or by using some device of simile or metaphor... for he works not with planes or with colours but with the names of objects and of properties<sup>134</sup>.

Donald Hall, in his ekphrastic poem "The Scream", would disagree. He states 'We have made our bravo, but such of coarse will never equal the painting'<sup>135</sup>. The incomparable Leonardo Da Vinci settles for the supremacy of painting:

And if the poet gratifies the sense by means of the ear, the painter does so by the eye – the worthier sense; but I will say no more of this, but that if a good painter represents the fury of a battle and if a poet describes one and they are both together put before the public, you will see where most of the spectators will stop, to which they will bestow most praise... Undoubtly painting being by a long way the more intelligible and beautiful will please most<sup>136</sup>.

But Ezra Pound sees the common ground of the arts as the 'combat of arrangement or harmony... as each artist works out the same and yet a totally different set of problems'<sup>137</sup>. As they are working on the same problems in a sense, their works can benefit from this cross pollination of various, complex ideas.

In my own paintings I have aimed to illustrate certain concepts from poems – to translate the meaning or mood into paint. Despite Leonardo's praise of painting, it is not always easy to set down in paint the conceptual world of poets. I have worked on a series of paintings around a poem of Judith Wright:

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<sup>134</sup> Pound, *A Memoir of Gaudier – Brezeska*, 121.

<sup>135</sup> Hollander, *The Gazer's Spirit*, 285.

<sup>136</sup> Ross and McLaughlin, *The Portable Reader*, 533.

<sup>137</sup> Pound, *A Memoir of Gaudier Brezeska*, 121.

“Australia 1970”. I would only be too happy to echo her thoughts. I may use a line from the poem as a title. The poetic works of Ezra Pound have been a huge influence on my later paintings. There is a wealth of rich thought and philosophy in his writing and there is also exquisite imagery.

Fine poetry is, for the philosopher Heidegger, the home of being that he sees as vital for mankind’s spiritual growth and survival. Heidegger believed that ‘if there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being describing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work.’<sup>138</sup>

Heidegger believed that if we ignored our true being we became inauthentic. He stated that

Poetry is not a secondary phenomenon; it has a special relation to being and truth. Poetry is founding of truth; it discloses the (or ‘a’) world and creates a language for its adequate expression. When a painting such as Van Gogh’s peasant shoes ‘opens up’ a world, the world of the peasant, when a Greek temple ‘sets up’ a world they are essentially ‘poetry’.<sup>139</sup>

Heidegger is renowned for his ‘immense learning, his profound and innovative intelligence his commitment to philosophical inquiry and above all his intense influence on modern thought’.<sup>140</sup> I would urge artists to move closer to the poetic realm, and to take the words of Heidegger to heart. He asserted that the poet names the holy, while the thinker says being. He stressed that ‘unpoetic thought and language are parasitic on poetry and its vision’<sup>141</sup>.

I have, during my research on the interplay of poetry and painting, become convinced of the need for painting to include the literary sphere and for artists to imbue their works with that poetic state that can transcend the banal and the ordinary.

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<sup>138</sup> Goldblatt, *A Reader in Philosophy of the Arts*, 800.

<sup>139</sup> Honderich, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 375.

<sup>140</sup> Honderich, *A Reader in Philosophy*, 375

<sup>141</sup> Honderich, *A Reader in Philosophy*, 375

It is to be hoped that the world of poetry will energise painting and the arts generally. It was frightening and enlightening also, to see the gentlemen starring in the T.V. series *Grumpy Old Men* referring to much of today's art as a load of Bollocks! The fish in formaldehyde, the unmade bed are a little too ordinary, too obvious.

The artist has perhaps strayed into an aesthetic no-man's land of the ordinary. The artist is swamped with the banal, the every day. 'The world is too much with us';<sup>142</sup> said Wordsworth. He went further and said that we are 'out of tune'<sup>143</sup> with everything. I would suggest that the artists look to the poets, and that art students should do likewise.

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<sup>142</sup> Palgrave, *The golden Treasury*, 319.

<sup>143</sup> Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury*, 319.



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