



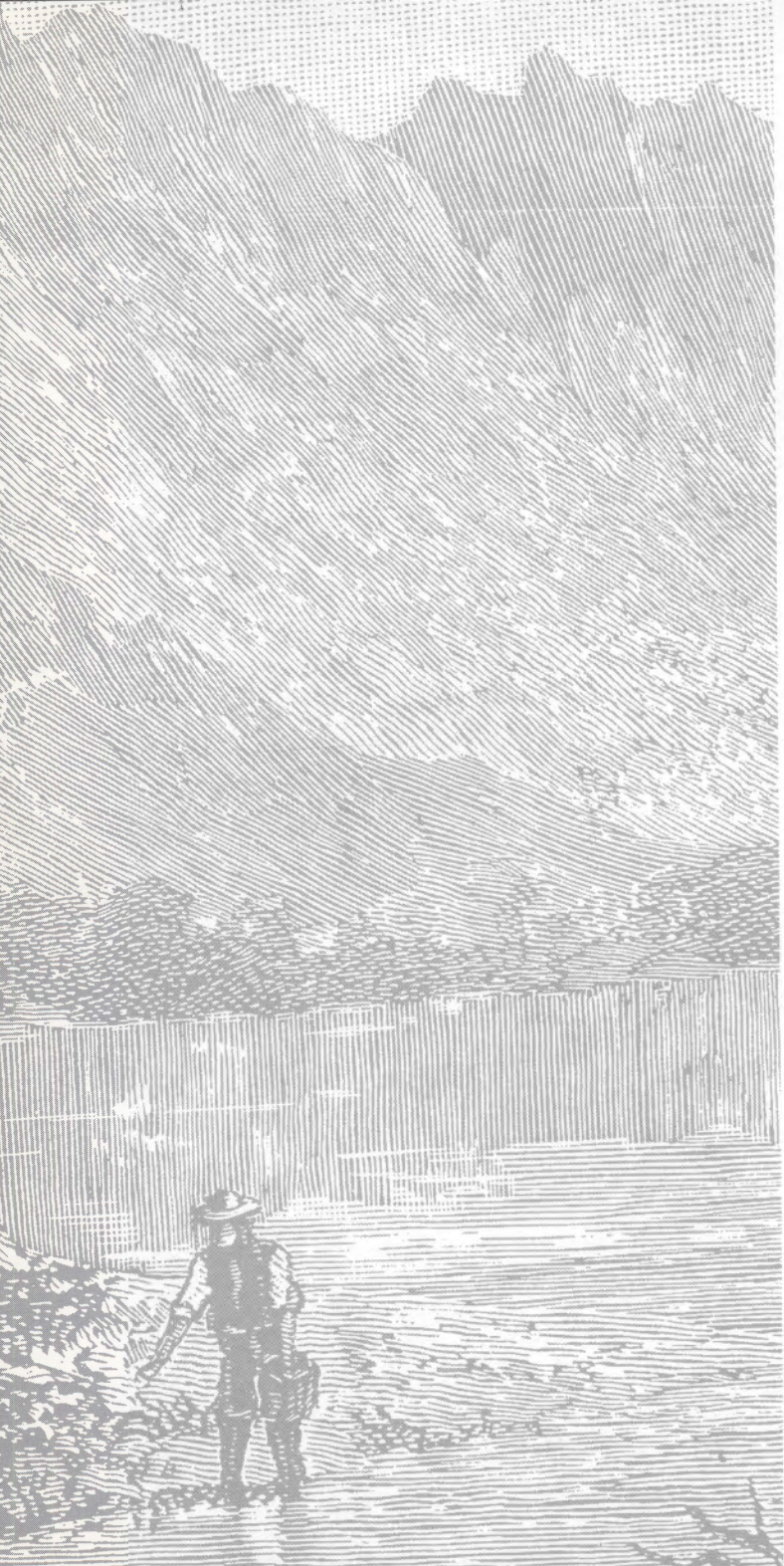
T O T H E S U R F A C E

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C O N T E M P O R A R Y
L A N D S C A P E

Ray Arnold
Lorraine Biggs
Tim Burns
Greg Hind
Leigh Hobba
Sieglinde Karl
David Keeling
Bea Maddock
Wayne Malm
Milan Milojevic
David Stephenson
John Wolseley
Helen Wright
Jock Young

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

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What have we made of the landscape? What is here? These are questions posed by an artist in an article that I have read recently. *To the Surface-Contemporary Landscape* could be said to be answering them.

What is here? is particularly relevant to a reading of the artworks in this exhibition. What ideas, processes, adventures, terrain and locations are evident in the work as you traverse the Plimsoll Gallery. More interestingly 'what is here?' in relation to the paintings of the nineteenth Century artist W.C. Piguénit that are concurrently on show at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Patricia Sabine in her introduction to the Piguénit exhibition catalogue spoke of 'Watching the rainclouds and the sunshine chase one another down the Florentine Valley from the comfort of a four wheel drive vehicle on an all weather road at the top of Mt Tim Shea. A view which brought home forcefully the the sheer physical achievement of such nineteenth century nature painters as W.C. Piguénit in even traversing the then unexplored country'. I find the contrasting motifs of late twentieth century technology in the form of the four wheel drive with the more enduring atmosphere of light and weather an interesting juxtaposition. The contrast of the exhibitions *To the Surface-Contemporary Landscape* and W.C. Piguénit offers a similar reading.

The connection with the Piguénit exhibition is paramount. My intention in co-ordinating the contemporary landscape show is to set up a comparison with paintings and drawings that come from the nineteenth century, which also record the wilderness areas of our state and were constructed from direct experience and observation

of the landscape. I want to draw out ideas from the exhibition within the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. As an institution it is an agent for cultural authorization and enshrinement and as such it is constructive for it to find direct connection or relevance to an exhibition such as this beyond its doors. A satellite exhibition of living artists will encourage a relative interpretation of the Piguénit exhibition and clarify the aims of its curator. It allows a trajectory into the museum as 'site'.

Who was Piguénit? Is he really of any interest to us? Dinah Dysart in *Art and Australia (Winter 1992)* called him a nineteenth century environmentalist and 'His art reveals in no small measure a respect for the environment which is surely the most important single issue of our times'. Superficially his romantic, cloudy vistas of Western Tasmania are indeed a precursor to the sentiments expressed through the latest wilderness calendar but Richard Flanagan, a Hobart writer, sees them more as post apocalyptic images with the landscape bare, barren and emptied of people. A reference which suggests the clearing out of the aboriginal population in the face of European colonizing pressures. There is also the often quoted Robert Hughes dismissal of him as a minor romantic who 'enjoyed a good crag'.

Piguénit's art, however, was informed by direct experience of the landscape. Employed as a draughtsman/surveyor he would make long expeditions to the west, recording images of the terrain and his experiences. Frenchmans Cap, Mt Arrowsmith, the Western Arthurs and Lake Pedder are some of the place names visited and recorded. This nomenclature, redolent with emotionally charged names like 'Pedder', again allows us to reflect on the 'view we see now being their view', as Elizabeth Gertsakis was to put it in her article in *Art and Australia (Summer 1988)* about *Tasmanian Vision*. Pedder is flooded, the Western Arthurs fragile traverse attracts 1000 bushwalkers a year, and the Lyell Highway cuts into the southern flanks of Mt Arrowsmith as it descends into the Franklin River valley.

Tasmanian social, cultural and political imperatives are shaped by and in turn modify our physical environment. Our history and our contemporary world is a function of our unique landscape. *To the Surface* will seek to draw out ideas from the work of fourteen artists whose interests are also a function of a direct experience of that landscape. A subtle framework within the range of artists exhibiting will be the emphasis on sets of work. Quite a number of pieces are made up of either painting, print or photography components. These mosaics or assemblages will encourage the viewer to traverse along or through various pictorial devices where the associations of narrative and journey will become evident.

The contributing artists are Lorraine Biggs, Tim Burns, Greg Hind, Leigh Hobba, Sieglinde Karl, David Keeling, Bea Maddock, Wayne Malm, Milan Milojevic, David Stephenson, John Wolseley, Helen Wright, Jock Young, and myself. Peter Jackson and Jonathan Holmes have contributed essays to this catalogue.

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R A Y A R N O L D

December 1992



A P L A C E F O R T I M E

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'Go, go said the bird: human kind

Cannot bear very much reality.

Time past and time future

What might have been and what has been

Point to one end which is always present.'

T.S. Eliot ¹

Look at it! Where? Here! Enter into it. How do you know it? Is it yours? Can you own it? For how long?

The landscape is more than our backdrop. It is the space for the moment. We cross it, enter it, stay in it, leave it. It is many. It is one. It pulls at us, dividing our loyalties, giving form to the extremes of culture. You have your favourite; I have my little niche; the city squats on someone else's. We live on it, in it, from it. No wonder we write about it, want to own it, want to fight for it.

In looking at the landscape we reveal our characters. We can look for what we want, but do not have. We can reinforce our belief in what we think we already have. And if we are romantic, we can spread our feelings out to its ascribed qualities.

Our relationship to the landscape, indeed everything, is a complex function of consciousness. How do we know that we are conscious? Do we revert to Descartes' position on thinking, trying to prove our existence with the intrinsic qualities of introspection? Or do we assume a more pragmatic position, accepting 'reality' around us? That is, that our identity and existence is verified by interaction with our surroundings. If we do the latter, there is that perceived space

starting with us, moving with us, and extending in an ever increasing uncertainty of detail.

The landscape is the condition of the 'other'. How we understand where we are, depends on where we are not. The rolling moors, the balloon over Everest, the forest's tentacled space - these are all too obvious. But everywhere, at all times, we sense our own presence, our own identity, from our conscious projection of space around us.

A mental space travels with us. In the dark or when blind, we project heuristically, trying to read the memory map or the experiences which give structure to our surroundings. The landscape is the character space which the mental space enters when we travel. Some people travel metaphorically or in imagination. And when we 'see', in a very important sense, we 'imagine' what it is like. For to travel even a small distance, increases the amount of information that we can see. The detail and spatial context of what we saw before was different. When longer distances are involved, the changes are more remarkable.

The horizon is our only dream of perfection.

Robert Penn Warren.²

The quaint paradoxes of perception can be demonstrated in the living room. 'What do you see when I hold up this coin? The elliptical image or the circular fact?' In a limited space, within a certain ill-defined scope of vision, the mysteries of distance do not arise. Scientifically, philosophically, they still exist. However, when our perceived space becomes sufficiently extended, so that the precision of our observation is in doubt, then the phenomenological nature of perception impinges on whatever we see. The view we perceive is a conditional one. It might seem like reality, and photographs

reinforce this assumption. They convert dynamic complexity into static records. But what you see in a landscape is always an arrangement of viewpoints. Intimate details are replaced by super-imposed spatial organisation.

As we look out across a surface, so much of the middle distance is already concealed. The lie of the land deceives, the reflections of water divert upwards, and the distant hills take on their own inaccessible character. It is inaccessible to the immediate frame of reference which we encounter close at hand. There is something fascinating about the middle distance and beyond; the peculiar diversions of atmospheric perspective and the infinitely intricate details which are condensed into a generalised haze of light and colour. Every one of those perceptions of distant landscape has its moment of realisation. More than most 'objects' of perception it exists, or seems to exist, only as a visual effect.

In Gerald Murnane's novel, *The Plains*, there are two fictional groups of landscape enthusiasts who idolise their environment. One group is committed to the ineffable content of the horizon: '...what moved them more than the wide grasslands and huge skies was the scant layer of haze where land and sky merged in the farthest distance.'³

Western landscape painting has always pursued distance. Throughout the Romantic era there were endless variations. Even in early landscapes like Rubens' *Chateau de Steen*, the challenge of the

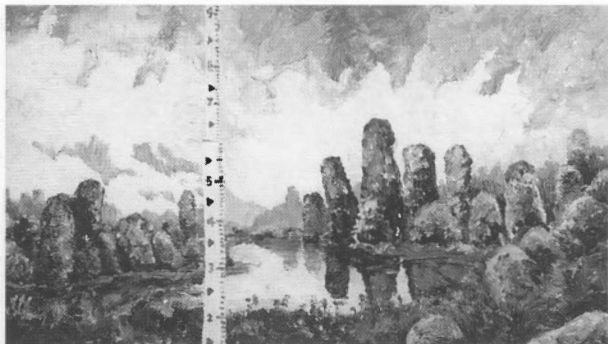


distance seems to be a major factor in the painting's organisation. Despite the intensely busy foreground, much of the focus comes from the ownership of space, which in terms of a painting, constitutes the creation of an illusion of an imagined distance.

No matter how often the owner of that perception may have travelled through the perceived space; no matter how intimately he may have examined its surface secrets (like the foreground hunter in Rubens' picture) that view holds tight to a particular image and the moment which is determined by it. That is the convention of a perceptual tradition where the single viewpoint of Renaissance perspective has come to dominate the landscape genre and arrest the passage of time.

'Our visual apprehension of the world is dynamic; as we change everything else changes, as we move through space, every relation shifts; this complex actuality no picture can capture.'⁴

The thesis that Australian painting has been long attached to the scenic illusion at the expense of an intimate environmental experience is well established. However, a claim like Paul Carter's that the art of Fred Williams 'eschews the metaphysical abstraction of the third dimension'⁵ suggests that the metaphysical is something which can be excluded. There is always a metaphysical dimension to any representation or surface which the artist develops and the viewer subsequently interprets. An illusion of distance in a painting is no

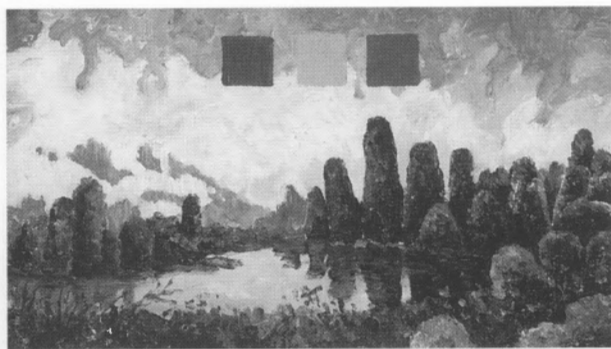


more metaphysical than the surface of a Tapies. However, the perception of distance does create an experiential problem in terms of access and essence. The distant ether emanates from the vistas of Bruegel, Turner or Piguénit with the same insistent presence that we have today when we look towards 'the farthest distance.'

The point of issue here is the nature of landscape itself. In one sense, how it functions as a fundamental reference in consciousness, and in another sense, how it is represented in art. It may well be that much painting is merely variations on an image mode which is locked into the tacit assumption of the moment. However, it would be unfair to assume that nineteenth century vista painters lacked the immediacy of direct experience.

'Like Richard Long today, he climbed it, walked it, was soaked and blown and warmed by it; and no painter has insisted more than Turner on the actuality of these experiences, even if, unlike the Impressionists who looked to his example, he increasingly came to paint from recollection rather than in the field.'⁶

Two vital dimensions: The qualities perceived in a three dimensional field, and the experiential component in perception. The latter is not so much a function of nearness and tactile presence, but how we process our experiences in time.



*'Sometimes the process from present to future, leaving past behind,
is disturbed or even cut
by unexpected coincidences. In this moment
past and future precipitate into the present
and amalgamate - the state of timelessness
has started.'*

Klaus Rinke⁷

Our capacity to see and know what we apprehend is constantly changing. Quite apart from the long term acquisition of knowledge and attitudes which give meaning to our world, our mood of the day, the dynamics of the moment, all colour the content of our perceptions. Our experience of the actual world ensures that 'reality' remains a conditional, if not subjective, 'event'. 'This is where the birds sing; **this** is where the sky is blue.'⁸

If we own our experiences in this particularised individual sense, it is always through the context of time. A shared actuality can live on in the memory of some while others forget and distort its features. ('But then can truth ever really be remembered?')⁹

The act of perception is the mind's settling on the sense's moment before memory consumes it once again. There is a certain analogy

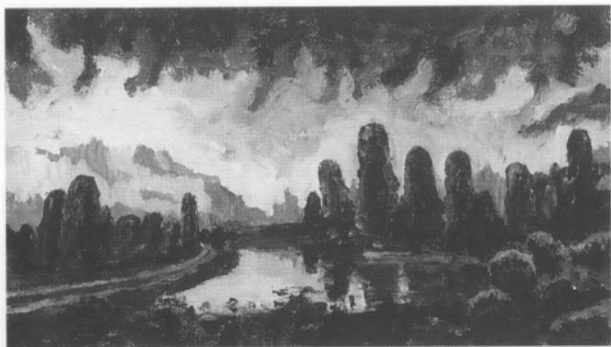


between the way our memory works and the way a landscape unfolds around us. Proximity reassures our grasp on what we **believe** to be actual. Distance diminishes access. Both in the conscious present and the unfolding space around us, there is never a clear line of demarcation between the near and the far; the now and the then.

When we speak of the present, we create a vague, surrounding mental space. Perception is always in the present, but its essential dynamism is quite unlike the moment that we think we know. Because painting, and photography in particular, presents us with static images; because the evidence can be perused at leisure, there is a misleading assumption about the instant. In our conscious experience, all moments are extended in time. Our awareness is essentially retrospective. We can anticipate an approaching event like a jump, a shot, the finish to a race, but the now of it is paradoxically extended either side, and most of it backwards.

Perhaps our best option when faced by the tyrannical, illusionary and transitory nature of reality is to approach it with involvement. It is, after all, our participation which brings meaning to complex perceptual experiences, especially those like paintings. A full meaning cannot be achieved without some form of 'in dwelling'.¹⁰

'It is as if we looked at a picture to enter into it and the objects in it surrounded us like real ones; and then we stepped back, and were now outside it; we saw the frame, and the picture was a painted



surface. In this way, when we intend, we are surrounded by our intention's pictures and we are inside them. But when we step outside intention they are mere patches on a canvas, without life and of no interest to us. When we intend we exist in the space of intention, among the pictures of intention, as well as with real (actual) things.¹¹

This is a simple distinction of representational content from the surface elements, and of course the same kind of intention can attach to the 'mere patches on a canvas', or background sounds at a concert. What constitutes the intended perception is not predetermined by any external rules or framing devices. Composition within the picture space is taken as a 'given' reality in the same way that there is an assumption that the camera has caught 'actual' reality.

In the mental space, intention focuses on the processes of perception, and thereby sustains the illusion of the present. In the way in which we enter into the process of perception, the way in which we come to own our actions, we can dwell within a timeless place.

'Alfred Jarry once wrote that in order to dwell in eternity, one has only to experience two separate moments at the same moment. I believe this is true whether a moment is a unit of something called time or a unit of something called place.'¹²

Our intentions become our future. The space we inhabit clings to our thoughts and gives meaning to the passage of time.

The landscape is here. The time is now.



'..... *he was drawn closer to the landscape,
the seldom motionless sea of grass, the twisted trees in grey and
black, the sky ever increasing in its rage of blue;
and of that landscape, always,
he would become the centre.*'

Patrick White¹³

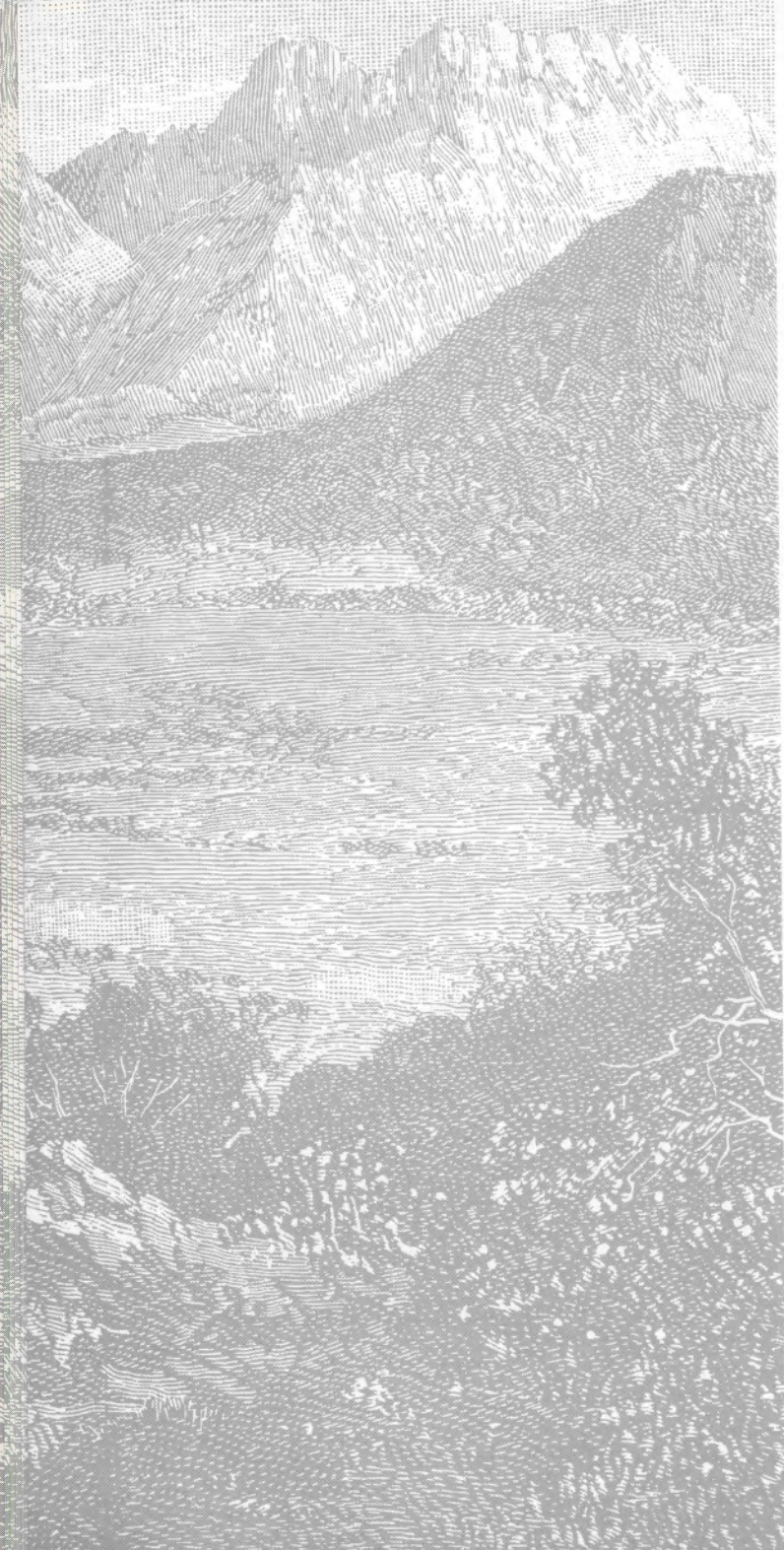
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P E T E R J A C K S O N

December 1992

NOTES AND SOURCES

- 1 T.S.Eliot *Collected Poems* Faber & Faber, 1963, p. 190.
- 2 Robert Penn Warren *Rumour Verified* Secker & Warburg, 1982, p.65.
- 3 Gerald Murnane *The Plains* Nostrella Press, 1982, p.26.
- 4 Mell Gooding *The Act of Painting* The South Bank Centre, 1989, p.4.
- 5 Paul Carter *Mining the Surface* Art Monthly, no.46, p.5.
- 6 David Blayney Brown *Original Eyes* Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1991 p.39.
- 7 Klaus Rinke: Statement at Biennale of Sydney, 1979, catalogue.
- 8 E.M. Forster *Room With a View* (Mr. Emmerson)
- 9 Ian McKeever *McKeever* Whitechapel Art Gallery. 1990, p.54.
- 10 M. Polanyi & H. Prosch *Meaning* University of Chicago, 1975, p.145.
- 11 Ludwig Wittgenstein *Zettel* Basil Blackwell, 1967, p.42.
- 12 Gerald Murnane *Velvet Waters (First Love)* McPhee Gribble, 1990, p.171.
- 13 Patrick White *Voss* Penguin 1970, p.169.



T H E V I E W F R O M A B O V E

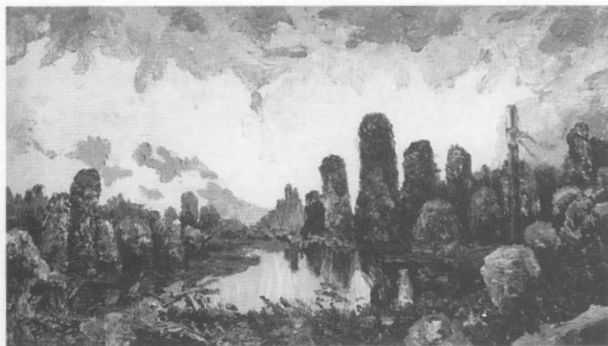
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It must have been sometime in 1974 when Carl Andrew, the then-Curator of Fine Art, pulled out a rather 'daggy', dog-eared group of monochrome paintings from a store in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. We had gone to a store-room to view the Bock portraits and had stumbled across the paintings as we pulled works down from the shelves. On cardboard, they could hardly be described as in good condition, but they were quite startling in their impact. They were small black-and-white landscape paintings and included a striking depiction of *Hell's Gates* on the Davey River in South-West Tasmania, and several other images which pictured the rugged landscape of the southern half of the state. Since restored and now usually prominently displayed in the colonial gallery of the Museum, they represent an extremely important aspect of William Charles Piguenit's oeuvre.

William Moore says that these monochrome paintings were purchased by special vote of Parliament for £100 on the express recommendation of Lady Hamilton, after she had heard a lecture given by Piguenit to the Royal Society sometime in 1887-1888,¹ although it may well be that they had been produced considerably earlier, because Piguenit made at least three major excursions into the South-West in 1871, 1873 and 1874. It's possible, too, that they didn't come into the Museum's collection until sometime after 1892, since Piguenit refers to the *Hell's Gates* painting in his lecture *Among the Western Highlands of Tasmania* delivered to the Royal Society in January that year. (It may have been, however, that he simply pulled out the paintings from the Museum's collection in order to illustrate his lecture)²

The monochrome paintings are very interesting indeed because this genre of landscape painting is not common in nineteenth century Australian art. It seems to have had a quite specific purpose, namely as a preparatory method to be used for the burgeoning illustrated press in the 1870s. Presumably Piguénit saw these paintings as a quick and satisfactory method to get the breadth of gesture and painterliness he wanted (as against the more emphatic mark making that might be generated by drawing) and that he had his eye on the press as a possible source of income. Whether a copyist did the work or Piguénit did it himself, the image would be transferred from the monochrome painting to a box-wood engraving block which had been whitened. The black-and-white image was then cut into by the engraver to prepare the illustration for printing; so the blackest blacks were left 'type-high', whites were gouged out, and the greys were an intricate web of cross-hatching.

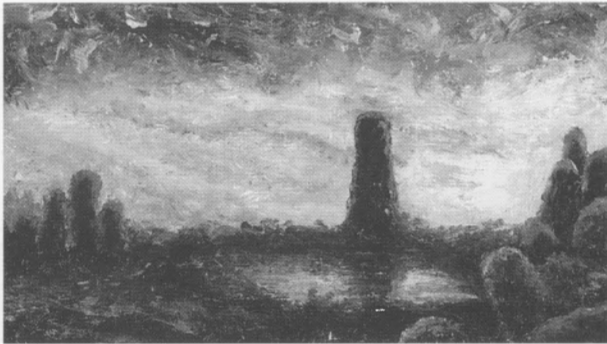
In the latter part of the nineteenth century, an extraordinarily high number of artists earned an income from the illustrated press (Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin included). During the 1880s, Piguénit was a staff member of one of the most ambitious of all of the illustrated publishing ventures, the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, which began publication in 1883 and, in regular instalments, continued to be published through to 1886 (by which time the sections on Tasmania had been produced). Although it lost



money, there is little doubt that it represented the very best of the illustrator's art at the time. Interestingly the *Hell's Gates* painting which the Museum owns was reproduced as the illustration on page 496 of volume two of the *Picturesque Atlas* in the chapter on Tasmania and was one of a number which Piguénit was asked to produce.³ Whether he relied upon his already-extant folio of monochromes, or whether he produced a new range of illustrations for the *Atlas* in 1885-1886, is unclear but what is clear is that as a staff-artist for the *Atlas*, Piguénit's job was to depict 'wild and rugged nature'. A.H. Fullwood produced the bucolic scenes; the urbane W.T.Smedley illustrated the city scenes; A.C.Cooke drew the 'bird's-eye' illustrations of the various cities; Mrs Ellis Rowan drew hundreds of botanical illustrations; and Frank Mahoney produced the 'action' pictures of bullockies, horse-breaking, and station-life.

Piguénit's monochrome paintings, therefore, had a quite specific utility- they were produced for a massive, three volume publication which represented the first attempt to create a comprehensive picturing of Australia as a geo-political entity. And they were meant to evoke the idea of an 'untrammelled nature' to be deliberately set beside the more domesticated depictions of the landscape - the illustrations of tranquil Hobart and environs, the Midlands, and the farming belt of the North-West coast.

From the point of view of the publishers this had a particular effi-



cacy because the *Picturesque Atlas* was a real attempt to celebrate the achievements of white settlers, for it was quintessentially a publication about their ownership of the land - not in any mythical sense but as a physical entity. Pigenit's Tasmanian paintings, therefore, which celebrate the grandeur of nature and which evoke a strong sense of the force of Nature, its wildness and irrationality, provided an elaborate counterpoint to the domestication of the landscape depicted by other illustrators employed on the *Atlas*. By representing an awesome and impenetrable landscape, his illustrations highlighted the achievements of those settlers who had won through and, in a sense, tamed this wilderness.⁴

Pigenit's involvement in the 'selling' of Tasmania as a geographical entity of great natural beauty was something he did proudly throughout his life but it would be wrong to suggest that there was anything cynical about this. The paintings were profoundly felt works of art which genuinely sought to convey his physical experience of the South-West and to give some sense of the artist travelling through that landscape. But the paintings were not meant to be just vicarious experiences for the viewer, for he also seems to have seen them as *promoting* the wilderness. In discussing his 1873 bush-walk to Lake St Clair, for instance, he refers quite specifically to the trail-blazing nature of the expedition and to the fact that the expeditioners saw themselves as preparing the way for the 'tourist'.⁵



A century has passed since Piquenit delivered his lecture to members of the Royal Society and if there is one fundamental change to our perception of the landscape that has occurred since then it has been that we can survey that landscape from above. Piquenit recommends to his 'tourist' that, if 'he does not object to a little mountain climbing [he should] when in the neighbourhood of the King William Range, ascend the first peak in of that range', for he will be afforded a 'vast panorama embracing almost the whole of the Western Highlands'.⁶ Now, on a fine day, the tourist's first view of the 'wild South-West' is most likely to be from the comfort of a window-seat of a Boeing 727 as it cruises into Hobart at around 15,000 ft.

It was Roland Barthes who explored the fundamental difference between these two forms of experience. In one of the most brilliant of his 'Mythologies', 'The Eiffel Tower', Barthes describes how the visitor to the tower is presented with a dramatically new way in which to 'see' the world. Unlike the belvedere or the cathedral tower (or the mountain peak for that matter), the Eiffel Tower rendered up Paris as a new kind of nature which presented people with the opportunity to *read* Paris as well as to perceive it. A new sensibility emerges as a result of this: as Barthes says the 'construction of the Tower and the birth of aviation, permit us to transcend sensation and to see things *in their structure*.'⁷

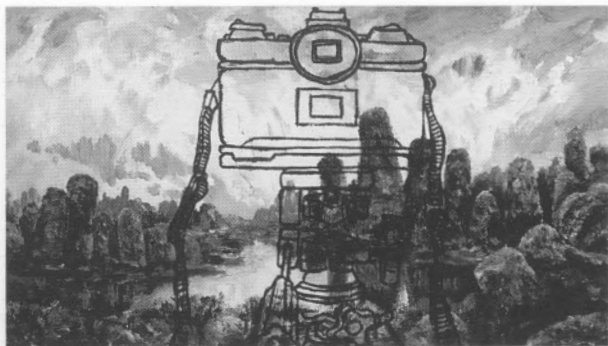
Early nineteenth century experience of the city *and* the country



was quite different for it was emphatically temporal and sensual (one only has to think of Rousseau here). On the other hand, the Eiffel Tower ushered in a world which was not only perceived in sensual terms but could be grasped and circumscribed intellectually (or so it would seem). Barthes makes the astute observation that the 'Tower is not a trace, a souvenir, in short a culture; but rather an immediate consumption of a humanity made natural by that glance which transforms it into space.'⁸

People could consume the world as a site and could also make believe that what they were actually capturing and holding for eternity was the 'real', albeit as an exactly quantifiable series of fragments. The camera would usher in this new way of seeing too and the *thinking* generated by its invention may, in part, be behind Piguénit's desire to convey the drama of the panorama. Here one has to be circumspect because there is no question that the experience which Piguénit wishes to pass on is a physical one - of being there and facing Nature in all of its awesome power. But one also gets the feeling that Nature is being delivered up to us as a quantifiable thing and this is nowhere better shown than in the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*.

The tension which exists between these two ways of seeing continues to be a major pre-occupation for artists and this is particularly so for artists working in Tasmania. One hundred years later Nature



or the wilderness is something that seems to have been almost completely circumscribed by culture. This is particularly evident in the way in which the South-West of Tasmania is delivered to us as one of the last great pockets of 'untouched' land which, depending on one's political predilection is there to be preserved or to be finally 'tamed' and domesticated. Piguénit's excursions into the landscape of the South-West mark a point where we can see this shift from a perceptual experience of the landscape, one where the artist attempts to convey the effect this has *on the body*, to a point where the landscape can be imagined and expressed as a *structural entity*, the quantifiable fragments of which, when pieced together, might render Nature as a knowable and entirely circumscribed phenomenon. This helps to explain why so many artists in recent years have deliberately emphasised the constructed and mediated nature of the landscape and why, too, there has been such a pre-occupation with the loss of that raw experience of the phenomenal world and what that loss might entail. Both points of view are clearly discernible in the present exhibition.

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JONATHAN HOLMES

December 1992



NOTES AND SOURCES

- 1 Moore, William *The Story of Australian Art* Sydney 1934, 2 volumes; i, 89
- 2 See Bernard Smith's *Documents in Art and Taste in Australia* Melbourne 1974; 172-179. Pignenit writes, for example:
Resuming our journey, we reached Port Davey, where we camped for five days, experiencing in the whole of our stay very rough westerly weather. We nevertheless managed, with the aid of a boat obtained from a resident, to visit many parts of the port on its weather shore, and among others the grandest bit of scenery I believe to have found in the neighbourhood - that known as 'Hell's Gates' on the Davey River. The 'Gates' are a tremendous chasm between two hills, whose perpendicular sides reach an altitude of from 250 to 300 feet. The river, at the time of our visit, was comparatively low and running at a moderate rate, but in flood time it rushes through the chasm with tremendous velocity. I had some difficulty in making the sketch from which the accompanying illustration has been taken, owing to the furious westerly wind that was blowing through the 'Gates' accompanied with driving showers of sleet. (174-175)
- 3 *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (ed. Garran and Associates), Sydney 1886, vol. 2; 496
- 4 It's interesting too that the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* also 'advertised' the east coast of Tasmania as a tourist destination: by the 1880's the relative coolness and temperate climate of the east coast was packaged and offered up to a jaded *haute bourgeoisie* of Victoria and New South Wales wanting to escape the fierce heat of their respective states in high summer.
- 5 *ibid.*; 177
[The tourist on his visit to the lake finds, on reaching its south shore, a noble sheet of water stretched before him, surrounded for the greater part by high and precipitous mountains, but it is only by the aid of a boat that he can see its grandest features, notably views of Mount Olympus and Mount Ida, from the north-eastern shore.]
- 6 *ibid.*; 178-179
- 7 Barthes, Roland *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* [trans. by Richard Howard] New York 1979; 9
- 8 *ibid.*; 8

A R T I S T S S T A T E M E N T S

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LORRAINE BIGGS - Pigenit, the surveyor who created his own landscape via paint. My 12 appropriations of Pigenit's fictitious landscape *A Mountain Top* signify the multiple use of the Tasmanian landscape in the latter half of the twentieth century. To contemplate, to conquer, to possess, to profit, to enjoy, to destroy. The struggle to satisfy all interested parties is futile. The miners, the timber industry, the tourists, the wilderness users- all change the landscape, all effect it to some degree.

TIM BURNS - Through my sensual experience of the landscape, I find a set of primary elements with which I create a poetic language, where natural phenomena is transformed into a symbology resonant with archetypal significance. In the same way that form is relative to content in Modernist aesthetics, the phenomena of the landscape is relative to our shared universal spirit.

In looking at the landscape I seem to be seeking a symbolic language for something within me that already exists, rather than observing anything new. Coleridge

The Romantic tradition has continually stressed the essential relativity between artist and the wild elemental forces of Nature. I find in the landscape an experience far more physiologically profound than that offered by social morality.

The essential quality of the landscape to the human experience is its ability to distil in us some mysterious essence or elixir capable of stimulating our awareness of the instinctual unity between ourselves and the world.

LEIGH HOBBA - The ambition of this installation is to present landscape from a point of view that understands the world as networks rather than locations. It takes as its premise an understanding of the most affecting aspects of our contemporary environment as instrumental, in the sense that we transmit, communicate and actively participate in certain parts of this environment in a way that is not within a physical, actual reality.

Frenchman's Cap has an aura of attraction for me that goes beyond the physical - an aura that is informed by my previous visits to the area and stories related to me by other travellers to this place, one which came from an observation of lightning striking the peak and 'illuminating' the Quartz rock and another which resulted in a recurring series of 'dreams in high places', both of which have located the area within a place of a profound personal mythology.

SIEGLINDE KARL

earth womb whirls dream time blaze tall tree cries
 black blood floods worn rock welds space dream climbs
 lea fights free burnt blown back earthbound blinds
 clings dream face who lives dies born decides
 erects earth work erupts seed flames fly
 buds burnt black reemerge twist scenes twine
 trees seek sky brown bark bursts hurls whorls wide
 space spins time takes loves lead trails remind
 lines bind birth drives dead schemes green elides
 mood melts moon words trance form day dreams dive
 slugs fill slime mud drum booms blasts ear eye
 transports time throws back breath death revives

Excerpt from *Marks Karl* (1987) poem by Hazel Smith from
Abstractly Represented (Butterfly Books)

DAVID KEELING

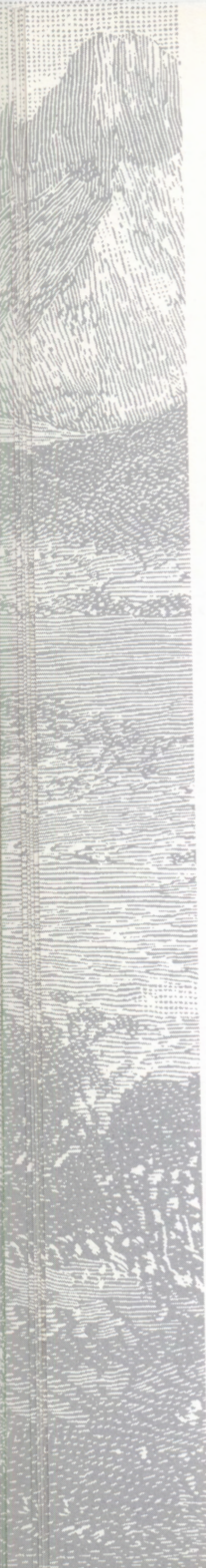
He will move away
and live in a more ample landscape,
yet when he comes to envisage
the Ultimate Place
he will return to this
undistinguished plain
and depict it in such a way
that it have a different truth

Excerpt from Gary Catalano *The Painter* from *The Empire of Grass*.
(University of Queensland Press).

BEA MADDOCK - I had a strong sense of 'journey' before the voyage on the Icebird began, and my anticipation of this was heightened by the fact that according to schedule the length of Voyage 6 in 1987 was to be forty days. Initially I was going to make something based on forty units - days - but the 'journey' emphasis was eventually surpassed by an emphasis on 'place'.

Forty pages from Antarctica is based on the strongest visual impressions I had of the continental icecap and the seas surrounding the continent in summer. The work deals with scale as I perceived it and takes the form of a long panorama. The words it contains relates to my thoughts on being in that place at that time.

Antarctica is a special place, and I have developed strong feelings about it. In political terms, I think it's enough to say that Scott's race to the Pole shouldn't become a metaphor for its development.



WAYNE MALM - The paintings deal with the artists changing perception of the landscape, landscape painting and painting as an institution. They attempt to redefine the lineage inherited from a Romantic landscape tradition which exists as the dominate paradigm for imaging the landscape in Tasmania. This lineage serves only to disconnect us from the landscape in which we exist creating a world of illusion.

MILAN MILOJEVIC - The imagery utilised in the piece will be photographs I have recently taken at Bronte Park, in conjunction with those of my fathers taken in the 1950's during his employment with the Hydro Electric Commission. These will be printed onto traditionally unconventional materials such as copper, stainless steel, wood, plastic, tiles - all of which reflect the industrial landscape. The use of different materials and in particular metals is to provide the notion of the monument, and ideally the piece could be installed in an outside location

DAVID STEPHENSON - The Overland Track Tasmania Lake St Clair to Cradle Mountain eighty kilometres five days five nights Mount Olympus Mount Gould the Parthenon the Acropolis Mount Geryon Falling Mountain Cathedral Mountain Mount Ossa Mount Pelion East Mount Oakleigh Mount Pelion West Barn Bluff sun wind cloud rain sleet hail snow spring equinox nineteen ninety.

JOHN WOLSELEY - When leaving a favourite place I have been in the habit of making a drawing and burying it by my camp - and unlike Piguénit, being as I am blessed with an old Toyota, I will usually return a year or two later. One half of the drawing is still preserved pristine in my portfolio, but the part I exhume may be changed in the most varied and mysterious ways according to the habitat. Waves of colour, stains, crystalline mosaics, specklings, dapplings, all hint at unknown agencies. There are the traces and resonances of unseen movements and events which fall through the sand above the drawing as it lies in its silent resting place.

HELEN WRIGHT - 'That was the trouble. The land is too big out there, and after a while it starts to swallow you up. I reached a point when I couldn't take it in anymore. All the bloody silence and emptiness. You try to find your bearings in it, but it's too big, the dimensions are too monstrous, and eventually, I don't know how else to put it, eventually it just stops being there. There's no world, no land, no nothing. It comes down to that, Fogg, in the end it's all a figment. The place you exist in is in your head.'


Paul Auster from *Moon Palace* (Faber and Faber).

JOCK YOUNG - There are times when quite ordinary landscapes (or objects within a landscape), perhaps through a change in the light, or when the weather suddenly changes, become quite extraordinary. It is as if that during these times the landscape is no longer inanimate, but an expression of some greater feeling. I like to paint those times.

- RAY ARNOLD
- 1 *Lyell Highway/Piguenit Trail*
13 panels, oil on canvas
90 x 550cm
- LORRAINE BIGGS
- 2 *Someone Looks at Something...
Someone Looks at Nothing*
12 panels, oil on board
each 16 x 28cm
- TIM BURNS
- 3 *Judd's Creek Landscape*
oil and wax on paper
250 x 450cm
- GREG HIND
- 4 *Source of Derwent*
oil on canvas
55 x 50cm
- 5 *Lake St Clair*
oil on canvas
35 x 40cm
- 6 *Mt Ida*
oil on canvas
35 x 45cm
- 7 *Lake St Clair National Park*
oil on canvas
50 x 30cm
- LEIGH HOBBA
- 8 *Storms usually last about 3 days*
video
- SIEGLINDE KARL
- 9 *Earthbound*
installation
2000 x 70cm
- DAVID KEELING
- 10 *Table*
oil of wood
99 x 150cm
- 11 *Brown Hills*
oil on wood
24 x 56cm
- 12 *Crack*
oil on linen
45 x 55cm
- BEA MADDOCK
- 13 *Forty pages from Antarctica*
Set of 40 etchings on 21 sheets of
paper, each 50.6 x 70cm
- WAYNE MALM
- 14 *The Moments of Unbelief, the
Beginning of Make Believe*
triptych, oil on canvas
each 91 x 120cm
- 15 *Evidence I*
oil on board
35 x 70cm
- 16 *Evidence II*
oil on board
33 x 30cm
- 17 *Evidence III*
oil on board
33 x 68cm

L I S T O F W O R K S

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| <p>MILAN MILOJEVIC</p> <p>18 <i>Bronte Park II</i> screenprint 200 x 300cm</p> <p>DAVID STEPHENSON</p> <p>19 <i>Kindred Spirits</i> 7 photographs each 90 x 100cm</p> <p>JOHN WOLSELEY</p> <p>Burial Paintings</p> <p>20 <i>Mt Gunson, near Woomera, NT</i> 1990 and 1992 watercolour on paper 50 x 42cm</p> <p>21 <i>Ochre Pits, Petermann Ranges, NT</i> 1982 and 1991 watercolour on paper 52 x 64cm</p> <p>22 <i>Haasts Bluff, NT</i> 1990 and 1991 pencil on paper 66 x 184cm</p> <p>23 <i>Sand Hills, near Woomera</i> 1990 and 1992 watercolour on paper 66 x 104cm</p> <p>24 <i>From Earth to Sky - Palm Valley</i> 1978 and 1979 watercolour on paper 107 x 42cm</p> <p>25 <i>Study No2 for a Honey Increase</i> <i>Centre</i> 1980 and 1990 watercolour on paper 71 x 51cm</p> | <p>HELEN WRIGHT</p> <p>26 <i>Untitled Landscape</i> charcoal and pastel on paper 105 x 76cm</p> <p>27 <i>Untitled Landscape</i> charcoal and pastel on paper 76 x 105cm</p> <p>28 <i>Untitled Landscape</i> charcoal and pastel on paper 105 x 76cm</p> <p>JOCK YOUNG</p> <p>29 <i>Betsy Island</i> oil on canvas 65 x 224cm</p> <p>30 <i>Iron Pot</i> oil on canvas 90 x 105cm</p> <p>31 <i>Clifton Headland</i> oil on canvas 44 x 89cm</p> <p>32 <i>Headland</i> oil on canvas 40 x 40cm</p> <p>33 <i>Rocks</i> oil on canvas 30 x 30cm</p> <p>34 <i>Entrance</i> oil on canvas 20 x 24cm</p> |
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - The curator would like to thank the artists and writers for their support; and the assistance received from Arts Tasmania for the catalogue production, the Tasmanian School of Art for the provision of the Plimsoll Gallery and the City of Hobart for the inclusion of this exhibition in their 92/93 Summer Festival Programme.

The work reproduced in this catalogue is a 12 panel painting titled *Someone Looks at Something... Someone Looks at Nothing* by Lorraine Biggs.

PETER JACKSON - I came to Tasmania in 1967 because of the southern environment. Moving through the landscape and observing it is the most absorbing time for me. The juxtaposition of private experiences are fascinating. There are many passions which periodically dominate my life, but literature, philosophy, photography and drawing are most relevant to this context. Over the past few years, the greater midlands region has exercised increasing magnetism for me. I have also just finished a series of illustrations of the cliffs of Mt Wellington.

JONATHAN HOLMES - I write about Australian Art and teach art history and theory at the Tasmanian School of Art at Hobart.

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