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**THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE**

**The intimate expression of nature in Australian landscape painting from  
the late nineteenth century to c.1940**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master  
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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyses the broad spectrum of landscape painting in New South Wales and Victoria from the late nineteenth century to 1940. My aim is to position the intimate view within the diversity of landscape practice. I do this by constructing an inclusive and relational art history which reworks the landscape canon. My argument is based on an analysis of pictorial space in landscape art. I also focus on issues of gender as they intersect with dominant values of the landscape genre.

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## INTRODUCTION

Australian landscape painting of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is represented at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in a display of the permanent collection.<sup>1</sup> It follows an historical chronology structured around well-known artists including Lister Lister, Piguenit, Heysen, Lambert, Streeton, McCubbin, Long, Gruner, Ashton, Roberts, Conder, Davies, Withers, Murch and Wakelin. Despite the large number of paintings displayed, no work by a woman landscapist is represented between Jessie Scarvell's The Lonely margin of the sea (1894) and Margaret Preston's Grey Day in the ranges (1942), a period of nearly fifty years. This orthodox representation of landscape art as a masculine practice is also sustained in past and recent art histories. My aim in this thesis is to challenge such a partial history.

My thesis sets out a spectrum of practice ranging from still life flower studies, garden studies and intimate landscapes, to landscapes which depict aspects of land production. I include still life flower studies and garden studies in order to draw out the formal and associative qualities which they share with intimate landscape views. I incorporate such diverse streams into an inclusive, integrated and relational account which more accurately considers the heterogeneity of landscape art of the period. Paintings by lesser known male and female landscapists are given their historical place alongside those by well-known landscapists, most of whom are men. I do not discuss women landscapists as a separate category, but foreground those inflections in landscape painting which suggest a gendered relationship to the land. My account is thus structured around an historically specific nexus of genre and gender.

Landscape practice from the late nineteenth century to 1940 was indeed gendered. Paintings within the spectrum described above suggest that women artists had a different relationship to the land from their male counterparts. Evidence of the few landscapes by women artists viewed from a high position and looking out over the land suggests that the continuation of pictorial space, or distance, is a primary indicator of difference. Alice Norton's Dawn (1924) (plate 1) with its view from the heights of Vaucluse across Watson's Bay to North Head, is a rare exception to the more usual enclosed, intimate views by women

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to the permanent collection display of late 1996 which was altered recently after being in place for many years.

landscapists.<sup>2</sup> Differences also in subject matter support the view that the knowledges and desires which inform the imaging of landscape are socially structured. The evidence that few women painted pastoral landscapes suggests that such a subject may have inhibited women artists through social, institutional or critical expectations which defined the ways in which they perceived and represented the land. In this light, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the threshold as a 'sort of sacred boundary between two spaces' is useful in considering the subtle determinants of landscape practice.<sup>3</sup> A threshold is both a point of permission and of trespass, and can be considered as a psychic demarcation which informed the professional practice of the landscape artist. Such a demarcation was defined by male art teachers, critics and historians who determined the ways in which Australian landscape imagery was produced and received. The masculinism they secured is indicated in historical accounts which privilege landscapes by men and in public collections which visualise such histories. My use of the term masculinism as a limited and exclusive schema aligns with Michele Le Doeuff's definition of 'work which, while claiming to be exhaustive, forgets about women's existence and concerns itself only with the position of men'.<sup>4</sup> Such partiality characterises the histories of Herbert Badham (1949), Robert Hughes (1970) and Bernard Smith (1971). By contrast, my research reveals a diversity of landscape painting by both male and female artists. William Moore's The Story of Australian Art of 1934 also makes it clear that many women landscapists practised professionally, listing twenty eight from Victoria and New South Wales alone.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that women practised within a narrow iconographic range, while men painted across the full spectrum. Within this range the pastoral landscape was, and remains, the primary object of claims of cultural value.

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<sup>2</sup> While landscape painting from the major art centres of Sydney and Melbourne is my primary focus, I include images produced elsewhere in Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge University Press, 1977, 130

<sup>4</sup> Michele Le Doeuff, Hipparchia's Choice. An Essay Concerning Women. Philosophy, etc., trans. Trista Selous, Oxford, 1991, 42

<sup>5</sup> William Moore, The Story of Australian Art, Sydney, 1934, 88, 99, 106. The artists are May Vale, Emily Paul, Ethel Stephens, Constance Roth, Amy Vale, Isabel McWhannel, Jane Sutherland, Lillah Reidy, Bertha Merfield, Mrs Heywood, Alice Norton, Clara Southern, Christine (sic) Asquith Baker, A.M.E. Bale, Jo Sweatman, Mrs E. Gulliver, Laura Booth, Dorothea Toovey, Rose Walker, Marjory Withers, Edith Downing, Mary Edwards, Isabel Mackenzie, Pearl Sheldon, Alice Whyte, Gladys Owen, Elsie Barlow, and Stephanie Taylor.

The term pastoral is used in Australia to describe rural life and its traditions. Jeanette Hoorn notes that in Australia the received meaning of pastoralist is a sheep farmer. Pastoral also describes certain landscape paintings of Australian country life, depicting grazing and other forms of land use.<sup>6</sup> Its Australian meaning refers to the pastoral industry rather than the classical state of repose away from a restless world in European literature and myth.<sup>7</sup> Australian pastoral landscapes almost always depict views over the land from a high position. This traditional position of status and authority is closely bound to the concept of 'prospect' in Western thought. Prospect denotes a commanding view outward and holds the idea of future promise.<sup>8</sup> The association of prospect with ownership is developed in Ian Burn's seminal reading of Streeton's The Land of the golden fleece (1926) (plate 2) as an iconic 'ideal of pastoral wealth and national potential' which defines the land through white ownership and use.<sup>9</sup> In early twentieth century Australia, proprietorial pastoral views were valued as images of the land's economic promise.

From the late nineteenth century to 1940 landscape artists were critically judged according to their success in rendering space and distance, two primary characteristics of prospect. Deep pictorial space, together with the rendering of light, was seen to represent the real or true Australia. Artists who painted these elements were considered to have vision and sincerity in expressing this desired end. Streeton was believed to be capable of revealing the essential Australia through his 'unique gift of being able to see into the heart' of the landscape, and this perception remains intact.<sup>10</sup> The advertisement for the Arthur Streeton 1867-1943 exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in October 1996 read,

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<sup>6</sup> Jeanette Hoorn, The Idea of the Pastoral in Australian Painting 1788-1940, Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne 1988, 3-4

<sup>7</sup> European notions of the pastoral deriving primarily from classical literature and myth are associated with the shepherding of flocks and herds. They express an implicit removal from reality. Michael Putnam, Virgil's Poem of the Earth. Studies in the Georgics, Princeton University Press, 1979, 240. Elizabethan pastoral poetry also celebrated an ideal of 'content', or the good life, free from ambition, greed, and the vicissitudes of fortune. Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry. A Study in Conventions, Meaning and Expression, University of Michigan, 1968, 8

<sup>8</sup> Denis Cosgrove, 'Prospect, perspective and the evolution of the landscape idea', Institute of British Geographers Transactions, vol.10 no.1, 1985, 45-62

<sup>9</sup> Ian Burn, National Life & Landscapes. Australian Painting 1900-1940, Sydney, 1990, 108, 79-80. I have been greatly influenced in my reading of the proprietorial pastoral view and its variations by Burn's lectures and writings on Australian landscape.

<sup>10</sup> 'The Emigrant Artist. By J.S.', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 6-5-11, Art Gallery of New South Wales Press Cuttings (hereafter referred to as AGNSWPC), Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 109

for example; 'You haven't seen Australia until you've seen Arthur Streeton'. The promotion for the Tom Roberts exhibition in April 1997 also claimed that 'Tom Roberts captured the real Australia in the late 19th century'.

In contrast to a proprietorial view over the land, the intimate landscape represents the Australian bush from a low viewpoint, with either no outlook, or a mere glimpse through to the distant horizon. Many such paintings are constructed with only a foreground and middleground, in a foreshortened pictorial space similar to the formal organisation of still life and flower paintings. Intimate landscapes emphasise the sensory and haptic experience of being close to the natural environment and native flora within a familiar place. Such views are unresearched in Australian art history and their inclusion as a landscape category extends the interpretive range of the genre.

The term intimate was current in art reviews of the period and it was used to describe or evoke a particular landscape space. The critic for the Age perceived a 'quality of intimacy that is decidedly attractive' in A.E. Newbury's paintings of 1920.<sup>11</sup> Archibald Colquhoun wrote that John Eldershaw's 'most subtle and intimate dealings with nature' were to be found in certain of his watercolour studies of 1920.<sup>12</sup> Joan Weigall was described as being 'on terms of intimacy with gum-trees' in the Bulletin in 1920.<sup>13</sup> Colquhoun characterised Weigall's paintings of 1921 by 'an agreeable breadth and simplicity of treatment, together with an intimate expression of nature'.<sup>14</sup> In 1921 a critic also described Penleigh Boyd's studies of 'placid beauties of the Australian bush' and 'the quietude of morning and evening in the bush at Warrandyte' as 'essentially intimate'.<sup>15</sup> Colquhoun had earlier distinguished between Alice Bale's 'out-of-door work' which he considered 'generally of the more intimate and domestic type, as distinct from the orthodox landscape'.<sup>16</sup> Such orthodoxy became increasingly formulaic, and the gauge against which

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<sup>11</sup> 'Art Notes. Mr A.E. Newbury's Pictures', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 20-4-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 475

<sup>12</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Art of J.R. Eldershaw. Watercolours Exhibited', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 19-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 514

<sup>13</sup> Bulletin (Sydney, NSW), 15-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 517

<sup>14</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Miss Weigall's Pictures. Attractive Exhibits', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 10-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 512

<sup>15</sup> 'Art Notes. Mr Penleigh Boyd', Age (Melbourne, Vic) 24-10-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 124

<sup>16</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Twenty Painters. Pictures to be Shown', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 4-8-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 358

other landscape forms were assessed. Gender identifications of landscape practice which were articulated and sustained in critical discourses confirmed the orthodoxy. A canon of aesthetic codings thus informed, and was informed by, the production and reception of landscape art. Its legacy is the historical imbalance which is still evident in art histories and public collections.

Still life flower studies, garden studies, intimate landscapes, and landscapes depicting land use were coexisting modes in the period before and after the First World War. Each occupied a specific place in the field of meanings which constituted the post-Federation concepts of home and nation. Through their subject matter, content and structuring, the paintings can be read within an intense polemic between land production and land conservation that developed in this period. These antagonistic forces existed in a dialectic of land use whereby the one confirmed the other. I read pastoral and intimate views in particular against the discourses of the dialectic and in this way these two landscape modes become principal organising subjects of my thesis. While the different qualities of intimate and pastoral landscapes may lend themselves to a discourse of opposites, I avoid such binarism by emphasising the affinities, overlaps and intersections of landscape practice. Donna Haraway's proposal that 'binaries[...] can turn out to be nice little tools from time to time' may be a valid approach to some research subjects, but an oppositional framework is inappropriate to my purpose.<sup>17</sup> My historical methodology thus affirms difference in positive terms.

Griselda Pollock's analysis of modernism and femininity in late nineteenth century Paris outlines the concept of 'historical asymmetry' as 'a difference socially, economically, subjectively between being a woman and being a man [which] determined both what and how men and women painted'.<sup>18</sup> Pollock argues that women's social and psychic positioning—'the product of the social structuration of sexual difference'—is articulated in a specific and historical configuration of difference. My thesis has a similar premise. However, while Australian women landscapists certainly worked within a gendered practice,

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<sup>17</sup> Donna Haraway, 'Reading Buchi Emecheta: Contests for 'Women's Experience' in Women's Studies', *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*, New York, 1991, 111

<sup>18</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and the spaces of femininity', *Vision and Difference. Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art*, New York, 1988, 55, 82

Pollock's concept of gendered urban spaces does not readily transpose to landscape. This is evident when considering women's access to places or spaces beyond urban centres. Many women artists enjoyed the mobility allowed by their privileged socio-economic position, and travelled widely within Australia and to Europe and the United States. Despite such mobility, women landscapists practised only within a narrow spectrum which again suggests a psychic rather than physical or geographic demarcation. Doreen Massey describes a related 'power-geometry' or politics of movement and argues that

it does seem that mobility and control over mobility both reflects and reinforces power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, and that some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people.<sup>19</sup>

The politics of movement within landscape practice of the period is asserted in reviews and histories which represent male artists as active and mobile within the landscape. Women artists were not portrayed in this way. Male landscapists were thus seen, in Massey's terms, to 'move more' and this idea has assumed the status of truth. Ros Pesman argues, however, that Australian women 'moved about the empire and Asia from the late nineteenth century as missionaries, teachers, nurses, governesses, actors, tourists and cultural pilgrims', in ways which indicated the 'exceptional mobility' of Australians 'both across and beyond our own borders'.<sup>20</sup> Jan Carter writes that from 1901 to 1910, 204,000 women arrived in Australia, while 175,000 left.<sup>21</sup> Such broad-based mobility also characterises the physical movement of women landscapists. My evidence suggests that the portrayal of male artists as more active than female artists was sustained at a rhetorical rather than a factual level.

The language used to portray the active male landscapist centres on the cultural coding of activity as a masculine attribute. Helene Cixous' analysis is useful in developing an understanding of such a gendered economy of signs. She writes that the

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<sup>19</sup> Doreen Massey, 'A global sense of place', Studying Culture. An Introductory Reader, ed. Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan, London 1993, 235

<sup>20</sup> Ros Pesman, Duty Free. Australian Women Abroad, Melbourne, 1996, 17, 4,

<sup>21</sup> Jan Carter, Nothing to Spare. Recollections of Australian Pioneering Women, Ringwood, 1983, 123

(political) economy of the masculine and of the feminine is organized by different requirements and constraints, which, when socialized and metaphorized, produce signs, relationships of power, relationships of production and of reproduction, an entire immense system of cultural inscription readable as masculine or feminine.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the hierarchized order which 'subjects the entire conceptual organization to man' is a 'male privilege, which can be seen in the opposition by which it sustains itself, between *activity* and *passivity*'.<sup>23</sup> Such a gendered order imbued the rhetoric of Australian landscape of the period.

The dominant rhetoric invoked a further cultural inscription in its emphasis on vision and penetrating sight. The primacy of vision in Western philosophy derives from Platonic thought and subsequent epistemological and cultural assumptions rendering vision as a model for knowledge. This model links the three components of the visual system—the eye, the sun, and light—so that; 'The eye is likened to the intellect, the 'eye of the mind', the sun to the Good, objects of sight to truth, and knowledge itself to the meeting of like with like which[...] accounts for perception'.<sup>24</sup> An implication of this model for women landscapists may be drawn from Luce Irigaray's postulation of a politicised division of the senses. Irigaray's subject is female eroticism and she argues that 'Woman' enters a dominant 'scopic economy' which renders her passive.<sup>25</sup> This masculine visual logic is sustained within a hierarchy of the senses by which vision is a higher, and touch a lower sense, and knowing and seeing are conflated. Hans Jonas's reasoning that sight is 'the ideal distance-sense' through its capacity to 'reach into space' suggests a basis for the value given to vision in landscape's masculinist rhetoric.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Helene Cixous, 'Sorties', New French Feminisms. An Anthology, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, Sussex, 1981, 93

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 91

<sup>24</sup> Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine R. Grontkowski, 'The Mind's Eye', Discovering Reality. Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, Dordrecht, 1983, 210

<sup>25</sup> Luce Irigaray, 'This Sex Which Is Not One', New French Feminisms. An Anthology, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, Sussex, 1981, 101

<sup>26</sup> Hans Jonas, 'The Nobility of Sight. A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses', Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, v. 14, 1954, 517, 519

The dominant rhetoric positioned landscape paintings other than the orthodox as, to borrow Evelyn Fox Keller's term, 'minor themes made inaudible'. Fox Keller argues in relation to science that 'actual science is more faithfully described by the multiplicity of styles and approaches that constitute its practice than by its dominant rhetoric or ideology'.<sup>27</sup> A similar issue was addressed in the exhibition Review in 1995 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales which challenged 'the role of canonical objects in the art historical orthodoxy'. Works by women artists were displayed to trace the fuller shape of the collection and to reveal the institution's 'predilections and biases'.<sup>28</sup> The curator aimed to integrate seldom seen art works into an inclusive exhibition. A letter by the opera singer Lauris Elms to the Sydney Morning Herald in 1994 had already called for the retrieval of women's art from storage to the public space of the gallery. Elms claimed that for the period from 1938 to 1989 'only works by male artists are shown, some of whom are given encores for good measure'.<sup>29</sup>

The partial perspective of the landscape orthodoxy, whereby a limited range of paintings is chosen by curators, art writers and historians, sustains a closed historical narrative. An analogous intellectual closure is addressed by Donna Haraway in her critique of scientific objectivity as a practice of 'unequal parts of privilege and oppression'. She proposes an academic position of 'feminist objectivity', of 'limited location and situated knowledge', as an alternative to the 'unlocatable' masculinist knowledge of science. Her analysis aims to counter the 'modes of denial through repression, forgetting and disappearing acts' of scientific discourse.<sup>30</sup> The process of 'forgetting' also characterises the closed narrative of Australian landscape painting.

The closure of the landscape canon presents the methodological challenge to move beyond a strategy of historical reclamation, in order to critically engage the partial narrative. Reclaiming forgotten history is important empirically but it can further marginalise whatever the canon

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<sup>27</sup> Evelyn Fox Keller, Reflections on Gender and Science, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1985, 125

<sup>28</sup> Deborah Edwards, 'Review—The Australian Collection', exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales 1995, 4-6

<sup>29</sup> Lauris Elms, 'Women painters', Letters to the Editor, Sydney Morning Herald, 31 January 1994

<sup>30</sup> Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature, New York, 1991, 183-201

has already not incorporated, such as works by minor artists and women. Exhibitions such as Completing the Picture (1992), Heritage (1995) and Review still allow the reading of women artists as a separate category. In such discrete placement outside the historical narrative lies the potential for devaluing and 'forgetting'—when Review was dismantled, for example, the former permanent display was rehung and the orthodox canon which the exhibition sought to question was reasserted. The alternate method of my thesis incorporates orthodox masculinist values in order to understand how they function and to thereby expose their bias and displace their authority. It also includes landscape values other than those constructed and ratified by masculinism. My thesis thus speaks from within the knowledge claims that inform landscape practice. Such a critical position follows Donna Haraway's concept of 'situated' and 'transformative' knowledge.

Since the 1970s, feminism has challenged masculine canons of history. This has enabled the re-evaluation of orthodox methodologies through intellectual strategies by which the canon can be re-read. An active and interventionist theoretical position such as Spivac's 'enabling violations' compares with the methodology of much French feminist philosophy of the early 1980s. This focussed on the nature of difference, mainly in linguistic representations, using a diagnostic method by which the feminine was cast as passive to the dominant masculine. Julia Kristeva proposed that women are 'estranged from language' and that they are 'visionaries, dancers who suffer as they speak'.<sup>31</sup> Claudine Herrmann argued that 'physical or mental, man's space is a space of domination, hierarchy and conquest, a sprawling, showy space, a full space', adding that 'woman, on the other hand, has long since learned to respect not only the physical and mental space of others, but space for its own sake, *empty space*'.<sup>32</sup> These writings sought alternative textual strategies but were premised on an essentialising concept of Woman as passive and constrained.

The geographer Susan Ford questions how feminism can critique the masculine structures of landscape and spectatorship, and proposes an active rather than passive critical position. She challenges Irigaray's argument that for Woman to enter the 'dominant scopic economy'

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<sup>31</sup> Julia Kristeva, 'Oscillation between Power and Denial', New French Feminisms. An Anthology, 166

<sup>32</sup> Claudine Herrmann, 'Women in Space and Time', New French Feminisms. An Anthology, 169

signifies her 'relegation to passivity', arguing that to abandon the visual would be a 'defeatist stance' because 'visual communication would seem too powerful an arena to be given up to men'. She asks, 'Can I, as a feminist geographer, politically and morally inhabit the 'male gaze'? Or is the gaze[...] unavoidably phallogentric, thus leaving women to apprehend the world through the other senses of touch, taste, smell and hearing?' Ford proposes a 'feminist spectatorship' by which women are possessors of their own gaze. She argues that the symbolic power of landscape can still be recognised through feminist ideas which hold at the same time the potential to destroy such power. Ford cites Freedburg's concept of the engagement of the senses when looking at art, and posits this as the basis for 'a more intimate account of spectating' which 'recognises the ideological content of a particular landscape, but does not obscure or deny the visual potency of such a landscape'—this can result in a 'much fuller engagement with what we see'. She reasons that women, being 'well-versed in masculine perspectives on the world', are uniquely placed to adopt a 'duplicitous and subversive stance' and can thus work with a different scale and different aesthetic by which the 'male gaze' is subordinated to being one look amongst many.<sup>33</sup> Ford's concept of a 'fuller engagement' broadens the possibilities for reading landscape differently and for affirming its diversity, because it avoids the oppositional structures of landscape's masculinist discourses. Such a strategy is particularly relevant given the metaphorical feminisation of nature which empowers the male gaze.

Western discourses have a history of constructing the object of scientific investigation as female.<sup>34</sup> The concept of the land as female or as mother earth in which 'universal' Woman resides is part of this history.<sup>35</sup> Annette Kolodny's analysis of American life and letters sets out the implicit duality of the land-as-woman metaphor as 'both the regressive pull of maternal containment *and* the seductive invitation to sexual assertion: if the Mother demands passivity, and threatens regression, the Virgin apparently invites sexual assertion and awaits

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<sup>33</sup> Susan Ford, 'Landscape Revisited: A Feminist Reappraisal', New Words, New Worlds: Reconceptualising Social and Cultural Geography. Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the Social and Cultural Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers, University of Edinburgh 1991, 151-155

<sup>34</sup> Simon Ryan, The Cartographic Eye. How Explorers Saw Australia, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 196

<sup>35</sup> See Kay Schaffer, Women and the bush. Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition, Sydney 1988, 22-23

impregnation'.<sup>36</sup> The desire for power over nature and the conquest for territory through exploration which followed white settlement in Australia can be viewed in these terms. According to Simon Ryan, exploration is a gendered practice and structured 'in terms of an active male penetrating the inert yet resistant female land'.<sup>37</sup> Claims to the land followed an inward movement from the coast to the imagined inland and along this trajectory Australia's future was conceived. In psychic terms it was the masculine domain of the pioneer.<sup>38</sup> In landscape painting the gaze of the explorer or outsider resonates in the proprietorial view and its implied claim to the land. Ford argues that prospect 'requires an adequate distance between the observer and that which is being observed. This distancing, the objectification of the prospect, facilitates a notion of possession and control'.<sup>39</sup> Streeton's large views looking out over settled land into the distance established the measure by which others were evaluated. He was the most esteemed landscape artist of the period. When he returned to Australia in 1906 he revealed his gendered view of the land when he cried 'Man! It's like a recall to a beautiful, golden-haired mistress after years of banishment!'<sup>40</sup> Streeton thus extended the notion of the land as essentially feminine to a personalised fantasy of desire and gratification.<sup>41</sup>

Landscape paintings by male artists dominated the public domain until the 1890s. From that time and into the 1930s, unprecedented numbers of professionally trained women landscapists emerged from art schools and exhibited their art. This same period also saw the proprietorial pastoral view assume its iconic status. Its validation derived from its capacity to articulate the discourses of nationalism by imaging the nation as a symbolic whole. Sentiments of local identification and patriotism were consequently transferred to the larger political unit. Joan Dejean argues that in the development of the modern nation-state the subjectivity of its powerful masculine subjects was imagined as a 'national enclosure' or 'canonic fortress'. She uses the term

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<sup>36</sup> Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land. Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters, University of North Carolina, 1975, 67

<sup>37</sup> Ryan, The Cartographic Eye, 196

<sup>38</sup> According to Gillian Rose, this psychic claim has parallels in the heroic field work of geography. Gillian Rose, Feminism & Geography. The Limits of Geographical Knowledge, Oxford, 1993, 70

<sup>39</sup> Ford, 'Landscape Revisited', 151

<sup>40</sup> 'Our Artists Abroad. A Chat with Arthur Streeton', Sydney Morning Herald, 30-12-06, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 5

<sup>41</sup> Annette Kolodny has described this phenomenon in America as the country's 'oldest and most cherished fantasy'. See Kolodny, The Lay of the Land. 4

'psychogeography' to describe the psychic inside and outside of nationalism's 'fortress of representation' adding that it depends for its existence 'on the perfect functioning of a sense of resemblance and dissemblance'.<sup>42</sup> In Australia this psychic geography was defined in masculinism's claim to territory and asserted as truth—what Elizabeth Grosz refers to as the construction of a 'monolithic singular truth'.<sup>43</sup> Landscape was central to the definition of nation since landscape's subject, the land, is a primary referent of patriotism. Gillian Rose argues that while masculinism imagines its universality as a spatial conquest by which 'everything in that space is known and captured by the Same', such territory 'also has internal differences; it contains an Other space that it perceives as outside itself[...] the Other is part of the territory of the Same'.<sup>44</sup> Australian landscape representations other than those which were claimed as the true Australia were analogously viewed as 'outside'. Masculinism's universalising claim depended on the iconic landscape's ability to generalise, naturalise and abstract its referent of nation.<sup>45</sup> Those landscapes which did not conform to such criteria were assessed as minor inflections or fragments of the whole. This was the enterprise which secured masculinism's canonic 'fortress of representation'.

The iconic landscape's capacity to abstract its subject—and to thereby assume symbolic meaning—is the prerequisite of mythology. The canonical hegemony which confirms the symbolism is still evident in unquestioned histories, both written and visual. Such evidence supports Barthes' assertion that it is the first impact of myth that is most profound. He writes that 'a more attentive reading of the myth will in no way increase its power or its ineffectiveness: a myth is at the same time imperfectible and unquestionable; time or knowledge will not make it better or worse'. Barthes defined the essential function of myth as the 'naturalization of the concept', claiming that 'myth acts economically[...] it does away with all dialectics[...] it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth[...] it establishes a blissful clarity'.<sup>46</sup> I intend to dismantle the naturalised

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<sup>42</sup> Joan Dejean, 'No Man's Land: The Novel's First Geography', Yale French Studies, no.73 1987, 175-189

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, 'The in(ter)vention of feminist knowledges', Crossing Boundaries. Feminisms and the critique of knowledges, ed. Barbara Caine, Elizabeth Grosz & Marie de Lepervanche, Sydney 1988, 97

<sup>44</sup> Rose, Feminism & Geography, 149

<sup>45</sup> See Burn, National Life and Landscapes on the later works of Heysen, Streeton and Gruner in particular.

<sup>46</sup> Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers, London, 1982, 130-143

power of the iconic landscape, not through an 'attentive reading' of the myth, but from within the historical economy of the canon.

The masculine bias of landscape practice has resulted in the perception that women artists rarely painted landscape subjects, but William Moore's The Story of Australian Art and exhibition catalogues and newspaper reviews of the period indicate that this was not so. Against such evidence, women artists, particularly of the interwar period, were generally aligned with Australian modernism and associated feminine pursuits of fashion and decoration.<sup>47</sup> This alignment sets up a simple dichotomy which overlooks women's contributions to landscape practice and leaves landscape's masculinism uncontested. Hoorn's assertion that women were 'excluded from participating in the discourse of the pastoral' and instead 'painted Modernist pictures', for example, restricts her analysis to such a dichotomy.<sup>48</sup> Its binarism suppresses the possibility—and fact—that women painted relationships to the land and chose subjects and spatial constructions different from those endorsed by masculinism.

Space and time, as they inform Australian landscape practice, are gendered categories. Space is not a neutral, abstract or metaphysical entity but the structure we 'help create' through our experience in the world.<sup>49</sup> It is not a static concept and can refer to differing physical, conceptual or psychic spaces. Ideas of space and time have been explored in diverse contemporary disciplines—Claudine Herrmann postulates, for example, that the 'space of the mind' is divided 'according to rules that are just as strict as the rules governing physical space'.<sup>50</sup> Norbert Elias argues that the concepts of time and space are 'among the basic means of orientation of our social tradition'.<sup>51</sup> Phenomenological geography asserts that 'people differ in their awareness of space and time and in the way they elaborate a spatio-temporal world'.<sup>52</sup> Feminism has sought alternate models to the concept of time as linear and progressive ever since Kristeva claimed that linear time is the 'time of project and

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<sup>47</sup> Mary Eagle, 'Modernism in Sydney in the 1920s', Studies in Australian Art, ed. Ann Galbally and Margaret Plant, University of Melbourne, 1978, 80-89

<sup>48</sup> Jeanette Hoorn, 'Women Make Modernism: Contesting Masculinist Art Criticism', Strange Women, ed. Jeanette Hoorn, Melbourne, 1994, 25

<sup>49</sup> Kristin Ross, 'Rimbaud and the Transformation of Social Space', Yale French Studies, no. 73, 1987, 104

<sup>50</sup> Claudine Herrmann, 'Women in Space and Time', New French Feminisms. An Anthology, 169

<sup>51</sup> Norbert Elias, Time: an essay, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Oxford, 1992, 98

<sup>52</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience, London, 1977, 119

history'.<sup>53</sup> Social knowledges thus intersect with the distinct ways in which groups and individuals are positioned in relation to received concepts of time and space. The idea of space as experiential knowledge is particularly relevant to the understanding of difference in constructions of the Australian landscape.

The temporal and spatial inflections of intimate Australian landscapes were given no place in nationalism's canon of representation. Painting titles in exhibition catalogues of the period, however, suggest that the imaging of intimate, familiar and everyday landscape views was prolific. The titles can rarely be identified with known paintings, but it is reasonable to assume that within the context of naturalistic practice, they were descriptive. Catalogues of groups such as Twenty Melbourne Painters, the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors, Yarra Sculptors Society, Australian Academy of Art, Australian Art Association, Victorian Artists Society, Australian Artists Association and the Victorian Academy of Arts, show that most paintings were of particular locations, intimate spaces, gardens or flowers. There were few non-specific titles and this suggests that there were few generalising images.

Landscapes of local attachment were produced in a period which witnessed two significant psychic shifts in the perception of the land by white Australians. The first was the shift from alienation to association. Early nineteenth century sentiment held that the land had no tradition, and certain later art and literature imbued the landscape with Sublime grandeur, a philosophical concept which was European in origin. An historical awareness emerged in the late nineteenth century, however, whereby the formerly inscrutable land was claimed through association with it. Such a psychic bond became increasingly heroic as the narrative of exploration was given visible form. Between 1910 and the early 1930s, for example, the Victorian Historical Memorials Committee erected over one hundred stone cairns and plaques to honour the explorers, Flinders, Bass, Hume and Hovell, Strzelecki, Mitchell and Sturt.<sup>54</sup> The cairns were sited to follow their expeditions because in the historical narrative, it was the explorer's imprint which rendered the soil heroic. The developing concept of nation was similarly bound to the idea of

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<sup>53</sup> Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Autumn 1981, 18

<sup>54</sup> Tom Griffiths, 'In Search of Classical Soil: A Bicentennial Reflection', Victorian Historical Journal, November 1988, 27

'mourning inscribed into the landscape'.<sup>55</sup> The losses of the First World War were marked by the raising of memorials on Australian soil, far from the actual graves. The Gallipoli landing day was declared a commemoration of sacrifice and became Australia's sacred day. Anzac memorials which could be experienced as places of remembrance were built in the postwar period and these imparted local and national meaning. Deirdre Gilfedder argues that the war monuments recount the narrative that, 'This is the place that people left from, the place people returned to, or never returned to', and adds that,

This marks a sharp change from the earlier story: 'This is where we have been exiled to—away from home'. It is the movement away from, and back to, that established an idea of Home in both a local and a national sense, as distinct from the older idea of European roots or origin.<sup>56</sup>

The narrative of nation thus secured a geo-historical lineage bound to the Australian soil.

The second shift was away from ideas of human superiority over nature—of dominating and exploiting nature—to land stewardship based on the growing realisation of the need to conserve the environment. The conflict between productivity and conservation—between land usage for economic gain and the undisturbed natural balance—gathered momentum in the late nineteenth century. An active movement for conservation developed from the 1880s into the 1930s, and was particularly concentrated during the intensive clearing of land for farming between 1900 and 1930. In this period wheat and wool signified Australia's primary economic ordering.

Landscape paintings cannot be read as direct statements of land ecology or any aspect of land use. Their meanings may, however, be considered in relation to contemporary discourses of the land. It is evident that within the spectrum of practice, from flower and garden studies to the pastoral view, there is an increasingly strong tendency to image the productive nation. The structure of my thesis will draw out this tendency while bringing into play the affinities and differences between each mode of practice. By offering this relational art history I lay out an

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<sup>55</sup> Deirdre Gilfedder, 'The Road Warrior', *Meanjin*, vol 48 no 2, Winter 1989, 242

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 242

analytical terrain by which each landscape perspective can again be considered as 'one look amongst many'.<sup>57</sup>

Chapter 1 analyses the closed narratives of art histories which secure the cultural values of landscape's masculinism, reinforce its conceptual certainty, and sustain its legacy. I reveal the ways in which cultural value is assigned and sustained, and expose the ideological framework and discourses of masculinism within which Australian landscape is positioned.

Chapter 2 analyses the pictorial structures of the intimate landscape, their affinity with those of still life flower studies and garden studies and their gendered associations. Women have been identified traditionally with the domestic environment of the garden, and gardening has been viewed as an extension of women's nurturing role in the home. The intimate scale and non-hierarchical pictorial space of still life flower and garden studies can be interpreted differently from the masculinist interpretations of art reviews and subsequent art histories. The intimate landscape is read within discourses of land conservation and ecology of the period, thus positioning the imagery of 'being within' the landscape in terms of local attachment and close association with the natural environment.

Chapter 3 analyses those images which suggest an attachment to place and a comfortable relationship between labour and the earth. Such images are read against discourses of land production of the period. These paintings have compositional affinities with both intimate and pastoral landscapes and thus bridge the two modes. I also analyse the constructions of deep pictorial space and perspective which invoke ideas of the future in landscape paintings and expose those landscape elements in which cultural power is inscribed.

Throughout my thesis I explore the culturally grounded concepts of space and place and the consequent psychic and professional access available to landscape artists. The Art Gallery of New South Wales is a constant referent as an institutional patron, an arbiter of cultural value, and a site of cultural knowledge and power. My argument is based on landscape paintings which have been incorporated into both the New

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<sup>57</sup> I have borrowed this phrase from Susan Ford's 'Landscape Revisited: A Feminist Reappraisal', 154

South Wales state collection and masculinist discourses, and also on landscapes which have been overlooked in the visual display and writing of Australian art history.

## CHAPTER 1

### REVISITING THE CANON

Michele Le Doeuff has written of philosophers and 'other learned people' as 'men who only addressed other men'. She perceives in philosophy's masculinism that 'when someone is placed outside, the existence of an inside is re-established by contrast, with no need even to take the trouble to prove the coherence of the inside'.<sup>1</sup> Such a critique of masculinism's unproven coherence applies to the Australian art histories of Hughes, Badham, Smith and Moore. These discourses and allied institutional structures have secured and sustained the hegemonic power of historical values which frame landscape practice. The hegemony can be dissembled nevertheless, to reveal those fissures and dissonances which its coherent guise masks. Such a strategy subverts masculinism's exclusive method and opens up alternate possibilities within its canon, for landscape art.

In the introduction to his popular history The Art of Australia, Robert Hughes answers his question 'Why do Australians paint?' with the words, 'because they are men, and art is a social and perhaps a biological necessity'. He claims that the historian's task is 'to comment, with some degree of impartiality, on what *has* happened; he begins with the fact, and is a recorder, not a maker, of history'.<sup>2</sup> Such factual recording however, is not apparent in Hughes' writing. His assumption that the art community is predominantly masculine is evident particularly in chapters 2 ('The Heidelberg School 1885-96') and 3 ('Landscape, with Various Figures') in which he makes only passing references to Margaret Preston and Vida Lahey. A mere five of the book's 146 black and white and colour plates represent women's art. Hughes writes that his purpose is not to close discussions about Australian art in an 'authoritative study', but to 'keep them open'. In spite of such a claim, Hughes constructs a history which, in Le Doeuff's terms, concerns itself only with the position of men. Hughes states that to choose 'the artists to discuss is always tricky', adding that 'I hope I have omitted no painter whose work has substantially impinged on Australian sensibility; certainly I have left out none who moved mine'.<sup>3</sup> His masculinist

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<sup>1</sup> Le Doeuff, Hipparchia's Choice, 44, 25

<sup>2</sup> Robert Hughes, The Art of Australia, Ringwood, Victoria, 1970, 23, 22

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 24

history secures the circular process described by Le Doeuff, by which men address only other men.

Grosz's analysis of the masculinity of knowledge with its 'propositions, arguments, assertions, methodologies' is also useful to the consideration of Badham's A Study of Australian Art. Grosz writes of the status attributed to knowledges 'which present themselves as universal, objective, truthful and neutral' through the 'prevailing commitment' to 'one truth, one method, one knowledge, one mode of reason, one form of subject'.<sup>4</sup> Such claims to a lack of bias by Badham in his foreword are contradicted by his text. Here he follows the masculine metaphors of pioneering and agriculture in chapters entitled 'The Pioneers', 'The First Sowing', 'The First Harvest', and 'The Second Sowing', and sets out a history of male artists for whom he makes generous claims—Ashton, Folingsby and Hall 'let light into the darkness of the continent', Buvelot was 'the first artist to paint the landscape with dignity', and Streeton is commended for his 'bravura', 'spirit of enquiry' and 'unique command over landscape distances'. Badham cites Heidelberg as the place where artists could 'worship nature' and 'hear the words of the newly-arrived prophet of the new order—Tom Roberts'. Heysen's work is described as 'masculine, showing the uninhibited male's dislike of compromise'.<sup>5</sup> The only woman artist mentioned in 'The First Sowing' is Dora Meeson who is listed as a life class student at the National Gallery School. Badham acknowledges his debt to William Moore's The Story of Australian Art which he found 'of inestimable value', adding that 'I pay full tribute to the accuracy of Julian Ashton's judgement when he said, 'It will not be possible for anyone to write authoritatively upon the various phases of the art of this great continent without having recourse to The Story of Australian Art for a foundation upon which to build'.<sup>6</sup> Badham thus affirms a masculine lineage of accuracy and authority as the basis to his own claims to objectivity.

Although Moore lists women landscapists from Victoria and New South Wales in his chapter 'The Australian School of Landscape Painters', the foreground narrative is that of the male landscapist. He particularly emphasises the physical activity of such artists. Moore writes that Louis Buvelot 'went as far north as Seymour and as far west as

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<sup>4</sup> Grosz, 'The in(ter)vention of feminist knowledges', 93, 97, 99

<sup>5</sup> Herbert E. Badham, A Study of Australian Art, Sydney, 1949, 37-69

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 'Acknowledgements', n.p.

Coleraine'; William Charles Piguenit 'was attracted to the mountainous regions; and as he often penetrated trackless country, he must be credited with being an explorer as well as an artist'; John Mather 'was one of the first to rouse a wider interest among Victorians in the beauty of their own colony, and the first to discover the Healesville district as a sketching-ground'; and George and Arthur Collingridge were 'the first artists to explore the Hawkesbury River'.<sup>7</sup> Within his narrative, physical movement evokes a relationship with the land centred on freedom and discovery. Streeton had made such an association in 1891 when he expressed his desire and capacity to 'hurry up and move somehow':

I picture in my head[...] the great gold plains, & all the beautiful inland Australia & I love the thought of walking into all this & trying to expand & express it in my way[...] It is immense[...] But I can't sit here thinking[...] So first opportunity & I off.<sup>8</sup>

Moore also describes the territory covered by Lister Lister as a wide-ranging movement; 'Going further afield than most artists[...] he has painted along the coast from the south of Jervis Bay to the north of Terrigal, inland north-west of New England and south-west as far as Canberra'.<sup>9</sup> In The Story of Australian Art, Moore characterises male landscapists as pioneers or explorers in action or in spirit.

Landscape's masculinism is secured in historical discourses which sustain an integrated narrative of the artist, the land, and the work of art. Such thematic cohesion can be understood through Hayden White's concept of the correlation between an organicist 'mode of explanation' and a conservative 'mode of ideological implication'. In such a structure, 'a fully explicated historical domain will appear as a field of integrated entities governed by a clearly specifiable structure of relationships' which are either mechanistic (cause-effect) or organicist (part-whole). White adds that this model 'strives not for dispersion, but for integration, not for analysis, but for synthesis'.<sup>10</sup> Such historical synthesis characterises masculinist Australian art history. For Raymond Williams also, the word organic has 'an important applied or

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<sup>7</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, I, 87-90

<sup>8</sup> 'To Tom Roberts. First half of 1891', Letters from Smike. The Letters of Arthur Streeton 1890 - 1943, ed. Ann Galbally and Anne Gray, Melbourne, 1989, 30

<sup>9</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, 96

<sup>10</sup> Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, 63

metaphorical meaning, to indicate certain kinds of relationships and thence certain kinds of society'.<sup>11</sup> Such metaphoric meaning is found in masculinism's assumed synthesis.

The figure of the landscape artist is central to the integrated components of masculinist art history. J.S MacDonald saw McCubbin as an artist whose pioneering spirit had direct implications for his art. He wrote that McCubbin's paintings 'show a projection into the past of his feelings, which put him en rapport with the pioneers, and let him assume in spirit the burdens their labours entailed'. MacDonald adds that 'McCubbin's pictures will convey a true view of their ancestor's condition and attitude. No new land has ever had this done for it'.<sup>12</sup> MacDonald saw McCubbin as a medium to Australia's past through his capacity to project beyond his immediate environment. Julian Ashton was portrayed as a benevolent warrior with 'the eagle Anzac cast of face that proclaims the fighter, and the twinkling eyes that tell of a soul that knows no real bitterness'.<sup>13</sup> Moore places the male landscapist in a patriarchal lineage by stating that Buvelot was 'acknowledged by Streeton, Roberts, Paterson, McCubbin and Mather as the 'father' of landscape painting in Australia'.<sup>14</sup> In turn, Streeton acknowledged Tom Roberts as the 'father of Australian landscape painting'. Male artists established the heroic scale of Australian landscape painting within such a patriarchal structure. Moore writes that Buvelot 'was the first to paint landscapes on a large scale with a sense of space and design and a dignity worthy of the subject'.<sup>15</sup> Long's Spirit of the plains was 'the initial attempt to symbolize the vastness of the open spaces'.<sup>16</sup> Smith echoes this point when he writes that 'Streeton travelled inland to the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury River to paint on a more heroic scale. The desire to paint landscapes which would suggest the immensity and grandeur of Australian nature never left him'.<sup>17</sup> Moore emphasises the large painting size required to represent the heroic landscape in his account of Heysen's studio practice. Heysen described his difficulty in painting Hauling Timber in his old studio which measured 'only eleven

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<sup>11</sup> Raymond Williams, Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Cambridge, 1976, 189-190

<sup>12</sup> J.S. MacDonald, 'Frederick McCubbin', Art in Australia, 1:7, 1919, 48

<sup>13</sup> 'Julian Ashton', Sydney Mail (Sydney, NSW), 18-2-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 434

<sup>14</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, I, 87

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 88

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 97

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1970, Oxford University Press, 1974, 80

feet wide and nine feet high'. His new studio at Ambleside provided him with 'all the space I require'. Moore notes that Heysen's work became 'much freer and broader' following a trip to the Flinders Ranges, and that 'even his gum-trees have been painted with more attention to mass than to detail'.<sup>18</sup>

Moore's emphasis on the masculine qualities of landscape continues in his discussion of Howard Ashton who 'preferred subjects with solidity and weight—big headlands with their weather-worn vegetation and the rugged heights of the Blue Mountains and Mount Kosciusko. His work shows remarkable force'. G.V.F. Mann's painting has 'freedom and breadth', Robert Johnson 'has a free vigorous method of attack', and the landscapes of George Bell are 'broadly painted'. Charles Wheeler is noted for his 'tenacity' and the 'sheer determination' which enabled him 'to gain an assured position among our leading men'.<sup>19</sup> Female landscapists are not described by Moore in such heroic terms, but he does observe that 'a large outlook distinguishes the work of Clara Southern, who has painted a number of spacious landscapes'. Gladys Owen is also described as 'a forceful artist'.<sup>20</sup> Within Moore's conflation of listings, anecdotes and judgements, few expanded comments are made about women landscapists. It is relevant then, that his comments on the spaciousness and broad outlook of Southern's art endorse her placement at the head of a list of women landscapists. Textual space within Moore's history also reveals his structuring of value. The short listing of ten women landscapists in a small paragraph is followed by a lengthy discussion of Hans Heysen of over one and a half pages.<sup>21</sup> This section includes two large quotations by the artist which is a standard means of reinforcing the characterisation of authority.

Masculinist discourses valued the idea of unity within the paintings themselves, by which formal elements were fused in an harmonious whole. McInnes' work was 'generally characterised by a uniting tone of silver grey' and his colour 'always harmonised and restrained' while 'light, gracious and all pervading, is felt to invest even the least of his canvases'.<sup>22</sup> Lister Lister's The Honeysuckers was praised for its 'warmly glowing suffusion of faint yellow and rose-coloured light of the late

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<sup>18</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, I, 100

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 105-107

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 106

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 99-100

<sup>22</sup> R. Sutherland, 'William Beckwith McInnes', Art in Australia, 1:1, 1916, n.p.

afternoon [which] gives a binding fascination to the work as a whole'.<sup>23</sup> Lionel Lindsay wrote in 1919 that Heysen had long sought 'that harmonious relation of necessary parts which is the foundation of all great work, and which makes Heysen's art something so completely outside the pale of ordinary picture building'.<sup>24</sup> The painting's unity was at times seen to hold social implications in that it was not visually disturbing. Howard Ashton wrote of Percy Lindsay's landscapes that, 'One finds no Bolshevism in these quiet, atmospheric, well-drawn landscapes with their spacious skies full of clouds and light'.<sup>25</sup> Sydney Long perceived the 'harmonies' and 'fascinating range of tones' in the Australian landscape which made him feel that 'this is where I belong as a painter', adding that 'we are learning to look upon landscape as a kind of art itself',

depending not so much on what is there for everyone to see as upon the way in which it is seen—the form it has to a painter's eye, the colour it has, the way its harmonies of form and colour combine in a painter's feeling.<sup>26</sup>

Harmony was associated with permanence, established through the work of art. Lionel Lindsay wrote that 'Streeton has revealed the native beauty of our country' and in that revelation 'he has raised his own most enduring monument'.<sup>27</sup> At times such perpetuity applied to the artist's own immortality—of Charles Conder, Julian Ashton wrote that,

it is pleasant to think that his five year sojourn in Australia laid the foundation for those colour poems, those charming medleys of pearly blossom and azure skies upon which his claim to a place amongst the immortals must be based.<sup>28</sup>

Hilder also, was a 'name that will live for ever in the history of Australian art'.<sup>29</sup> Such ideas of immutability aligned readily with those of the sacred and the divine. Lionel Lindsay described Streeton's 'two

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<sup>23</sup> 'Royal Art Society. The Spring Exhibition. Strong, Sound Show', Sydney Morning Herald, 23-8-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 367

<sup>24</sup> Lionel Lindsay, 'Hans Heysen's Later Water-Colours', Art in Australia, 1:6, 1919, n.p.

<sup>25</sup> Howard Ashton, 'Percy Lindsay's Landscapes', Art in Australia, 1:11, 1921, n.p.

<sup>26</sup> 'Syd Long A.R.E. An Interview with A.G. Stephens', Art in Australia, 1:11, 1921, n.p.

<sup>27</sup> Lionel Lindsay, 'Arthur Streeton's Place in Australian Art', Art in Australia, 1:2, 1917, n.p.

<sup>28</sup> Julian Ashton, 'Some Recollections of Charles Conder', Art in Australia, 1:2, 1917, n.p.

<sup>29</sup> The Baldwin Spencer Collection of Australian Pictures and Works of Art, auction catalogue, Fine Art Society's Galleries, Melbourne, May 1919, 16

renderings of the Hawkesbury' as art which was painted 'entirely in the open' upon which rests the 'benediction of the sky', adding that,

Lyricaly it affirms the gift of life, the sovereignty of the sun. Such pictures are adorations, veritable hymns to Apollo, the one and only god of all true landscape painters.<sup>30</sup>

Streeton's 'lovely pastoral' Still Glides the stream and shall for ever glide was described by Lindsay as a contemplative painting which 'lays its quiet spell upon us ever more surely, because its poetry is inherent in the faithful and delicate rendering of light'.<sup>31</sup> Streeton himself was described as a 'true child of Apollo' who 'brought to a golden harvest the efforts of his companions in impressionism' and who 'still stays with a kind of golden serenity in the place he made for himself with such apparent ease'. For Lindsay, Streeton was 'the blond painter of spacious country-sides flatly lighted of the sun'.<sup>32</sup> The recurring emphasis on the sun and its light reinforces the masculinism of landscape's discourse, for in Western thought the sun is a masculine principle; the sun's heat is traditionally 'a masculine generative force'.<sup>33</sup> As a revered quality in Australian landscape painting since the 1880s, the rendering of light was a preeminent gauge of artistic worth, as the following art review of 1919 indicates:

Light indeed, is the chief problem of the Australian artists; by his methods and his success in solving that omnipresent problem his position and merit are judged. Australian landscapes are usually flooded with light; its representation is, therefore, more important than even the composition of the picture.<sup>34</sup>

The representation of light was seen to be integral to 'the foundation of the Australian landscape school of painting' and its distinctiveness.<sup>35</sup> Streeton was claimed in 1906 to have 'penetrated to the inner mystery of Australian sunshine' and 'emerged with the magic wherewith to reproduce its wondrous effects on canvas'.<sup>36</sup> In 1910, a critic praised his

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<sup>30</sup> Lindsay, 'Arthur Streeton's Place in Australian Art', n.p.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>32</sup> Lionel Lindsay, 'Twenty Five Years of Australian Art', Art in Australia, 1:4, 1918, n.p.

<sup>33</sup> Kolodny, The Lay of the Land, 23

<sup>34</sup> 'Sunshine and Clouds. J. Muir Auld's Oil Paintings', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 16-7-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 352

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 352

<sup>36</sup> 'Our Artists Abroad. A Chat with Arthur Streeton', Sydney Morning Herald, 30-12-06, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 5

'brilliant canvases' where 'the sun shines, the sky is blue, the creek winds beneath shimmering trees. All is gaiety and beauty', and described Australia Felix as 'a dazzlingly successful rendering of space and sunshine'.<sup>37</sup> His paintings were executed in his 'spacious galleries with a top light, in the centre of the Victorian Markets, almost under the dome'.<sup>38</sup> Significantly, Moore wrote that Streeton's painting 'Hawkesbury River in the Melbourne Gallery' (The Purple noon's transparent might) was 'painted in the blaze of noon'.<sup>39</sup>

Mabel Withers' painting was praised in 1919 for its 'welcome suggestion of atmosphere, of sunlight and space' in 'very effective renderings of typically Australian sun-bathed distances', but the alignment of women landscapists with dominant values was unusual.<sup>40</sup> Equally, light-filled canvases by male landscapists were rarely criticised. The comment that Heysen had 'exhausted the commercial possibilities of summer' and was 'evidently ready to advertise the other seasons if someone can find him a gumtree that he hasn't already exploited' was unusual. The criticism that Harold Herbert 'has now discovered that an Australian day can produce something more than sunstroke and headache' was also uncommon.<sup>41</sup> Landscapes by women were generally included in critical discourses as 'other than' the masculine orthodoxy, and disparaging reviews were common. Streeton wrote in 1921 that Asquith Baker's landscapes were 'insipid', and 'over addicted to the use of weak greens and blues'.<sup>42</sup>

Artistic vision was central to realising the golden and sun-filled landscape vistas. Moore and McCubbin characterised Buvelot as an artist of 'vision' with the 'genius to catch and understand' the features of the country and 'point out the way' to the 'painters who followed him'.<sup>43</sup> Moore quotes Mary Gilmore's comment that Hilder 'made the golden air of this land visible to all of us, as it was to him'.<sup>44</sup> Norman Lindsay

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<sup>37</sup> 'The Painters of the Bush. By L.E.', Sydney Morning Herald, 11-6-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 75

<sup>38</sup> 'Mr Streeton's Exhibition', Sydney Morning Herald, 18-7-07, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 20

<sup>39</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, I, 85

<sup>40</sup> 'Art Notes', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 15-7-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 350

<sup>41</sup> 'Two Melbourne Art Shows', The Triad: A Journal Devoted to Literacy, Pictorial, Musical and Dramatic Art, 10-5-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 331

<sup>42</sup> 'Art Notes. Paintings by Mr A. Streeton. Miss Asquith Baker', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 6-7-21, AGNSWPC, March 1930 to August 1932, Part 1, 18

<sup>43</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, I, 88

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 101-102

evoked an affinity between God and Gruner's vision when he wrote that the 'landscape painter's humanity is most apparent when he can rise superior to his sense of actuality':

The beauty of Nature is not sufficient here; it must be translated by the inner vision of the artist. God may supply the material, but its beauty is of man's selection and creation[...] it is man[...] who has imposed upon God the human perception of beauty.<sup>45</sup>

In Australian Painting, Smith constructs a value system within 'Genesis' by which vision and creativity are privileged—Roberts, Streeton and Conder in particular are conceived of as bearers of vision. Ideas of vision dovetailed those of the artist as a leader or prophet. Julian Ashton was described as 'Artist, Teacher, Prophet; no man has had a greater influence on Art in New South Wales than Julian Ashton'.<sup>46</sup> Roberts was represented by Lionel Lindsay as a visionary upon whom a 'divine discontent' had 'settled' and who, 'like Paul—a light unto the Gentiles—was a natural leader' who had a 'great gospel to preach' in 'Truth to Nature; sunlight; atmosphere; the blue sky: breadth of handling; the square brush and paint laid on; a broken prism in all its suggestive beauty':

So to Box Hill went Roberts and his brethren to bear witness on canvas to the true faith[...] and for the first time in our history Australian landscape was well and truly characterised.<sup>47</sup>

Hilder was portrayed by Julian Ashton as a guiding star whose 'highest achievements will outlive both the vagaries of Fashion and the ravages of Time' and whose art was thus immortal. He was one of a gleaming 'small band of stars which, like the pointers in our Southern Cross, mark the course we must travel to the new ideals'. He was 'one of those who are rarely endowed' who 'passed away before reaching the zenith of his powers'.<sup>48</sup> Landscape's masculinism also ascribed god-like powers of creativity to the artist. Lionel Lindsay characterised Heysen as the 'painter of big gums' who 'might have created them, so surely does he raise their majestic forms with his brush'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Norman Lindsay, 'Elliott Gruner's 'Morning Light'', Art in Australia, 1:5, 1918, n.p.

<sup>46</sup> C.L.J., 'Julian Rossi Ashton', Art in Australia, 1:1, 1916, n.p.

<sup>47</sup> Lionel Lindsay, 'Tom Roberts', Art in Australia, 1:8, 1921, n.p.

<sup>48</sup> 'J.J. Hilder', The Baldwin Spencer Collection of Australian Pictures and Works of Art, Fine Art Society's Galleries, Melbourne, May 1919, 16

<sup>49</sup> Lindsay, 'Twenty Five Years of Australian Art', n.p.

Against such metaphors of prophecy and near-godliness, women artists were generally represented as followers. A.M.E. Bale, herself a prominent artist, is subverted in the following promotion of Meldrum's 'doctrine of painting' which 'acted as a lamp in dispersing most of her technical difficulties':

At one period of her career she discovered that her work lacked the truthful relation of tones that was to be found in the paintings of Meldrum and his students, but when once the basis of his theories was realised and acted upon she made a rapid improvement.<sup>50</sup>

Even the presumption of Bale's dependence as an artist takes second place to Meldrum's ideas. By contrast, Roberts was portrayed elsewhere as 'the tenacious fighter for truth to Nature, who never relinquishes his grip', and Ashton as 'the enemy of shams and of the pseudo-artists'.<sup>51</sup> Such active and passive counterpoints characterise the contrivances which secured masculism's partial account.

Masculinist discourses culminate in Smith's Australian Painting 1788-1970, in particular the chapter entitled 'Genesis 1885-1914'. Smith sets out the period from 1885 to 1939 in 'Genesis 1885-1914', 'Exodus 1881-1919', 'Leviticus 1913-32', and 'Contemporary Art Arrives 1930-39'. He establishes a value structure by which the Heidelberg School is the gauge of artistic achievement. Subsequent art is referred back to the 'genesis' of Australian painting and evaluated in terms of that achievement—an 'inspired creative art' is 'born', then 'lost' in romantic, lyrical and modernist excursions, and 'reborn' around 1939. Australian Impressionism is the consistent dominant referent.

Smith acknowledges that the introduction of Post-impressionism to Australia in the period from 1913 to 1932 'owed much to women', adding that their contribution 'appears to have been corporately greater than that of men; and in individual achievement in every way comparable'.<sup>52</sup> He undermines women's significant contribution, however, by stating that 'a great deal of post-impressionistic work in Australia tends to be on the light side in terms of real achievement'.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> 'A.M.E. Bale', Art in Australia, 3:7, March 1924, n.p.

<sup>51</sup> Lindsay, 'Tom Roberts', n.p.

<sup>52</sup> Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1970, 198

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 202-203

Earlier in 'Leviticus', Smith argues that 'the decade from 1920 to 1930 was not a particularly creative period in Australian art', and that,

post-impressionism did not bring the same sense of discovery and liberation to the artists of the time that impressionism brought to the men of Roberts's generation, or that expressionism, surrealism and abstract art were to bring to the artists who began to work in the years preceding the Second World War.<sup>54</sup>

The period between Australian Impressionism of the late nineteenth century and Modernism of the late 1930s is thus represented as a decline or deviation. Smith's historical organisation proposes that art practice is secure in male hands at Heidelberg, declines outside this norm, and is safely returned to masculine command in the late 1930s. This view is further inscribed when he argues that until the 1940s,

the modern movement in Australia simply did not bring forth artists of stature sufficient to produce work that, regardless of time and taste, will stand comparison on its own merits with the best work of the Heidelberg School. Nor did it produce a leader of the calibre of Roberts with enough drive and creative ability to break through the thick rind of artistic complacency that encrusted the decade.<sup>55</sup>

Smith upholds masculine achievement as the criterion by which all is measured. 'Genesis' is the first of three Biblical chapter titles—those outside the years 1885 to 1932 are simply descriptive. The ultimate patriarchal framework of the Bible is thereby secured as the over-arching metaphor and symbolic order. The period 1885-1932 is thus defined through a specialised group of male artists—the doyens of Australian Impressionism—those who had the 'power to inspire creative art'.<sup>56</sup> Such masculine promotion includes Smith's own.

The presence of women is minimal in these chapters of Australian Painting, although Smith makes passing reference to Constance Roth, Violet Teague and Ruby Lind. Streeton's recollection of the 'last summer at Eaglemont' of 1889 when 'we made sketches of the girls on the lawn' would appear to characterise a view of women of the late nineteenth century. He refers to female students who attended weekend landscape and still life classes at Eaglemont and his description fuses

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 195

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 201

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 106

them with the motherly protectiveness of nature in the words: 'The lovely pure muslin, and gold, sweet grass-seeds and the motherly she-oak, with its swing spreading a quiet blessing over them all'.<sup>57</sup> Streeton designates his female contemporaries to a space outside art practice—such a designation, together with Smith's expression of women artists' failure within Post-impressionism, confirms Australian Impressionism as the exclusive enterprise of men.

Smith sets out 'Genesis' in terms of innovation and the 'new vision of Australian landscape'.<sup>58</sup> He views the discovery of the Heidelberg artists as the 'naturalistic interpretation of the Australian sunlit landscape[...] in the full blaze of sunlight' and thus aligns the Heidelberg artists with the masculine symbolism of the sun.<sup>59</sup> Smith couples Streeton with landscape's heroic scale through his desire to travel inland; the artist is also a focus for Smith's religious allusions. He writes that 'Streeton sought to paint his hymn of praise to the Australian sun' and quotes the artist's following description of the place where he painted Fire's On: 'There is a cutting through the vast hill of bright sandstone; the walls of rock run high up and are crowned by gums bronze-green[...] and behind is the deep blue azure heaven'. Smith also quotes Streeton's thoughts that, 'My path lies towards the west, which is a flood of gold. I felt near the gates of paradise—the gates of the west'.<sup>60</sup> Smith emphasises the religious roots of Norman Lindsay and Heysen. Heysen 'settled at Hahndorf[...] amid a rich and beautiful agricultural country first settled by a community of Evangelical Lutherans'. From this country Heysen 'fashioned an image of the Australian landscape which has come to occupy a permanent place in the national imagination'. His 'vision' acquired 'nobility', and made the eucalypt forests 'his own' subject. Smith adds that 'Heysen's vision is cast in a heroic mould', that there is a 'baroque magnificence in the amplitude of his scale', and that his gum trees 'are almost Piranesian in their grandeur'. He writes of the artist's 'control of breadth', the 'authority of accumulated knowledge' of his large paintings, and the 'power, clarity and vigour' of his water-colour paintings.<sup>61</sup> Smith's binding ideas of sacredness, creation, and the enduring cultural heritage of Heidelberg are bound to the masculinism of discovery and exploration and, ultimately, to a concept of bush-based

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 94

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 83

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 82

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113

nationalism—McCubbin, Roberts and Streecon, 'each after his own fashion, made a significant contribution to the growth and diffusion of this national myth'. Smith secures the masculinist absolute of a patriotism based on 'sun-drenched optimism' through his thematic consistencies.<sup>62</sup>

Ideas of lineage underscore landscape's placement within Smith's discourse. His idea of the Heidelberg ethos being reborn in the late 1930s to reassert its creative force has already been mentioned. A European lineage is affirmed in orthodox art historical terms through the influence of Bastien-Lepage and Courbet in Roberts' work, and in Heysen's handling of 'the big landscape' in which he 'drew more thoroughly than either Streecon or McCubbin upon the figure and landscape tradition of the European masters'. Heysen's large paintings resonated with the 'echoes of Turner, Constable and Rubens' and his Study for approaching storm 'possesses the freshness and authority of an old master'.<sup>63</sup> Heysen's 'vision' was not commonplace—it 'acquired nobility, as did Constable's, through a lifelong devotion to the countryside of his boyhood'.<sup>64</sup> Heysen's affinity with the land is coupled with his capacity as a seer, through the 'prophetic ring' of his comments on Central Australia, whereby he 'foreshadowed an interest in the desert landscape to be made much of by Drysdale, Nolan and others in the 1940s'.<sup>65</sup> Smith thus makes Heysen the connector between Heidelberg and the revived creative spirit of Australian art in the 1940s. He privileges Norman Lindsay and Hans Heysen, who cannot be categorised directly with the Heidelberg School, by writing about them in monographic form. Lindsay's intellectual contribution in the artist-as-creator model is emphasised, as is Heysen's heroic vision. Smith stresses Heysen's leadership, by which he 'pioneered' and 'others followed'.<sup>66</sup> Roberts too, was 'a natural leader and a creative artist'.<sup>67</sup> Such leadership, in conjunction with ideas of visual authority, originality, power, clarity and vigour, asserts a paradigm of masculine endeavour within Smith's own hymn of praise.

The values of Smith's paradigm subside as he discusses the deviations from his schema. Hilder's 'slim, lyrical effusions' and Gruner's

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 85-86

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 113-114

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 113

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 114

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 115

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 122

'mundane' early work are represented as deficient against the Impressionist revelations of Heidelberg, and Smith uses feminised language to discuss their art. Gruner's 'mood is invariably sentimental, his composition stereotyped, and his colour lacks sensitivity'. He adds that to compare

any of Gruner's early beach scenes or spring landscapes with similar early paintings by Roberts, Conder or Streeton is to realize at once that Australian impressionism had lost the power to inspire creative art.<sup>68</sup>

Smith clearly conceived of sentimentality as a lapse when measured against his praise of 'the true impressionist' who was 'an objective painter' and 'not concerned with the moods of nature or with literary values' He added that it was 'his business to depict a fragment of the world in a moment of time with all the conditions of light, atmosphere, temperature, wind and shadow peculiar to the moment'.<sup>69</sup>

Smith's depreciation of sentimentality aligns him with the view that such an attribute applies to women, while objectivity, reason and exteriority apply to men. He compares the decorativeness of Blamire Young's art with the Heidelberg paradigm when he writes that 'Young's decorative neo-Rococo manner is in sharp contrast to the *plein-air* realism of Roberts and McCubbin. He played with a dream-world behind the thin veils of his graded and granulated washes'.<sup>70</sup> He further depreciates decorativeness in his comments on Heysen, whose 'response to nature' was 'too deep to be long confined to decorative mannerisms'. Smith's ideas of objective art and seriousness of pursuit complement his promotion of artistic professionalism. The status of the Heidelberg artists, who achieved professional recognition after being tradesmen and weekend painters, coincides with the emergence of the few artists who, like Roberts, could for a time earn a living from their art. Smith conflates professionalism and serious commitment, and sets such values against the 'enthusiasts for cultural improvement and well-meaning amateurs' of the early art societies.<sup>71</sup> In Australian Painting then, landscape practice is framed by Smith as comprising vision and truth, based on ideas of discovery, exploration and pioneering, lineage,

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 106

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 92

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 106: Smith's allusion to Rococo implies an effeminisation, a topic which begs further research. It is also significant that no woman has access to an art historical category such as neo-Rococo in Smith's discourse.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 115

independence, nationalism, religiosity, patriarchy, objectivity, revealed truth, professionalism, and above all, in Roberts' words, 'Business, my dear boy, business'.<sup>72</sup>

Roberts' idea of art as business was an indication of his ultimate success, but his situation was exceptional. To be an artist in the period from 1900 to 1940 was a precarious existence, since patronage and market systems were not strongly established. The institutions of Australian art were defined by men—the Board of Trustees at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales was composed entirely of men, mainly politicians and businessmen.<sup>73</sup> Mrs H.V. Evatt was the first woman Trustee, appointed in 1943.<sup>74</sup> Eccleston du Faur was a founding Trustee who died in 1915, and his profile gives an idea of the interests of an influential man of the early twentieth century. Du Faur was identified with exploration and discovery after 'fitting out a private expedition in 1874 to search for the remains of the famous explorer Leichhardt'.<sup>75</sup> He was associated with mapping and surveying for, as chief draughtsman in the Department of Lands for ten years until 1881, he compiled 'the most complete map of the colony prepared up to that date' and calculated its 'true area'. He opened up areas of the Blue Mountains for residential settlement and 'was the first to penetrate up Govett's Leap Creek'.<sup>76</sup> On his retirement, du Faur went into business as a pastoral agent and was therefore economically linked to the land. His ecological interests included Kuring-gai Chase, 'the great public park on the shores of Cowan Creek, of which he was managing trustee until 1903'.<sup>77</sup> He was also one of the first members of the New South Wales Academy of Art from which the Art Gallery of New South Wales was formally

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 121, quoting D.H. Souter's account of Tom Roberts, quoted by Croll, 40-41

<sup>73</sup> From 1876 to 1997, 10 women and 95 men have been Trustees. The women are Mary Alice Evatt M.A. (1943-1970), Lady Mary Fairfax (1971-1980), Diana Mary Heath, Vice-President (1977-1980), Vesta Davies (1980-1982), Judy Cassab CBE (1980-1988), Dr. Denise Hickey (1982-1986), Carla Zampatti (1988-1995), Jilian Broadbent (1993-), Anne Landa (1996-) and Janet Laurence (1997-).

<sup>74</sup> Eadith Walker was nominated for a position on the Board of Trustees in 1907 which she refused. Trustees Minutes, 13 May 1907, 383, quoted in Heather Johnson, *Art Patronage in Sydney 1890-1940*, MA Hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1988, 25

<sup>75</sup> 'Art Gallery President Dead. Passing of Mr E.F. Du Faur', *Sunday Times* (Sydney, NSW), 25-4-15, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 222

<sup>76</sup> 'Death of Mr Du Faur. A Notable Career. President of Art Gallery', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26-4-15, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 223

<sup>77</sup> *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW), 26-4-15, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 222

established.<sup>78</sup> Du Faur's public interests in science, exploration, surveying, pastoralism, business and art endorsed his status at a time when such masculine concerns were central to the promotion of an Australian national ethos.

The National Art Gallery was the primary purchaser of art in the state. The Trustees held the power to purchase works for the collection, and favoured British art over Australian. The Trustees' bias did not go without criticism—Norman Lindsay suggested in 1913 that they 'should occasionally unbend to take a little interest in local talent' while at the same time noting that 'it would save a lot of heartburning among landscape painters if the Wynne prize were handed over permanently to Mr Lister'.<sup>79</sup> Lister Lister, who was a Trustee from 1900 to 1943, and Vice-President from 1919 to 1943, appears to have been highly regarded as an artist. Of eleven of his paintings in the state collection, nine are from the period 1888 to 1919—of these, seven were purchased in the same or following year of their making, which indicates the Trustees' keenness.<sup>80</sup> The sustained purchasing power of the Trustees shaped the character of a collection which was viewed by large audiences—total attendances for 1907 were 260,832.<sup>81</sup> Attendances for 1910 were 269,745.<sup>82</sup> In contrast with such public interest there was, in 1914, only a small group of private collectors in Sydney. Most were men, but included a 'Mrs Rutherford, of Bathurst'.<sup>83</sup>

The Trustees influenced the careers of artists, since acceptance into the art establishment was measured by work being purchased for the National Art Gallery. In late 1914, the Trustees purchased eight works

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<sup>78</sup> The 'Gallery of Art' was established in 1874, and from 1880 was known by its present name. In 1883 the name was changed to National Art Gallery of New South Wales. Art Gallery of New South Wales Handbook, Sydney, 1988, 9

<sup>79</sup> 'On Art Gallery. Indifference to the Best Work. Trustees Further Criticised. Norman Lindsay's Views', Evening News (Sydney, NSW), 13-12-13, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 155

<sup>80</sup> The exceptions are The Golden splendour of the bush (c.1906) which was a gift of public subscribers in 1907, and Banksia (c.1919) which was purchased in 1938. Check List of the Australian Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1989, 82-83

<sup>81</sup> 'National Art Gallery', Sydney Morning Herald, 7-1-08, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 34

<sup>82</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, 5-1-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 91

<sup>83</sup> The others named were Mr Henry C. Dangar, Mr William Dixson, Mr R.T. Carter, Mr Richard Binnie; and Mr Samuel Hordern, Mr Anthony Hordern, and Mr Lebbeus Hordern, who 'are having art galleries built at their private residences'. The late Mr John Hughes, M.L.C. was also named as a well-known collector. 'Works of Art. Private Collectors. The Picture Buyers', Sydney Morning Herald, 22-4-14, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 183

from the Royal Art Society for 440 guineas, six works from the Society of Artists for 275 guineas, and three works from the Society of Women Painters for 75 guineas.<sup>84</sup> The Daily Telegraph reported that this, and the previous year's expenditure on Australian art 'has exceeded any sum that has been spent in this direction during previous years'.<sup>85</sup> The Trustees had the power to commission paintings such as the 'large Australian landscape' commissioned in 1919 from a Mr. E Turner.<sup>86</sup> Gruner's Valley of the Tweed (1921) was also commissioned in 1919. Trustees such as J.F. Archibald were collectors—his collection was sold in 1919 and included works by Lambert, Streeton, Longstaff, Norman Lindsay, Mahony, Heysen, Gruner, Long, Ashton, Florence Rodway and 'some fresh and beautiful roses' by Ethel Stephens.<sup>87</sup> The influence of the National Art Gallery extended beyond Sydney. In 1895, the Trustees sent small collections to Bathurst, Goulburn and Newcastle together with paintings lent by members of the Royal Art Society. The loan system later extended to other districts—in 1920, paintings went to Dubbo, Goulburn, Tamworth, Young, Broken Hill, Newcastle, Corowa, Junee, West Maitland, Orange, Wollongong, and the Military Hospital at Randwick. Paintings were also sent to Armidale, Albury, Wagga, Singleton and Lithgow.<sup>88</sup> The state and a small group of private collectors were significant patrons of art, and this patronage was masculine.

The art world in the early twentieth century was an enclosed fraternity of cultural privilege and power. Such an alliance between 'brother artists in art and literature' was seen at the reception for Arthur Streeton in 1906 at Paris House. Guests included the artists Julian Ashton, Lister Lister (President of the Royal Art Society), Collingridge, Long, and Souter. They joined newspaper representatives from the Bulletin, Daily Telegraph, World's News, Evening News (Norman and Lionel Lindsay), Sydney Mail (Leist) and the Sydney Morning Herald, to wish Streeton 'success in his native land'. G.V.F. Mann from the National Art Gallery

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<sup>84</sup> 'Art Gallery. Purchase of Works', Sydney Morning Herald, 28-11-14, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 210

<sup>85</sup> 'New Pictures. Art Gallery Acquisitions. Local Encouragement', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 26-11-14, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 213

<sup>86</sup> Australasian (Melbourne, Vic), 22-11-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 411. No works by E. Turner are included in the Check List of the Australian Collection.

<sup>87</sup> 'Art and Artists. Mr Archibald's Collection to be Sold', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 25-10-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 404

<sup>88</sup> 'Art and Artists. The Gallery's Work for the Year. Country Loan Collections', no reference, 10-1-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 424

was also present.<sup>89</sup> The newspaper profession was a masculine world which intersected with that of art.<sup>90</sup> When Sir James Fairfax died in 1919, for example, it was reported that 'with the death of this great art lover and patron, there passes[...] the last founder of the National Art Gallery'.<sup>91</sup> A masculine community is indicated in a newspaper report of a Royal Art Society private view and 'smoke concert' in 1919. The attendance included 'several members of the judiciary, and a good many leading members of the medical and legal professions, as well as other business men'.<sup>92</sup>

The principal art bodies in Sydney prior to the First World War were the Royal Art Society, Society of Artists and Society of Women Painters. The latter was formed in 1910 as one of the many women-only societies formed at the beginning of the twentieth century when, as Angela Philp asserts, 'middle class women in particular were redefining, figuratively and literally, the structure of their space and their manner of movement outside the immediate domestic environment'.<sup>93</sup> In 1919, in his lecture at the Society of Women Painters entitled 'Women in the World of Art', George Taylor proposed that the vacancy left by the death of J.F. Archibald on the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery be filled by a woman. His candidate was Mrs Holman, President of the Society of Women Painters. A journalist responded that 'Mrs Holman is all right at a tea-party but as an authority on art it is doubtful if she quite fills the bill—even being a 'poet' is not positive proof that she is a judge of pictures'.<sup>94</sup> Such derision compares with the language used to praise du Faur, as a man who 'took the keenest interest in the work of the great artists' and was 'one of the best judges in the State', who 'had considerable literary ability, and was the author of a translation of Odes of Horace into English verse'.<sup>95</sup> Mrs Holman herself 'was of the opinion that women were no longer held back by men; they could do anything

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<sup>89</sup> Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 26-12-06, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 5

<sup>90</sup> In my research, the first newspaper article I found written by a woman was 'Gustave Barnes. A South Australian Painter. By Winnifred Scott', Sydney Morning Herald, 3-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 81

<sup>91</sup> 'Death of Sir James Fairfax. Doyen of Australian Journalism', no ref., 29-3-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 316-317

<sup>92</sup> 'Royal Art Society. Smoker and Private View', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 25-8-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 370

<sup>93</sup> Angela Philp, *The Society of Women Painters 1910-1934*, MA Hons. thesis, University of Sydney 1988, 12-13

<sup>94</sup> Truth (Sydney, NSW), 19-10-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 401

<sup>95</sup> 'Death of Mr Du Faur. A Notable Career. President of Art Gallery', Sydney Morning Herald, 26-4-15, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 223

for which they had the talent and energy'.<sup>96</sup> Truth characterised women painters, however, as 'petticoated daubers'.<sup>97</sup> The Argus reported from Sydney in 1920 that 'it is not now expected that the appointment of a leading lady as a trustee will be made'.<sup>98</sup> Such an appointment was not made until 1943.

John Shirlow revealed his expectations of his female contemporaries in 1920 when he wrote that, in general, 'woman has not been wholly a success as an artist', adding that the 'reasons for her relative failure' have been 'various':

Among them is the fact that the majority of women artists have persisted in following the methods, outlook and processes of men, rather than seeking a purely individual and feminine rendition.<sup>99</sup>

Shirlow consolidated his view by adding that 'No man is honored for his effort if it be effeminate, no woman for her endeavor to be masculine'. He discussed Asquith Baker's art as having 'a strongly personal feminine note. Her works breathe the spirit of poetry, and display a personality of a high order'. He praised the 'refinement and reticence' of her work, adding that 'her interpretation is so finely personal and feminine'.<sup>100</sup> Such expectations of femininity probably underscored women's art training. Some women artists were praised, however, for qualities associated with the masculine. Maud Sherwood's watercolours stood out to a reviewer in 1919 because they were 'brilliantly and broadly handled with a confident brush'—there was 'nothing of the pretty-pretty in her work; indeed, the touch is masculine in its strength'.<sup>101</sup> In 1920, Joan Weigall was seen to paint with 'an almost masculine brush, laying down her color in broad, exuberant masses that capture the essential features of a scene'.<sup>102</sup> Sweatman too, was praised in 1921 for the 'earnestness of purpose' and 'strong

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<sup>96</sup> 'A Melba in Art. The Uprising of Women', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 15-10-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 401

<sup>97</sup> Truth (Sydney, NSW), 19-10-19, *op.cit.*

<sup>98</sup> Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 13-5-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 487

<sup>99</sup> John Shirlow, 'Australian Artists. Miss Asquith Baker', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 9-10-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 578

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* I have retained Shirlow's spelling of 'honored'.

<sup>101</sup> 'New Art Rendezvous. Women Painters' Club Room', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 20-8-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 311

<sup>102</sup> 'Another one-woman show', Bulletin (Sydney, NSW), 22-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 517

endeavour' in the 'direction of truth to natural effect' of her 'sincere landscapes'.<sup>103</sup>

Art teaching institutions were dominated by male teachers. The gender bias of the National Gallery Art School in Melbourne has already been discussed in Janine Burke's Australian Women Artists 1840-1940.<sup>104</sup> The psychological dimension of such imbalance is suggested in Florence Rodway's response to Julian Ashton's address to the Society of Women Painters in 1919, when she said that she found 'the men artists very willing to help the women[...] they are ready with advice for the amateurs, as well as for the professionals'.<sup>105</sup> The quotation suggests that male artists remained the arbiters of art at a time when women were moving into professional art practice in increasing numbers. A critic acknowledged such professional standing in 1919, writing that 'Women have been playing a much bigger part in Sydney's art world lately', and that 'the women students quite outclass the men' in an exhibition at the Sydney Art School. The writer continued; 'One can see here the painters of tomorrow learning their craft and feeling their way, and there is decided promise among them. The best of it is that they show so much variety in aim and method'.<sup>106</sup> The cultural influence of men is apparent in the Honorary Advisory Council of the newly opened School of Fine Arts in Adelaide, which in 1921 comprised Hans Heysen, Norman Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay, Arthur Streeton, Julian Ashton and Sydney Ure Smith.<sup>107</sup> Rodway's comment also suggests her acceptance of the division between professional and amateur categories at a time when few artists could earn a living from their art. On this basis, the meaning of 'amateur' is difficult to determine. The term was used by critics to disparage art—the landscapes in a Society of Women Painters exhibition of 1919 were described as 'very poor. With few exceptions, all the work is amateurish and displays lack of training'.<sup>108</sup> Philp writes that the term 'meant someone who did not take their art seriously, who

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<sup>103</sup> 'Miss Sweatman's Paintings', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 18-8-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 56

<sup>104</sup> Janine Burke, 'The Getting of Wisdom: 1870-1915', Australian Women Artists 1840-1940, Collingwood, Victoria, 1980, 24-35

<sup>105</sup> 'Charge Against Men Artists. Do They Help or Hinder Women? Replies to Fidus Achates', Sunday Times (Sydney, NSW), 13-4-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 322

<sup>106</sup> 'Art and Artists. Women in Sydney's Art', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 29-11-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 418

<sup>107</sup> 'The Joy of Art. Adelaide's New Venture', Register (Adelaide, SA), 13-8-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 60

<sup>108</sup> Truth (Sydney, NSW), 16-11-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 413

was content with the familiar and acceptable and did not value innovation'. It also 'implied a social class with available leisure time'.<sup>109</sup> Philp argues, however, that while the classification of amateur was a masculine evaluation imposed on the Society of Women Painters, the artists themselves aspired to professional status. She adds that nearly thirty per cent of exhibiting members had received some form of professional training in art schools.<sup>110</sup> Heather Johnson provides an insight into how masculinism can effect the illusion of symmetry while concealing gender bias. She notes that the male dominated selection panels of the Royal Art Society and Society of Artists chose mainly flower studies and decorative paintings by women artists for exhibition. From this limited selection, paintings were bought by the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and such a narrow representation is evident today in the permanent collection—Mary Stoddard, Margaret Fleming and Emily Meston have for many years been represented only by still life paintings, arranged together on a separate wall. Women's art continues to be displayed as a small, separate and limited category in contrast with the large and diverse representation of men's art. Johnson argues that by comparison with the art societies, a broader range of subjects—including landscape—was selected for exhibitions of the Society of Women Painters. Purchases by the Trustees from these exhibitions were, however, principally flower and decorative paintings.<sup>111</sup>

The subtleties of constructing a distinction between professional and amateur may be seen in the case of the Sydney Technical College. The 'staff of trained teachers' of the College's Department of Art in 1909 comprised eight men and two women. The curriculum included 'Flower Painting and Plant Drawing from Nature', and 'Landscape Drawing and Painting from Nature'. The department's aim was to develop 'self-reliance, individuality, and originality' in students who 'desire to make a knowledge of Art a part of their general education', or 'intend to adopt Art as a profession', or 'include it in their general qualifications as Teachers in public, elementary, or other schools'.<sup>112</sup> Flower Painting was described as 'a popular class, attended mostly by young ladies who are taken through a graduated course of studies in

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<sup>109</sup> Philp, *The Society of Women Painters 1910-1934*, 108

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 75, 116

<sup>111</sup> Johnson, *Art Patronage in Sydney 1890-1940*, 120

<sup>112</sup> 'Department of Art', *A Quarter Century of Technical Education in New South Wales. A Monograph Published on the Occasion of the Exhibition of Students' Work Held at the Sydney Technical College, Easter Week, 1909*, Sydney, 1909, 143

both oil and water colours, and painting direct from nature'. Landscape Painting was a two year course—in the first year, 'instruction given is made as plain and direct as possible, dealing only with the simplest medium for outdoor study—the pencil'. Sketches of buildings were also made, 'showing the practical application of linear perspective, studies of rocks, trees and their growth, skies, foregrounds, values, and composition'. In the second year students painted 'direct from nature in oil or water colours' and received instruction in 'aerial perspective, shadows, reflections, processes and manipulation, as glazing, impasting, scumbling'. There were three lessons per week including a Saturday afternoon class 'to admit of those students who are otherwise engaged during the week taking up this ever-fascinating study'.<sup>113</sup>

Photographs of the Flower Painting class (plate 3) and Landscape class (plate 4) show only female students. The teacher for both classes was male. The two female teachers taught the 'ladies only' Life Drawing and Painting class, Antique Drawing, and Model Drawing. Male teachers taught Life Drawing and Painting (evening class), Antique Drawing (evening class), Still-Life Painting, Flower Painting, Landscape Painting, China Painting, Practical Plane and Solid Geometry, Perspective and Sciography, Black and White Drawing, Repousse, and Modelling and Casting. The Modelling class photograph shows an all-male group, although this may have been the evening class for students who worked. A gender distinction is suggested between women who attended classes during the day, and men with a 'trade or profession' who attended night or weekend classes. On this basis it is possible that even as students undergoing professional art training, women were regarded as amateurs.

Women's art at this time was often described through reference to a male teacher—Gwen Barringer's art was characterised by the 'spirit of her master', Heysen, which 'pervades her efforts'.<sup>114</sup> Women artists were often referred to in diminutive language—Ellis Rowan was called a 'little lady' at the time when she had been offered the considerable sum of 16,000 pounds for her paintings.<sup>115</sup> Nora Gurdon was called a 'Melbourne girl' when she returned to Australia in 1920 after serving for three and a half years as a British Red Cross volunteer in a French

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-148

<sup>114</sup> 'Mrs Barringer's Art Exhibition', *Register* (Adelaide, SA), 28-4-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 481

<sup>115</sup> *Bulletin* (Sydney, NSW), 6-5-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 488

military hospital.<sup>116</sup> Such language, and its wider institutional structures, discloses the hegemony which assigned women to a less serious professional place than their male counterparts.

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<sup>116</sup> 'Art Applied on War Service. Melbourne Girl's Success. By A. Colquhoun', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 17-5-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 490

## CHAPTER 2

### INTIMATE LANDSCAPES AND THE INSIDENESS OF PLACE

#### Insiderness

John Longstaff restated a primary spatial and geographic distinction in 1911 when he advocated that 'Australians should love their wide spaces and their bush better, and they would if they understood them'.<sup>1</sup> The landscape dualism of bush and plain was expressed as early 1794 in Watling's aesthetic response to the land around Sydney, when he wrote that the 'principal traits of the country are extensive woods, spread over a little-varied plain'.<sup>2</sup> Such a juxtaposition carried into the early twentieth century. Dorothea Mackellar's poem, My Country of 1908, makes a direct comparison between the 'sweeping plains', 'far horizons', and 'wide brown land' of verse two, and the 'ring-barked forests', 'green tangle of the brushes', 'lithe lianas', 'tree tops', and 'ferns' of verse three.<sup>3</sup> In 1925, the author Mary Fullerton distinguished between the plains and the bush, as well as the 'hills', and described the human qualities deriving from the two environments. The 'People of the Timber Belt' were 'pioneers of the primeval Bush still largely uncleared', and 'hard because our work is hard'. The 'plains beyond the Bush' provided 'the easy living of a sheep district' where 'greater wealth brings more comfort, finer taste'. Fullerton wrote that the 'difference between the types, in this one small district, is clearly marked'.<sup>4</sup> The dichotomies of the religious and non-religious, shelter and non-shelter underline Fullerton's dualism between the bush and the plains. She likened the bush to a temple, writing of the 'deep bush' where the trees 'run up, tall and straight for eighty or a hundred feet' adding, 'they are like the pillars of a temple, and they *are* that. They are the columns of the blue temple of the Heavens'. The bush provided the shelter which was not experienced in the open plains. She wrote that 'the cathedral pillars I've spoken of made the track a long aisle', and added:

To continue the simile, I suppose I should call the plains, as we emerged upon them, an altar, but the image won't hold.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Longstaff's Return. Successful Australian Artists', no reference, 7-3-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 109

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Bernard Smith ed., Documents on Art and Taste in Australia. The Colonial Period 1770-1914, Melbourne, 1975, 11

<sup>3</sup> My Country. A Poem by Dorothea Mackellar with decorations and illustrations by J.J. Hilder, Sydney, 1983, 2-3

<sup>4</sup> Mary Fullerton, The People of the Timber Belt, London, 1925, 7

The plains are just plains[...] From the green shelter of the tall timber it gives one a queer feeling to come abruptly to the dry open country.<sup>5</sup>

Paul Carter asserts that despite their apparent differences in the history of Australian settlement, the forest and the desert were spatially similar to settlers. He argues that the distinction between the 'fertile coastal crescent' and the 'outback of the great inland plains' makes 'good sense as historical geography', but that 'at a more intimate level',

the distinction melts away and we find that, in the context of home-making, the 'closed' world of the forest and the and the 'open' environment of the plains presented similar challenges, challenges defined by the newcomer's irremediable lack of commanding height.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, it is evident that complementary knowledges informed, and were informed by, the different spatial experiences of 'within' and 'without', and the dialectic of these discourses from around 1900 to 1940 defined an Australian sense of place and belonging. Knowledge of being within a place, of immanence and proximity, was bound to the emerging professions of ecology, conservation, botany and the gardening of native flora. Within the context of this expanding knowledge, intimate landscapes were intrinsic to the consolidating attachment to place.

Intimate landscape paintings depict the experience of being within the Australian bush as sensuous and pleasurable, and convey a sense of familiarity with the natural forms and textures of a known location. Such landscapes are of enclosed, rather than open or exposed spaces, and suggest the idea that local knowledge is gained through observation of the landscape at close range. Intimate landscapes draw on the experiential knowledge of place which is the sensory basis, as Casey argues, for 'knowing where one is'. He adds that 'to know where one is is to know where one is located in relation to the local landscape, on its terms and in its way'. Casey proposes that walking is the 'means of orientation' within the locale, from which local knowledge arises.<sup>7</sup> Because intimate landscapes emphasise familiar knowledge based on proximity and close observation, they tend to represent a different

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 20-22

<sup>6</sup> Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, London, 1988, 284

<sup>7</sup> Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*, Indiana University Press, 1993, 252

relationship to the land from that of the traveller or visitor. The pathways included in many intimate landscapes are indicators of this particular relationship.

Intimate landscapes are characterised by a shallow pictorial space which emphasises the fore and middle ground. This construction, together with a blocked or partial view and little or no background depth, holds the viewer's eye within a shallow visual field. Within this space, the detail of the bush is emphasised because the viewer is positioned close to, or within, the immediate scene, as if pausing to take in the detail of the surroundings. The enclosed space creates an impression of being within a protected place. A painting such as Clara Southern's painting A Cool corner (c.1915) (plate 5) imparts an intimate knowledge of the textures and tactile qualities of the natural bush through its fine delicate brushwork in a crowded pictorial frame. The bush extends beyond the frame to imply, by visual means, that the viewer is located within this space. The diagonal movement of the river leads the eye to the focal point of the image, the clusters of wattle, which hold the viewer's attention in the painterly surface. The muted tones of the feathery purple-blue of the left middle ground and the broadly painted backdrop are a visual foil for the high-key colour and sensuous texture of the wattle. The viewer's eye cannot move beyond the screen of foliage which holds the gaze within the foreshortened space. The foreground pathway secures the viewer at ground level and signifies that this is a familiar place. The river marks a point of transition between what is known and what lies beyond, and in so doing, inscribes the idea of security within a known area of the bush.

Almost three decades later Margaret Coen painted The Glade (plate 6), purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales from the Royal Art Society exhibition of 1943. Coen's watercolour, despite being an abstracted painting of colour and tone patterning, shares many structural qualities with Southern's naturalistic A Cool corner. These include the filling in of the pictorial frame with lush foliage, the diagonal movement through the image, and the blocked view. Coen's evocative painting of a cool sanctuary images the insideness of place found in Southern's earlier work. The viewer's eye is drawn in along the foreground river stones to the water, and this movement is reinforced by the attraction of light. It is checked, however, by the slim trunk which leads the eye back to the foreground shade by echoing the strong vertical

lines of the left and right hand trees. Through this pictorial device the viewer's placement within the natural enclosure is affirmed.

The generic titles of Southern's and Coen's paintings suggest that the expression of experiential knowledge was valued by the artists as much as the rendering of a known and secluded place. The two places are not named and are therefore not locatable—they remain simply a cool corner and a glade. The titles thus confirm the private knowledge of place which is communicated in the paintings.

Through its focus on the human significance of places to ordinary people, humanistic geography offers a useful, but qualified, departure point for considering the spatial experiences conveyed in intimate landscapes. Its philosophical foundation is phenomenology which asserts the primacy of the phenomena of the lived-world of immediate experience, sensory knowledge and 'the actualization of contact'.<sup>8</sup> Intimate landscapes are images which communicate the experiential immediacy and direct engagement of spatial insideness, and Edward Relph's concept of existential insideness is useful in understanding the spatial intimacy they impart. He describes a form of insideness 'in which a place is experienced without deliberate and selfconscious reflection yet is full with significances'. He claims this 'is the insideness that most people experience when they are at home and in their own town or region[...] existential insideness characterises belonging to a place and the deep and complete identity with a place that is the very foundation of the place concept'.<sup>9</sup> Gillian Rose argues, however, that while existentialism and phenomenology are central to humanistic geography's objective to recover the 'essence of the experience of place' from the more scientifically rational concept of geographic space, they do not adequately theorize 'the broader social power relations which in all sorts of ways structure experiences of place'.<sup>10</sup> On this basis, humanistic geography offers only a partial means of understanding the intimate inflections of landscape. In particular, the power structures of landscape practice which sustain masculinism's hegemony cannot be addressed through phenomenology's essentialising notion of the 'structures of human experience'.<sup>11</sup> This is because the social and political

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<sup>8</sup> David Seamon, 'Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballets', The Human Experience of Space and Place, ed. Anne Buttimer and David Seamon, London, 1980, 148

<sup>9</sup> Edward Relph, Place and Placelessness, London, 1976, 55

<sup>10</sup> Rose, Feminism and Geography, 43-44

<sup>11</sup> Seamon, 'Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines and Place-Ballets', 149

implications of difference are inscribed in, and drawn primarily from, the spatial dynamics of landscape art.

Simon Ryan describes how early explorers recorded the Australian landscape through the European artistic conventions of the picturesque, and proposes that such labelling was a strategy to combat the landscape's 'threatening vastness and unfamiliarity'. He adds that this contrivance also deferred 'the opening of the aesthetic process to native adaptations'.<sup>12</sup> It is generally regarded that such adaptation occurred through plein air painting of the late nineteenth century. The plein airists 'stressed the importance of the artist not as a mere traveller or visitor seeking picturesque sights, but as a resident who knew the landscape intimately'. The artists identified with specific landscapes where they pursued the rapid transitions of light, colour and atmosphere. They chose various suburban locations in the 'near bush' where they set up camps close to the landscape they were recording.<sup>13</sup> Ursula Hoff first used the terms 'suburban bush' and 'nearby bush' to describe the locations of the familiar and 'homely' subjects of Heidelberg School paintings between 1885 and 1890.<sup>14</sup> Virginia Spate also describes the country around Melbourne where Roberts, Abrahams, Conder and McCubbin camped increasingly frequently as the 'suburban bush'.<sup>15</sup> She argues that the artists who participated in the camps 'had a more intimate relationship with nature' and 'were the first to paint the landscape as a familiar loved environment'.<sup>16</sup> A young Streeton expressed his delight at being within the bush to Roberts in 1890 when he wrote;

Had a lovely long walk into the bush last Monday—about 18 or 19 miles[...] I collected a large bunch of beautiful orchids, 6 or 7 kinds, lovely delightful flowers, hiding their beauty among the grass and ferns—and wattle, wattle, wattle, it would make a fine Garden of Eden; and heath,

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<sup>12</sup> Ryan, 'Picturesque Visions: Controlling the Seen', *The Cartographic Eye*, 60

<sup>13</sup> Helen Topliss, *The Artists' Camps. 'Plein Air' Painting in Australia*, Melbourne, 1992, 21

<sup>14</sup> Ursula Hoff, 'Reflections on the Heidelberg School, 1885-1900', *Meanjin*, x, no. 2, 1951, 127-128

<sup>15</sup> McQueen also adopts the term 'suburban bush' to describe Tom Roberts' painting *Evening, Box Hill* (1887) which 'depicted the suburban bush in masses of brown, enriched by by mauve and magenta, under a muddy sky relieved by pink'. Humphrey McQueen, *Tom Roberts*, Sydney, 1996, 177

<sup>16</sup> Virginia Spate, *Tom Roberts*, Melbourne, 1978, 33-34

and gums, broad decorative feeling, masses of shimmering bronze and crimson.<sup>17</sup>

Streeton distinguished between those who appreciate or 'love' the native sarsaparilla plant, and those 'Philistines' from 'the old country' who did not. He attributed a feminine tenderness to the sarsaparilla plant when he wrote of it 'twisting her purple strength round everything; she is most amorous and sheds her color like blue tears if you pluck her roughly'. The artist's passion reveals the sentimental attachment to place which underscored the emerging socio-psychological concept of belonging of the late nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> This association matched the growing appreciation of the bush in aesthetic and ecological terms and marked the increasing shift away from viewing Britain as home. It is also the context in which intimate landscape paintings were produced for a domestic market.

Ina Gregory's The Forest Isle, Healesville (plate 7) is an intimate plein air painting of the near bush. Its mass of textures is brought forward within the shallow pictorial space on to a frontal plane. This foreshortening, and the controlling device of the vertical saplings, retains the viewer's eye within the dense central space. The low foreground growth acts as an approach to this focal point of tangled grey-green thicket. No single feature dominates as each bush foliage pattern interacts within the crowded impression. The painting's title does reveal a location, but its subject matter and pictorial construction emphasise those tactile qualities which characterise the experience of what Casey terms 'sensing the landscape close up'.<sup>19</sup> Gregory's bush is inviting and yet benignly mysterious.

Alice Mary Bowyer Rosman's evocative 'Bush Magic' of 1916 also expresses in poetry the alluring and profoundly sensual, even erotic, attributes of the Australian bush:

Have you heard her calling  
The lone bush, in the night,  
When dews are falling,  
And stars are shining bright?

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<sup>17</sup> 'Ernest Arthur Streeton - Letters to Tom Roberts. Letter 1: written probably in August 1890', Documents on Art and Taste in Australia, ed. Bernard Smith, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1975, 253-254

<sup>18</sup> It is relevant that by the mid 1880s, two-thirds of Victoria's population was native-born. See McQueen, Tom Roberts, 138

<sup>19</sup> Casey, Getting Back into Place, 252

Follow the last sunset gleams  
Where she guards the gate of dreams,  
If you are her lover true  
She will smile and let you through.

Have you seen it shining,  
The white cross of the South?  
Have the gum leaves twining  
Kissed you on the mouth?  
Then a spell shall hold you fast  
Until life be overpast;  
Tho' you roam the wide world over  
You will wander back, bush-lover?<sup>20</sup>

Ideas of a 'smiling' bush and kissing gum leaves contrast with earlier perceptions of the bush as unwelcoming. Such a view was expressed most notoriously in Marcus Clarke's idea of 1874 of the 'weird melancholy' of the Australian bush, when he wrote that,

The Australian mountain forests are funereal, secret, and stern. Their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle in their black gorges a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade'.<sup>21</sup>

The plein-airists' affection for the bush of the 1880s marked a shift in attitude which carried into the early twentieth century, and the bush was increasingly experienced in more moderate terms. Longstaff was quoted in 1911 as saying that 'Australia is to me more beautiful than any country I have been in. And the birds' songs are more beautiful. The bush may be melancholy, but it's a beautiful melancholy.'<sup>22</sup> Longstaff called the bush 'the most beautiful in the world'. It is significant that after ten years in London, Longstaff was 'glad to be home'.<sup>23</sup>

Three different paintings of wattle each convey an appreciation of the native beauty of the bush—each image highlights the sensation of brilliant colour within the surrounding grey-green bush. Dora Hake's oil painting Untitled (Wattle, river bank) (c.1895) (plate 8) is a crowded canvas organised around the diagonal axis of the river bank. The muted

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<sup>20</sup> Alice Mary Bowyer Rosman, 'Bush Magic' (v. 1 and 3), An Enchanted Garden and Other Verses, 1916

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from Marcus Clarke's 'The Buffalo Ranges by Nicholas Chevalier' in Documents on Art and Taste in Australia. The Colonial Period 1770-1914, ed. Bernard Smith, Melbourne, 1975, 138

<sup>22</sup> 'Sydney Like Paris. The Most Beautiful Country. Australian Artist Returns', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), March 1911, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 99

<sup>23</sup> 'Mr Longstaff's Return. Successful Australian Artists', no reference, 7-3-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 109

greens, browns and blues of the feathery foliage bind the river and the bush, particularly along the water's edge, where the brown reflections echo the bush colours. Within the shallow pictorial space the mass of colour and texture is brought forward on to the frontal plane, and the bush becomes a softly toned backdrop against which the brilliant diagonal sweep of yellow wattle contrasts. The directional force of the wattle emphasises the painting's horizontal format and promotes a sustained viewing process across the image. In this reading, the interplay of light and texture creates a sensual rhythm conveying the delight experienced in this secluded place. Deep reflections of high-key colour are the subject of Jessie Evans' oil painting (Wattle Reflections) (c.1895) (plate 9). The wattle's golden-orange blaze occupies the full height of the vertical canvas in contrast with the soft blues of water and sky. The shallow pictorial space encourages a reading of the flattened forms as a pattern of interacting colour and tone, making little distinction between the component parts of the image, particularly the river and bush, which merge. From across the water the soft sensuality of the bush scene draws the eye to its colour rhythms. Penleigh Boyd's Yarra Wattles (1918) (plate 10) is organised around the wattle's placement along the painting's vertical axis. This stabilises the image as a controlling device which, together with the dark background, gives full impact to the bursting high-key colour. The wattle's dominance renders the spiky foreground grass a secondary component of the composition and because of this, the viewer's eye is not lead into the image along the foreground pathway. The foreground acts primarily to stabilise the tension between the receding background and the forward movement of the wattle. The eye is attracted by the wattle's circular sweep, and through this movement the viewer discovers the small group of bathers on the river bank below. The inclusion of this figurative element distinguishes Boyd's painting from those of Hake and Evans.

Yarra Wattles is linked to, but differs from, late nineteenth century plein air painting through its figurative content. A subject painting such as Roberts' A Summer morning tiff (1886) repeats, as McQueen points out, the characteristic formula for narrative content in both poetry and painting of the late nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> In this context, James Green's hierarchy of the 'various branches of painting' of 1889 had placed figure

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<sup>24</sup> McQueen, Tom Roberts, 158

subjects first.<sup>25</sup> Bush landscapes such as McCubbin's The Lost child (1886) and Roberts' The Artists' camp (1886) portray the bush, as Burn first observed, through the eyes of visiting middle class 'city folk' for whom the bush held a 'certain intellectual pleasure'. Burn argues that that the incidents narrated in the paintings are indicative of this social relationship to the landscape.<sup>26</sup> In such a reading the bush becomes a mere setting for narrative incidents.<sup>27</sup> The paintings' pictorial constructions, in particular the framing devices and spatial foreshortening described by Burn, establish the viewer as a witness to the scene portrayed. The viewer is not part of the bush scene by being 'located within it' as Burn argues, but on the edge of the narrative space, looking in. Through its peripheral placement of the viewer, Yarra Wattles has close affinities with such incident painting of the late nineteenth century. Although it certainly celebrates the golden blaze of the native wattle, Yarra Wattles does not convey the characteristic insideness of place of the intimate landscape.

Intimate landscapes of the late nineteenth century contained little or no incident or narrative content at the time when narrative subjects, particularly those of masculine labour in the Australian landscape were highly valued in academic painting. Roberts' The Golden fleece. Shearing at Newstead, for example, was purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1894, the year of its production. His earlier work Shearing the rams (1890) expressed his response to 'being in the bush and feeling the delight and fascination of the great pastoral life and work' which the artist considered to be a noble and worthy subject.<sup>28</sup> Terry Smith argues that Roberts' celebration of work is notable for its 'conspicuous absences' and abstractions from contemporary life and that Shearing the rams is thus an idealised and fundamentally ahistorical depiction.<sup>29</sup> On this basis, Roberts' painting offers an interpretive range outside its apparent subject. In literary terms such multiplicity of

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<sup>25</sup> James Green, 'The Art Society of New South Wales', The Centennial Magazine, 2:4, November 1889, 272

<sup>26</sup> Ian Burn, 'Beating About the Bush: The Landscapes of the Heidelberg School', Australian Art and Architecture. Essays Presented to Bernard Smith, ed. Anthony Bradley and Terry Smith, Melbourne, 1980, 83-86

<sup>27</sup> A more nuanced analysis of the detail of this art may complicate easy readings of its narrative content. See, for example, Virginia Spate's discussion of Summer Morning Tiff in Tom Roberts, 49-52

<sup>28</sup> Argus 2 July 1890 quoted in Terry Smith, 'The Divided Meaning of Shearing the Rams: Artists and Nationalism, 1888-1891', Australian Art and Architecture, 102

<sup>29</sup> Smith, 'The Divided Meaning of Shearing the Rams: Artists and Nationalism, 1888-1891', Australian Art and Architecture, 122

meaning is, according to Wallace Martin, 'one of the necessary features of narrative'.<sup>30</sup> The dual capacity of literary narrative has a correspondence in visual narrative. Visual narrative suggests a temporal structure in which events take place, and this offers the possibility of a corresponding reality by which the viewer can project the painting's subject into their known or imagined world. Equally, visual narrative allows an historical back-and-forth referencing by which the past and present interweave. Such a capacity to reference the past through the apparent present became increasingly important as the narratives of the new Australian nation were articulated in and codified through landscape art in the early decades of the twentieth century. In this consolidating historical process the land itself was accorded the status of the narrative subject. John Salvana's landscape Afternoon on the Namoi (1913) (plate 11) for example, suggests both a pastoral present and an untrammelled past. The painting's horizontal format creates a sustained visual sweep across the central motif of the slowly flowing river, and the river gums enclose the still water, suspending the blue sky and green foliage in its reflective stillness. The viewer is located at ground level close to the foreground shaded area. The idea of the shelter in this place is created in the contrast between the barren river banks, devoid of vegetation, and the shade of the gums. The viewer's eye is lead from foreground to background along the river to the central expanse of distant sky where only a hazy horizon line is visible through the trees. Human presence is not immediately obvious, and this, together with the stillness of the river, conveys the sense of time passing slowly in an unchanging land. As the viewer's eye moves to the middle ground beyond the left hand gum however, the flock of sheep gradually comes into focus. Because they merge with the earth, the sheep are portrayed as integral to this benign natural environment, as if they had always been part of it, and the land had always been so. Equally though, Salvana's painting of the land supporting life even in drought represented Australia as benign and productive. Such ideas were taken up more programmatically in the 1920s to promote rural Australia to both potential immigrants and workers. In the pre-war period, however, such paintings consolidated the claim to a characteristic Australian art.

The experiential immediacy indicated in intimate landscapes contrasts with the present-past possibilities of incident or narrative landscape. George Lambert distinguished between the two modes in 1921 claiming

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<sup>30</sup> Wallace Martin, Recent Theories of Narrative, Cornell University Press, 1986, 187

that 'paintings of the bush and the bush alone, become as wearisome as the bush itself, without the human element'. He proposed 'subjects peculiar to Australia' such as the 'life outback, with horses, cattle and sheep, in a dignified landscape' instead of 'Nature' subjects 'sylvan and full of poetic charm'. Lambert referred to the 'pioneer days of Sydney art' when Mahoney and Roberts made 'valiant attempts to reproduce incidents of bush life' and also lamented that 'there seems to be little attempt now to record in paint the strenuous life of the people outback'.<sup>31</sup> Historical lineages thus resonated for Lambert in narrative art. In contrast with such an idea, Asquith Baker's landscape The River bank (c.1900) (plate 12) presents neither historical or contemporary reference, nor suggestion of a particular place—it deals primarily with the immediate view. The painting's symmetry and visual stability encourage the viewer to focus on the colours, tones and textures of the gently flowing water, mossy bank and trees. The vertical canvas is equally divided into earth and sky and the background expanse of sky silhouettes the soft forms and feathery textures of the trees. The screen of river trees filters the viewer's gaze to the band of trees beyond, which echo the foreground foliage. In its enclosing spaces the painting emphasises the sensory stillness of the unspecified scene. In his Landscape (c.1919) (plate 13) Gruner also conveys a secluded stillness within its foreground space, and no human activity is declared or implied. The painting's visual focus is the mass of river-bank trees and its reflection, and because the viewer is positioned across the water, the foliage reads as a unified dense mass rather than the variety of textures of Asquith Baker's painting. By comparison also, a strong directional movement leads the eye along the the river bank to the hills and background sky. Through this view out and beyond, Gruner's Landscape does not express the experiential immediacy of The River bank.

The bush was believed to be the inspiration for a 'new and national art'. A newspaper review of 1910 wrote that 'it is in landscape painting that Australia has displayed most originality', adding that 'the Bush is what distinguishes Australia from other lands':

The quality of the light[...] makes the Australian landscape essentially different from the landscape of other countries. The high key of colour, the transparency of atmosphere are unique and peculiarly delicate[...] how the gum tree delights

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<sup>31</sup> 'Australian Art. Is It Still Australian? George Lambert on Lost Subjects', Sunday Times (Sydney, NSW), 10-7-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 14

in the hot sunshine and melts into the luminous atmosphere.<sup>32</sup>

From the early twentieth century, those landscape elements which became formulaic in the 1920s were progressively assembled in art criticism. In this process, particular visual formulations, primarily those concerning distance and light, were increasingly assigned higher cultural value than other spatial renderings. Daplyn expressed his awareness of such difference in 1902 in his book Landscape Painting from Nature in Australia when he wrote that

Formerly pictures often showed miles of country in the style of a panorama; now[...] the subject, far from embracing miles of country, is likely to be the corner of the field, his aim not so much to call forth feelings of awe and rapture, by displaying Nature in her grander mood, but to translate for our benefit the beauty that lies in familiar things[...] his subject awaits him in the cool shade of the forest, by the side of the creek, river, or even in the garden. Perhaps he has chosen the familiar corner that we have passed by a hundred times without bestowing on it more than a hurried glance.<sup>33</sup>

### Being within

The Australian bush is conceived as uncultivated or sparsely settled land.<sup>34</sup> It is the site onto which diverse historically-specific and culturally-grounded desires and associations have been projected, and it therefore has no single meaning or conceptual fixity.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, in gendered terms, the bush is a masculine terrain, the home of the bushman and the subject of the bush ballad. In the late nineteenth century a shift from daily visits to the bush for picnics evolved into 'social camping' and thence to the specialised recreation of bushwalking. Bushwalking, or hiking or tramping, evolved out of Sydney's urban base.<sup>36</sup> In 1914, Myles Dunphy, the artist Herbert Gallop and Roy D. Rudder formed the Mountain Trails Club.<sup>37</sup> This was

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<sup>32</sup> 'The Painters of the Bush. By L.E.', Sydney Morning Herald, 11-6-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 75

<sup>33</sup> A.J. Daplyn, 'Introduction', Landscape Painting from Nature in Australia, Sydney, 1902

<sup>34</sup> Collins English Dictionary, 3rd edition, Sydney, 1991, 217-218

<sup>35</sup> For the many inflections of meaning of the term 'bush', see Joan Hughes ed., Australian Words and their Origins, Oxford University Press, 1989, 92-99

<sup>36</sup> Myles Dunphy, 'The Incidence of Major Parklands in NSW', January 1979, ML MSS 3677, Vol.1, 14

<sup>37</sup> Myles Dunphy, 'How Bushwalking Began', 1981, Papers, c.1902-1982, ML MSS 4457 Add-On 1823 Box 4 (15), 1

the first of the exploring, camping, walking clubs, a bush brotherhood [which] practised a new form of outdoor recreation based on the exploration and enjoyment of scenic wilderness of primitive areas—as near as possible roadless and uninhabited.<sup>38</sup>

Dunphy understood the activities of the 'bush brotherhood' in masculinist terms of discovery and exploration. He recalled a nine-day bushwalking trip in about 1910 to Katoomba where 'there were more girls than men' who 'wanted to be taken to picnics'. Although the men 'went on a few horse-drag picnics to be pleasant', most of the time they 'systematically walked fast about the Mountains'.<sup>39</sup> Between 1914 and 1939 the Mountain Trails Club expanded to approximately forty members, all of whom were men.<sup>40</sup>

The bush was a place where mainly men walked recreationally until women joined walking groups in the 1920s. Streeton wrote in 1890 to Tom Roberts of his 'lovely long walk into the bush last Monday—about 18 or 19 miles. Took our lunch and one bottle of beer and flute and terbac'.<sup>41</sup> John Le Gay Brereton made a month long walk in 1896 from Sydney through the Blue Mountains to the Jenolan Caves, Wombeyan Caves, Moss Vale, Kangaroo Valley, Berry, and back to Sydney. He referred to himself in the poem Wanderers of 1902 as the 'son of a star' and 'brother of birds and trees'.<sup>42</sup> The Warragamba Walking Club had been active in New South Wales since the mid-1890s, but its activities were more akin to 'the gentle person's art of scenic walking and touring' than the rugged 'outdoor and wild country exploration' of Dunphy and the 'bush pedestrianist' movement. Similarly, the Sydney Bush Walkers, formed in 1927, were social walkers and campers who 'proudly scorned any reference to being 'hikers' or 'trampers'. Dorothy Lawry was a founding member who began walking with a predominantly female group called 'The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies'.<sup>43</sup> Other clubs formed as recreational walking increased in popularity in the 1930s.<sup>44</sup> The Depression saw 'hiking-bushwalking' expand on a mass scale to include media coverage and sponsorship of organised events. The common

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<sup>38</sup> Dunphy, 'The Incidence of Major Parklands in NSW', 18

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 38

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 44-45

<sup>41</sup> 'Ernest Arthur Streeton—Letters to Tom Roberts. Letter 1: written probably in August 1890', Documents on Art and Taste in Australia, 253

<sup>42</sup> Colin Gibson, Sing With The Wind. 100 Bushwalkers' Poems, Sydney, 1989, 19

<sup>43</sup> Gibson, Sing With The Wind, 13-15

<sup>44</sup> These included The Rucksack Club in 1931 and The Coast and Mountain Walkers in 1934.

emphasis amongst the diversity of walkers was that of purposeful or directional movement through the bush.

Much uncultivated or partly settled bush was within easy reach of large urban centres. William MacLean, an amateur photographer and naturalist, wrote of his photographic day trip to the Narrabeen waterfalls in 1922. He described 'a swamp in which mahogany trees grow' and wrote that,

a few years ago[...] there were also a number of giant cabbage-tree palms, perhaps 100 feet high. Today only one remains; the others have fallen to some wanton axe. The stockwhip bird is found here in great numbers, its note being heard continually.<sup>45</sup>

Maclean protested about the destruction of the native bush and bird-life in his articles of the period. The subtleties of the bush were also increasingly expressed in popular journals—in 1916, Frank Morton wrote in The Triad that 'I don't think justice has ever yet been done to the fragrance of the Australian bush. It is elusive and exquisite, honeyed and aromatic, tart but soothing'.<sup>46</sup>

According to Geoffrey Bolton, the 'dawning appreciation of Australian fauna' began in the 1860s and broadened in the 1880s and 90s when 'the colonial-born' came to value the uniqueness of the Australian environment. The view of the bush as a potentially hostile environment gradually changed with the 'recognition of a system of land use which was not developmental in its aim but aesthetic and perhaps even spiritual'. The outcome was the adoption of conservation policies between 1880 and the 1930s for the protection of native fauna and flora. Amateur research through the popular study of wildlife was initiated by groups such as the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (founded 1880), the Natural History Association (begun in Sydney 1887) and the Wildlife Preservation Society (founded in Sydney 1909).<sup>47</sup> Dunphy recalled that the Society was formed to 'combat the trade in native birds and animals, and plumes and furs'.<sup>48</sup> The Society also pressed for the creation of sanctuaries to protect native flora, fauna and

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<sup>45</sup> W.F. Maclean, 'Narrabeen Waterfalls', Sydney Mail, August-September 1922, n.p., Local Studies Collection, Warringah Library, NSW

<sup>46</sup> Frank Morton, 'The Beach at Manly. Part 3', The Triad: A Journal Devoted to Literacy, Pictorial, Musical and Dramatic Art, 1 May 1916, 19

<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, Spoils and Spoilers, 2nd ed., Sydney, 1992, 107, 99

<sup>48</sup> Dunphy, 'How Bushwalking Began', 3

native forests. A protective attitude towards the forests had emerged in the late 1890s which stressed that they were not a limitless resource, and should be managed and harvested to allow for renewal and regeneration. The wildlife groups were primarily suburban in origin and membership. Through their influence, legislation was passed to protect native plants in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia between 1926 and 1939.<sup>49</sup> The New South Wales Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act of 1927 (plate 14) lists native rose, five varieties of boronia, three varieties of Christmas bells, flannel flower, waratah and Christmas bush as protected species.

The movement for wildlife conservation matched the growing demand for large areas of bush to be set aside as national parks for public recreation. In 1866 the New South Wales government declared a reserve at Jenolan Caves. The formation of the Royal National Park followed in 1879 'for the use of the public forever', and Centennial Park in 1888. In Victoria, Ferntree Gully was set aside in 1887 and later became a sanctuary for lyrebirds and native birdlife. Between 1898 and 1914, NSW, Victoria and South Australia passed acts for the reservation of national parks intended primarily for public recreation rather than wilderness preservation.<sup>50</sup> It was within this context, assisted by the development of suburban railways, that urban Australians ventured into the near bush.

In 'Narrabeen Waterfalls', Maclean expressed his delight amongst the umbrella ferns, the 'tall plants of boronia', the 'great red gums, turpentines, bloodwoods, and oaks' covering the hillside, and the higher marshy land, 'the real home of the Christmas bell'. He described the 'sprengelia, a long spikehead of beautiful pink stars with a white eye', the beauty and perfume of 'the long spikes of heath, both pink and white', the 'pale pink of boronia past its prime, the paler pink of a sister variety' and the 'yellow dillwynia'. He noted that soon, 'these hillsides will be white with flannel flowers [which] should be picked with one other flower only—a tall bright purple spike called steeple'.<sup>51</sup>

Within the bush, Maclean noted 'the many shades of green and the russet brown of dead leaves and bracken [which] make a lovely

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<sup>49</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, 105-107

<sup>50</sup> Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, 104-105

<sup>51</sup> Maclean, 'Narrabeen Waterfalls', n.p.

combination of colour'.<sup>52</sup> Mary Fullerton, writing in 1931 of her childhood in North Gippsland, remembered the shades of green which were revealed only from within the Australian bush. She wrote of 'the sombre greens' which were 'made a deep blue by the alchemy of the atmosphere in distance':

It was a wonder of which[...] I sometimes spoke after we had gone amid those ranges and proved the blue, the purple and the gold, to be green. But the green was infinite in its variety of shadings, for the native trees that grew[...] were many.<sup>53</sup>

Fullerton's recollection suggests a tactile awareness not evident in Maclean's more factual account. She described the visual richness of 'incredible vistas of the softest, fairest flower on earth—the puffy, fluffy, golden wattle blossom—when all among the bending glory of it hangs the purple festoons of the sarsaparilla', and expressed the maternal sensuousness of her bush experience by asking;

Is not then the Bush the royal home of nature? Oh, the softness of touch and scent of those masses of blossom against one's face, the coolness, the sweetness—Mother Nature's kisses on her babies' faces! But she has moods, and we, her children, have answering moods to them all.<sup>54</sup>

A similar private understanding is conveyed in Mabel Hookey's poem, 'The Unnamed Flowers of the Tasmanian Bush' of 1913. She evoked a secluded world of the 'sweet nameless flowers that blossom all unknown', whose 'bright, starry eyes' see 'waving shadows and blue sun-lit skies', but 'never face of man', and described the sounds and colours of her bush world in the words:

The forest's moan  
Echoes about you, and the silver tone  
Of dripping water, and the myriad sighs  
And voices of the bush, and all the wise  
Glad speech of Nature. These are your own.<sup>55</sup>

Fullerton and Hookey represent the bush through sensory attributes which were valued because they were distinctive and privately, almost secretly, known. Hookey's poem suggests an aural knowledge of the

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, n.p.

<sup>53</sup> Mary Fullerton, *Bark House Days*, London, 1931, 79

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 80

<sup>55</sup> Mabel Hookey, 'The Unnamed Flowers of the Tasmanian Bush', *The Edge of the Field*, Sydney, 1913, v

bush when she writes of 'the forest's moan' which 'echoes', the 'silver tone' of 'dripping water', the 'myriad sighs' and 'voices' of the bush, and the 'glad speech of Nature'. Jessie Traill also wrote of the sounds of the 'thick, deep and close' bushland of the Baw Baw Mountains in Victoria:

Here bird life is throbbing, here 'mid damp bush and thick tree fern, all the hosts of bird wonder live and hide from sight. Just their carols, just their flutter, lyre bird on wing, whip bird calling, answering, all among the crowded wattles, all below the giant gums.<sup>56</sup>

Such aural knowledge is one of being within a particular place, of listening, of being still and silent, in order to listen. It is a different experience from Longstaff's remembrance of the lure of the bush—he said in 1920 that 'I was born in the bush, and I can still hear its call'.<sup>57</sup> Such a contemplative quality was acknowledged in Jo Sweatman's art by an art critic who also noted her affinity with her landscape subjects:

Her own work is quiet, studious, and objectively musing. It is the outcome of observation and feeling[...] These quiet pictures speak in favour of the quiet life, neither understating nor unduly enthusing, but simply telling the truth about lovely, restful places, sequestered and placid.<sup>58</sup>

Annie Gates was described in 1920 as a 'a lover of nature's by-ways, and her more reposeful moods'.<sup>59</sup> The expression of 'tender feeling' in Bertha Merfield's landscape Bush at early morning was particularly noted by the reviewer of her exhibition of 1920.<sup>60</sup> Ideas of such sensory affinity within a known environment were expressed in literature of the period. Fullerton characterised the bush in almost domestic terms, evoking the comfort she felt in the softness of the bush light. She described an 'expanse of young stringy-bark saplings, their tops lit by the sunlight against a blue sky' as 'a sight to stir the senses', adding that, 'Every soft shade conceivable gives back the sun, coloured by its own

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<sup>56</sup> 'Mountain Tops. A Trip over the Baw Baws, Victoria, Australia' undated letter, Jessie Traill Papers, MS 7975, Latrobe Library, Victoria

<sup>57</sup> 'Mr John Longstaff's Protest. The Unsightliness of Bourke Street', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 27-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 536

<sup>58</sup> 'Jo Sweatman at the Athenaeum Gallery, 48 landscapes, six still-life studies', undated newspaper clipping, Latrobe Library, Victoria

<sup>59</sup> 'A Flower Painter's Exhibition', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 22-6-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 505

<sup>60</sup> 'Bertha Merfield', Sydney Morning Herald, 11-5-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 491

hues, as soft-toned lampshades transmute the quality of the light they shade and rob of its harshness'. Fullerton's response complements her earlier declaration; 'Oh those sweet, clean, even trunks; one wants to eat them, or at any rate to hug them'.<sup>61</sup> The author was aware that 'the utility and the beauty of this tree-tip growth has come to be appreciated by the city people in Australia' and that for many, 'the bush is a place that lies remote, to be visited only on those rare days when the dusty city releases them'.<sup>62</sup> A schoolgirl account of a day excursion to the bush of 1922 attributed the residual effect of the bush to 'the calm spirit of the great bush' which 'enfolds us; wraps us in her embrace'. She also wrote of the silence within the bush, a 'silence of complete comprehension and sympathetic understanding'. At the end of the day when the journey is finished, the 'traces remain': 'Never shall we be quite the same, for we are enrolled among the members of bush lovers, the peace of the bush is in our hearts'.<sup>63</sup> Fullerton also wrote of the uplifting spiritual silence of the 'infinite bush' which contained a thousand 'rendezvous for man with Solitude; places, beautiful, stupendous, silent'.<sup>64</sup> Dunphy's fantasy essay of 1922 conveyed the sensuousness he felt in what he termed the 'wilderness':<sup>65</sup>

I found myself lying on a soft, grassy bank beside a river[...]  
The sun felt warm and pleasant. I wished to just remain  
there and appreciate these things, the little melodies of  
breeze and birds, the humming of insects, the caressing  
breeze, the warmth and the tinkling waters. The Voice had  
said the earth was mine, I dimly remembered.<sup>66</sup>

Dunphy's expression of his affinity with the earth differs from a view of land control through property management. He absorbs himself sensuously in the visual, aural and tactile pleasures of his natural environment. His recollection was imaginary, but the basis for such direct knowledge was his real-life experience of the Australian bush through camping and bush-walking.

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<sup>61</sup> Mary Fullerton, The People of the Timber Belt, London, 1925, 20

<sup>62</sup> Fullerton, The Australian Bush, London, 1928, 129

<sup>63</sup> 'A Day's Walk by Margaret Peet Sept.1922', Myles Dunphy Papers, c.1902-1982, ML MSS 4457 Add-On 1823 Box 3 (15), 13-14

<sup>64</sup> Fullerton, The Australian Bush, 228

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion of the wilderness concept and its association with the idea of 'wild places' in Australia see Kevin Frawley, 'The History of Conservation and the National Park Concept in Australia: A State of Knowledge Review', National Conference on Australian Forest History. Australia's Ever Changing Forests: Proceedings, Canberra, 1989, 395-417

<sup>66</sup> 'A Dream of the Wilderness. Written for Margaret T. Peet, 1922. Miscellaneous Writings of Myles J. Dunphy (Nekome)', Myles Dunphy Papers, c.1902-1982, ML MSS 4457, Add-On 1823, Box 3 (15), 10

For Fullerton, the bush was a protective and nurturing environment of young life 'in the early hours of life's day'. She wrote of 'the Heaven' that lies in the bush about you in your infancy' and urged readers to 'Keep those dreams, let them be the soft velvet under the hard harness, so it shall gall you never'.<sup>67</sup> Ideas of a sheltering and protective bush resonate in children's books of the period. Women writers and illustrators in particular, characterised the bush as benevolent through themes of ecological and wildlife preservation. Deirdre Hyslop's analysis of children's book illustrations by women between 1896 and 1945 has revealed this thematic thread. Hyslop points out that Dorothy Wall made 'constant references to the deliberate damage or thoughtless actions which needlessly upset ecological balance'. Mrs F. Hayward wrote in the dedication to Tales and Tails of Tails and No Tails of 1920 that she hoped all children would learn as much as possible about 'the queer Animals and Birds of Australia', but regretted that 'Unfortunately, it would seem that our remarkable marsupials are rapidly disappearing'. Amy Mack lamented in her foreword to Bush Days of 1911, that 'those of us who love the trees and flowers and birds watch with sad eyes the passing of the bush':

Sometimes we raise our voice in protest, or lift helpless hands against the outward rush. But it is in vain[...] If, in the pages of this little book, I have been able to keep for others a memory of some greenwood spot, a fragrance of some bushland flower, then I am content.<sup>68</sup>

Women were prominent in the naturalists' clubs which developed in the nineteenth century, and in the emergent professions of ecology and botany. The first textbook on ecology, Charles Elton's Animal Ecology, was published in 1927, but the word was coined by the German biologist and philosopher, Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, over a century ago. Ecology derives from the Greek *oikos* meaning 'house' and means 'the study of the home'. It thus accurately represents the study of plants and animals in relation to their habitats, and the 'physical and biological factors with which an individual interacts and on which it depends for its survival'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Fullerton, The Australian Bush, 53

<sup>68</sup> Deirdre Hyslop, Illustrated Children's Books by Women in Australia 1896-1945, BA Hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1979, 14,17-18

<sup>69</sup> Harry F. Recher, 'A Natural Legacy: An Introduction', A Natural Legacy, Ecology in Australia, ed. Harry F. Recher, Daniel Lunney and Irina Dunn, 2nd ed., Sydney, 1992, 3

## Proximity

Botany was an area in which middle class women predominated. It stemmed from a new acceptance of the land and associated familiarity with its plant forms, and was integral to the growing awareness that the Australian indigenous environment was not expendable. Professional women contributed significantly to the expanding conservation movement. Sir Baldwin Spencer had been appointed the first Professor of Biology in Melbourne in 1887, and until his retirement in 1919 encouraged women graduates to undertake research in his department. Female scientists in botany, ecology, conservation, gardening and farming emerged from the intellectual framework which Spencer established. Edith Coleman (1876-1951), for example, contributed one hundred and forty articles in the Victorian Naturalist from 1922 onwards.<sup>70</sup>

The intimate appeal of the natural environment to women was imaged in flower and landscape studies from early settlement. In the early twentieth century artists such as Marian Ellis Rowan, May Vale, Margaret Preston and Grace Cossington Smith painted both Australian and imported flora. Archibald Colquhoun noted in 1920 that May Vale's 'flower pieces' were 'charming, yet closely studied, observations of nature'.<sup>71</sup> Although native flowers were popular in still life studies, their short cut life rendered them unsuitable as art subjects. Fullerton noted that 'the flannel flower is one of the few bush blossoms (apart from the heaths[...]) that do not fade rapidly when gathered'. She argued that it was 'sheer vandalism' to remove the 'trailing glory of the wattle' from the bush, and that it was 'poor homage to strew the homeward way with withering branches'. Fullerton recalled the still beauty of the bush as the 'harvest of a quiet eye', and early memories of 'the gold of the range wattle', 'the gay battalions of blue-bells' and the 'starry legions of the harbingers of spring'. She also noted that 'there are Australian artists who paint the bush in mauves, others who give it the hazy tones of goblin blue, others again who see it in sage-greens[...] and each is right'.<sup>72</sup> Such knowledge of the changing variety within the bush

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<sup>70</sup> Jane Lennon, 'The role of women in conservation in Victoria', Common Ground, December 1989, 36-38

<sup>71</sup> Archibald Colquhoun, 'Miss May Vale's Paintings. Exhibition Opens Tomorrow', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 10-10-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 578

<sup>72</sup> Fullerton, Bark House Days, 125-128

compares with the more formulaic idea of an 'Australian sentiment [which] demands glowing colours'.<sup>73</sup>

Leading male landscapists were upheld in the early 1920s for their intimate knowledge of indigenous tree forms, most notably the gum. Such recognition was part of the broadening ecological desire to protect diminishing native species and was expressed primarily in newspaper articles. Colquhoun wrote of Heysen's paintings that the 'glorified opalescent gum-tree has been replaced by a more homely and familiar type'.<sup>74</sup> John Shirlow wrote that Heysen 'has pointed with enthusiasm to the beauty of our forest growths', and emphasised the importance of artists who portrayed the 'gum and the wattle' as 'things of grace'. Shirlow compared such affection for native trees with former times 'when the youth of Australia were taught that theirs was a land without beauty—a drab sort of place where songless birds with crude plumage, rested in trees that were a weariness to the eye'.<sup>75</sup> On his return to Australia in 1920, Roberts was quoted as saying that 'Years ago the gum-tree was despised; but now its beauty is appreciated'. The author of the article noted that 'it is getting difficult to reach the gum-trees from the cities, and that helps considerably in the greater appreciation of the work of the artists'. He commented on the 'increased appreciation' of 'things that are scarce'.<sup>76</sup> The Daily Telegraph claimed in 1920 that 'people with an artistic sense are alive to a value in our trees', and that,

We may be thankful for this, for before the sweep of settlement the tree is a vanishing glory. And within twenty miles of Sydney there still remain, but soon to pass, survivors of the old forests, for the privilege of painting which many an artist would willingly cross half the world.<sup>77</sup>

Roberts noted that 'once people used to say, 'Oh! the hideous old gums! and talk of the bush with horror[...] But now I find that people love the

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<sup>73</sup> 'Art Ideals. To the Editor of the Herald. By D.G.R.', Sydney Morning Herald, 14-8-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 553

<sup>74</sup> Archibald Colquhoun, 'Pictures to be Shown. Fine Art Society's Display', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 4-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 541

<sup>75</sup> John Shirlow, 'Australian Artists. Hans Heysen', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 18-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 559

<sup>76</sup> Sydney Mail (Sydney, NSW), 21-7-20, (undecipherable title), AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 518

<sup>77</sup> Untitled clipping, Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 1-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 509

gums'.<sup>78</sup> To Streeton in 1921, 'every tree and shrub in the bush is beautiful to a man who knows how to use his eyes, and none is more picturesque, more typical or more varied than the gum'. He added that,

The fact that to a wandering Australian a gum means home, suggests that the trees have a right to figure prominently in our art, even apart from their beauty[...] A man wants to live among them to catch the subtle beauty. A visitor usually insists upon painting a gum green, and he misses the purple and blue, and the other shadings.<sup>79</sup>

Streeton also spoke of the 'wonderfully restrained color of most of our hardwoods' and the 'sort of grey, green, lavender tone' of the coolabah tree 'which is most striking when opposed to the bright plains'. Streeton spoke for the 'newcomer', who 'is seeing the bush with new eyes'.<sup>80</sup> While the tree studies of Heysen and Streeton are well known, many women landscapists including Nora Gurdon, Jo Sweatman and A.M.E. Bale also chose the gum tree as the subject of their art. Bale's untitled oil painting (c.1910) (plate 15) places the gum within the shallow foreground space, in a clearing bordered by a tangled screen of trees which block the view. The mottled trunk stands apart within the immediate enclosure, the sun's light emphasising its dappled textures and emphatic solitary presence. Nora Gurdon's Youth and age (plate 16) also places the grey solitary form of the gum's trunk within the immediate foreground space in front of a backdrop screen of trees. By comparison, Streeton's Untidy Bush (c.1924) (plate 17) depicts the gum as a majestic presence in an open bush setting, its top branches extending out against the sky. Streeton's gum towers above the viewer as a dramatic presence leading the eye upwards to the infinite space of the sky.

The paintings of the prolific botanical artist Ellis Rowan, depicting native flora and fauna in their natural habitats, were also a focus for ecological concerns of the early 1920s. Janine Burke has described Rowan's art as a 'homage to her environment, its strangeness, beauty and wonder'.<sup>81</sup> The importance of her art as a record of threatened species was promoted in newspaper articles of the time. The Daily

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<sup>78</sup> 'The Familiar Scene. Artist Resumes Work. Mr Tom Roberts' Impressions', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 20-3-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 459

<sup>79</sup> 'Gum Trees in Australian Art. Alderman Hitchcock's Criticism Answered. Opinions of Famous Native Painters', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 17-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 98

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 98

<sup>81</sup> Janine Burke, Australian Women Artists 1840-1940, 16

Telegraph reported the Governor's hope that the Rowan collection would be secured by the Government 'for the delectation of future generations', adding that 'There are birds here which, owing to the barbarity of human creatures[...] may shortly be extinct. There are flowers and trees which may also pass away'.<sup>82</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald expressed regret that 'indifference to opportunity shows itself in a thousand forms' and that in Australia 'it has allowed our timber to be indiscriminately cut down until now re-forestation has become necessary. Our native flora and fauna have been ruthlessly destroyed'. The article called for the Rowan collection to be kept together because 'its unique quality lies in its completeness; it covers the whole ground[...] It is meant to be envisaged as a whole'. The paintings were valued as visual records of what was distinctively Australian and as such, 'of benefit to the nation'.<sup>83</sup> In 1910, Rowan's art was praised for contributing to the awareness of Australian wildflowers beyond the cities when a critic wrote that,

the undeniable barrenness of parts of Australia, make us too often jump to the conclusion that we live in a continent where wild flowers are unknown, and where no sweet scents delight us. Mrs Rowan's pictures dispel this illusion, and no doubt they will send many searchers out into the bush.<sup>84</sup>

Rowan was praised for painting flowers from 'very inaccessible places' such as the desert-pea which, 'with its brilliant hues impresses the mind'.<sup>85</sup> Her art assumed cultural value partly through her direct experience of the places where she 'painted from life' the birds and flowers 'in their own native haunts'.<sup>86</sup> Rowan's huge output resulted from her exceptional and diligent pursuit of those indigenous subjects which took her far afield.

Nineteenth century precedents for Rowan's botanical pursuits included Helena Forde who was an animal and flower painter, the daughter of

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<sup>82</sup> 'Beauty of the Wilds. Birds, Beetles, and Flowers. Magnificent Paintings', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 3-3-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 442

<sup>83</sup> 'A Unique Opportunity', Sydney Morning Herald, 20-3-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 456

<sup>84</sup> 'Mrs Rowan's Pictures', Sydney Morning Herald, 2(?) - 8-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 80

<sup>85</sup> 'Mrs Rowan's Pictures. To the Editor of the Herald. Vesey R. Gosche', Sydney Morning Herald, 23-8-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 80

<sup>86</sup> 'Mrs Ellis Rowan's Valuable Collection of Paintings', Advertiser (Adelaide, SA), 28-1-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 287

the naturalist, Alexander Walker Scott. In 1865 she accompanied her husband on an inland journey to survey the Lower Darling River where she compensated for the 'crudities and hardships of camp life, and the isolation from all female society' by collecting native plants and making notes and paintings 'of the most remarkable'. An account of these was published by the Reverend Dr. Woolls in his Plants of the Darling in 1867.<sup>87</sup> Elizabeth Macarthur had studied botany in the early years of settlement.<sup>88</sup> Pioneer women such as Rachel Henning and Mary Durack from the 'largely literate squatter class' recorded impressions of their new surroundings in articulate expressions of affection and delight.<sup>89</sup> Henning arrived in Australia in 1854 and wrote in 1863 from Exmoor Station in Queensland of the 'beautiful flowers out in the creek'. She described the 'fire-tree' as 'a small tree covered with beautiful crimson blossoms, bottlebrush-shaped, as many of the Australian flowers are'.<sup>90</sup> Georgiana Molloy, Amalie Dietrich and Ellis Rowan were well known in the world of natural science. Molloy was a self-educated pioneer naturalist who contributed significantly to Australian botanical knowledge. South of Perth in Augusta, from around 1830 to 1843, Molloy made a domestic garden of 'British, Cape and Australian flowers'.<sup>91</sup> She made expeditions or 'gypsy parties' into the bush to collect seeds and specimens of Australian plants which were later propagated in England for botanical gardens. The great horticulturalist, Joseph Paxton, wrote that 'not one in 10,000 who go into distant lands have done what she did for the gardens of her Native Country'.<sup>92</sup> Women's botanical publications included Fanny Anne Charsley's collaboration with Ferdinand von Mueller in The Wildflowers around Melbourne (London) of 1867. Mrs Rolf Boldrewood's The Flower Garden in Australia. A book for ladies and amateurs of 1893 detailed 'how to collect and sow the spore from tree ferns'. It explained 'how to build a bushhouse with saplings, hessian panels and a system of rollers and pulleys' as an inexpensive alternative to the glasshouse or greenhouse. Boldrewood enthused over Australian native flora including 'the Desert Pea ('a magnificent plant'), Australian tree ferns[...] ('Nothing is more beautiful'), many varieties of acacia, the lemon scented gum and the

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<sup>87</sup> 'The Last of the Artist-Naturalists', Sydney Morning Herald, 14-12-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 88

<sup>88</sup> Eve Pownall, Australian Pioneer Women, South Yarra, 1986, 55

<sup>89</sup> Judith Godden, 'A New Look at the Pioneer Woman', Hecate, vol v, 2, 1979, 8

<sup>90</sup> David Adams ed., The Letters of Rachel Henning, Ringwood, Victoria, 1988, 142

<sup>91</sup> Pownall, Australian Pioneer Women, 90

<sup>92</sup> Susan Hosking, 'I 'ad to 'ave me garden', A Perspective on Australian Women Gardeners', Meanjin, vol. 47 no. 3, 1988, 447

lilly-pilly ('very suitable for the shrubbery').<sup>93</sup> The heritage of such experiential knowledge bound the emerging professions of botany, conservation and gardening of native flora, to the development of a twentieth century identification with the land and its indigenous forms. Landscape paintings which depict the experience of intimacy within the Australian bush share many pictorial and spatial qualities of still life, particularly flower studies. Such bush and flower studies suggest a particular way of knowing the world through proximity.

### Intimate space

Norman Bryson argues that still life is the least theorised of genres, and 'is always at the bottom of the hierarchy'.<sup>94</sup> He claims that the 'painter of fruit and flowers' sits 'well below the salt'.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, in Australian art from 1900 to 1940 still life, particularly flower studies, predominated. Little mention is made, however, of such flower paintings in art criticism or art history and at best, discussion is inhibited. The schism between still life and its commentary may derive from the interior space in which it is usually located. In general terms, still life and flower paintings signify an intimate or domestic feminine space, which may account for them being, in Bryson's terms, historically 'overlooked'.

Critical reviews were disparaging of flower studies. The Triad magazine wrote in 1919 that Isobel Hunter Tweddle was 'a tireless producer of those absorbing flower-studies which make the drawing-rooms of retired grocers so difficult to live in', adding that 'another of the unhappy band is Mrs Gulliver' who 'has a fancy for faded gardens' and whose art 'has become affected by the spirit of the departed'. The reviewer concluded that 'all that can be said of Miss A.M.E. Bale is that a lady who paints phlox is, artistically speaking, no better than a female'.<sup>96</sup>

J.S. MacDonald characterised Bale in 1924 as an 'all-round painter' for whom 'flower pieces' were a 'stand-by' and whose artistic range was 'touched by distinction'.<sup>97</sup> The same issue of Art in Australia also

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 442-443

<sup>94</sup> Norman Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked. Four Essays on Still Life Painting, London, 1990, 8

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 136. ['Below the salt' means to be seated amongst the servants and dependants; 'above the salt' means to be seated at table among the family and their equals, The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1982, 924]

<sup>96</sup> 'Exhibition by Twenty Melbourne Painters', The Triad: A Journal Devoted to Literacy, Pictorial, Musical and Dramatic Art, 10-9-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 389

<sup>97</sup> J.S. MacDonald, 'Review of Art Activities in Victoria for 1923', Art in Australia, 3:7, March 1924, n.p.

carried the narrow definition of Bale as 'a still-life painter by nature', adding that 'successful figure painting' was 'beyond her reach'.<sup>98</sup> The reviewer ignored the many landscapes she exhibited with Bernice Edwell and Jo Sweatman in late 1923. Of her thirty seven paintings, sixteen were landscapes of Kew, Castlemaine and Warrandyte—flower studies, interior and portrait studies made up the rest. Bale's retrospective of 1977 also demonstrated her artistic range from 1899 to the late 1940s. The artist is, however, represented in public collections primarily as a flower painter. The Art Gallery of New South Wales owns Last of the Season (plate 18), a flower study purchased in 1922, the Art Gallery of South Australia owns Camellias (1931) purchased in 1933, and the National Gallery of Victoria owns four flower studies and one landscape, Oatfield at Kew, all purchased from 1922 to 1943.<sup>99</sup> Such a limited representation supports Heather Johnson's proposal that paintings which reinforced the traditional view of women's art as decorative or domestic were those purchased for public collections. The narrow perception of Bale's art may also stem from her identification with the area around Castlemaine, a region she loved and enjoyed painting.<sup>100</sup> Hers was a local rather than national identification at a time when critical reviews tended to promote art which signified a broad, rather than localised view. The critic of the Herald wrote in 1921 that 'art must have universal appeal. Mere localism or provincialism would signify a narrow outlook'.<sup>101</sup> Women artists often painted aspects of their domestic lives, but while male artists also painted scenes close to home, they were not criticised for having a limited outlook. J.S. MacDonald wrote that 'McCubbin never penetrated far into the bush; seldom beyond cooe of some dwelling', adding that he 'didn't need to' because the country 'a few miles out of the city's limits' gave him 'the suggestion of further-afield atmospheres'.<sup>102</sup> McCubbin's capacity to project beyond his immediate circumstance countered the domestic inflections of his work. For Norman Lindsay, 'a landscape painter's humanity' came to the fore when rose 'superior to his sense of actuality'

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<sup>98</sup> 'A.M.E. Bale', Art in Australia, 3:7, March 1924, n.p.

<sup>99</sup> Paintings by Bale are also owned by the following public collections: Bendigo Art Gallery, Mildura Arts Centre, Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery, Australian National War Memorial, Canberra, University of Queensland, and Queensland Art Gallery

<sup>100</sup> Janine Burke, 'Will the Real A.M.E. Bale Stand Up?', Arts Melbourne and Art Almanac, December 1977, 35

<sup>101</sup> 'The Exhibition of Art', Herald (Melbourne, Vic) 15-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 95

<sup>102</sup> J.S. MacDonald, 'Frederick McCubbin', Art in Australia, 1:7, 1919, 48

to 'translate the 'beauty of Nature'.<sup>103</sup> Against such expectations, everyday subjects such as small landscapes, flower and garden studies were commonly depreciated by critics as insignificant 'bits of landscape' or 'small stuff'.<sup>104</sup> Colquhoun described the Women's Art Club exhibition of 1921 as 'chiefly of a minor character, such as small studies of landscape and flowers'.<sup>105</sup> The small size of such paintings was also disparaged. A review of the Society of Artists' exhibition in 1919 wrote that 'large pictures give a certain air of significance to a collection which the little watercolours do not afford'.<sup>106</sup>

Small paintings were considered to be more appropriate to the domestic scale of flats and houses than to public galleries. In the period before World War 1, however, few opportunities for exhibitions or sales existed. Julian Ashton responded to the situation in 1910 by calling for the establishment of 'a suitably-lighted gallery in which to display our work'.<sup>107</sup> The Minister for Education noted in 1911 that it was 'comparatively easy to paint pictures in Australia, but hard to sell them'. He nonetheless acknowledged that 'there was more money now here, and a greater tendency on the part of the people to devote some attention to local art and artists'.<sup>108</sup> The call for the public support of art was expressed in terms of an art which would be experienced not simply 'as a luxury, but as part of their everyday life'.<sup>109</sup> The art market expanded in the early 1920s with the growth of commercial galleries and solo exhibitions, and small painting size was associated with saleability to a buying public rather than a public gallery. Sir John Monash opened Elsie Barlow's exhibition in 1920 and commented that 'the display is of unusual attractiveness to collectors, being comprised of small panels of purchasable size, whose fresh, decorative quality would lend charm to most drawing rooms'.<sup>110</sup> A critic remarked in 1920 that the exhibition by

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<sup>103</sup> Norman Lindsay, 'Elliott Gruner's 'Morning Light'', Art in Australia, 1:5, 1918, n.p.

<sup>104</sup> 'Royal Art Society. Annual Exhibition', Sydney Morning Herald, 14-11-14, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 207, and 'A New Arts Club and Show', Daily Mail (Brisbane, Qld), 28-6-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 342

<sup>105</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Exhibitions of Paintings. Women's Art Club', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 16-8-21, AGNSWPC, March 1930 to August 1932, Part 1, 57

<sup>106</sup> 'Society of Artists. A Strong Spring Show', Sydney Morning Herald, 3-10-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 397

<sup>107</sup> 'Art and Artists. Proposal for new picture gallery. Outlined by Mr Julian Ashton', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 2-7-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 77

<sup>108</sup> 'Painting and Politics. The Duty of the State. Advance Australian Art', Sydney Morning Herald, 29-8-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 101

<sup>109</sup> 'Australian Art', Sydney Morning Herald, 22-9-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 99

<sup>110</sup> 'Art Notes', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 13-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 510

Alice Norton and Gladys Owen 'includes no large works, and on this account[...] should attract 'flat-dwellers', whose wall space is generally limited'.<sup>111</sup> Margaret Preston proposed in 1920 that woodcuts had a 'great future' as decoration for flats.<sup>112</sup> The Daily Telegraph noted a shift in attitude to smaller works, noting that,

the old idea that a small painting was merely a sketch to be reproduced on a larger canvas is slowly dying. In a small picture the artist gets a freshness and a spontaneity that are often lacking in a big picture[...] the modern artist[...] makes a small picture as complete and final a work of art as he would strive to make were his canvas 10 ft square.<sup>113</sup>

At the same time large painting size was emphasised and this suggests that it was a marker of importance, particularly when it signified a public gallery scale. In 1919, the Trustees of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales commissioned a 'large Australian landscape' for the collection.<sup>114</sup> Large paintings seem to have been a metaphor for Australia's geographic space or 'bigness', as Longstaff expressed it in 1920.<sup>115</sup> Small works were consequently associated with a domestic space and a decorative function. Isobel Hunter Tweddle's Flowerpiece (c.1938) (plate 19), for example, is a broad-brushed oil painting of roses in full bloom. The flowers are the painting's singular focal point within the shallow foreground—the semi-abstract backdrop of an irregular geometric patterning emphasises the coloured flower forms. The eye cannot move beyond the shallow pictorial space which is close to the painting's frontal plane. The space is bounded and constrained, a confined internal space.

### Outdoor space

The critical devaluation of interior spaces associated with the home contrasts with the high value accorded paintings which invoked action, movement, discovery or pioneering. In the early 1900s, the status of historical landscapes corresponded to an awareness that 'the present is the last generation which will preserve the oral traditions of the

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<sup>111</sup> 'Norton-Owen Show. Australian Women Painters', Sydney Morning Herald, 22-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 517

<sup>112</sup> 'Mrs Preston's Paintings. Purchases by National Gallery', Evening News (Sydney, NSW), 18-8-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 530

<sup>113</sup> 'Art and Artists. News from the Studios. Small Pictures for Small Flats', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 5-7-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 632

<sup>114</sup> Australasian (Melbourne, Vic), 22-11-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 411

<sup>115</sup> 'Art in Australia. Mr Longstaff Arrives. Opportunities for Landscape', Sydney Morning Herald, 1-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 570

pioneers'.<sup>116</sup> The last surviving member of the Burke and Wills expedition of 1860 was alive in 1907.<sup>117</sup> Remembrance of the expedition resulted in John Longstaff's The Expedition of Burke and Wills (1908), commissioned through a private bequest.<sup>118</sup> The commission expressed the desire to tell 'the story of the long fight against the stubborn forces that resisted the explorers and pioneers of the past, and that are not yet subdued'. Landscape art was bound to such an enterprise, through 'the rendering of beautiful poetic and characteristic aspects of the geography of Australia'.<sup>119</sup> When William Charles Piguenit died in 1914, he was described as 'the unconscious founder of an Australian school of art';

whether on the flat plains of the far west, the rugged mountains of Tasmania, the dense foliage of the northern rivers, or the wild waves of the ocean, he saw and depicted beauty in everything.<sup>120</sup>

Critics identified landscape artists in the early twentieth century with the era of discovery and exploration through landscape views away from settled areas. In 1908, the Trustees of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales sought paintings for possible purchase and the encouragement of Australian art, 'of scenery, or subjects in the MORE REMOTE DISTRICTS OF THE VARIOUS STATES AND COLONIES'.<sup>121</sup> Such an identification was linked to the desire for a characteristic Australian art. In 1913, the Morning Post reported that 'today there was only the potential of an Australian national art. But it was the pioneer of an effort which would one day embody the rich and beautiful life of the White Man's Continent'.<sup>122</sup> A critic expressed his opinion that the potential for a national art lay in the hands of art 'pioneers' who would 'glorify the life we live' and 'record for all time' the 'development of the

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<sup>116</sup> 'A National Portrait Gallery', Sydney Morning Herald, 5-8-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 102

<sup>117</sup> 'Burke and Wills Expedition', no reference, 21-12-07, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 31

<sup>118</sup> A J Daplyn, 'Art Progress. In Melbourne and Adelaide', Sydney Morning Herald, 18-1-08, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 34

<sup>119</sup> J.S., 'The Emigrant Artist', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 6-5-11, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 109

<sup>120</sup> 'Noted Australian Artist. Death of Mr Piguenit', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 20-7-14, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 198

<sup>121</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, 16-1-08, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 34

<sup>122</sup> 'The New Australian Capital', Morning Post (London, UK), 16-12-13, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 172

soul of the nation'. 'Immortality' awaited such 'prime movers' in the 'Temples of Art'.<sup>123</sup>

The rhetoric of the period promoted the idea of the physically active male artist moving into and across the land. Women artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were, however, similarly mobile. Hilda Rix Nicholas travelled in 1907 with her sister and mother to London, France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Spain, Gibraltar and Morocco, before returning to Australia in 1918. Mary Edwards travelled to Tahiti in 1917 where she and her mother 'were the only white people in the village of Papetaoi'.<sup>124</sup> In the early twentieth century Isabel McWhannel travelled frequently with a friend to New England to paint, staying in an old log cabin.<sup>125</sup> Mabel Withers' watercolour subjects of 1919 indicate the artist's extensive travels in the Eastern states. Withers was an English artist who came to Australia around 1914 from South Africa. Her paintings were done 'whilst she was staying on well-known pastoral stations'.<sup>126</sup> The critic of the Argus claimed that the 'widely differing nature of the localities depicted' gave 'opportunities which have been artistically used', including the 'tropical colour of Queensland', the 'smoke haze of summer on the Upper Murray', Croydon and Belgrave in Victoria, and mountain views in Tasmania.<sup>127</sup>

Jessie Traill described the freedom of movement she enjoyed throughout the country in personal letters and accounts. She travelled to Alice Springs in 1928 and summarised the area around the Finke River to R.H. Croll as 'an artist's paradise'.<sup>128</sup> Traill described a four day walking trip over the Government Tourist track in 'a wild uninhabited range of mountains known as the Baw Baws' in Victoria, stopping each

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<sup>123</sup> Stephen Haweis, 'Art in Sydney', Sydney Morning Herald, 12-4-13, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 132

<sup>124</sup> 'Civilised Tahitians. Nothing Barbaric But Singing. Read Bible and Book of Mormon. Artist's Difficulties with Models', Sun (Sydney, NSW), 28-7-18, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 258

<sup>125</sup> In 1918 she died from the Murray River virus. Interview with the artist's relative Mrs Morrow, Watsons Bay, 11-5-1984

<sup>126</sup> 'Water-Colour Exhibition', Australasian (Melbourne, Vic), 19-7-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 350

<sup>127</sup> 'Miss Withers's Paintings', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 15-7-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 350

<sup>128</sup> Jessie Traill letter to R.H. Croll, 3 May 1928, Jessie Traill Papers MS 7975, Latrobe Library, Victoria

night 'in the shelter sheds provided'.<sup>129</sup> The walking trip covered forty eight miles at 5,000 feet above sea level. Traill and Violet Teague also went to Phillip Island in 1929 on a painting expedition. In 1923, Hilda Rix Nicholas travelled with her secretary and companion Dorothy Richmond on a nine-month sketching tour 'into the way out back'.<sup>130</sup> The women journeyed through country areas of New South Wales including the Snowy River and Monaro district, Illabo, Blue Mountains and Myall Lakes. In 1927, they travelled through Eastern Australia in a car modified to carry large canvases and painting equipment, and motored to the Snowy River and Quidong district, and coastal areas of southern New South Wales, and Queensland. In 1919, Elsie Barlow exhibited 'nearly 80 examples of landscape, the majority of which were painted in the neighbourhoods of Healesville, Sassafras and Mentone'—her exhibited landscapes were of the near bush areas of Woodend (Rising Mists, Woodend), Sassafras (Black Buttes, Sassafras), Healesville (In the Heart of the Bush, Healesville) and Macedon (Sunlight on the Gums, Macedon).<sup>131</sup> In 1920, Barlow exhibited landscapes which were painted in the Western district of Victoria. Joan Weigall's landscapes of 1920 were also considered to have 'benefited by several months' strenuous and independent study of open-air effects at the picturesque resort of Warrandyte'.<sup>132</sup> Weigall also exhibited works painted near Greensborough.<sup>133</sup> In Sydney, Gladys Owen and Alice Norton exhibited watercolours which 'were painted while they were on a three weeks' vacation at Robertson, NSW'.<sup>134</sup> Arthur Streeton exhibited paintings in 1920 of 'the Grampians, Mount Boronia, Hall's Gap and Sundial View and views of Sassafras and Sherbrooke'—that is, paintings of areas not far from Melbourne.<sup>135</sup>

In 1919, Colquhoun described the scope and nature of the 'work undertaken by the pleinairiste' as 'extensive and varied', ranging from

<sup>129</sup> 'Mountain Tops. A Trip over the Baw Baws, Victoria, Australia', undated letter, Jessie Traill Papers MS 7975, Latrobe Library, Victoria

<sup>130</sup> Letter from the artist to Lady Stradbroke, c.1923, Hilda Rix Nicholas papers, Collection of Rix Wright

<sup>131</sup> 'Art Notes', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 2-6-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 333

<sup>132</sup> 'Art Notes', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 13-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 510

<sup>133</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Miss Weigall's Pictures. Attractive Exhibits', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 10-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 512

<sup>134</sup> 'Two Sydney Women Artists. Exhibition of Water Colors', Sunday News (Sydney, NSW), 25-7-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 517

<sup>135</sup> 'Art Exhibition by Mr Streeton', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 27-10-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 583

'that of the young lady amateur to the heavy professional, who is represented in the exhibitions by large compositions of the kind known as important'. He went on to discuss the range of physical movement available to a landscape artist:

Though these large canvases are more frequently handled in the studio than in the open there are exceptions to the rule, and the late Fred M'Cubbin has often been seen struggling in a high wind under the burden of an eight foot pastoral. Some of the local artists seek their inspiration far afield in regions entailing long journeys by rail and coach, and yielding exhibition titles such as 'Big Timber', 'In the Kelly Country', or 'Sunset, Mount Baw Baw'; while others, less inclined to rove, are content with the nearer hunting grounds of Warrandyte, Eltham, Mordialloc, or more suburban spots about Kew or Deepdene.<sup>136</sup>

In spite of women artists moving easily and frequently into the country, only the male landscapist was represented in exhibition reviews and newspaper articles as physically active. In 1919, John Mather was praised for his painting In the Buffalo Mountains which represented the artist 'at the height of his productiveness, when he travelled far and endured much to satisfy his passion for magnificent subject matter'.<sup>137</sup> Gruner's search for the subject of his commissioned landscape Valley of the Tweed was described in similar terms as an exploration, particularly through the artist's claim that 'the journey up to the border[...] is practically a new region for the artist[...] Australia is still an unexplored country as far as the artist is concerned'. Gruner added that 'the only painter who had previously reached the Tweed was Tom Roberts', describing him as 'one of our most enterprising pioneers of art'.<sup>138</sup> The promotion of the active male landscapist as a pioneer-explorer dovetails the conception of the national space as a totality, knowable through a broad outlook and vision. The quality of spatial distance, such as the 'vast distances brought into harmonious relation' of On the Murrumbidgee (1929) (plate 20), was particularly valued. The painting was seen to represent the true Australia in its 'freedom, originality, and

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<sup>136</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Artist Out of Doors. What Painters Suffer from a Curious Public. Melbourne Has Material to Repay Sketchers' Skill', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 29-3-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 319

<sup>137</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Art of Late John Mather Reveals His Love of Nature. Collection to be Sold', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 18-6-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 340

<sup>138</sup> 'Search for a Subject. How it was Painted', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 24-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 99

unity of detail'.<sup>139</sup> Gruner's painting guides the viewer's eye in a downward sweeping movement through the interlocking features of the land surface. Such tonal patterning, and the absence of direct narrative, invokes a generalised whole which belies the ostensible specificity of the painting's title.

In her discussion of the metaphors of knowledge within anthropological texts, Ann Salmond argues that 'our discourse about knowledge characteristically elaborates a series of metaphors about location in a physical landscape, where the space-time properties are those of commonsense Western perception'. She claims that 'these metaphors mirror either the landscape itself or physical activities upon it', and that,

a somewhat arbitrary entry to these metaphors might begin with the supposed claim, *knowledge is a landscape*. This claim does not stand on its own but enters into a series of entailments (*knowledge is a landscape* entails that *knowledge is territory* entails that *knowledge has spatial existence*), and it is linked with a series of related metaphors including *intellectual activity is a journey* (and so *knowledge is a destination*); *understanding is seeing* (and so *knowledge is clear sight*).<sup>140</sup>

In these terms, pictorial evocations of distance or accounts of artists' wide travels in the landscape can assume metaphorical meaning as a quest for knowledge attained through sight or vision. Streeton's art was praised in 1921 for its 'power of suggesting great distances' in which 'the eye travels far'.<sup>141</sup> Although such rhetoric applied mainly to male artists, Ellis Rowan's wide-ranging journeys were considered in 1910 to contribute to knowledge of the features of Australia. The Sydney Morning Herald claimed that 'if the knowledge of oneself is held to be one of the most interesting of human studies, surely it will be admitted that the knowledge of one's native land must rank next to it':

No opportunity should, therefore, be lost in securing the means wherewith to impart to the public every phase and

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<sup>139</sup> 'Gruner Landscape. For the Art Gallery. By Critic', Sydney Morning Herald, 8-3-30, AGNSWPC, March 1930 to August 1932, Part 1, 8

<sup>140</sup> Ann Salmond, 'Theoretical Landscapes. On Cross-Cultural Conceptions of Knowledge', Semantic Anthropology, ed. David Parkin, London, 1982, 67

<sup>141</sup> 'Mr Streeton's Pictures', Melbourne Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 1-11-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 127

every feature of its country, and to impress upon them the variety, richness, and beauties of its inheritance.<sup>142</sup>

Vision and its implicit knowledge was portrayed as a masculine attribute, and was rarely credited to women artists. The critical praise of Leila McNamara's 'artistic vision' and 'zealous endeavour' in her painting Morning on the Towers was exceptional.<sup>143</sup> The figure of the pioneer or explorer was also exclusively masculine. Orthodox Australian history has cast women as secondary pioneers following the trail of the explorers, as housekeepers and child rearers rather than land settlers.<sup>144</sup>

### Domestic space

The concept of deep landscape space as a site of knowledge contrasts with the view of the garden as a limited space. Flower and garden studies were rarely discussed in critical discourses without being associated with the feminine. The garden can also represent an intermediate space between the house and the boundary. It is a marginal, half-way place to be, a liminal space.<sup>145</sup> As such, the garden can symbolise a transitional, rather than enclosed or confined space. Ina Gregory's Our Garden (c.1910) (plate 21) depicts the edge of an unstructured garden at the point where it merges with the bush. There is no border and no sense of an inside or outside. It is one space, bound in the tones of soft grey-green of the foreground garden which blend with the indistinct bush behind. The flower forms of the cultivated garden are brought forward on the pictorial plane through their texture and dense paint application, as if they float or hover in the air against the backdrop of soft green foliage and brown earth. Only the title indicates the nature of the particular space depicted. Gregory's garden view echoes the spatial structure of intimate landscapes, in particular the spatial foreshortening, no outlook or prospect, and the non-hierarchised treatment of its subject. As such, the painting aligns with Susan Ford's assertion that the garden represents the 'detail of landscape', a 'different scale, a different

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<sup>142</sup> 'Mrs Rowan's Pictures. To the Editor of the Herald. Vesey R. Gosche', Sydney Morning Herald, 23-8-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 80

<sup>143</sup> 'Society of Arts. The Winter Exhibition', Advertiser (Adelaide, SA), 18-5-21, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 681

<sup>144</sup> Pownall, Australian Pioneer Women, 5, 64. Women such as Elizabeth Hawkins who crossed the Blue Mountains to Bathurst with her husband and family in 1821 played a crucial role in opening up areas for settlement. Hers was reputedly the first family of free settlers to cross the mountains, eight years after the expedition by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth.

<sup>145</sup> Casey, Getting Back into Place, 155

aesthetic', and consequently, different knowledge.<sup>146</sup> Our Garden images quite a different space, however, from that of Rix Nicholas' Knockalong Garden (c.1934) (plate 22) which closely aligns with orthodox landscape expectations of prospect and distance. The painting depicts a garden from within, looking out to the landscape beyond. The eye is guided from the colourful large-bloomed roses of the foreground to the middleground trellis, hedge, trees and studio, and on to the background rolling land, distant Tombong Range, and sky. A separate enclosed space—an inner, as opposed to an outer world—is created by the hedge and emphasised by the dark tones of green, brick red and black. In its movement from foreground to background, Knockalong Garden conforms closely to formulaic ideas of landscape composition, which The Bookfellow summarised in 1920:

Landscape must come with a one-two-and-three of fore, middle, and back: to lose one leg of the tripod is to make an imperfect picture. Middles depending on colour[...] lose the life of Nature in so far as they miss the range of Nature: they approach the category of still life, which is not the category of landscape.<sup>147</sup>

Many still life and flower studies share the spatial foreshortening of intimate landscapes. Bale's Last of the Season (c.1922) (plate 18) brings the softly textured creamy-white flowers forward on to the frontal plane where they float against the dark and indistinct surrounding forms in a concentrated sensory presence. The soft physicality of the petals is reinforced by their cohesion in the centre of the painting, and stabilised by the forms behind them and the curve of the table below. Bale's intimate glimpse of an everyday scene shares many pictorial qualities of paintings such as Margaret Coen's watercolour Oriental Harmony (c.1938) (plate 23). Again, there is no view out beyond the shallow illusionistic space. The eye is engaged in discovering the sensuous qualities of the arranged objects such as the soft, delicate petals of the high-key pink, blue, purple and white flowers, the dense colour of the vase, the evocative blue and gold oriental figure, and the rich mauve colour and texture of the fabric backdrop. The circular movement within and around the central arrangement emphasises the concentrated rhythm of textures and shapes. Bale created a similar circularity in her Last of the Season in the repeated roundness of each form.

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<sup>146</sup> Ford, 'Landscape Revisited: A Feminist Reappraisal', 154

<sup>147</sup> 'NSW Art Society', The Bookfellow: the Australasian Review and Journal of the Australian Book Trade, 18-8-20, 164, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 547

Bale's quiet painting of a familiar and incidental middle-class arrangement of flowers from the garden—not a bunch, but the last of the season—contains no external reference to detract from its immediate sensuous focus. By comparison, Hardy Wilson's Sunlit Hydrangeas (c.1920) (plate 24) places the flowers in an outdoor domestic space. The secluded darkness of Bale's study contrasts with Wilson's sunlit outdoor scene. Sunlit Hydrangeas is more than a flower study because it provides architectural information, and indicators of domestic comfort such as the curtains, overflowing flower tubs and pecking hens. The commonplace objects were described wryly by the Bulletin in 1920 as the 'artistic inspiration' to be found in 'hydrangeas and poultry'.<sup>148</sup> The painting provides external references which intimate still life and flower studies generally do not. It does, however, associate flowers with the home.<sup>149</sup>

The affinity between the flower garden and the home derives from early Australian settlement when gardens were cultivated for both food and pleasure in town houses, on farms and on pastoral properties.<sup>150</sup> From early colonial times the exchange of flowers and shrubs was viewed as an expression of community. Mary Fullerton called flowers 'current coin', adding that 'What one had, all came to have'.<sup>151</sup> Louisa Clifton received a gift of flower seeds for her 'mythical cottage' when she left England for Australia in 1840.<sup>152</sup> English books such as Jane Loudon's Gardening for Ladies (1840) and Theresa Earle's Pot-Pourri from a Surrey Garden (1897) proposed gardening as a suitable pastime for women and were popular throughout the British Empire. Louisa Johnson's Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener (1840) which proposed gardening as a consolation for single women—'as a distraction from the disappointments of life'—was not as popular.<sup>153</sup> Mrs Boldrewood's The

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<sup>148</sup> Bulletin (Sydney, NSW), 18-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 561

<sup>149</sup> In September 1920, Fowls and Landscape or Poultry Yard by the Dutch 17th century artist Melchior Hondcoeter was purchased by the Felton Bequest from the collection of the late Lord Taunton and was on view in Melbourne. See A. Colquhoun, 'Felton Bequest Purchases. Pictures on View in Gallery', Herald (Melbourne), 27-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 566

<sup>150</sup> Jane Lennon, 'The role of women in conservation in Victoria', Common Ground, vol. 2, no. 3, December 1989, 36

<sup>151</sup> Fullerton, Bark House Days, 15

<sup>152</sup> Lucy Frost, No Place for a Nervous Lady. Voices from the Australian Bush, Ringwood, Victoria, 1984, 42

<sup>153</sup> Susan Hosking, 'I 'ad to 'ave me garden', A Perspective on Australian Women Gardeners', 441

Flower Garden in Australia (1893) also perpetuated the view that gardening was a 'home pleasure' which denoted domestic contentment.

The city or country flower garden was commonly set out in an English style. A turn-of-the-century garden on a dairy farm and vineyard near Katanning, Western Australia, was remembered as 'a lovely flower garden laid out beautifully in all shapes—diamonds and things' which had 'a lot of bulbs, daffodils mostly and annuals and white lillies all the way round the fence. Marigold, stocks and wallflowers—they had a great respect for England'.<sup>154</sup> Mary Fullerton recalled that 'Mother had many sentiments—daisies, violets, buttercups and primroses, and, last of all, a daffodil; these gathered England about her'.<sup>155</sup> Joan Austin Palmer recalled the Canoon homestead garden, 'well-clothed in greenery', near Hay in the mid 1890s, its 'winding paths' and 'pergolas covered with creepers and climbing roses, while the beds backed by trees and shrubs contained every cottage flower imaginable'.<sup>156</sup>

B.E. Minns' watercolour The Homestead garden (1933) (plate 25) depicts the lush green growth within an enclosed domestic courtyard. The screen of buildings and trees mark the border of the enclosure and block any outward view. The viewer's focus is thus brought back to the variety of foliage in the dappled sunlight. The bare foreground area acts as a visual counter to the backdrop of variegated greenery. It is not an image of a harsh environment but a declaration, through its depiction of luxuriant growth, of civilised comfort and home shelter, and, apart from the wallaby, more English in its reference than Australian.

The gender category 'women' is not a fixed historical entity, and women do not form a homogeneous social group. Women's gender identification from 1900 to 1940 was, nonetheless, closely aligned with a static domestic world rather than outdoor activity or movement away from the home. It is reasonable to assume that women's daily lives were then quite different from men's. There is scant information about the daily routines of male or female artists, although Herbert Gallop wrote sometime between 1908 and 1922:

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<sup>154</sup> Jan Carter, Nothing to Spare. Recollections of Australian Pioneering Women, Ringwood, 1983, 141

<sup>155</sup> Fullerton, Bark House Days, 15

<sup>156</sup> Joan Austin Palmer, Memories of a Riverina Childhood, Kensington, 1993, 19

Daily routine: Rise early. Sketch from nature until 7, then set palette and start painting. Breakfast at 8. Paint until 12. Lunch. Paint until 3 o'clock. Clean up and go for a walk until 6. Then dinner. Read or draw until 9.30 pm then to bed.<sup>157</sup>

The Sydney Morning Herald noted that Julian Ashton's brother, the artist George Ashton, worked from 6am until '10 and 12 at night'.<sup>158</sup> The Adelaide Register noted in 1919 that 'on what he called a holiday', James Ashton 'rose with the sun and worked until it set'.<sup>159</sup> In 1921, Streeton advocated 'incessant work and ability' as the 'secrets of success'.<sup>160</sup> By contrast, as a married woman and mother on a large country property, Hilda Rix Nicholas worked no longer than four hours a day. Margaret Coen's literary voice in Meg Stewart's Autobiography of My Mother also states that 'I learned to draw from memory[...] it was one of the things I learned while baby minding'.<sup>161</sup> Coen thus affirms her dual professional and nurturing activities within the home.

Yi-Fu Tuan argues that place is 'a pause in movement' rather than stasis, adding that 'the pause makes it possible for a locality to become a centre of felt value'. He writes of the commonplace objects of a familiar place, of the home which 'is full of ordinary objects' known through use, and 'the small, familiar world, a world inexhaustibly rich in the complication of ordinary life but devoid of features of high imageability'.<sup>162</sup> Such ideas complement Margaret Coen's delight in painting flower studies and her pleasure in the everyday:

Flowers have a life of their own. Flowers aren't static; they move. It's fantastic how some flowers move. Nasturtiums will turn right round to look at the light in a room. Movement in flowers is difficult to paint, but that's the aim. The slightest movement makes the world of difference to a painting.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> 'Notes on Art. Culled from the Notebook of Herbert Gallop. Dated 1908 onward. With Bert's consent. 1922', Miles Dunphy Papers c.1902-1982, ML MSS 4457, Add-on 1823, Box 3 (15)

<sup>158</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, 10-10-16(?), AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 51

<sup>159</sup> 'Fine Landscapes. Mr James Ashton's Exhibition', Register (Adelaide, SA), 11-3-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 306

<sup>160</sup> 'An Artist on Art. Mr. Arthur Streeton's First Lecture', Register (Adelaide, SA), 29-7-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 42

<sup>161</sup> Meg Stewart, Autobiography of My Mother, Ringwood, Victoria, 1985, 251

<sup>162</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience, London, 1977, 138, 144-

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<sup>163</sup> Stewart, Autobiography of My Mother, 228

Vida Lahey expressed similar views in her undated 'Talk on still life':

Still life painting usually consists of objects that are apparently static, but are not necessarily inanimate; although inanimate things are often used, such as furnishings, pottery, glassware etc. Flowers, fruit and even vegetables are often featured and they most definitely are not inanimate, showing change and even movement from one day to another. This capacity for movement is most marked in flowers. It is not only the death of flowers which proves embarrassing, but very often their exuberance of life. This vitality which is so precious creates a constant movement and change in the arrangement of the bunch as some of the flowers become more erect and others perhaps more drooping, or possibly some turn more towards the light. The title 'still life', I think, is very suggestive—it seems to me this title pre-supposes that even in the picturing of apparently inanimate things the basic reality, 'life', should be recognised as a fundamental ingredient, and that the feeling of life must be conveyed in the picture even if only through the texture, the handling and the quality of the paint. For the above reason I think that our English title for this branch of art is much more inspiring and suggestive than the term used by the French, not 'still life' but 'dead nature'.<sup>164</sup>

Everyday subjects were not well received in critical reviews. In 1919, the flower and fruit paintings of Margaret Macpherson and Gladys Reynell were depreciated for replicating an everyday domestic sight by the reviewer of the Advertiser who wrote: 'Personally I prefer landscapes and other paintings to still life studies, as I feel that one can always get the still life studies in one's home'.<sup>165</sup> Within landscape art however, some subjects were considered to be uplifting, while others, such as Harold Herbert's 'little bits of creek and smiling bush' of 1921, were regarded as trivial.<sup>166</sup> An article in the Herald of 1913 had written scathingly of 'pretty pictures which remind us pleasantly of the fields wherein Mary led her little lamb, or representations of cottage corners where the late John Horner was wont to sit consuming well-known delicacies'.<sup>167</sup> The author called instead for an art by 'men who can interpret the spirit of their time'. Dora Meeson also criticised 'pretty

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<sup>164</sup> 'Selected Writings of Vida Lahey' in Bettina MacAulay, Songs of Colour. The Art of Vida Lahey, exhibition catalogue, Queensland Art Gallery, 1989, 87

<sup>165</sup> 'Art Exhibition. Opened by the Governor', Advertiser (Adelaide, SA), 16-9-19, AGNSWPC Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 385

<sup>166</sup> Bulletin (Sydney, NSW), 17-3-21, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 651

<sup>167</sup> Stephen Haweis, 'Art in Sydney', Sydney Morning Herald, 12-4-13, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 132

pictures', adding that Australian artists 'neglected opportunities of painting scenes palpitating with life' and 'other subjects' which were 'of more moment than garden studies and gum trees'.<sup>168</sup> By contrast, the reviewer of the Argus praised William Rowell's bush road studies of 1921 because the artist 'revealed' himself 'as an earnest seeker after the subtle truths that are to be found in nature'. He described the paintings as 'full of air and space' which gave an 'actual illusion of light'. The 'feeling of space as it recedes' was also 'truthfully rendered'.<sup>169</sup> Through such essential qualities and illusory truths, the studies thus suggested to the reviewer an experience beyond that of the familiar or everyday.

Bryson asks what connections exist between the ambivalence towards still life and the cultural construction of gender, adding that the value placed on the 'creaturely routine' of domestic chores is culturally and historically constructed. In Australian art history, still life is rarely discussed: Bernard Smith raises it in relation to Post-Impressionism when he writes that 'the still life, the interior, garden and back-yards, landscapes and portraits, a little figure-painting: the range of subject-matter made no advance upon that already treated with distinction by the impressionists'. He adds that 'consequently a great deal of post-impressionistic work in Australia tends to be on the light side in terms of real achievement: colourful, well-constructed, eminently decorative'.<sup>170</sup> James Green placed decorative art last in his hierarchy of 1889, after figure subjects, portraiture, landscape, seascapes, and architectural subjects. He considered these to be of 'relative importance', 'according as they exercise the imagination and the other higher faculties of the artist'.<sup>171</sup> Australian modernism was also broadly viewed as decorative, embracing 'all the arts that pertain to living' in the domestic sphere which, in this period, was considered to be a feminine space.<sup>172</sup>

Bryson claims that the negative view of what is considered to be mundane originates from the perception of supposed 'lowness' posing a threat to another level of culture which regards itself as 'having access to superior or exalted modes of experience'. He points out that the objects

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<sup>168</sup> 'Cousin Kate. Notable Australian Artist. Interview with Mrs George Coates', Mail (Adelaide, SA), 24-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 102

<sup>169</sup> 'Exhibition of Paintings', Argus (Melbourne, Vic) 15-3-21, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 641

<sup>170</sup> Smith, Australian Painting, 202-203

<sup>171</sup> Green, 'The Art Society of New South Wales', 272

<sup>172</sup> Mary Eagle, 'Modernism in Sydney in the 1920s', 79-89

of still life are 'materially continuous' forms which do not change over long periods of time, and yet have enormous force through familiarity.<sup>173</sup> Hilda Rix Nicholas' The Frugal meal (c.1936) (plate 26) visualises such force of familiar things; of bread, butter, fruit, flowers and water jug, arranged on a small table against a grey and white backdrop. The objects are tilted up towards the frontal plane which, together with the viewer's position looking down, emphasises their formal presence in the tableau. The high-key tones of yellow and orange-red entice the eye rhythmically from one compositional element to another, binding them visually against the flat neutral backdrop, and also suggesting the simple abundance of the frugal meal. The front edge of the table lies outside the frame and thus extends into everyday space—the viewer is thus able to associate directly with the scene and its simple offering. The Frugal meal depicts a self-contained arrangement within the home and makes no direct reference to the outside world. It implies, in Bryson's terms, the habits of everyday life, those occurrences which maintain and stabilise the human world because 'the subject of culture is naturally at ease and at home'.<sup>174</sup>

Although male and female artists painted still life and flower studies, still life's placement within the domestic space coded it predominantly as feminine. Critical reviews generally mentioned flower studies and still life paintings by women as part of a body of work, but often singled out still lifes by male artists for particular mention. Those by Streeton and Heysen in particular were praised for their technical mastery and emotional power. Streeton's 'painting of a spray of plum blossom in a glass bowl' was seen in 1920 to reveal the artist's 'almost uncanny cleverness':

To paint glass without the help of a dominant color behind it is a problem that most artists would leave severely alone. With a few, sure strokes of the brush Mr Streeton has achieved the translucency, the actual brittleness of the glass.<sup>175</sup>

Hans Heysen's Flowers and fruit (Zinnias) (1921) (plate 27) prompted an emotional response from the actress Marie Tempest who reportedly said that 'tears came to my eyes when I saw this blaze of color':

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<sup>173</sup> Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked, 137-138

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 138

<sup>175</sup> 'Art Notes. Mr Arthur Streeton Among the Grampians', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 2-11-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 589

The trustees of the Gallery showed great taste when they bought it. It will do everyone good, for it will make them feel young again[...] There should be curtains round the Heysen picture or it should be placed on a wall by itself. It is the most beautiful flower painting I've seen.<sup>176</sup>

The reviewer claimed that the painting, 'with its simple array of color, would hold its own against the masterpieces of Lambert, Lindsay, Gruner and Streeton and the entire hierarchy of art'.<sup>177</sup> Such high praise contrasts with the moderate remarks made generally about flower painting by women artists. Archibald Colquhoun wrote in a tone of typical flatness that 'there is some good painting in the flower studies, Chrysanthemums and Poppies' in Janie Wilkinson Whyte's exhibition of 1921.<sup>178</sup> The reviewer of the Argus commented on Miss A.E. Oakley's exhibition of the same year that 'the flower studies[...] reveal the artist's best work', but added:

Among them are noticed many sketches of the smaller varieties of flowers such as boronia, tea-tree blossom, scarlet runner and phlox, which, in their wealth of detail, present many difficulties in their portrayal.<sup>179</sup>

Art criticism of the period valued the whole view and regarded the detail of much landscape and still life by women artists in disparaging terms. The reviewer for the Age declared in 1921 that Jo Sweatman's paintings were 'marred' because 'too much unnecessary detail has been crammed into the canvas', and criticised the artist's 'weakness in selection and elimination'. One work, Sunlit Warrandyte, was seen to sacrifice 'all the charm of a glimpse of distance for the sake of faithfully reproducing an ungraceful tree in the foreground'.<sup>180</sup> The critic of the Sydney Morning Herald wrote in 1920 that Gladys Owen's Late Afternoon, Bellevue Hill was 'crowded with detail' and considered the watercolour painting inappropriate for viewing in the public gallery space.<sup>181</sup> By contrast, the critic of the Age praised Streeton in 1921 for the

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<sup>176</sup> 'Society of Artists. Marie Tempest's Tears. Before the Heysen Burst of Flower-Color', Sunday Times (Sydney, NSW), 11-9-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 84

<sup>177</sup> Ibid

<sup>178</sup> A. Colquhoun, 'Miss Wilkinson Whyte's Art. Exhibition of Paintings', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 1-10-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 111

<sup>179</sup> 'Exhibition of Paintings', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 19-10-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 119

<sup>180</sup> 'Art Notes. Miss J. Sweatman', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 18-8-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 56

<sup>181</sup> 'Women Painters. Annual Exhibition', Sydney Morning Herald, 23-10-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 584

'minimum of detail' in 'his new picture of Melbourne from Sassafras' in which the artist 'has unrolled miles of the most beautiful country scenery in Australia'.<sup>182</sup> A.M.E. Bale's painting method of dealing 'separately with the detail' was also viewed favourably because the artist 'treated' detail 'as she would the whole canvas in noting the precedence of tone and then finally checking that portion with the whole'.<sup>183</sup> Masculinism's negative judgement of still life painting can be seen to lie partly in the gendered proposition that concern with detail is feminine. Naomi Schor suggests that as an aesthetic category, detail has been viewed in the West with suspicion and hostility. She argues that such a negative view is bracketed in a 'larger semantic network' comprising the ornamental and its 'connotations of effeminacy and decadence', and the everyday, whose 'prosiness is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women'.<sup>184</sup> Such associations may have preceded critical assessments of Australian still life painting.

Bryson offers a further insight into why still life is negatively associated with the feminine. He suggests that psychoanalytically, the male child must separate himself from the 'domain of maternal nourishment and warmth' which he does by claiming another kind of space which is 'definitely and assuredly *outside* [...] a space where the process of identification with the masculine can begin and can succeed'. In this light, Bryson argues that still life 'bears all the marks of this double-edged exclusion and nostalgia, this irresolvable ambivalence which gives to feminine space',

a power of attraction intense enough to motor the entire development of still life as a genre, yet at the same time apprehends feminine space as alien, as a space which also menaces the masculine subject to the core of his identity as male.<sup>185</sup>

According to Bryson, the space of still life is alien to the male painter because it is 'incapable of being occupied from the inside, and at the same time as a place of fascination and obsessive looking'. He adds that historically, still life is regarded as a genre appropriate to women painters, and 'unable to abstract itself from its entanglement in detail'

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<sup>182</sup> 'Art Notes. Paintings by Mr. A. Streeton', Age (Melbourne, Vic), 6-7-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 18

<sup>183</sup> 'A.M.E. Bale', Art in Australia, 3:7, March 1924, n.p.

<sup>184</sup> Naomi Schor, Reading in Detail. Aesthetics and the Feminine, London, 1987, 7

<sup>185</sup> Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked, 172-173

and 'merely sensuous pleasure'.<sup>186</sup> While Bryson's proposition—that male artists are alien to and estranged from the inviting spaces of still life—requires further research in relation to Australian still life painting, his argument does offer a means of understanding masculinism's assessment of still life as primarily women's art which concerns itself with mere everyday particularity. The view that artists should not be concerned with everyday representations resonates in Colin Colahan's opinion of 1930 that 'the function of the artist' is to 'reveal Nature freed from her utilitarian and everyday associations'.<sup>187</sup> Lister Lister's art was praised in 1919 for such a capacity to reveal 'familiar scenes in such a new and poetic aspect' that 'the onlooker realised how much he had failed to perceive in Nature' and which 'the trained observer' could 'show him by a few magical touches'.<sup>188</sup>

Paintings of gardens and spaces close to the home can be seen to depict a feminine space because they infer a self-contained domestic stasis, from where one moves out into the world.<sup>189</sup> Vida Lahey's Morning News (1926) (plate 28) suggests such an idea through the placement of the static foreground figure within a shallow pictorial space. The woman's stillness is reinforced by her black shoes which visually ground her on the pathway, and reading from her shoes to her dark head establishes a stable triangular shape. The open newspaper pages establish outward directional lines which contain her absorption in her reading and contrast with her resultant fixity. Such an inward-outward tension suggests her mental projection beyond the immediate situation. Lahey's In a garden (1925-26) (plate 29) also contains a similar, but differently constructed inner-outer dynamic within the shallow space of an enclosed and private world. The relaxed figure of the young woman absorbed in her reading forms a strong diagonal line towards the top left corner which recedes in its tones of dark green, thereby invoking the world beyond. The female subjects of both paintings are located within a shallow in-between space just outside the home. The interconnectedness of public and private domains is also expressed in

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 173-175

<sup>187</sup> 'Beauty and the Iconoclast by Colin Colahan. A modern artist unleashes his opinions', Stead's Review (Melbourne, Vic), 1-3-30, 35, AGNSWPC, March 1930 to August 1932, Part 1, 4

<sup>188</sup> 'The Lister Paintings', Sydney Morning Herald, 7-5-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 326

<sup>189</sup> Bernice McPherson also explores the gendered space of the verandah in 'The Verandah as a Feminine Site in the Australian Memory', Jeanette Hoorn ed., Strange Women, 67-80

Hilda Rix Nicholas' oil painting The Little green gate (c.1920) (plate 30) depicting an open garden gate viewed from within the property, looking out to the urban bush beyond. The strong directional line of the pathway on which the viewer is placed is echoed in the green weatherboarding, leading the eye from inside the gate to the outer space of the uncultivated bush.

The mediated space of the home and just beyond is the space by which a particular psychic attachment to place can be secured. Paul Carter describes the nineteenth century process in Australia by which 'the cultivation of intimate space assumed an extraordinary importance', and each house became 'a world in miniature' from where 'the world could be dreamed of'.<sup>190</sup> To edge away from such a domestic base is to carry the sentiments and desires of that intimate space into the 'interplace' which, according to Casey, allows us to 'move freely into and out of residences and to vacillate between a private and public life'. The garden is such a place where we perambulate and pause from time to time for viewing:

*Perambulate* [...] means to inspect the boundaries of a place[...] but in the case of gardens *the place itself is a boundary*. To perambulate here is not restricted to going *around* a place but includes walking *through* it[...] Indeed, the boundary of a garden can be obscured and even removed at the limit, but the garden as such is already and always a liminal presence.<sup>191</sup>

On this basis, gardens have the capacity to invoke what lies beyond them. Such ideas are expressed in Ina Gregory's Our Garden and the garden studies of Hilda Rix Nicholas and Vida Lahey. These images gesture to the outside world through an anchoring house-garden-nature movement.

### Close-to-home space

A pathway is a well used track usually close to the home, a means of moving to and from, and within a familiar place. It is a route for travelling on foot—a walking, rather than a vehicle track—and lacks the directional force of a road which cuts through the terrain and is purpose-built. A pathway evolves with frequent use and indicates a routine and circumscribed pattern of movement within a local and known area. A.M.E. Bale's oil The Pathway (c.1925) (plate 31) establishes the pale

<sup>190</sup> Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, 282

<sup>191</sup> Casey, Getting Back Into Place, 155

presence of the pathway within the foreground space, its directional emphasis echoed in the wooden fence and purple blossom. The pathway is stabilised by white vertical posts which contain its width, but at the furthest post, the view is blocked by a screen of dark trees, and the viewer's gaze is encouraged to then explore the intimate immediate space. A less defined track is depicted in Jessie Evans' oil (Green Landscape) (c.1895) (plate 32). The pathway, on which the viewer is located, is integral to the feathery foreground growth and thicker middleground bush into which it appears to lead. As the eye follows the line of the receding bush, the indistinct outline of a roof indicates that this track is close to home. The winding worn track in Dora Serle's (Untitled Landscape) (plate 33) leads the viewer's eye into the bush landscape but again, the eye cannot move beyond the shallow landscape space—it is blocked by the thick trees into which the path disappears and thus returns to explore the textures and colours of the natural bush on either side. Jessie Evans' oil (In the bush) (c.1895) (plate 34) also locates the viewer on the track leading from the foreground clearing into the natural bush. This painting includes figures moving towards the dense growth, a human presence merely implied in previous works. The view over the land is stopped by the middleground trees and background mountain, and the eye is encouraged to explore the different textures, shapes and colours which are accessible only to a viewer positioned within this proximate space.

The process of discovery inscribed in the paintings evokes the familiar knowledge gained while walking, sauntering or moving slowly through the natural bush. Such an intimate relationship to the land follows reflective movement within a known place. Casey describes walking as the activity which negotiates the 'middle realm between nature and culture' which serves to connect the cultivated with the uncultivated world. He further suggests that *sauntering* combines walking with reflecting and 'implies a certain leisurely insouciance that allows the walker to be more thoughtful and more open to the land than if he or she were to rush over it with a(n)[...] eye to discovery or exploration'. This allows the walker to 'take continual note of what he or she comes across'. He argues that walking is a means of orientation within a specific locale, and a process from which local knowledge arises.<sup>192</sup> Such knowledge resonates in paintings of the intimate landscape.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 246, 252

## CHAPTER 3

### HOME SPACE AND DEEP SPACE

#### Home space

Zygmunt Bauman's spatial concept of 'clean slate' is a useful departure point for considering conflicting views of the land which followed white settlement in Australia. His subject is the social structuring of strangeness and he argues that the stranger's psychic separation from the world is articulated as a problem by which the self and the world 'become clearly visible; both are articulated as problems; both call for constant examination and both need, in the end, to be 'operated on', 'handled', '*managed*'. Bauman argues that the concept of clean slate, 'once popular among educators and cultural missionaries', was conceived by extrapolating the stranger's experience. He distinguishes between the stranger and the 'native born' whose state is, in Heidegger's terms, that of 'being situated'.<sup>1</sup> Such rootedness is expressed in paintings which depict the intimate placement of human settlement in the landscape. They are images of belonging which visualise an affinity with the land by portraying the land itself as home.

John Longstaff predicted in 1920 that 'landscape was the branch that that would offer most inducement to painters of both sexes', but professional symmetry existed primarily in the middle ground of the landscape spectrum, in the professional space between the masculinist privileged views of power, and the enclosed intimate spaces of the bush.<sup>2</sup> Landscape artists expressed their attachment to particular places by depicting houses at ease in the landscape and by invoking the intimate rhythms of routine life. W.B. McInnes was praised in 1920, for example, for the 'homely appeal' of his landscapes, 'as distinguished from majestic solitude'.<sup>3</sup> The private space of the home itself and its intimate associations, however, were still viewed as women's domain.

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<sup>1</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, 'Strangers: The Social Construction of Universality and Particularity', *Telos* 78, Winter 1988-89, 17-18

<sup>2</sup> 'Art in Australia. Mr Longstaff Arrives. Opportunities for Landscape', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1-9-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 570

<sup>3</sup> 'The McInnes Paintings', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8-2-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 440

Herbert Gallop's The Farm, Ermington (c.1935) (plate 35) is organised around the painting's focal point of the farmhouse. A circular movement following the soft colours and textures of the trees and land encloses the farmhouse and confirms its significance as the centre of its surrounding land. Above all, the house is depicted as if in the earth, fusing with its background pastures and merging with the foreground trees as an image of place, and belonging. Vance Palmer's sensory anticipation of home in his poem Homecoming expresses a similar attachment to place in his fond remembrance of the 'shingled roof half-hidden by branching gums' and the 'farm with furrowed paddocks of nut-brown loam':

There's a winding track, and a friend who at evening  
comes,  
There, there will my heart find home.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, Daryl Lindsay's watercolour Landscape Eltham (c.1925) (plate 36) is a small landscape in which tones of green and blue are densely concentrated around the farm dwelling. It nestles within this horizontal band of colour which separates the cultivated area in front of the house from the uncultivated land behind it. The native trees, shrubs and orchard trees site the dwelling beneath the soft wash of blue sky. The interlocking bare foreground paddocks lead to the house as a point of destination, and its association as a domestic presence is thereby inscribed in the painting's construction. The dwelling itself defines the pictorial and associative space in which it is placed. Muir Auld's oil painting Winter Morning (1935) (plate 37) also conveys the idea of comfortable human placement within the landscape. The distant farmhouse fuses with the hillside, its simple form grounded in a bed of pink paint which in turn attracts the eye to the form of the chimney. The closer farm building on the right is painted in the same grey-white tones of the foreground earth and mottled sky, and thus reads visually with these large areas of the canvas.

The paintings by Gallop, Lindsay and Auld of farm dwellings nestling in the Australian landscape depict the co-existence of natural and developed land as if such harmony were a natural order of existence. Gladys Owen expressed a similar sense of belonging in Late Afternoon

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<sup>4</sup> Bards in the Wilderness. Australian Colonial Poetry to 1920, ed. Brian Elliott and Adrian Mitchell, Melbourne, 1970, 226. See also Paul Carter's chapter 'Intimate Charm' on the welcoming light of home amongst the trees. Paul Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, 261-292

Bellevue Hill (1920) (plate 38) which locates the viewer above the seemingly semi-rural scene, looking down to the clusters of houses, and across to the opposite hill. The artist has massed the foreground forms—the blocky clusters of houses flattened in their geometric patterning, tall grasses and soft green textures—in a pattern of colour and texture which engages the eye in the concentrated foreground space. The painting's unifying warm golden tones counter the tension between the anchoring foreground and receding background space. This binding effect emphasises the harmonious coexistence between humankind and the land within such a self-contained place. Dorrit Black's Heat Haze (1919) (plate 39) also depicts such ease of existence in the countryside. The focal point of the white-roofed farmhouse sits exposed near the central axis on the beautiful pinky-mauve rise of the middleground. It establishes a pictorial control in its central placement and a foil for the surrounding diffuse pastel colours—the sensuous crepuscular colours of pale ochre brown, mauve and pinky white—which impart a soft tonal cohesion and unify the scene.

Landscape paintings with figures also suggest a close and comfortable relationship between farm activity and the natural landscape. Hans Heysen's The Track to the farm (1926) (plate 40) depicts a farmer returning home at day's end. The laden cart is bound to the rich brown earth of the foreground through paint texture and tone. The fading sunlight catches on the haystack and highlights the cart's produce and the curve of the farmer's back, thereby linking these elements. The huge haystack dominates the painting as an icon of golden bounty connecting the foreground earth and background sky. The touches of white paint on the haystack's top and side create a visual link to the distant white smoke which, as an indicator of the home fire, is like a beacon guiding the farmer home. A sense of comfort and security infuses the scene, conveyed primarily through the painting's soft late-afternoon light. The easy relationship between man and earth portrayed in The Track to the farm contrasts with an earlier painting by C.E.S. Tindall entitled Gone Are the days (1902) (plate 41) which depicts a couple on a waggon-stop in their journey. They are portrayed as passing through the country, and as detached from each other as they are forlorn in their temporary rural surroundings.

Harold Herbert's The Farm (1930) (plate 42) and Heysen's The Farmyard gum (1936) (plate 43) are paintings of rural harmony between man and

the land. The foreground sheds and animals of The Farm are bound in the artist's broad wash technique and interrelate within the tableau. They exist in the bright sunlight and dappled shade of the large tree which can be read as a symbol of protection and shelter. The idle cart is almost camouflaged in the mottled shade of the tree, and the merging of the symbol of traditional rural labour with the solid tree implies an historical past and suggests a secure and ordered continuum. The Farm compares with Gordon Coutts' earlier oil painting The Close of day (1900) (plate 44) which depicts the end of the day's work. The inactivity and stillness of the upturned cart and the wandering horse in the early evening light tell us little directly about the nature of human existence here. By contrast, Herbert's welcoming scene suggests the everyday rhythms of a familiar place. The viewer is drawn into the world of The Farm through the conceptual extension of the enclosing foreground space, and by implication, is also shaded and protected. Heysen's The Farmyard gum (1936) (plate 43) also expresses the idea of stable settlement mainly through the soaring vertical strength of the powerful organic gum. Under its bough the farmer's bent body echoes the curved shape of the horse. The rich earth tones bind the foreground elements and signify their connection to the land. The farmer bends over as if in homage, his hands and feet touching the earth as he hitches up the yoked draughthorse—this gesture, while that of a working man, implies an informal reverence under the protective and massive gum, and a spiritual union between the farmer and the soil.

The Track to the farm, the The Farm, and The Farmyard gum were painted in the years from 1926 to 1936 following World War One, a period of increased mechanisation in agriculture, but none of the paintings represents the contemporary world—the farm cart and yoked draughthorse in particular refer to pre-industrial agricultural methods. William Lines argues that the history of Australian settlement lies within the modern world, and that the founding of Sydney in 1788 when 'the sons of the Enlightenment[...] practical men, rational men[...] ruled and settled Australia' coincided with the Industrial Revolution in Britain. He suggests that for white settlers, there was 'no history of living with the land before industrialisation, no consciousness of making the land a home before the invention of technological civilisation'.<sup>5</sup> Both old and new agricultural methods coexisted in the

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<sup>5</sup> William J. Lines, Taming the Great South Land. A History of the Conquest of Nature in Australia, St Leonards, NSW, 1992, 25-26, 16, xvi

period from 1900 to 1940, but paintings of settlement on the land were, in the main, idealised. They portrayed an uncomplicated rustic simplicity in which settlers and earth were bound in an implied natural union, and as such, were disengaged from an increasingly mechanised present.

Bauman's concept of clean slate is paralleled in the British colonial concept of *terra nullius* by which the land was considered to be a 'no person's land', belonging to no one, which could be occupied on the basis of 'first discovery'.<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Bolton argues that white settlement initiated a clear division between those who 'exploited the country to serve preconceived economic goals' and those who 'sought to create a civilisation where human use of resources was compatible with a sense of identity with the land'.<sup>7</sup> Such a division is in place to this day, albeit with a contemporary inflection. Historically, the two attitudes are rarely aligned, since land management has sought the destruction of the native environment through deforestation, land clearance and overgrazing. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in particular, the countryside was transformed for intensive agricultural and pastoral use into a cleared and paddocked landscape which in the 1920s and 30s was promoted as typically Australian.<sup>8</sup> Edwin J. Brady's reasoning of 1918 that 'the pastoral industry, being the oldest, most permanent and important feature of our material development, merited the fullest possible extension of space', summarises the economic premise of unabated land clearance.<sup>9</sup> Lines calls this process the 'relentless invasion of the bush', adding that,

The stump, a symbol of nature subdued, became an enduring image in Australian history. The bush, like the wildlife and Aborigines sheltering within, stood in the way, not only of order and light, but of progress. The stump represented victory.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 25

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, *Spoils and Spoilers*, Sydney, 1992, 23

<sup>8</sup> William Lines writes that since British settlement, Europeans have destroyed over 70 per cent of original woodland and forest, and agricultural and pastoral activities have degraded two-thirds of all arable land and one-half of all grazing land. Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, 12

<sup>9</sup> Edwin J. Brady, *Australia Unlimited*, 1918, 14

<sup>10</sup> Lines, *Taming the Great South Land*, xvi, 41

By 1821, about eighty men owned sixty per cent of all alienated land in New South Wales.<sup>11</sup> Women land owners were unusual, but their labour was essential to early settlement—in clearing the land, establishing the sheep and cattle industries, keeping station stores and accounts, milking and tending stock. There were exceptions such as Hannah Laycock, 'a quartermaster's wife, who was granted 500 acres of Botany Crown Lands in 1804', and Eliza Walsh who arrived in the colony in 1819—a year later she informed Governor Macquarie that she 'had spent 1,000 pounds on horned cattle and a small property and was prepared to spend another 1,000 pounds on improvements if Macquarie would grant her more land'. He refused because it was 'contrary to regulations to give grants of Land to Ladies'—Eliza appealed to Earl Bathurst and was subsequently granted the land.<sup>12</sup> Bathurst's expressed the view to Governor Darling that unmarried women should not be excluded from 'holding Lands in the Colony',

provided they possess sufficient funds for the purpose, intend[...] to reside on their lands, and[...] fulfill any other stipulations which may be required of them in common with all other Grantees.<sup>13</sup>

Elizabeth Macarthur managed Elizabeth Farm, Parramatta, as a prosperous business during periods of her trusteeship, the longest being nine years. A different early experience of the land is suggested in the experience of Elizabeth Hawkins who, with her family on the voyage across the Blue Mountains in 1821, sometimes walked apart and gathered 'delicate nosegays from the flowering shrubs'.<sup>14</sup>

According to Bolton, the imported concept of land owned and cultivated was based on rationalist principles whereby 'man had a right and duty to transform the environment into greater productivity'. To the first settlers the essential mark of a citizen was land ownership, the most highly regarded form of property.<sup>15</sup> This belief emerged with the advent of modern agrarian capitalism in eighteenth century Britain, when agricultural practice was transformed from local subsistence farming to the production of cash crops. This model was transposed to Australia by migrants with little direct experience of rural life or land management.

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<sup>11</sup> Alienated land is land transferred to private ownership. Lines, Taming the Great South Land, 38

<sup>12</sup> Pownall, Australian Pioneer Women, 5, 49-50

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 50

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 66

<sup>15</sup> Bolton, Spoils and Spoilers, 11

The first administrators were 'practical naval and military men, measurers and surveyors whose training taught them to value the useful'.<sup>16</sup> The surveyor's map, with its grids and straight lines imposed on the landscape, symbolised such rationalist expropriation of the land.

Australia's rapid settlement placed production demands on both the land and the landholders who changed the 'wilderness' into a bountiful pastoral empire. Landholders saw their task to transfer rural Australia to maximum productivity, and this view extended into the twentieth century. In 1928, Fullerton claimed that 'a great spread of population is going on, a healthy development which means also a wealthy development, for it is the PRODUCER that the country wants'.<sup>17</sup> In the period following World War 1, Australia was perceived to have unlimited potential extending as far as the inland centre where, in Fullerton's words, the 'vastness of the terra incognita [is] yet to be brought under civilisation'.<sup>18</sup> Fullerton expressed a broader optimism when she wrote that,

Deserts, like mirages, are given to disappear as we approach them. They have a way[...] of becoming resolved into gardens when the apparently inhospitable soil of them is attacked by man's implements of agriculture.<sup>19</sup>

Like a *tabula rasa* the desert awaited, according to Brady in 1918, the 'correct treatment'. He reckoned optimistically that 'instead of a 'Dead Heart of Australia' there exists in reality a Red Heart, destined one day to pulsate with life', the result of 'individual industry':

Behold the sons of the 'desert'. They are six-foot men, stalwart and strong, independent landholders, freemen, each adult a ruler with an equal voice in the government of the country; and each adult woman—sister, mother, wife or daughter—the same.<sup>20</sup>

Land conversion, particularly of the inland, was promoted as being essential to Australia's future, and possible through concepts such as Brady's 'Leading Spirits' with their qualities of strength, enterprise, and resolute pioneering success. Such ideas bound the idealised figure of the pioneer to land settlement, development and production. Individual

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>17</sup> Mary Fullerton, *The Australian Bush*, 169

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 93

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 102

<sup>20</sup> Brady, *Australia Unlimited*, 630-636

enterprise on the land is the subject of Gruner's Summer Morning (1916) (plate 45) which depicts a farmer standing firmly on the ground against the clear blue sky. He has no facial features and this suggests he is a type, a man of the land with rolled-up sleeves, a healthy worker standing in the sunlight with his abundant crop. The farmer's shadow joins his legs and binds him to the earth, and also links him through its green and purple highlights to the uncut crop, creating a visual and metaphoric dynamic between the farmer and his produce. He is set sharply against the background horizon hills and sky, and in this way is rendered as distinct and prominent within the domain he manages—he is above all, a producer.

Gruner's New England (1921) (plate 46) represents rural Australia as a harmonious pastoral order in an idyllic scene of sheep calmly grazing on lush pastures under an expansive sky. The painting's palette of greens, blues and mauve-blue unifies the scene, the denser lower colours emphasising the earth. The idea of benevolence is conveyed by the sunlight caught on the sheep's backs and the post-and rail-fence, both of which represent property and territory defined by a border and implicitly owned—this is an image of the basis of Australia's pastoral capital. Its title, New England, links Australia to the origin of its white settlers thus transposed, and thereby suggests a linear development from that heritage into the pastoral present.

Muir Auld's The Oat patch (c.1932) (plate 47) depicts the land as settled and productive, and also as a place of belonging. The focal point, the solid farmhouse, sits beneath a large expanse of sky, close to the lush pasture which is its reason for being. The farm buildings sit within a horizontal middleground band which blocks the view, apart from a small gap in the foliage, to the space beyond. Their tonal weighting, and that of the earth below, grounds them so that they read as indicators of stability. In Auld's painting the material and psychic benefit of land use is rendered as ease of placement within the landscape—that is, as home.

### Deep space

Sharon Zukin argues that as a culturally mediated concept, space is a 'dynamic medium that both exerts an influence on history and is shaped by human action'. It is a fundamental ordering system which is 'conceptually[...] separable from facts and their relationships'. Different conceptions of space arise 'because this conceptual relation and separation can occur at different levels of abstraction and from different

viewpoints and modes of thought'.<sup>21</sup> There are, therefore, multiple meanings of space.

Space and spatial relations are subjects of intellectual inquiry in the domains of philosophy, geography and architecture. Space is the principal subject of those discourses which analyse spatial differentiations from two closely related perspectives: that of the meanings of space and place, and that of the relationship between humankind and the physical environment. These two emphases come together in the idea of landscape and human impact on the land.<sup>22</sup> Landscape is thus socially constructed, a spatial order imposed on the natural (or built) environment.<sup>23</sup> The representation of landscape space in painting, sculpture and film, has the power to shape spatial consciousness in a process described by Ian Burn as 'mapping the landscape into the imagination'.<sup>24</sup> Landscape may thus be considered as a visual field in which spatial inflections are consonant with broader social resonances. Conversely, landscape knowledges and imaginations intersect with structures of cultural and economic power.

Svetlana Alpers' analytical model, although applied to earlier European art history, is useful in considering spatial meanings. Alpers uses Georg Luckacs' literary distinction between narration and description to compare the 'description and visual surface' of seventeenth century Dutch art with the 'narrative and textual reference' of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>25</sup> She argues that this distinction follows a 'hierarchical model of distinguishing between phenomena commonly referred to as primary and secondary; objects and space versus the surfaces, forms versus the textures of the world'.<sup>26</sup> Her comparison aligns with Jay's differentiation between landscape as a 'fragment of reality'—the 'fragmentary, detailed and richly articulated surface of a world'—and landscape which renders a rational and geometric 'illusion of homogeneous three-dimensional space seen with a God's eye view from afar'. The former images the 'discrete particularity of visual experience'

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<sup>21</sup> Sharon Zukin, 'Postmodern urban landscapes: mapping culture and power', *Modernity and Identity*, ed. Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, Oxford 1992, 224, 4

<sup>22</sup> Robert David Sack, *Concepts of Space in Social Thought. A Geographic Perspective*, London, 1980, 3

<sup>23</sup> Zukin, 'Postmodern urban landscapes: mapping culture and power', 224

<sup>24</sup> Burn, *National Life & Landscapes*, 8

<sup>25</sup> Martin Jay, 'Scopic regimes of modernity', *Modernity and Identity*, ed. Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman, Oxford, 1992, 184

<sup>26</sup> Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, The University of Chicago Press, 1983, 44

while the latter allegorizes or typologizes its subject.<sup>27</sup> Such dualities disallow the diversity of Australian landscape art, but do identify some key indicators of meaning in the different landscape modes, the spaces they render and the cultural values they inscribe.

To directly align the intimate landscape with the vernacular, or the iconic pastoral landscape with agrarian power, would construct an oversimplified dichotomy which bypasses the shared traditions and multiple aspirations of landscape practice. It is relevant nonetheless, to position landscape imagery against contemporary antagonisms over land use, because ecological and land management discourses played a central role in shaping attitudes towards the land. The relationships between landscape space and social thought which inform landscape's imaging are, however, elusive and problematical through their mediated and illusory nature. According to Henri Lefebvre only 'a rough coincidence is assumed to exist between social space on the one hand and mental space[...] on the other', and he asks; 'By what path[...] is this thought to come about?'<sup>28</sup> The role of socially constituted discourses is useful to the consideration of such a correlation. Discourse facilitates the understanding of landscape within a conceptual range which includes the possibility of landscape art as a cultural projection and a way of knowing, whether an idealised abstraction or intimate view. It thus constitutes an articulated cultural mediation—or pathway—between social landscape spaces and their imaging which counters the idea of a 'natural' landscape view.

Derek Gregory's use of the term 'discourse' in his discussion of the 'untidy' boundaries and 'cross-border traffic' of academic geography is useful to the consideration of landscape practice. Discourse, he writes, refers to 'all the ways in which we communicate with one another, to that vast network of signs, symbols, and practices through which we make our world(s) meaningful to ourselves and to others'. Gregory argues that discourse is particularly helpful in clarifying the 'contexts and casements that shape our local knowledges, however imperiously global their claims to know'.<sup>29</sup> To speak of the discourses of landscape is to acknowledge the constellations of power and knowledge which inform its practice and indicate its situatedness within social practices at

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<sup>27</sup> Jay, 'Scopic regimes of modernity', 185-187, 185

<sup>28</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, 1991, 28

<sup>29</sup> Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, Oxford, 1994, 11

large, in particular those contending 'myriad topographies' of different or overlapping sites of meaning.<sup>30</sup> Foucault's concept of the centrality of space in the exercise of power can also inform the understanding of spatial resonances inscribed in landscape's privileged power view.<sup>31</sup>

Burn has described Streeton's The Land of the golden fleece (1926) (plate 2) as an iconic landscape 'of peace, an ideal of pastoral wealth and national potential' indicative of landscape's 'new power and authority', a power encoded in its 'detached and universal' symbolism of a new order.<sup>32</sup> Streeton's earlier painting Still Glides the stream, and shall for ever glide (1890) (plate 48) was also intended 'less as a record of specific locality than as a generalized statement about a *type* of place' and was praised for its 'wonderful effect of distance and atmospheric space'.<sup>33</sup> The painting leads the viewer's eye from the narrow foreground rise, across the meandering middleground river and broad sweep of river flats to the distant hills, in a trajectory away from a defined space to the imagined infinity of the sky beyond. The deep illusory space rendered by the painting's construction is the primary vehicle for a generalised reading.

A simple reading of The Land of the golden fleece may readily align the painting with an orthodox visual order described by Jay as a 'three-dimensional, rationalized space' from a single fixed viewpoint. In such terms, Streeton's landscape may be seen to carry the historical weight of principles which bind Renaissance perspective in the visual arts to Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy. Such principles, according to Jay, are claimed as the 'dominant, even totally hegemonic visual model of the modern era', a model which symbolises generalised harmony through its 'allegedly objective optical order'. The claim to objectivity centres on the idea of viewing the world from a position of detachment which assumed a 'static, unblinking and fixated (eye), rather than dynamic, moving with[...] 'saccadic' jumps from one focal point to another'.<sup>34</sup> Such a position, Bryson reasons, followed the logic of the fixed 'Gaze' rather than the 'Glance'. The gaze, he claims, is 'prolonged'

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

<sup>31</sup> See Michel Foucault, 'The Eye of Power', Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper, Sussex, 1980, 146-165

<sup>32</sup> Burn, National Life & Landscapes, 79-81

<sup>33</sup> Jane Clark and Bridget Whitelaw, Golden Summers. Heidelberg and Beyond, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Victoria, 1985, 108

<sup>34</sup> Jay, 'Scopic regimes of modernity', 179-181

and 'contemplative', yet 'regarding the field of vision' with 'disengagement, across a tranquil interval' by which the 'flux of phenomena' is arrested. For Bryson, the gaze indicates an abstraction from the physical practice of painting—in such an abstraction, 'the eye contemplates the world alone, in severance from the material body of labour: the body is reduced[...] to its optical anatomy, the minimal diagram of monocular perspective'.<sup>35</sup>

Such notions of fixity and disengagement are difficult to sustain in Gruner's Man and mountains (1926) (plate 49) and Howard Ashton's Jamieson Valley (1931) (plate 50) which depict the land from ambiguous positions of height. Man and mountains locates the viewer high up on the valley slope beside a jagged rock face, and Jamieson Valley positions the viewer at the edge of the cavernous valley in the tufty, textured foreground. Both paintings guide the eye to the background distance through a visual reach into the receding space. Such deep spatial projections contrast with the shallow space and insideness conveyed by the intimate landscape. Through this difference the cultural significance of the panoramic outward view can be identified. This meaning is grounded in the metaphorical weight of two related economies of movement, those of mapping and travelling.

The status of panorama and perspective in Western art centres on a spatial ordering or 'form of knowing or seeing' by 'white male bourgeois knowers on Other knowns'.<sup>36</sup> The cultural power of this structuring gaze has a history within cartography, and also historically specific meanings in the ways it is deployed, particularly in art, to assert a visual authority. In this assertion, according to Cosgrove, the eye renders 'absolute mastery over space' which is thereby 'the property of the individual detached observer, from whose divine location it is a dependent, appropriated object'.<sup>37</sup> From this cultural power of the eye derives the status of vision. The first 'white knowers' of the Australian landscape were the explorers and cartographers who charted a land unknown to British administrators and colonists. During the early years of settlement, maps of immediate areas were made together with

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<sup>35</sup> Norman Bryson, 'The Gaze and the Glance', Vision and Painting. The Logic of the Gaze, London, 1983, 89-94

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Pile and Gillian Rose, 'All or nothing? Politics and critique in the modernism/post-modernism debate', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 10, 1992, 131

<sup>37</sup> Cosgrove, 'Prospect, perspective and the evolution of the landscape idea', 49

sketches commissioned by the government which indicated the lie of the land. Such utilitarian imaging continued with exploration beyond the coastal settlements particularly through the topographical art of George Evans (1778-1852) and John Lewin (1770-1819). Lewin's views are 'the first in which the view of the spectator is directed outward' in the depiction of an Australian vastness.<sup>38</sup> Spatial depth and future prospect were clearly aligned in the early nexus of exploration, cartography and landscape.

While early views provided topographical information and were used to promote Australia as a destination for free settlers, such a utilitarian understanding of the land was overlaid in the second half of the nineteenth century by the appreciation of natural features specific to a locality. From this growing localised awareness, landscape paintings present markedly different renderings of space and place from generalised images of prospect. This is evident in the proposal by the New South Wales Academy of Art around 1875 to prepare a portfolio illustrating the 'characteristic scenery' of the Blue Mountains and other parts of the country which would 'do much towards directing the attention not only of our own community, but specially of visitors to the colony, to its wealth in easily-accessible scenery of a character which can scarcely be equalled, but has hitherto been little appreciated'.<sup>39</sup>

Alice Norton's painting of the late nineteenth century with its affectionate title, A place of wind and flowers. Full of sweet trees and color of glad grass (1894) (plate 51) evokes the sensory experience of a familiar and loved place. The soft foreground textures of the painting, the bracketing by the wild thicket either side, and the gentle rise beyond, emphasise the protective space of the grassy clearing. The viewer's eye is drawn towards the distant bench which signifies this place as one of quiet contemplation. The signs of human presence—the seat and possible dwelling behind—are subtly integrated into the composition and are almost indistinguishable in this view of a sequestered and private world. To compare the qualities of stillness, familiarity and solitude in Norton's small painting with the critical response to Streeton's 'great canvas' Australia Felix (1907) (plate 52), provides an insight into those features considered appropriate to the rendering of the

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<sup>38</sup> Hoorn, *The Idea of the Pastoral in Australian Painting 1788-1940*, 12, 23-24

<sup>39</sup> 'Fourth Annual Report of the New South Wales Academy of Art', c.1875, 1874-1880 Minute Book. New South Wales Academy of Art 1874-5, Art Gallery of New South Wales Archive, n.p.

national space. A critic emphasised the title's derivation from 'a term first employed by the explorer Mitchell when near this very spot, looking from Mount Toorong towards Melbourne'. It was, he wrote, a characteristic view that led the mind to contemplate 'a vast stretch of country', adding that the 'actuality of the tones, the idea of distance, and the fine treatment of the sky, with its suggestion of high wind on the far horizon, gives value to this work.<sup>40</sup>

From the late nineteenth century, expansive views over the land increasingly assumed symbolic meaning in the representation of the unified nation. The sense of vastness engendered by the far horizon was particularly valued in critical discourses of the period. Gruner's On the Murrumbidgee (1929) (plate 20) was awarded the Wynne Prize in 1929 and praised for its 'immense depth and spaciousness', 'profound analysis of light in nature', 'bold proportion' and 'vast distances brought into harmonious relation'.<sup>41</sup> Such qualities had less codified literary origins in the early years after 1900 in the 'sweeping plains', 'grey-blue distance' and 'far horizons' of Dorothea Mackellar's My Country of 1908, and similar motifs in Maybanke Anderson's earlier poem Australia Fair of 1902 which reads:

I love thy golden sunshine,  
Thy sky of peerless hue,  
The soft greys of the distance,  
The hills' faint tints of blue.<sup>42</sup>

In 1934, William Moore took up the motif of the horizon and quoted Mary Gilmore's comment that 'Europe has its peaks piercing the sky but we have the horizon'.<sup>43</sup> Space and distance were valued as metaphors for the new national space primarily through claims that they were typical attributes of the land.

Space is a common symbol of freedom in the Western world. Yi-Fu Tuan writes that 'space lies open; it suggests the future and invites

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<sup>40</sup> 'Mr Streeton's Exhibiton', Sydney Morning Herald, 18-7-07, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 20

<sup>41</sup> 'Gruner Landscape. For the Art Gallery. By Critic', Sydney Morning Herald, 8-3-30, AGNSWPC, March 1930 to August 1932, Part 1, 8

<sup>42</sup> Maybanke Anderson's Story of Pittwater 1770 to 1920, ed. Jan Roberts, Avalon Beach, NSW, 1996, 12

<sup>43</sup> Moore, The Story of Australian Art, 1, 85

action', adding that open space 'is like a blank sheet on which meaning may be imposed'.<sup>44</sup>

The Historical Memorials Committee imbued the site for the national capital with such future meaning in 1912 when it offered a 'major art prize' for a large panoramic landscape, stating that 'a midday effect is desired in preference to evening or scenic effects'.<sup>45</sup> Ideas of open space signifying hopeful time and the horizon as an image of the future—'when our gaze turns toward infinity'—were posited by Eugene Minkowski in 1933.<sup>46</sup> Tuan develops Minkowski's concept in his proposal that open space in Western thought is 'cone-shaped' and opens up 'from the point where one stands, to the broad horizon that separates earth from sky[...] Every perspective landscape painting[...] teaches us to see time 'flowing' through space'.<sup>47</sup> The directional visual passage of Gruner's Man and mountains (plate 49) exemplifies such a point. As the eye follows the sharp edge of the rock face from the top right to the bottom centre of the painting, the eye sweeps into the undulating valley and on to the background mountains and distant sky. This aerial flow through deep illusory space maximises the broad view over the land.

Panorama and prospect signified the future promise of wealth from the land. Tuan posits that 'space is a resource that yields wealth and power when properly exploited. It is worldwide a symbol of prestige', adding that 'financial and territorial growths are basically simple additive ideas that require little imaginative effort to conceive and extrapolate'.<sup>48</sup> Australia's territorial conquest was fused with man's desired control over nature, and because Australia is an island, this followed an inward movement which was also the direction faced in inland explorations. In phenomenological terms, according to Tuan, 'frontal space is primarily visual [and] is 'illuminated' because it can be seen'. He argues that on a temporal plane, 'frontal space is perceived as future'.<sup>49</sup> Brady expounded a similar idea in his portrayal of 'Explorer Wells' as 'one of the last explorers' whose eyes 'have looked over great distances' and who said 'I believe the country that is apparently desert will be no desert for future generations'.<sup>50</sup> The 'light of faith' in the explorer's eyes aligns with the

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<sup>44</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience, London, 1977, 54

<sup>45</sup> Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, no. 80 (21 Dec. 1912) 2639, quoted in The Australian Art Association 1912-1933, v.1, 14, State Library of Victoria

<sup>46</sup> Eugene Minkowski, Lived Time. Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies, trans. Nancy Metzger, Northwestern University Press, 1970, 81-90

<sup>47</sup> Tuan, Space and Place, 123-124

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 58

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 40

<sup>50</sup> Brady, Australia Unlimited, 628

concept of the eye that looks and knows, the sovereign eye at the centre of the visual world. 'Explorer Wells' was imbued with the capacity to conceive a future Australia, in an elision between seeing and knowing—above all, his vision was optimistic. Brady established this theme in his introduction to Australia Unlimited, writing that even though his outlook may be considered overly optimistic, the 'whole continent has proved to be a vast storehouse of mainly undeveloped Wealth[...] To the sane, healthy native-born it is a mother of everlasting youth and beauty, and the freest, richest, happiest land on earth'.<sup>51</sup>

The unified nation was conceived to lie in man's beneficial capacity to create a space of order and control through transforming the land. Brady cited the pioneer cattleman Sidney Kidman as an enterprising and benevolent 'typical Good Australian' who,

has brought the Far North and the waste lands of this vast, empty continent into practical use, and has made many an area of back-country that was risky for stock-raising practically drought-proof with ever-flowing wells and ever-filled waterholes. His 'deserts' have been converted into fattening pastures.<sup>52</sup>

Brady's conception of a barren inland transformed to abundant pasture is couched in almost Biblical terms. Tuan claims that Old Testament words for spaciousness 'mean in one context physical size and in others psychological and spiritual qualities'—as a physical measure spaciousness is 'a good and broad land', and on a spiritual plane, 'space connotes deliverance and salvation'.<sup>53</sup> Walter Brueggemann also argues that in Biblical symbolism the land is imbued with hope and, as a central theme of faith, is more than soil. He asserts that the land is 'concerned with actual rootage in a place' and is a 'repository for commitment and therefore identity'.<sup>54</sup> The land thus sustains symbolic and psychic meanings in Western concepts of place. According to Brueggemann,

Place is space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations. Place is space in which important words have been spoken

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 14

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 1034

<sup>53</sup> Tuan, Space and Place, 58

<sup>54</sup> Walter Brueggemann, The Land, Philadelphia, 1977, 3, 5-6

and have established identity, defined vocation, and envisioned destiny.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast with ideas of 'actual rootage' to place, the explorer is, by definition, a stranger to the space he (sic) is entering—a person, in Bauman's terms, 'temporarily out of place'.<sup>56</sup> The temporal presence of the stranger allows him the possibility of exit, for his is a 'truant proximity'.<sup>57</sup> Bauman argues that because his stay is temporary, the stranger has 'the freedom to go' and that because he is 'physically near while remaining spiritually remote', he 'disturbs the resonance between physical and psychical distance'. Bauman claims that the stranger thus represents an incongruous 'synthesis of nearness and remoteness', that his proximity suggests a moral relation, while his remoteness 'permits only a contractual one'.<sup>58</sup>

The stranger's incongruous position has, according to Shields, spatial and temporal implications, in that presence is spatial in the sense of proximity, and also temporal in the sense of 'nowness, the present'. He adds that past and future are categories of absence, radically different from the tangibility and 'presence' of events in the present.<sup>59</sup> Bauman argues that a central factor in the stranger's position is the separation or 'sundering' of the 'primeval union between the self and the world'. It is the status of 'being outside' which 'casts the stranger in the position of *objectivity*: an outside, detached and autonomous vantagepoint'. According to Bauman, the marker of the transition between inside and outside is the point of entry which is 'always a passage, a changing of statuses'.<sup>60</sup> The idea of entry into a space from outside, or transition from one space to another, is suggested by the rough pathway through the tufty foreground bushes of Ashton's Jamieson Valley (plate 50). The change in surface texture and colour at the edge of the escarpment abruptly marks this space as separate from the deep valley of the middleground. Although the rough pathway amongst the tufty bushes is a device indicating human scale, the viewer's position is detached from the space beyond. Similar spatial transitions also characterise Gruner's Man and mountains (plate 49) and On the Murrumbidgee

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>56</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, 'Strangers: The Social Construction of Universality and Particularity', 21

<sup>57</sup> R. Shields, 'A truant proximity: presence and absence in the space of modernity', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol.10, 1992, 183

<sup>58</sup> Bauman, 'Strangers', 9

<sup>59</sup> Shields, 'A truant proximity', 187

<sup>60</sup> Bauman, 'Strangers', 17, 20

(plate 20). A comparison is provided by Norton's A Place of wind and flowers (1894) (plate 51) which leads the eye into the scene through the similar textures, colours and tones within the painting's uniform spatial ordering. The viewer thus reads this intimate scene from within rather than without.

The identification of the male landscape artist with exploration occurred in the early twentieth century when, according to Mary Fullerton, the 'explorer proper, discoverer and penetrator of wilds unknown and uncharted' had 'done his work'. In 1928, she wrote that 'the end of the nineteenth century saw the map sketched out in a rough way, there being no longer vast tracts of unknown country in Australia', but added that 'explorations continue' in the interests of science, settlement, and the search for minerals and timber.<sup>61</sup> As exploration's physical appropriation ended, the landscape artist who rendered the deep space and prospect of the newly conceived national space and thereby—in Ford's terms—facilitated a notion of possession and control, was a symbolic explorer.<sup>62</sup> Such landscape art symbolised the land and its potential within an emergent nationalism as the rational space of man's control

The notion of a typical Australian landscape was increasingly promoted in art reviews after 1900. Lister Lister's The Golden splendour of the bush (c. 1906) (plate 53) was praised in 1907 as 'a painting so typical of the Australian bush'.<sup>63</sup> A review of 1910 described his 'great canvas' Mid Song of birds and insects murmuring as a 'typically pastoral scene, showing a foreground of verdant grasses and bush beside the mirror-like surface of a winding stream, with a gigantic river-oak dominating the composition, and cattle grazing amidst the more distant trees', adding that the painting's 'many subtle touches contribute to the quiet harmony of ensemble which makes the whole such a feast to the eye'.<sup>64</sup> The reviewer also described Salvana's 'big landscape' The Namoi River at Boggabri as a 'typical Australian bush-scene, showing the sandy banks uncovered by the drought', but all 'idealised and made delightful by the

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<sup>61</sup> Fullerton, The Australian Bush, 71

<sup>62</sup> Ford, 'Landscape Revisited', 151

<sup>63</sup> 'The Golden Splendour of the Bush. Presented to the Art Gallery', Sydney Morning Herald, 18-6-07, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 16

<sup>64</sup> 'Royal Art Society. The Annual Show Proves Strong', Sydney Morning Herald, 27-8-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 67

abundance of light' over 'foliage, and earth, and water, and sky'.<sup>65</sup> Ideas of the typical Australian landscape thus ranged from the pastoral view to 'idealised' drought made 'delightful' by the 'abundance of light'. George Lambert queried the increasingly repetitive views of Australian landscapists in 1921, asking 'is there not a danger of their methods being modified to a style which is popular?'<sup>66</sup>

The promotion of a typical Australia was bound to the idea that the 'best of the Australian work has that quality of separateness from the art movements of Europe', and such separateness was considered 'a thing to guard, not to lose'.<sup>67</sup> In 1919, J.S. McDonald compared the differences in 'contour, flora and atmosphere' in the landscape art practice of England and Australia, beginning with 'the wonderful clearness of the Austral air'. he described the English greens as 'much more nearly at full pitch', 'modified with buffs and greys', and Australian foliage as 'buffs and greys modified by greens and blues'. In Australia, according to McDonald, 'We have no haze to dull the local color; in England everything at and beyond 100 yards is veiled'. Because of this, and the 'cultivated character of his landscape', the English artist strives 'for intimacy in his canvases':

His subject is visually circumscribed, but within the nature-set boundary there is a great deal of pictorial matter. His foreground is close at hand and of much detailed interest; his middle distance usually gives him his pattern or design, but his distance is almost negligible; so many films of atmosphere hang between him and it. He consequently has to make much of a motif which frequently has not a great area. It has not a great deal of frontage, so to speak, on the horizon; nor does it need it for the horizon is not far off. And necessarily his perspective is more or less abrupt, for his foreground begins at his feet.<sup>68</sup>

The English artist 'makes hurried notes of bits and elaborates and composes from them in his studio'. He 'knows most of what can be known about his own landscape as far as plain 'seeing' is concerned', but

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<sup>65</sup> 'Royal Art Society. The Annual Show Proves Strong', Sydney Morning Herald, 27-8-10, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 67

<sup>66</sup> 'Australian Art. Is it Still Australian? George Lambert on Lost Subjects', Sunday Times (Sydney, NSW), 19-7-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 14

<sup>67</sup> 'Australian Art. Fine Gallery Exhibition', Sun (Sydney, NSW), 3-4-18, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 1, 259

<sup>68</sup> 'The Field of Art in Two Hemispheres. England and Australia Compared. By J.S. McDonald', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 31-5-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 330

when he 'recommences to paint', his 'new-born inner eye' shows him 'many things that before were invisible'. Under the article's subtitle, 'The Wide Horizon', McDonald summarised the qualities of the Australian landscape, beginning with 'our field of vision' which is 'big; wide and of great depth' and notably, did not include the 'circumscribed' intimate view. He characterised Australian skies as 'distant', 'our clouds' as 'more spaced out' and 'our growth' as 'uncultivated'. As a result, he claimed, 'our pictorial horizons are of wider expanse, our perspective is more gradual and our pictures are therefore not so intimate':

So little do our meteorological conditions vary that, relative to English landscapes, our depicted scenes are static. Our lucent air so enhances definiteness that detail is visible at great distances[...] Our searching sun makes difficult the evasion of defining our natural features, and our pioneers in painting early realised that the draftsmanship requisite for this purpose was the first qualification of an Australian artist.<sup>69</sup>

The values inscribed by McDonald correspond to critical praise for Streeton's Australia Felix (1907) in 1920, as 'one of the most important pictures in the history of Australian art'. The reviewer emphasised the 'great expanse of richly timbered country' seen from a height, the 'extensive fertile valley' below, with its 'clearings and signs of habitation and progress', the 'noble contour' of Mount Macedon', and the receding landscape which becomes 'lost in the haze of light and distance'. Above all, the painting was seen to be 'typical of the best of Australia in the glory of light, inviting space, and beautiful colour'.<sup>70</sup>

On his return to Australia in 1920, Streeton stated that 'I want to do one fine thing of Sydney', a 'big picture', claiming that 'We have all done bits of it, but the big thing is still to be done'. Streeton sought the urban equivalent of the elevated landscapes which imaged the symbolic whole space of nation. He also expressed his desire 'to get away out among some of the big ranges again. That's the sort of thing; that's what I have been waiting for all the time, and I must have a good go at it'.<sup>71</sup> Streeton thus invoked a gendered physical and psychic position above the land

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 330

<sup>70</sup> 'Adelaide's Art Gallery', Register (Adelaide, SA), 19-4-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 475

<sup>71</sup> 'To Paint Sydney. Arthur Streeton Returns. Exhibition in May', Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), 20-4-20, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 483

which distinguished the visual 'big picture' from the 'bits'. Such a distinction between the part and whole view was seen as a deficit in Sweatman's art in 1921, by a critic who wrote that her landscapes tended 'at times towards literalism, in the sense that she is rather inclined to see things separately, instead of as a whole'.<sup>72</sup>

The formulaic landscape components of 'air and sunlight' and receding space were thus seen to comprise a pictorial and, by extension, real or natural truth. Such a claim was made not only about landscape painting but about the artists themselves. John Shirlow's account of 1919 describes Streeton and Roberts as 'more truly themselves when they were close to nature' at Chartresville where 'the true glory of the place came with the advent of men of genius' who made the place 'a shrine'.<sup>73</sup> Such sustained claims to a truth in landscape, by which the real Australia is revealed, comprise the mythical overlay which has obscured the understanding of landscape's diversity. John Rowell attempted to open up such possibilities by using the following quotation by Nietzsche in the introduction to his exhibition catalogue in 1921; 'There are many kinds of eyes—even the Sphinx has eyes—therefore, there must be many kinds of 'Truth', and consequently there can be no Truth'.<sup>74</sup>

A quiet eye can reveal a different truth. Alice Norton's Dawn (1924) (plate 1) was not purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales but entered the State collection in 1949 as a bequest of the estate of A.E. Stephens. It was included in the exhibition Review in 1995, but is not included in the current display of the permanent collection. Its winding foreground roads which lead us into the semi-rural scene are integrated into the green open land of the hollow; the middleground clusters of red-roofed houses nestle into the hillside and are the visual focus within the deep space of the painting. The viewer's eye follows a flowing trajectory over the land to the distant sky, and returns from the grey background by way of the protective enclosing sky to the comfortable presence of houses on the land. The image is of a peaceful place in which land, houses, sea and sky are integral parts, the one not

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<sup>72</sup> 'Miss Sweatman's Paintings', Argus (Melbourne, Vic), 18-8-21, AGNSWPC, June 1921 to August 1923, Part 1, 56

<sup>73</sup> 'Chartresville. A Shrine. By John Shirlow', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 7-8-19, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 361

<sup>74</sup> 'William Rowell's Art. By A. Colquhoun', Herald (Melbourne, Vic), 14-3-21, AGNSWPC, Jan. 1905 to June 1921, Part 2, 641

being more important than the other. In particular, the quiet placement of the houses suggests both an accepted imposed order and non-hierarchical dimension to this landscape view. Dawn is at once a view from above looking out over the land, a painting of unity, light, deep space and receding distance, but above all, of belonging—a woman landscapist's truly 'big picture' of Sydney.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have argued for an historical place for the intimate expression of nature within Australian landscape art, as a view of proximity and local knowledge. By speaking from within the canonical discourses of masculinist art history, I have echoed the place from which landscape artists produced their images. By creating an inclusive history whereby connections and affinities are made rather than exclusive value structures, I reaffirm the assemblage of practice which characterised the period. Such an affirmation subverts the critical and historical overlay by which landscape is assessed, and opens up the possibilities for a broader understanding of the landscape genre. Through such an understanding, difference can now be read as a positive historical fact.

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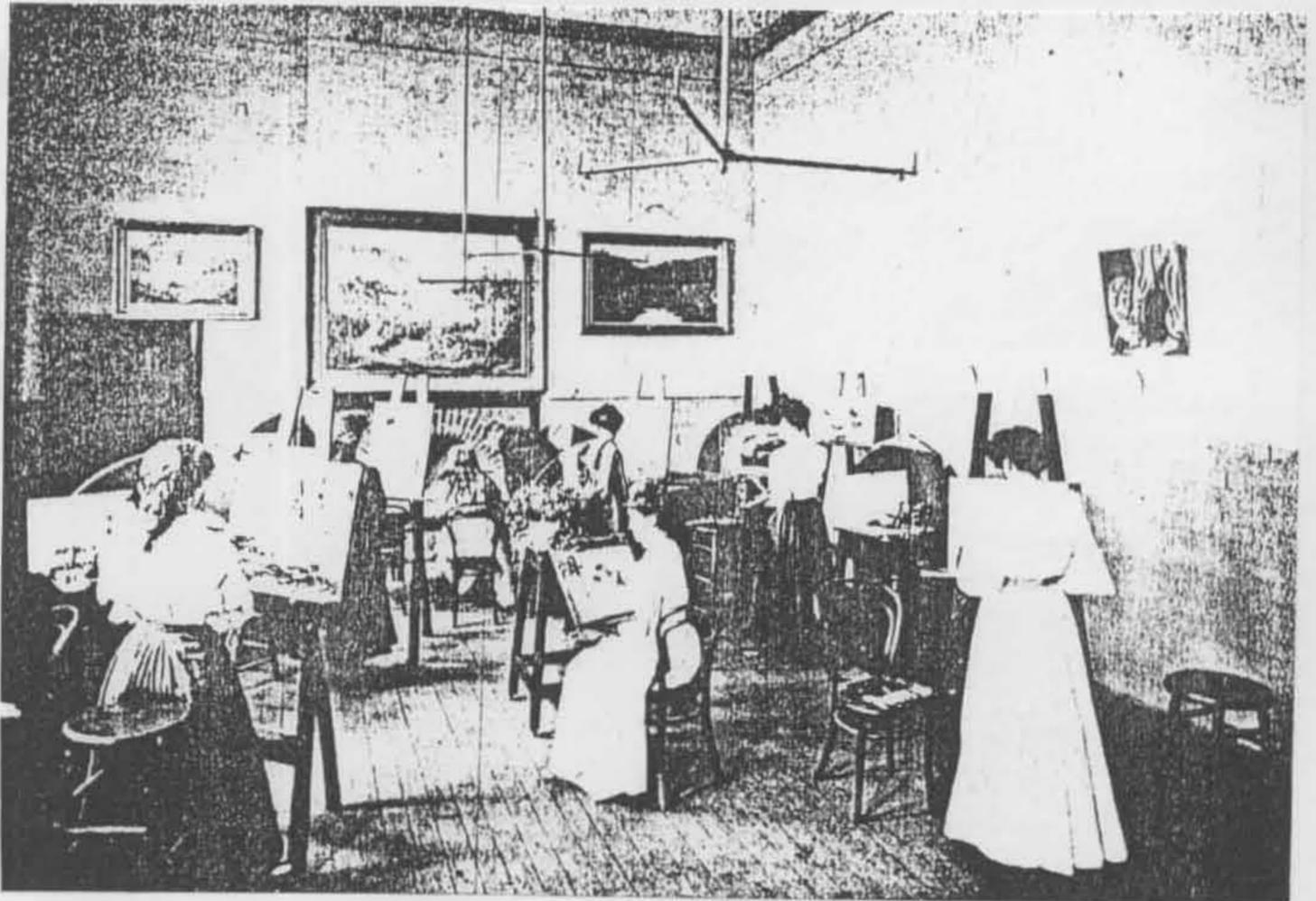
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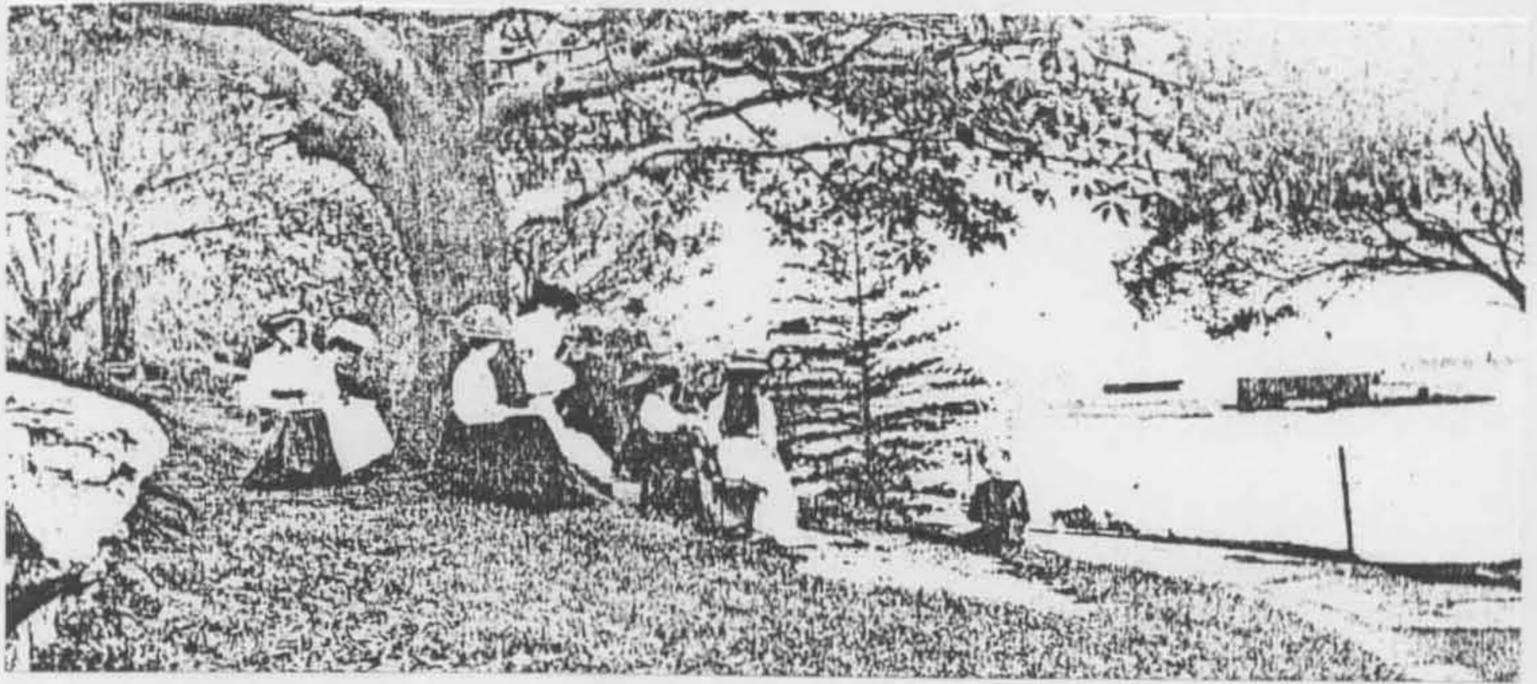
1.  
Alice Norton  
Dawn 1924  
Watercolour on paper 36 x 62 cm  
Bequest of A.E. Stephens 1949  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



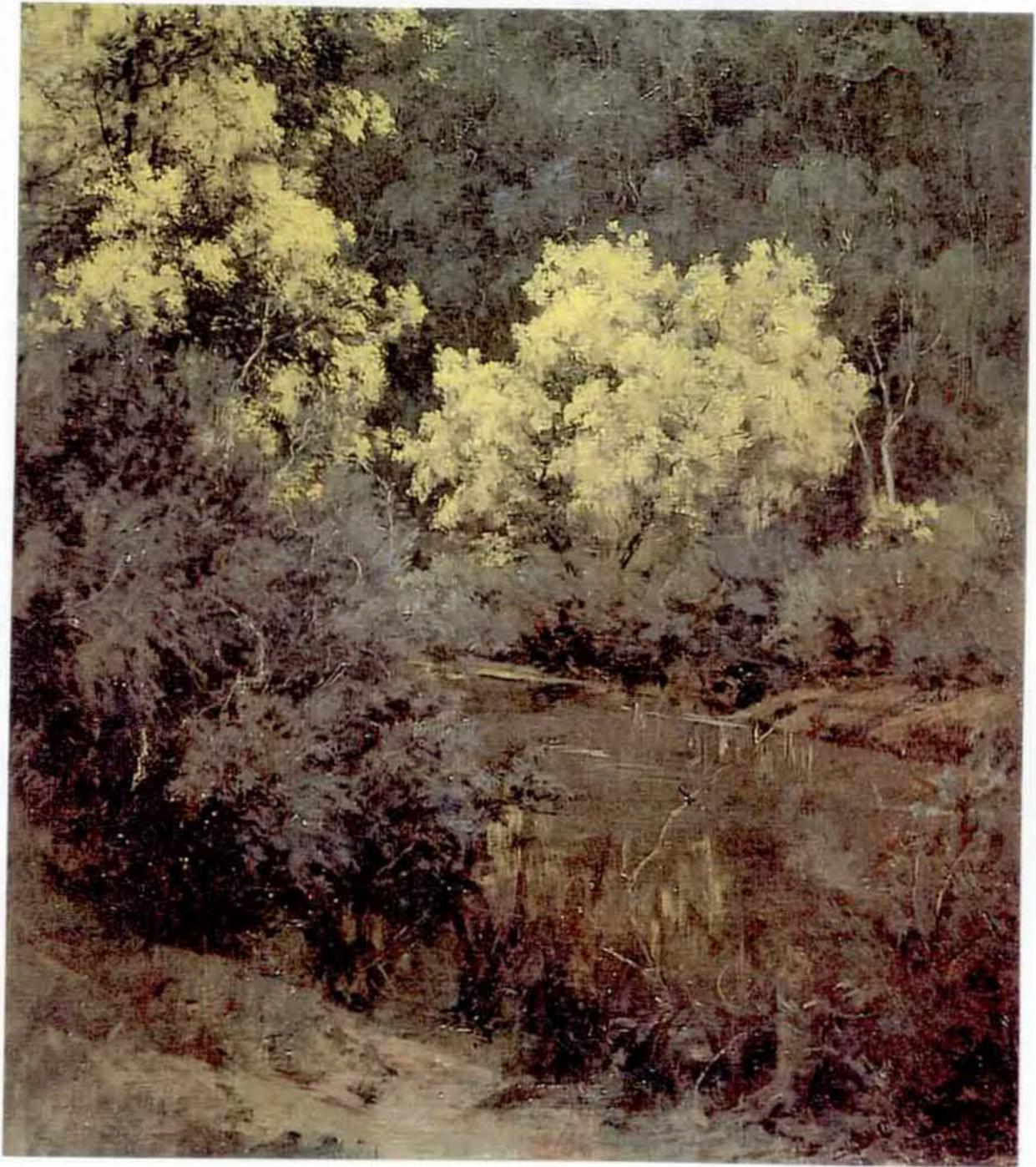
2.  
Arthur Streeton  
The Land of the golden fleece 1926  
Oil on canvas 49.9 x 76.5 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria



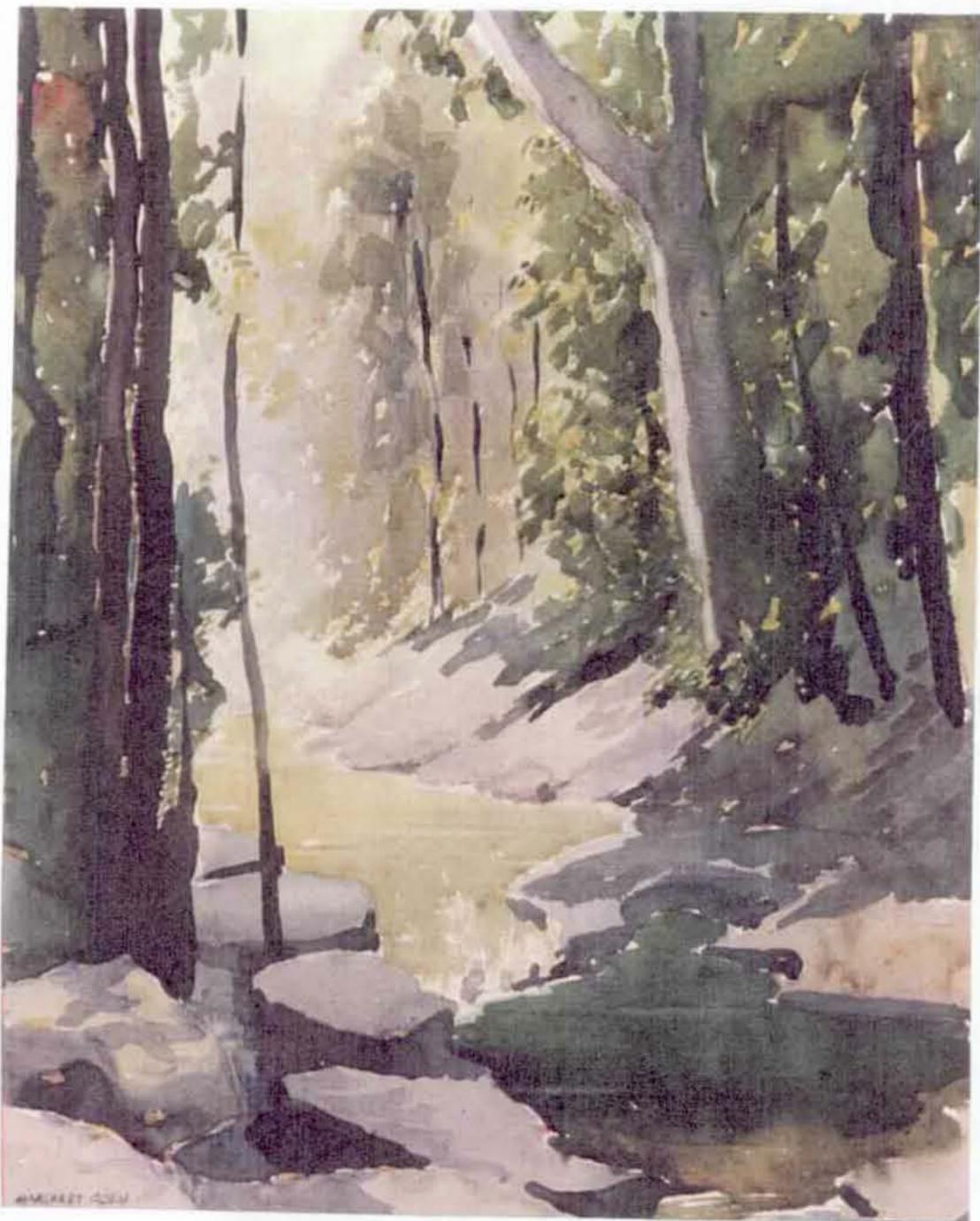
3.  
Still-Life Room, Showing Flower Painting  
East Sydney Technical College, 1909



4.  
Landscape Class at Work  
East Sydney Technical College, 1909



5.  
Clara Southern  
A Cool corner c.1915  
Oil on canvas 76.5 x 61.4 cm  
Ballarat Fine Art Gallery



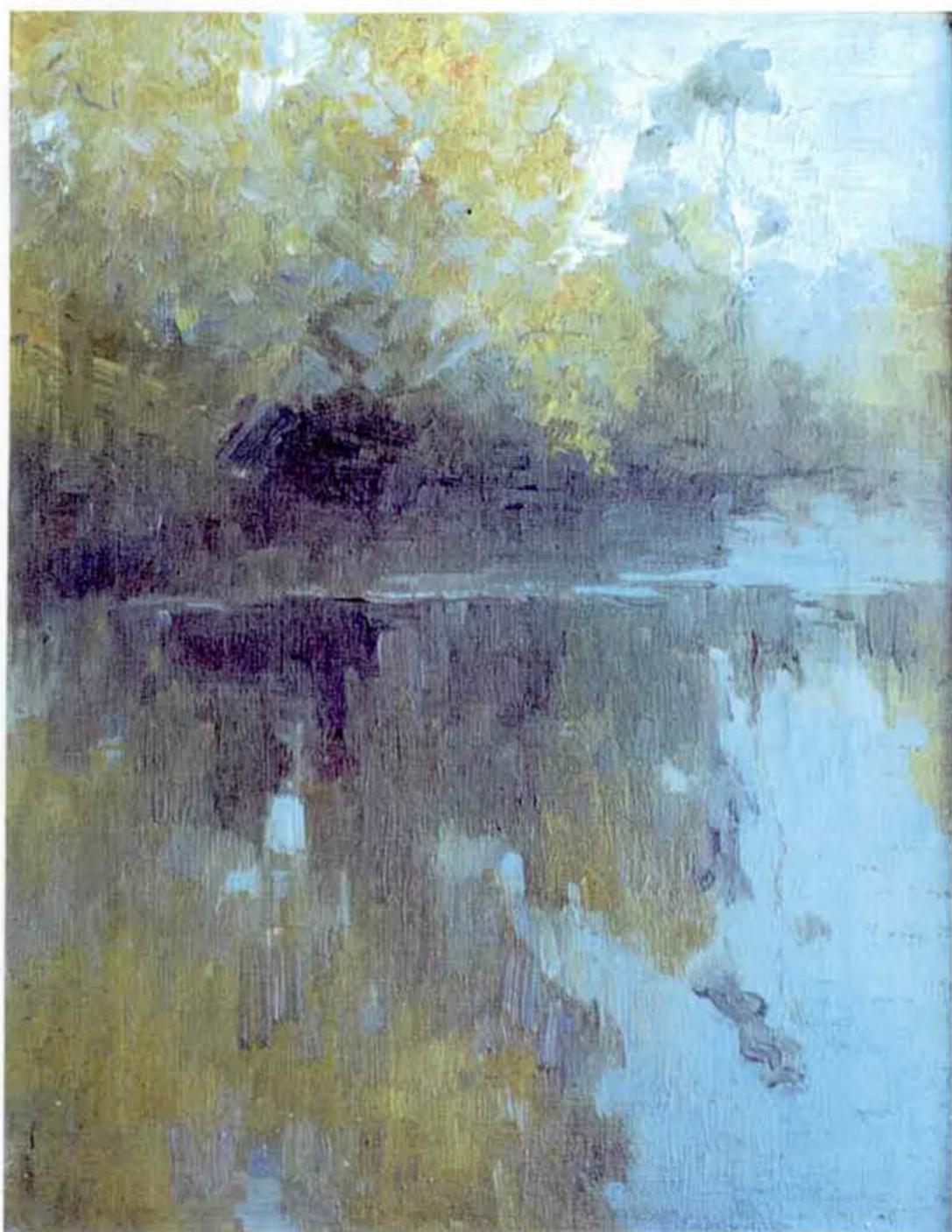
6.  
Margaret Coen  
The Glade c.1943  
Watercolour on paper 50.5 x 41.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



7.  
Ina Gregory  
The Forest Isle, Healesville  
Oil on canvas 73.5 x 43.2 cm  
Private collection



8.  
Dora Hake  
Untitled (Wattle, river bank) c.1895  
Oil on canvas  
Private collection



9.  
Jessie Evans  
(Wattle Reflections) c.1895  
Oil on canvas 46 x 35.5 cm  
Private collection



10.  
Penleigh Boyd  
Yarra Wattles 1918  
Oil on canvas 105 x 121 cm  
Private collection



11.  
John Salvana  
Afternoon on the Namoi 1913  
Oil on canvas 76 x 126.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



12.  
Christina Asquith Baker  
The River bank c.1900  
Oil on canvas 74 x 60 cm  
Private collection



13.  
Elioth Gruner  
Landscape c.1919  
Oil on canvas 31 x 39 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales

# WILD FLOWERS PROTECTED

WILD FLOWERS AND NATIVE PLANTS PROTECTION ACT, 1927.

## PROCLAMATION

(L.S.) D. R. S. de CHAIR,  
Governor.

8th June, 1927.

I, Sir DUDLEY RAWSON STRATFORD de CHAIR, the Governor of the State of New South Wales, with the advice of the Executive Council, by virtue of the power and authority conferred upon me by the Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act, 1927, do hereby by this my Proclamation, notify that the wild flowers and native plants specified in the Schedule hereto are protected under the said Act throughout the whole State of New South Wales for the period 1st July, 1927, to 30th June, 1928, both days inclusive.

By His Excellency's Command,

GOD SAVE THE KING.

THOS. KEEGAN.

### SCHEDULE.

Botanical Name.	Common Name.
Boronia serrulata .. ..	Native Rose
Boronia Floribunda .. ..	Pink boronia
Boronia pinnata .. ..	Pinnate boronia
Boronia anemonifolia .. ..	Sticky boronia
Boronia ledifolia .. ..	Red boronia
Boronia microphylla .. ..	Small-leaved boronia
Blandfordia nobilis .. ..	Christmas bells
Blandfordia flammea .. ..	Christmas bells
Blandfordia grandiflora .. ..	Christmas bells
Actinotus helianthi .. ..	Flannel flower
Telopea speciosissima .. ..	Waratah
Ceratopetalum gummiferum .. ..	Christmas bush

In connection with the above Proclamation the attention of the public is invited to the following provisions of the Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act, 1927, and to the penalties therein prescribed for breaches of the said Act:—

Any person who picks a protected wild flower or protected native plant which is growing—

- on any Crown land or State forest; or
- on any public park or public reserve; or
- on any private land (except with the permission of the owner);

and any person who sells or offers or exposes for sale any protected wild flower or protected native plant—shall be guilty of an offence.

Any person convicted of an offence shall be liable—

- for a first offence to a penalty not exceeding five pounds;
- for a second offence to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds;
- for a third or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.

Authorized servants of Councils of Shires and Municipalities, members of the Police Force, Rangers and Caretakers of Crown lands, State forests, public parks or public reserves, and Honorary Rangers appointed by the Minister may require any person reasonably suspected of having offended against the Act, to give his name and address, and to deliver up any protected wild flower or protected native plant in his possession. Upon failure to do so the person shall be guilty of an offence.

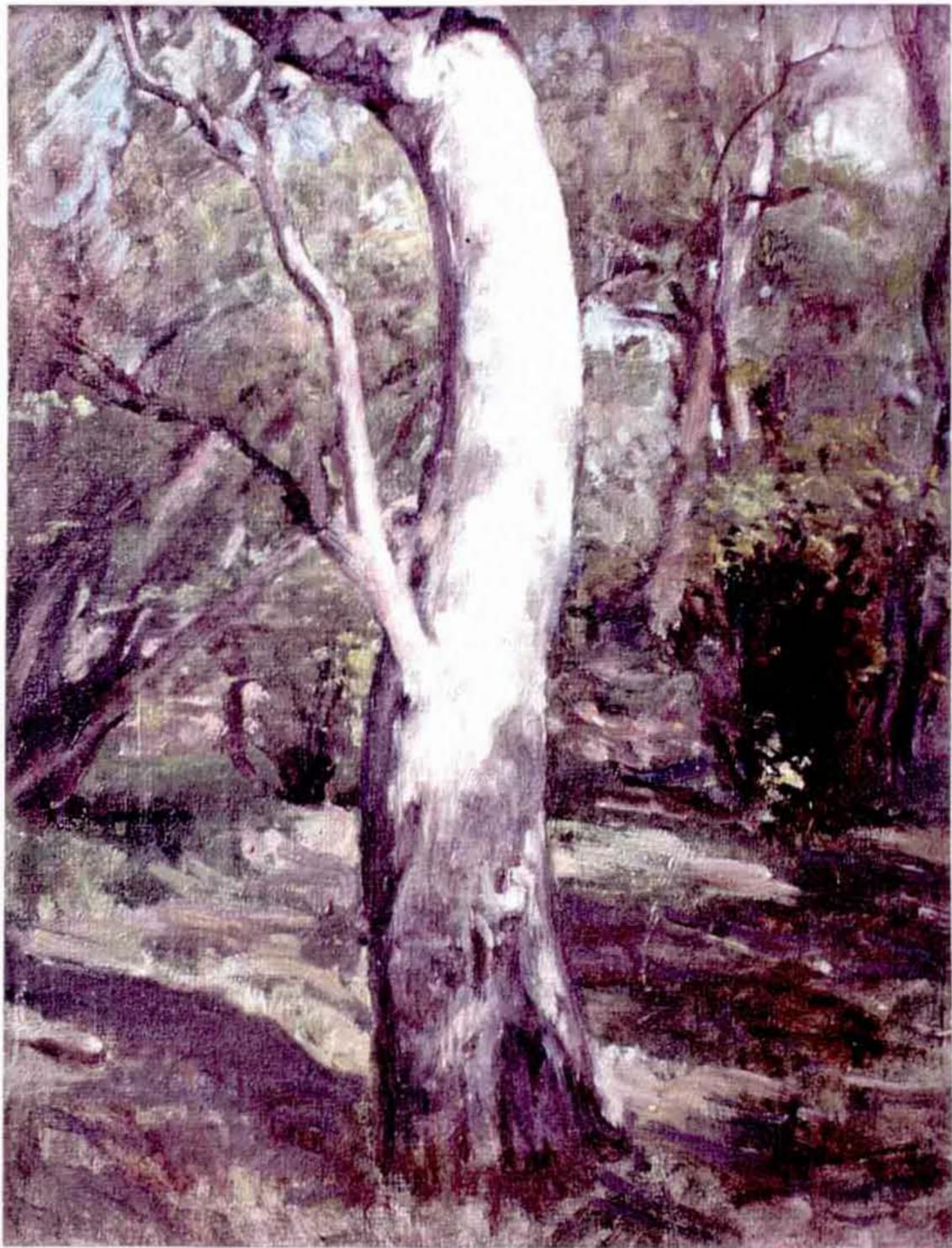
The Railway Commissioners may refuse to convey on any Government Railway or Tramway any protected wild flower or protected native plant, and are required by the Act to prevent any person selling or exposing for sale on railway or tramway premises any protected wild flower or protected native plant.

1st July, 1927.

THOS. KEEGAN, Minister for Local Government.

41966

Sydney: A. Wood Jones East, Government Printer—1927.



15.  
A.M.E. Bale  
(Gum) c.1910  
Oil on canvas 45 x 35 cm  
Private collection



16.  
Nora Gurdon  
Youth and age  
Oil  
Private collection



17.  
Arthur Streeton  
The Untidy bush c.1924  
Oil on canvas 62.2 x 75.2 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria



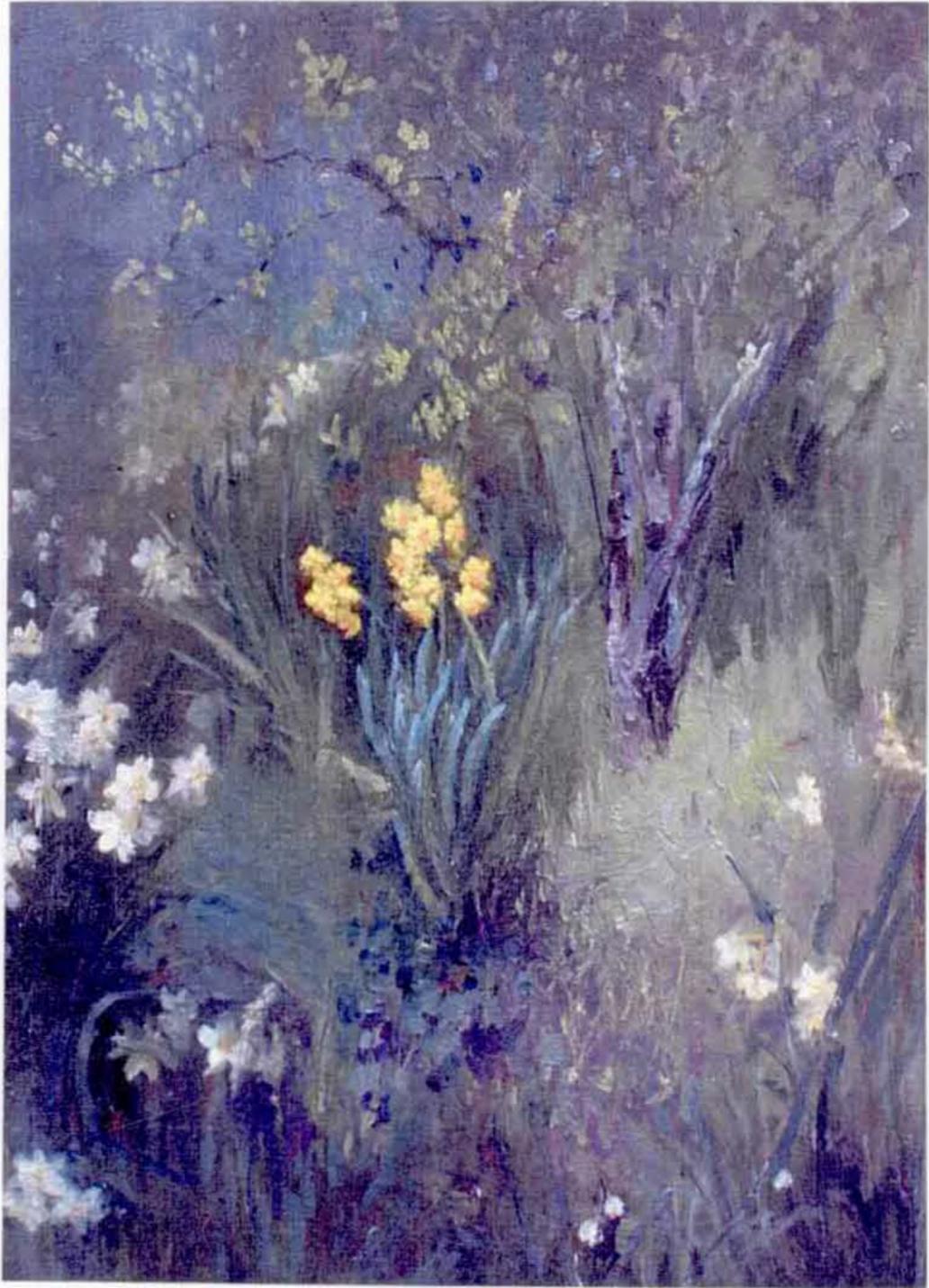
18.  
A.M.E. Bale  
Last of the season c.1922  
Oil on canvas 43.5 x 37 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



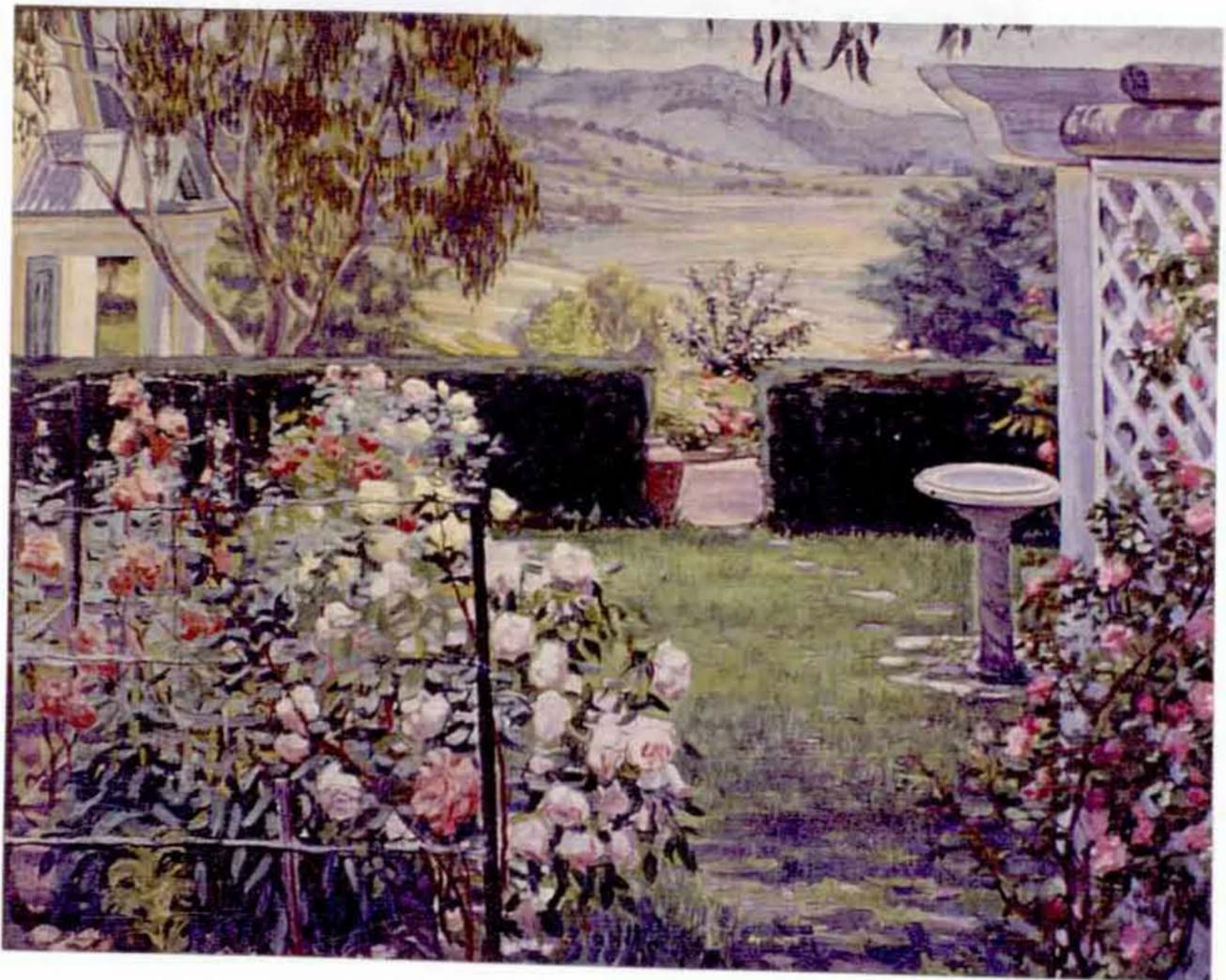
19.  
Isobel Hunter Tweddle  
Flowerpiece c.1938  
Oil on canvas on hardboard 61 x 50.8 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



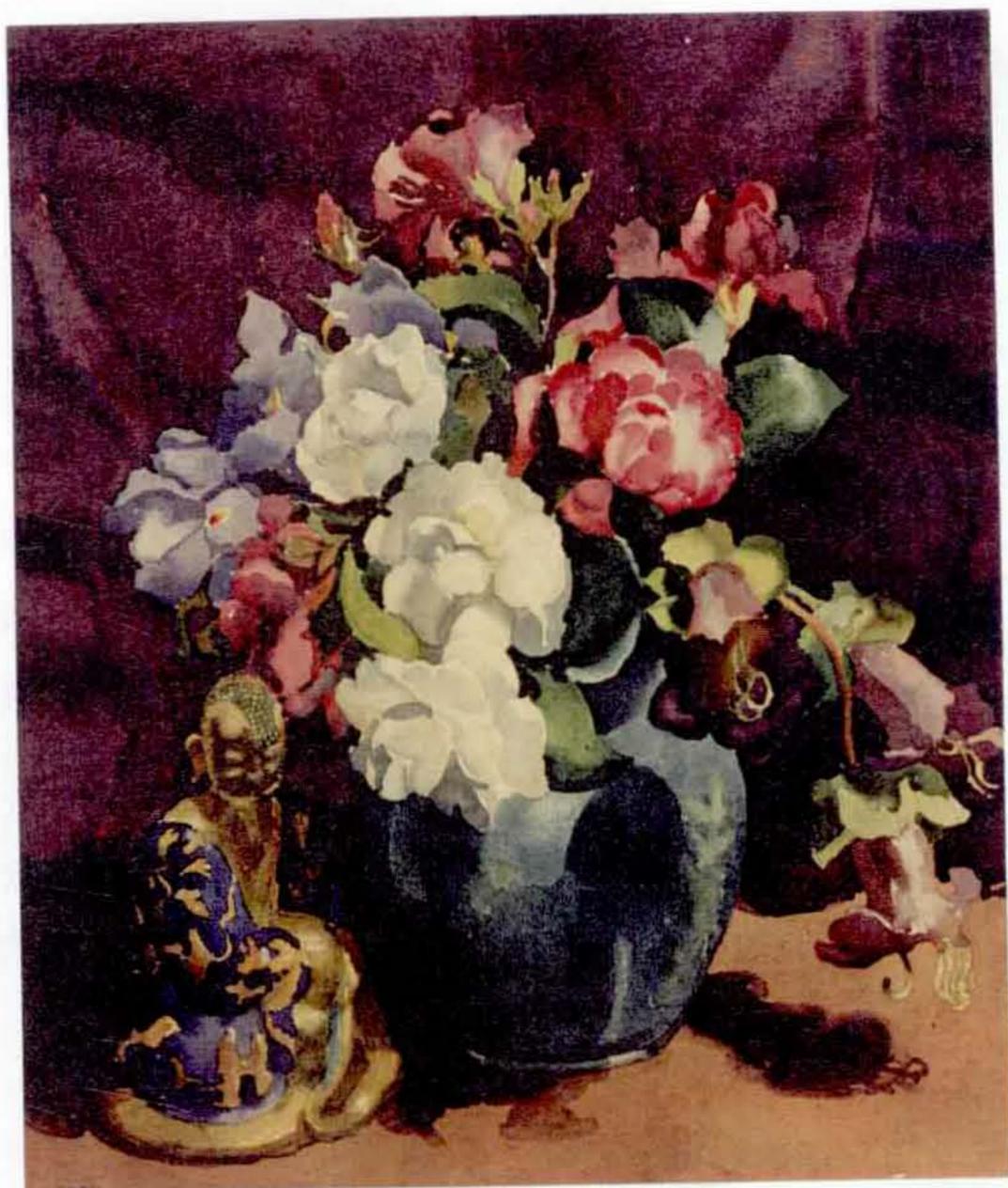
20.  
Elioth Gruner  
On the Murrumbidgee 1929  
Oil on canvas 101.7 x 122.2 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



21.  
Ina Gregory  
Our Garden c.1910  
Oil on board 30.5 x 22.8 cm  
Castlemaine Art Gallery



22.  
Hilda Rix Nicholas  
Knockalong Garden c.1934  
Oil on canvas  
Private collection



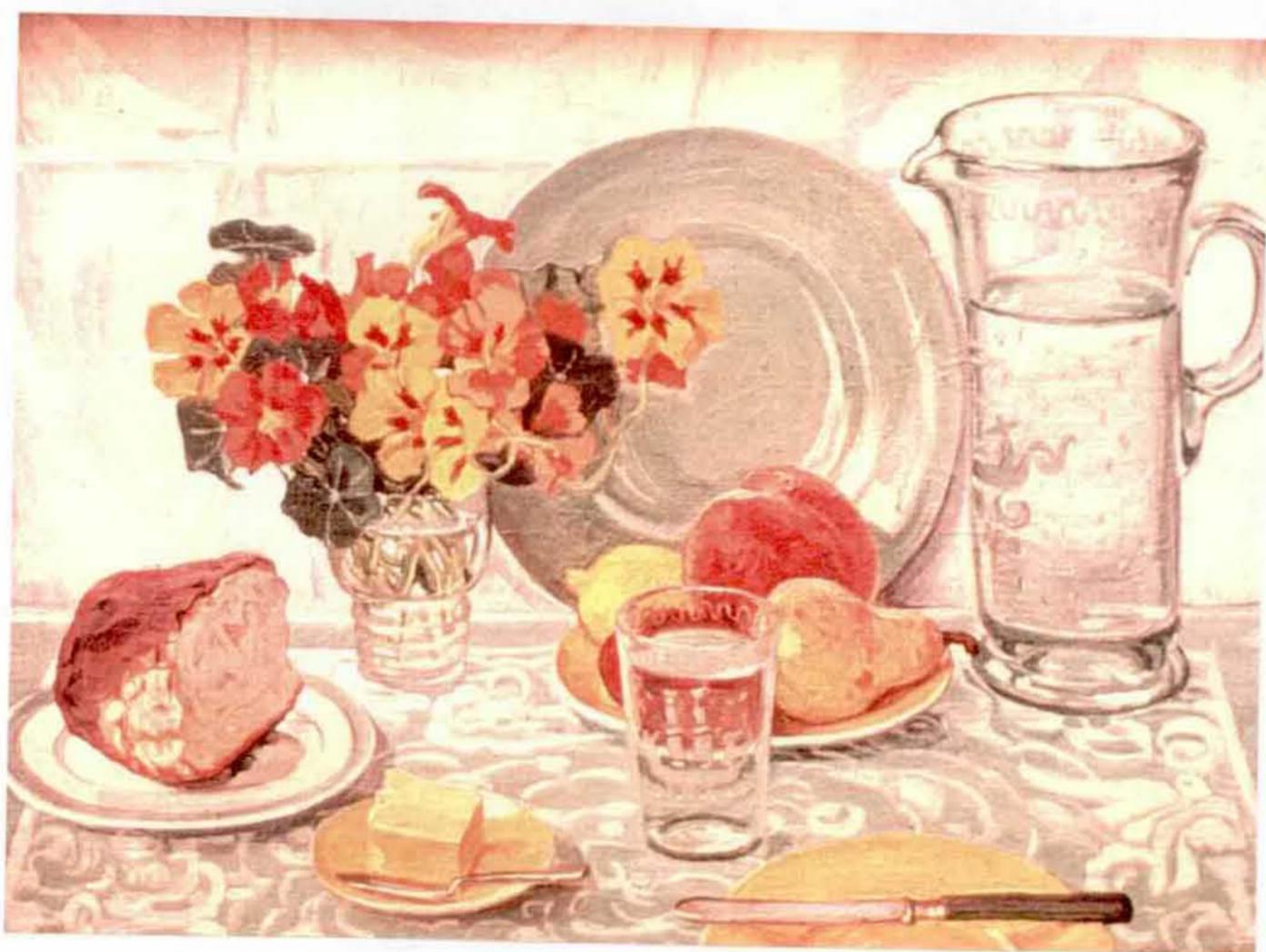
23.  
Margaret Coen  
Oriental Harmony c.1938  
Watercolour on cardboard 45 x 38 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



24.  
Hardy Wilson  
Sunlit Hydrangeas c.1920  
Watercolour on paper 45.5 x 37 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



25.  
B.E. Minns  
The Homestead garden 1933  
Watercolour on paper 26 x 36.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



26.  
Hilda Rix Nicholas  
The Frugal meal c.1936  
Oil on canvas  
Ballarat Fine Art Gallery



27.  
Hans Heysen  
Flowers and fruit (zinnias) 1921  
Oil on canvas 70 x 82.7 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



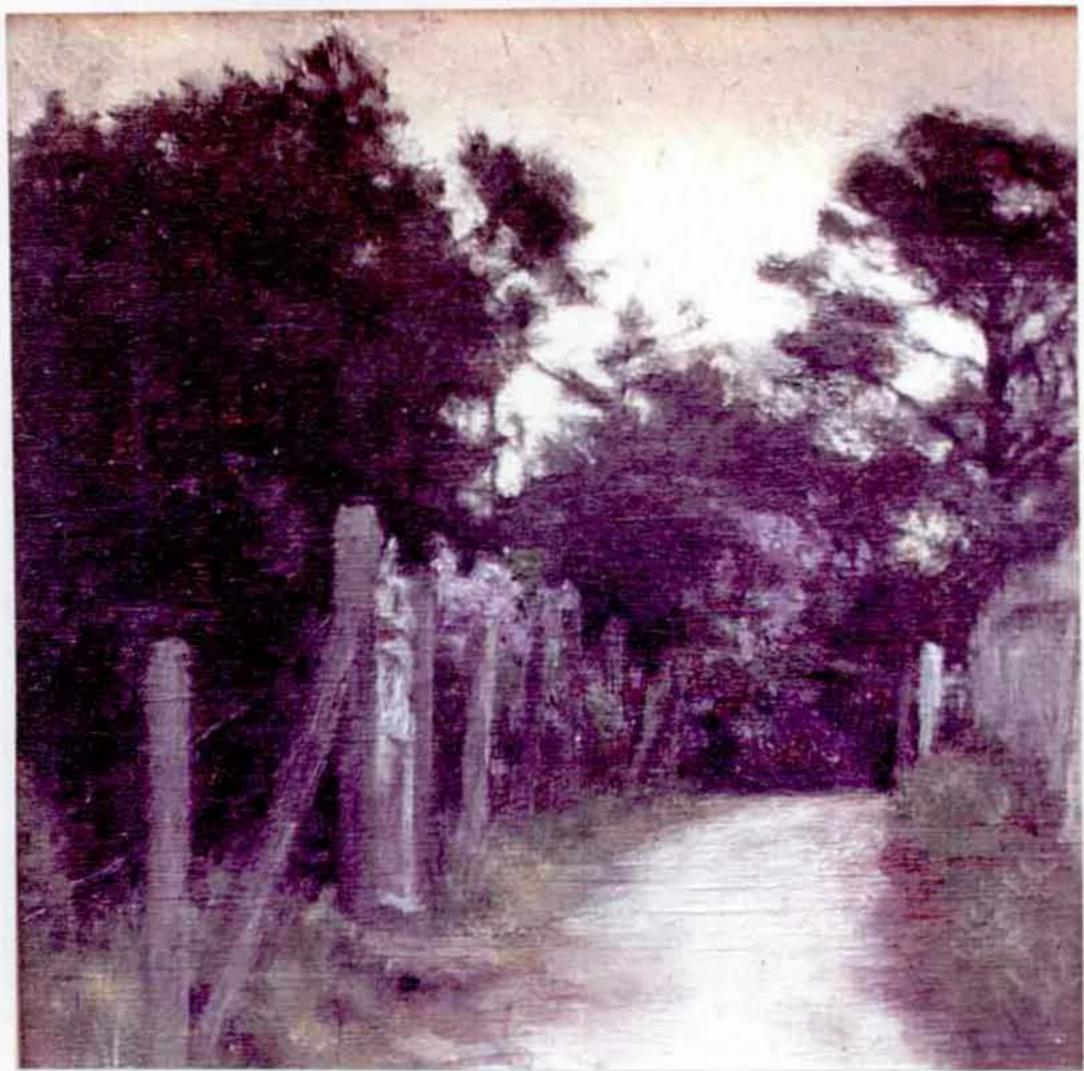
28.  
Vida Lahey  
Morning News 1926  
Oil on plywood 19.6 x 19.7 cm  
Private collection



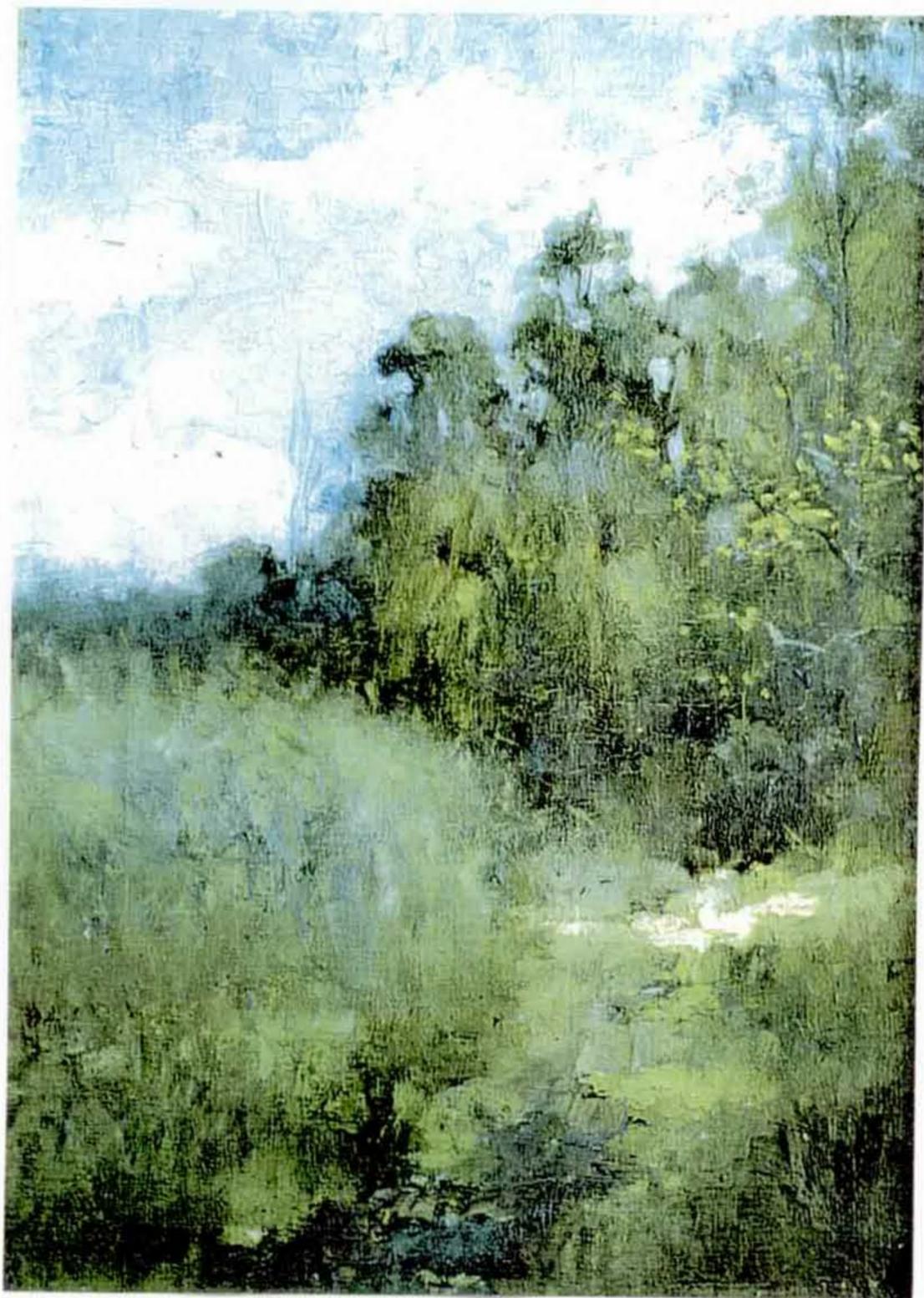
29.  
Vida Lahey  
In a garden 1925-26  
Oil on plywood 20.4 x 20.3 cm  
Private collection



30.  
Hilda Rix Nicholas  
The Little green gate c.1920  
Oil  
Private collection



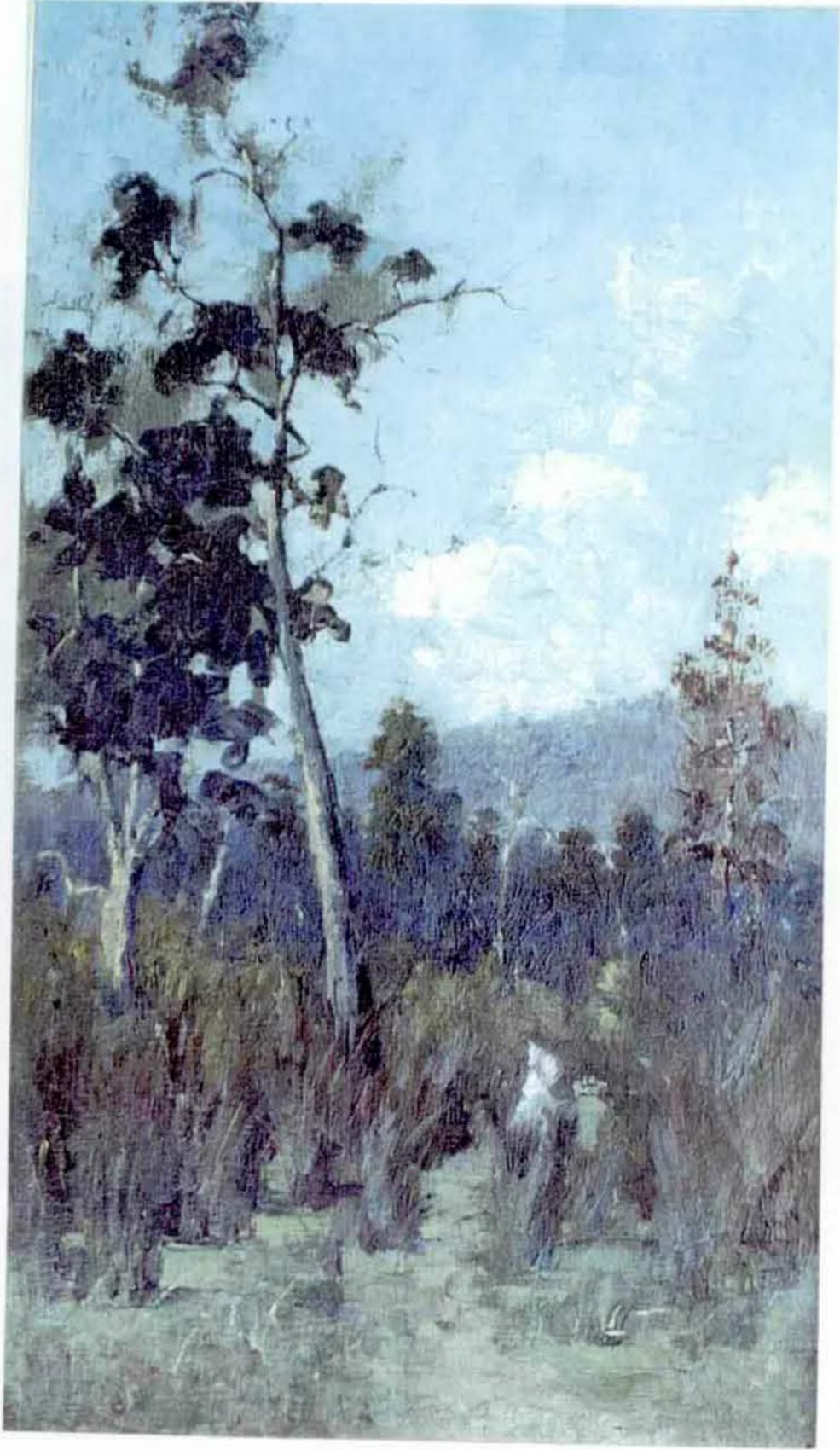
31.  
A.M.E. Bale  
The Pathway c.1925  
Oil on wood 20.2 x 20.2 cm  
Castlemaine Art Gallery



32.  
Jessie Evans  
(Green Landscape) c.1895  
Oil 51 x 35.5 cm  
Private collection



33.  
Dora Serle  
(Untitled Landscape)  
Oil on canvas on board  
Private collection



34.  
Jessie Evans  
(In the bush) c.1895  
Oil on canvas 69 x 39 cm  
Private collection



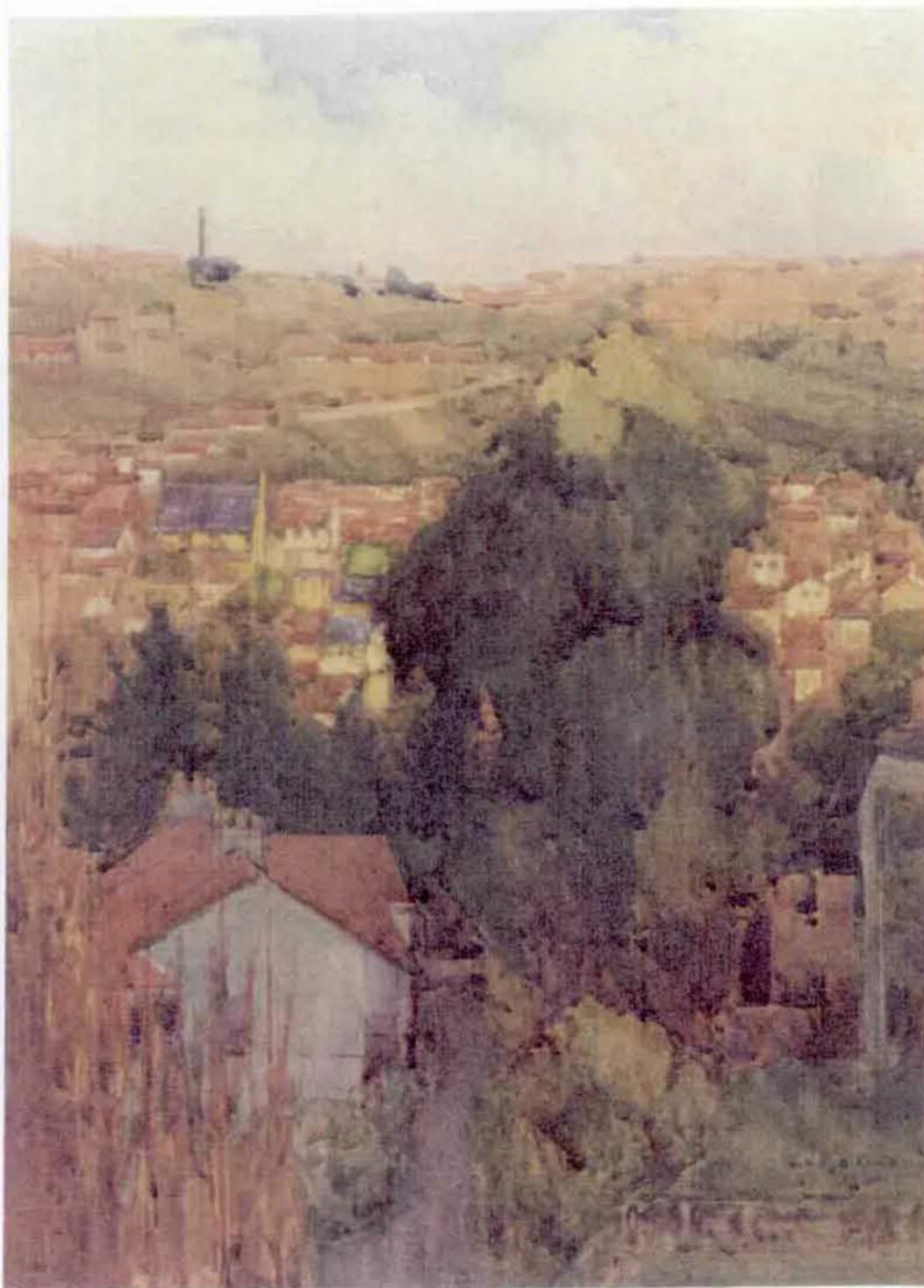
35.  
Herbert Gallop  
The Farm, Ermington c.1935  
Oil on canvas 64 x 76.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



36.  
Daryl Lindsay  
Landscape Eltham c.1925  
Watercolour on paper 25 x 35 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



37.  
Muir Auld  
Winter Morning 1935  
Oil on canvas on paperboard 40 x 45 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



38.  
Gladys Owen  
Late Afternoon, Bellevue Hill 1920  
Watercolour on paper 44 x 33.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



39.  
Dorrit Black  
Heat Haze c.1919  
Oil on canvas on paperboard 22.4 x 38.2 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



40.  
Hans Heysen  
The Track to the farm 1926  
Oil on canvas 55.3 x 62.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



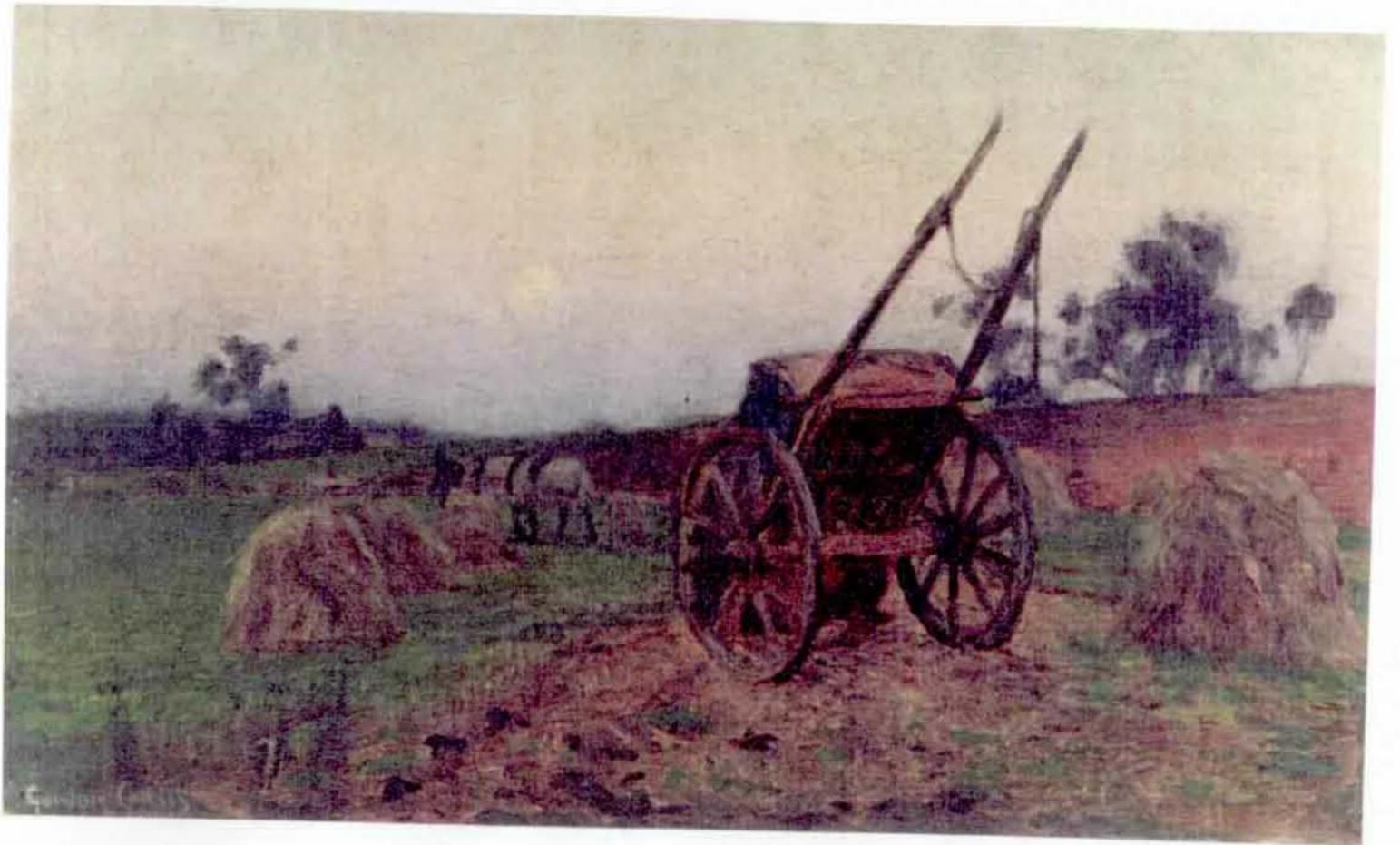
41.  
C.E.S. Tindall  
Gone Are the days 1902  
Watercolour on paper on cardboard 39.5 x 63.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



42.  
Harold Herbert  
The Farm 1930  
Watercolour, gouache on paper 32 x 47.4 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



43.  
Hans Heysen  
The Farmyard gum 1936  
Watercolour on paper 33 x 40.2 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



44.  
Gordon Coutts  
The Close of day 1900  
Oil on canvas on hardboard 26.9 x 43.2 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



45.  
Elioth Gruner  
Summer Morning 1916  
Oil on canvas 30.7 x 40.7 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



46.  
Elioth Gruner  
New England 1921  
Oil on canvas 34.3 x 44.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



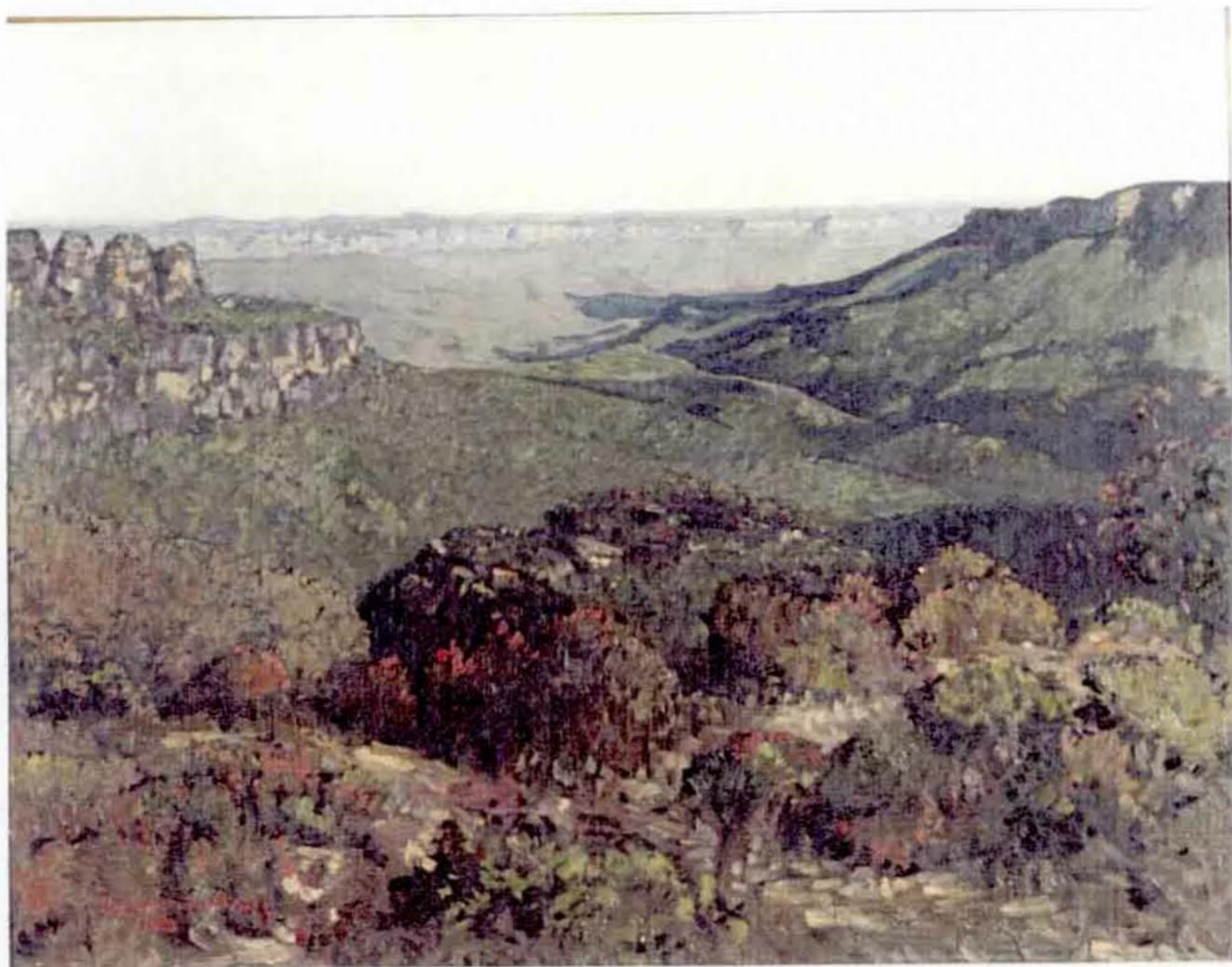
47.  
Muir Auld  
The Oat patch c.1932  
Oil on canvas on paperboard 25.4 x 37.8 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



48.  
Arthur Streeton  
Still Glides the stream, and shall for ever glide 1890  
Oil on canvas 82 x 153 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



49.  
Elioth Gruner  
Man and mountains 1926  
Oil on canvas 51 x 61 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



50.  
Howard Ashton  
Jamieson Valley 1931  
Oil on canvas 52.8 x 68.9 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



51.  
Alice Norton  
A Place of wind and flowers 1894  
Watercolour on paper 61 x 56.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales



52.  
Arthur Streeton  
Australia Felix 1907  
Oil on canvas 89.5 x 151 cm  
Art Gallery of South Australia



53.  
W. Lister Lister  
The Golden splendour of the bush c.1906  
Oil on canvas 239.8 x 190.5 cm  
Art Gallery of New South Wales

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