

Dealing and exhibiting in original works by Australia's most collectable young, mid-career and senior artists

Easter Trading Hours

Sydney & Melbourne
Fri, 21 March - Closed
Sat, 22 March - Open
Sun, 23 March - Open
Mon, 24 March - Closed

Contents

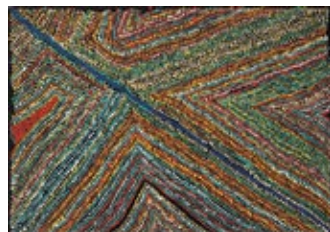
- 1 Indigenous Art
- 2 News in brief
- 3 Exhibitions
- 4 Artist interview

Indigenous Art - the ethics and the importance

In this issue, we're taking a closer look at the Indigenous art market, as a preview to Dickerson Gallery's (Melbourne) show in April this year of Indigenous work by artists from the Papulankutja (also known as Blackstone) community.

The community is located in western desert 'spinifex country', close to where the borders of Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory meet. Blackstone is home to 200 people, and also home to an Aboriginal owned and managed artists' co-operative. Dickerson Gallery (Melbourne) Director, Stephen Nall, says the upcoming show represents the community's first major exhibition in Melbourne. "This exciting body of recent works demonstrates the strong family linkages within this remote community that ensure the enduring nature of the traditions of these people."

A key achievement for the artists of Blackstone was winning the 2005 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award. Their winning work was a life-size model of a Toyota Ute – made entirely from spinifex grass, string and chicken wire. The artists use spinifex in a number of forms; local women have developed a process for making spinifex paper which retains its natural colour and can also be used for printing and painting.



Jimmy Donegan, Pukara

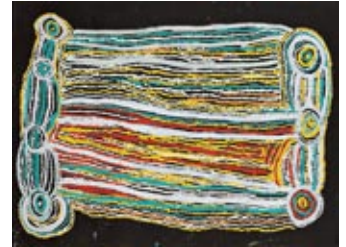
The Blackstone show comes at an interesting time in the Aboriginal art world. A new record price for an Indigenous work was set in July 2007 with the National Gallery of Australia paying \$2.4 million for Clifford Possum Tjapaltjari's significant work Warlugulong. Afterwards, the Head of Sotheby's Aboriginal Art Department, Tim Klingender, told Bloomberg News the sale smashed the previous record of \$1.056 million for Emily Kame Kngwarreye's Earth's Creation. He added, "Aboriginal art has grown exponentially in popularity and in value over the last decade or more. It is now very much in line with other major art movements."



Cliff Reid, Wati Design

Despite these record breaking auction prices, there remain legitimate concerns about the ethical operation of the Indigenous art market. The acquisition of an Indigenous work is an important addition to any collection – big or small – because it represents an important aspect of Australia's historical and cultural life. But with the media exposing horror stories of artist exploitation, the smaller, private collector may feel cautious about purchasing a work.

So, how do you ensure you're making an ethical acquisition?



Tjayanka Woods, Minyma Kufjara Tjukurpa

For the moment, the simple answer is – purchase from a reputable gallery, and make sure you ask questions about the artist, their community, and the work's provenance. Dickerson Gallery is conscious of these issues; to maintain ethical standards, Stephen Nall liaises directly with the co-ordinators of Indigenous community art centres, who act in the artists' best interests. "In this way, we can avoid any uncertainties that seem to 'bedevil' the Indigenous art trade, including questionable provenance & exploitation of artists. Art centre co-ordinators are, for the most part, dedicated operators who act with integrity. Because they understand the vital role that city galleries play in promoting their artists work, they can be relied upon to provide the best works for exhibitions."

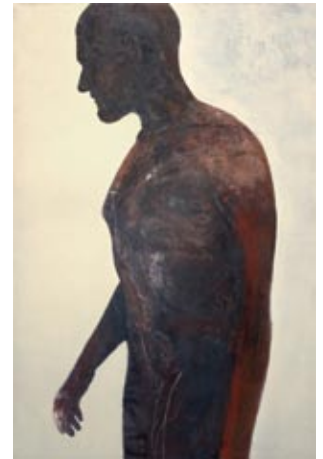
In the near future, the process of ensuring ethical standards may become more formalised. The Australia Council is funding the development of an Indigenous Australian Commercial Code of Conduct, covering best practice conduct for the art production and sales relationships between artists, agents, sales intermediaries and buyers. "Dickerson Gallery is aware of the terms of the code, and supports its adoption by all galleries that sell such works," said Stephen Nall.

Nicholas Hutcheson Heads South

Melbourne-based artist, [Nicholas Hutcheson](#), has embarked on an extraordinary journey to the Antarctic in search of inspiration for his next show with Dickerson Gallery. On 31 January, Nicholas set sail on the ship, *Aurora Australis*, joining its eight week voyage to provide supplies to three Australian bases in the Antarctic, as well as collecting expeditioners returning to Australia.

Nicholas has established a website at www.nicholashutcheson.com/antarctic/ where you can follow the progress of his trip. Each week on the site, Nicholas is posting fresh drawings of his observations, and interviews with the people he encounters. The opportunity to see this incredible part of the world came about through the Federal Government's Antarctic Arts Fellowship Program. One of the program's aims is to provoke the interest of young people in the Antarctic. Therefore, Nicholas is corresponding via email with Victorian school children following his journey on the web. The kids have been invited to exchange their thoughts on the region, as well as their own Antarctic-inspired artworks.

Clients of Dickerson Gallery will have the chance to see the artistic results of Nicholas' journey later this year, when he is scheduled to have his second Melbourne show.



Nicholas Hutcheson, *Vessel XV*



Robert Dickerson, *Divorce*

Dickerson: Aspects of Law

To mark Dickerson Gallery's participation in the inaugural [Art Brisbane](#), clients attending the show will have a unique opportunity to purchase individual prints from [Robert Dickerson's](#) *Aspects of Law* series. The highly popular lithographs are usually sold as a box set of 12 prints. As one of the exhibitors at Art Brisbane, Dickerson Gallery will have the series available for sale as 12 individual, framed prints.

Art Brisbane is based on the successful Art Melbourne and Art Sydney events, formerly known as The Affordable Art Show. The first ever Art Brisbane will be held from [30 May – 1 June](#) at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Bank.

For more information about the *Aspects of Law* series, contact Dickerson Gallery. For general information about Art Brisbane, go to www.artbrisbane08.com.au

In Brief....

Blowers & Cordero in Glover Prize

[Nicholas Blowers](#) and [Jason Cordero](#) have been announced as finalists in this year's [Glover Art Prize](#) - a \$30,000 award for landscape paintings of a titled Tasmanian scene. The winner will be announced on 7 March.



Nicholas Blowers,
Forest Debris



Jason Cordero,
The Gates are Before Us

Lockhart in Kedumba Drawing Award

[Adrian Lockhart](#) was one of 24 artists to be invited to submit work in the recent [Kedumba Drawing Award](#). Two of Adrian Lockhart's works were hung in the show at the Kedumba Gallery, located in the Blue Mountains.



Adrian Lockhart,
Love Letters 2

Staff News

Congrats to Melbourne Gallery Manager, [David Hagger](#), and his wife, [Stefanie](#), on the birth of their son [Oliver Andrew](#). The baby boy proved an early Christmas present for the couple, arriving on 3 December, weighing a healthy 3.61kg (7lb15oz).

New Dickerson Works

An exhibition of new paintings by [Robert Dickerson](#) will commence at [Rex Irwin Art Dealer](#) on [20 May](#) and finish on 14 June. Rex Irwin is located on the First Floor, 38 Queen St, Woollahra.

Witzigs now in National Portrait Collection

The [National Portrait Gallery](#) (NPG) has acquired three of [John Witzig's](#) surf portraits, including [Mark Richards at Haleiwa](#); [Hawaii](#), [Nat in Hawaii](#), and [Midget at Palm Beach](#). The works will feature in the next issue of the NPG's publication, *Portrait*, accompanied by a written piece by John Witzig.



John Witzig,
Midget Farrelly at Palm Beach

Looking Forward, Sydney

Nicholas Blowers: 16 April - 11 May

Following sell-out shows in Sydney and Melbourne, [Nicholas Blowers](#) returns to the Sydney gallery with a collection of oil paintings on canvas. The use of canvas represents a new development in the artist's career, with his previous works predominantly on paper.



Nicholas Blowers,
Bush Interior

Derry Messum: 14 May - 8 June

[Derry Messum's](#) works display skilled use of traditional materials and techniques such as bronze and aluminium casting, wood carving, plaster sculpture and ceramics. Messum fuses modern day motifs with his whimsical, and at times provocative, outlook on life.



Derry Messum,
Hidden

Max Linegar: 11 June - 6 July

[Max Linegar's](#) landscapes possess a deeply psychological undertone played out not by any people in the scene, but by the wind, rain and darkness. Long stretches of coastline and surrounding landscapes in southern Victoria and New South Wales have been the impetus for these images.



Max Linegar,
Lorne

Looking Forward, Melbourne

Ian Bracegirdle: 5 March - 6 April

[Ian Bracegirdle's](#) new work shows how the awareness of climate change impacts not just on our daily behaviour but on the way we see the world. Bracegirdle's figures retain the uneasiness they showed in his earlier works but now they appear to be more engaged and quizzical.



Ian Bracegirdle,
Long way from the Seine

Bart Sanciole: 5 March - 6 April

[Bart Sanciole's](#) passion for figurative artworks is matched by his ability in developing art pieces of contrasting sizes, and using a variety of materials, techniques and methods. His work does not intend to illustrate an abstract concept, rather Sanciole is attracted to the human condition.



Bart Sanciole,
Visage I

Blackstone Indigenous: 9 April - 4 May

Residents of the [Papulankutja](#) (also known as Blackstone) Community describe their home as "a small oasis where bush tuckers are in good supply and people can retain their culture and speak their native Ngaanyatjarra language." The artists tend to paint scenes of the country and representations of the important stories from this region. (see page 1)



Andrew Mitchell,
Walu

Murray Bird: 7 May- 1 June

Using traditional still-life subject matter, [Murray Bird](#) skews the conventional by depicting his objects in situations of high-tension, delicacy, and vulnerability. In his upcoming show, he introduces a new element – figures (see page 4 for interview with the artist).



Murray Bird,
Apple Attack

John Witzig: 7 May - 1 June

The last picture show will be [John Witzig's](#) final exhibition with Dickerson Gallery, showcasing the best of his vintage surfing photographs. John Witzig contributed his first piece to *Surfing World* in 1963, and went on to found *Tracks* magazine in 1970. He recently launched a book, *John Witzig: Surfing photographs from the 1960s and '70s*.



John Witzig,
Torquay

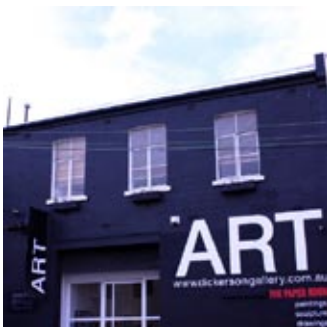


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IN CONVERSATION WITH MURRAY BIRD

As [Murray Bird](#) puts the finishing touches to his upcoming Melbourne show, *The Fruit and the Figure*, he kindly took time out from painting to answer a few questions, put to him by newsletter editor, [Cassie Hamer](#).

CH: Fruit has long been a traditional still-life subject – but your paintings manage to imbue the fruit with human characteristics, which is quite unconventional. Can you explain what you are trying to achieve?

MB: I want the viewer to see still-life in a different way, instead of being just an arrangement of objects. I'm interested in the surreal aspect of my subject. In some paintings my fruit becomes human-like and show the human psyche, playing out roles of vulnerability, violence and desire. Because I am working with still-life in this way, a humorous feeling can be achieved, while still showing menace and having a strong emotional impact. Painting still-life gives me the freedom to continue to develop ideas and create interesting scenarios and situations.

CH: There's a real sense of menacing and even torture in some of your still-life works – but do you think there's also a sense of humour in your work? Is that intentional?

MB: I don't want the paintings to be taken too seriously. I have great enjoyment painting them and hope people can enjoy them also. Humour is a great way of dealing with the subjects in some of my paintings and it allows the viewer to see things in a more playful and innocent way.

CH: Some of your works portray fruit in highly complex arrangements. Do you actually make models of these arrangements – and is that difficult?

MB: I try to work from the motif as much as possible. I set the subject up as close to what I need to work from as possible. These arrangements can be quite

difficult to make. Some paintings require me to build a type of sculpture, which is quite complicated. Also, the weight and the perishable nature of some fruit can be a problem, and this fruit I replace with foam shapes.

CH: As indicated by the title of the show, you've included some depictions of figures in your latest works – is this the sign of a new direction in your work?

MB: I'm introducing the figure as a way of broadening my subject matter. I enjoy painting the figure and would like to include it in my body of work. I think still-life and figurative art have always been compatible. As I am interested in the human element in my still-life, it is natural to develop my figurative work. Painting the figure offers new opportunities and challenges and allows me to grow as a painter.



Murray Bird,
Waiting

CH: You were trained at the Julian Ashton Art School – and you have taught there for some years. What is the Ashton philosophy and why does it appeal to you?

MB: It is the philosophy of the Julian Ashton Art School to encourage fine draftsmanship and excellence in the craft of painting. I believe with these skills, no matter what direction my art might take, the foundation has been laid. The years I have spent at the School have created a passion and love for great works of art, and an appreciation of the skills required in realistic paintings.

The Fruit and the Figure runs from **7 May - 1 June** at **Dickerson Gallery, Melbourne.**



Murray Bird,
Hostile takeover