



Callan Park Gallery

For Self-Taught and Outsider Art

APA People

A celebration of the Stuart Purves Gift of nearly 200 Arts Project Australia works to the Self-Taught and Outsider Art Research Collection

As Director of the Australian Galleries, Stuart Purves has supported and nurtured some of the country's great artistic talents. A list that includes the likes of James Powditch, Arthur Boyd and Jeffrey Smart is impressive. It must have come as some surprise, therefore, to Stuart as he walked around another Melbourne Art Fair in 1998, with its predictable roster of established and emerging talent, to discover a booth showing work that was marked by a freshness and devil-may-care adventurousness that appeared to owe nothing to the rules of engagement of the professional artworld. At that moment he was hooked by the practices of a diverse group of artists working out of a unique Melbourne Studio, Arts Project Australia. The prices being asked for this work he considered desultorily low considering its overall high quality (a situation that still persists, and which Stuart continues to challenge). Over the course of the Fair he bought a number of works by APA artists. So began a passion for collecting that lasted for nearly a decade, until Stuart became a board member of APA, and felt that, as such he should pause his acquisitions.

By this time the collection was well on the way to numbering two hundred works by some forty-three artists. This moment was chosen to share the collection and Stuart's passion with a wider audience, with production of an exhibition and accompanying book entitled "Pearls of Arts Project Australia". The inaugural show at the Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest (19 May - 24 June 2007) met with a hugely enthusiastic response from the public and discerning critics. Later outings included Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney (Apr 17, 2008 – May 24, 2008), under the sensitive care of the late, great Nick Waterlow, and the Orange Regional Gallery (16 January – 1 March 2009), which under the leadership of Alan Sisley has for nearly two decades pioneered the serious exhibition of self-taught and outsider art in Australia.

In spite of its Victorian pedigree, the Pearls of Arts Project Australia seems to have received its warmest response in New South Wales, and so it was with real excitement and gratitude that STOARC reacted to Stuart's suggestion that The University of Sydney might become the permanent custodian of his collection. The current exhibition has been mounted to celebrate this important gift.

The Pearls collection will now take its place as part of a growing rich and diverse research resource for people interested in self-taught and outsider art. In APA a tiny fraction of the collection has been chosen to present a coherent visual display of three of its important thematic: the expressive rendering of the human figure; the pictorial use of text; and iconic, minimal figuration. Knowing that this will not be the only opportunity to view the Pearls has enabled a hanging that gives each work the space it deserves, allowing it to tell its own story, whilst communicating as part of a group. It allows viewers to see in some depth the very different work of Julian Martin (b. 1969) and Leo Cussen (b. 1959), supported by John M. Northe (b. 1943), Scott Ferguson (b. 1963), Jodie Noble (b. 1981), Tim Noble (b. 1984), Anne Lynch (b. 1956), Timothy Williams (b. 1964) and Kelvin Heffernan (b. 1958).

Founded in 1974, originally as an organization devoted to the exhibition of artwork by persons with an intellectual disability, APA aimed to establish increased visibility for this previously near-invisible group in a respectful and dignified way. In 1982 the concept was extended to the establishment of a studio workshop in which people with intellectual disabilities could engage in creative development, facilitated and supported by a staff of practicing artists. From the start APA was distinguished by its independence from existing institutional settings. The current space in Northcote, a Melbourne suburb, consists of a studio, with 130 artists on the roll, and a substantial gallery with a constantly changing exhibition program.

Colin Rhodes, March 2010



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1. Tim Noble, *Untitled (wizard cup)*, 2007, pen and texta on paper, 34.5 x 25cm.
2. Scott Ferguson, *Untitled (figures and text)*, 2004, pencil on paper, 16 x 50.5cm.
3. Leo Cussen, *Untitled (Broadway melody text on black)*, 2004, pastel on paper, 38 x 56.5cm.
4. Leo Cussen, *Untitled (Dr Who's tardis)*, 2005, pastel on paper, 56 x 38cm.
5. Julian Martin, *Untitled*, 2003, pastel on paper, 65 x 50cm.
6. Julian Martin, *Untitled (letter N)*, 2003, pastel on paper, 65 x 50cm.
7. Julian Martin, *Untitled (grey guitar)*, 2002, pastel on paper, 65 x 50cm.
8. Julian Martin, *Untitled (fan)*, 2002, pastel on paper, 65 x 50cm.
9. Julian Martin, *Untitled (jungle series 12)*, 2006, pastel on paper, 66 x 50cm.
10. Julian Martin, *Untitled (jungle series 6)*, 2006, pastel on paper, 66 x 50cm.
11. Anne Lynch, *Untitled (boots)*, 2002, pastel on paper, 25 x 32cm.
12. Timothy Williams, *Flame thrower*, 2000, collage on paper, 35 x 25cm.
13. Cameron Noble, *Untitled (woman looking over her shoulder)*, 2005, pastel and graphite on paper, 56 x 38cm.
14. Leo Cussen, *The engineer's assistant*, 2005, pastel on paper, 33 x 50cm.
15. Leo Cussen, *Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra*, 2002, pastel on paper, 33 x 50cm.
16. Leo Cussen, *Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra*, 2002, pastel on paper, 25 x 35cm.
17. John Northe, *Untitled (Nicky)*, 1998, pencil and pastel on paper, 66 x 50cm.
18. John Northe, *Untitled (Star Wars queen)*, 1989, pencil and pastel on paper, 65 x 50cm.
19. Jodie Noble, *Untitled (after 'Jerry' by Lyndal Walker)*, 2005, pastel on paper, 76 x 56cm.
20. Kelvin Heffernan, *Xena, a unicorn and a dinosaur*, 1999, ink on paper, 65 x 50cm.
21. Scott Ferguson, *Untitled (white text on black)*, 2005, pencil on paper, 14.5 x 24.5cm.

APA People will be on display to Wednesday 31 March 2010.

Gallery hours: By appointment

For further information please contact:

Professor Colin Rhodes, Dean
Sydney College of the Arts
The Visual Arts Faculty of the
University of Sydney
callanpark.gallery@sydney.edu.au
sydney.edu.au/sca

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