



Diploma Lecture Series 2011
Art and Australia II: European Preludes and Parallels

Printmaking in Melbourne and Sydney: a 1960s and '70s Renaissance

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Lecture summary:

There are 3 significant factors shaping this *a forte* re-emergence of printmaking in the early 1960s: an improving Economy, extended and more nearly universal education and the Post-War waves of European Immigrants who brought to Australia their expertise in, vision of and familiarity with prints.

Printmaking is an essentially democratic medium in its capacity for multiple (and affordable) reproducible images – and this too chimed with the egalitarian impulse of the times. It served the needs of a radical and politicized generation – the anti-Vietnam war, emerging Feminism, socialist Agit-Prop, trade-Unionism, Art and Language and – perhaps especially the emergence of Pop art with its blurring of boundaries between popular culture and “High” Art.

In 1961 Sydney saw the formation of The Sydney Printmakers – its founding members included Earle Backen, Margaret Preston, Henry Salkauskas, Frank Hinder, John Coburn, Eileen Mayo, Eva Kubbos and Vaclovas Ratas, Weaver Hawkins. Many of these artists were either European and had training in printmaking or had studied in England and France. Hayter’s Atelier 17 in Paris was especially important for the revival of etching and aquatint, but most especially in the development of complex intaglio techniques which were highly suited to Abstraction.

In Melbourne Tate Adams took over the Printmaking Workshop at what was then Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT) – formerly reserved for the use of Illustration students – and opened it to artists for use one day a week. It attracted the recently returned Fred Williams – and a growing group. By 1967 Tate Adams had established the first Tertiary Qualification – a Diploma in Printmaking at RMIT. And a year earlier he opened a small gallery devoted to works on paper, prints especially (The Crossley Gallery). The first of its kind and not only provided a venue for emerging printmakers and established artists to show prints, Adams also brought contemporary prints from Japan and Europe to Melbourne. Such exposure enriched local art. The National Gallery of Victoria’s Prints & Drawings Room was open to artists who found inspiration and also exposure to prints both historical and contemporary. Its Curator, Dr Ursula Hoff was instrumental in the founding of the print Council of Australia in 1966 together with two artists from RMIT’s Art School, Graham King (who had studied in England) and Udo Sellback, trained in Graphic Arts in Germany – and a major player in the evolution of Printmaking in Australia both as an artist and a teacher (he established Printmaking Departments in Canberra and Tasmania. The Print Council was instrumental – as was the Crossley Gallery – in establishing a public awareness of Printmaking. Their Journal, *Imprint*, was launched in 1966 and still continues.

Gallery A in Melbourne in the 1960s, established its own Printmaking facilities managed by Janet Dawson and James Mollison. They also brought American prints to Australia. From America Abstract Expressionism fuelled an alternative vision of the repertoire of Abstraction, but especially Pop Art’s transgressive imagery and vibrancy found a natural resonance in Prints.

Max Millar ran a printmaking Workshop in Sydney and printed for artists such as John Olsen and Lloyd Rees in the early 1970s.

In Sydney Rudy Komon’s Gallery began to show prints in group exhibitions in the mid 1960s and following the burgeoning of the art-form by the late 1960s, solo exhibitions of prints by many Melbourne artists such as George Baldessin, Fred Williams and Jan Senbergs.

George Baldessin and Tate Adams started a printmaking workshop in Melbourne to service the production prints for the Crossley Gallery.

By mid to late 70s the excitement fuelling the explosion of printmaking in the 1960s became institutionalised – an Academy of sorts – increasing marked by technical bravura rather than invention. The Print expanded in size in an attempt to compete with the scale of painting. Large scale etching presses were manufactured here to meet this demand and screenprinting, co-opted from commercial usage, likewise facilitated large scale work and large editions - though in the hands of an artist of Jan Senbergs’ calibre screenprinting became a medium of invention.

Real excitement – experimental and daring use of printmaking mediums fuelled by discovery and made daring by ignorance, the absence of materials and master-printers.

Elizabeth Cross.

Slide list:

1. Henry Šalkauskas, *Black Harbour*, 1961 (linocut)
2. Henry Šalkauskas, *Harvest*, 1959 (colour linocut)
3. Henry Šalkauskas, *Monument*, 1967 (watercolour),
4. Earle Backen, *Composition* 1957 (etching, aquatint, soft-ground, burnishing)
5. Earle Backen, *Composition*, 1957 (etching, aquatint, soft-ground, burnishing)

6. Earle Backen, *Ecce Homo*, 1960 (etching, aquatint, scraping out, burnishing)
- *7. Earle Backen, *Black Structure*, 1963 (etching, engraving, aquatint)
8. Earle Backen, *Dream Landscape*, 1968 (etching, aquatint)
9. Eva Kubbos, *The sudden wings of blue*, 1962 (colour linocut)
- 10 a. and b. Tate Adams (lithographs) 1959
- 121 Tate Adams (colour linocut)
12. Tate Adams (etching)
- *13. Tate Adams, *Clown*, 1962 (colour linocut)
14. Noel Counihan (linocut)
15. Fred Williams, *Dancing Figures (Performers)*, 1954-55 (etching and aquatint)
16. Fred Williams, *Performer*, 1954-55 (etching and aquatint)
17. Noel Counihan, *The Miner*, 1947 (linocut)
18. Noel Counihan, *The cough*, 1947 (linocut)
19. Janet Dawson, *The night bird (L'oiseau de nuit)*, 1960 (colour Lithograph)
20. Herthe Kluge-Pott, *Man's Planet*, 1967 (colour etching and aquatint)
21. Udo Sellbach, from *The Target is Man*, (etching and aquatint)
22. Udo Sellbach from *The Target is Man*, (etching and aquatint)
23. Udo Sellbach from *The Target is Man*, (etching and aquatint)
24. Udo Sellbach from *The Target is Man*, (etching and aquatint)
25. Udo Sellbach from *The Target is Man*, (etching and aquatint)
26. Barbara Hanrahan, *Adam*, 1964-67 (etching, sugar-lift aquatint, fould bite.)
- 27 Barbara Hanrahan, *Eve*, 1967 (?) (linocut)
- 28-30 The Broadsheet, (Screen printed poster), various artists 1967 – 8
31. Munakata from *The Ten Bodhisatvas*, woodblock (NGV)
32. Munakata from *The Ten Bodhisatvas*, woodblock (NGV)
- *33 George Baldessin, *Personage with striped Dress (11)*, (Etching and aquatint)
34. Fred Williams, *Performer* (etching and aquatint)
35. George Baldessin *Dancer*, 1963 (etching and aquatint)
- 36 George Baldessin, *The Ultimate Death of EM*, 1964 (etching and aquatint)
- 37 George Baldessin, *Banquet for No Eating*, 1971 (etching and aquatint)
38. George Baldessin, *City Sky with Factory Smoke*, 1972 (etching and aquatint)
39. George Baldessin, *MM of Rue St Denis*, 1978 (drawing)
40. John Brack (etching and aquatint)
- 41 John Brack (etching and aquatint)
- 42 Fred Williams, *Upwey landscape*, 1962 (etching and aquatint)
- 43 Fred Williams, *Upwey landscape*, 1962-4 (etching and aquatint)
- *44. Fred Williams, *Forest of gum trees*, 1965-66 (etching)
- 45 Antoni Tàpies (lithograph)
46. Hideo Hagiwara, *White Fantasy (1)*, 1962 (colour woodcut and mixed techniques)
47. Hideo Hagiwara, *White Fantasy (2)*, 1962 (colour woodcut and embossing)
48. Allan Mitelman, *Cards*, 1969 (colour Lithograph)
49. Allan Mitelman, untitled, 1970 (lithograph)
- 50 Allan Mitelman, *S.T.* 1971 (lithograph)
- 51 Fred Williams, *Circular Hillside Landscape*, (etching and aquatint)
52. John Olsen, *The Aquarium*, 1973 (lithograph, 3 colours)
- 53 Roger Kemp, *Relativity*, 1972 (etching)
54. Roger Kemp, *Horizontal twelve*, c.1974-6 (etching and drypoint),
- *55. Roger Kemp, *Horizontal six*, c.1972 (etching)
57. Jan Senbergs, *Hill*, 1970 (colour screenprint)
- *58. Jan Senbergs, *We're Moving*, 1971 (colour screenprint)
59. Jan Senbergs, *Structure with black peaks*, 1973 (print/painting)
60. Petr Herel, *Etre devenant dans le devenir de chute*, 1974 (etching and aquatint)
61. Graeme Peebles, *The remnants of the last supper*, 1981 (mezzotint, etching and aquatint)
62. Graeme Peebles, *Wilson's Prom*, 1984 (mezzotint)

NB. Your greatest resource is the Print Room at the AGNSW (Senior Curator Hendrik Kolenberg)

Bibliography:

Hendrik Kolenberg, & Anne Ryan. *Australian Prints in the Gallery's Collection*, Sydney 1998, Art Gallery of New South Wales.
Imprint (Quarterly Journal of the Print Council of Australia – commenced publication in 1966)
 Coppel, S, *Out of Australia. Prints and Drawings from Sidney Nolan to Rover Thomas*, London 2011, British Museum Press
 Zimmer, J Ed. *The Crossley Gallery 1966- 1980*, Macmillan, Melbourne 2003
 Roger Butler, 3rd Vol to be published *Printed*, Canberra National Gallery of Australia



Earle Backen, *Black Structure*, 1963 (etching, engraving, aquatint)



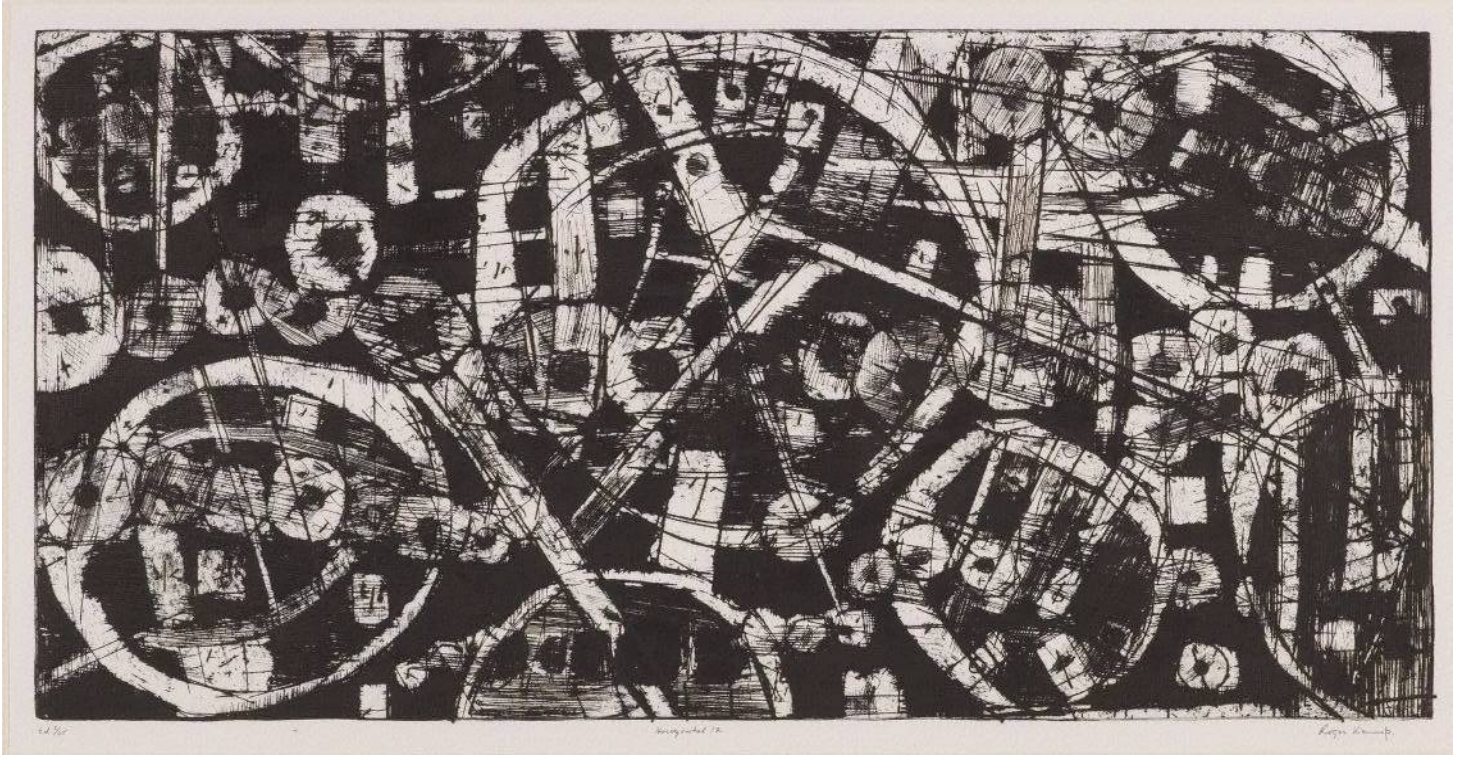
Tate Adams, *Clown*, 1962 (colour linocut)



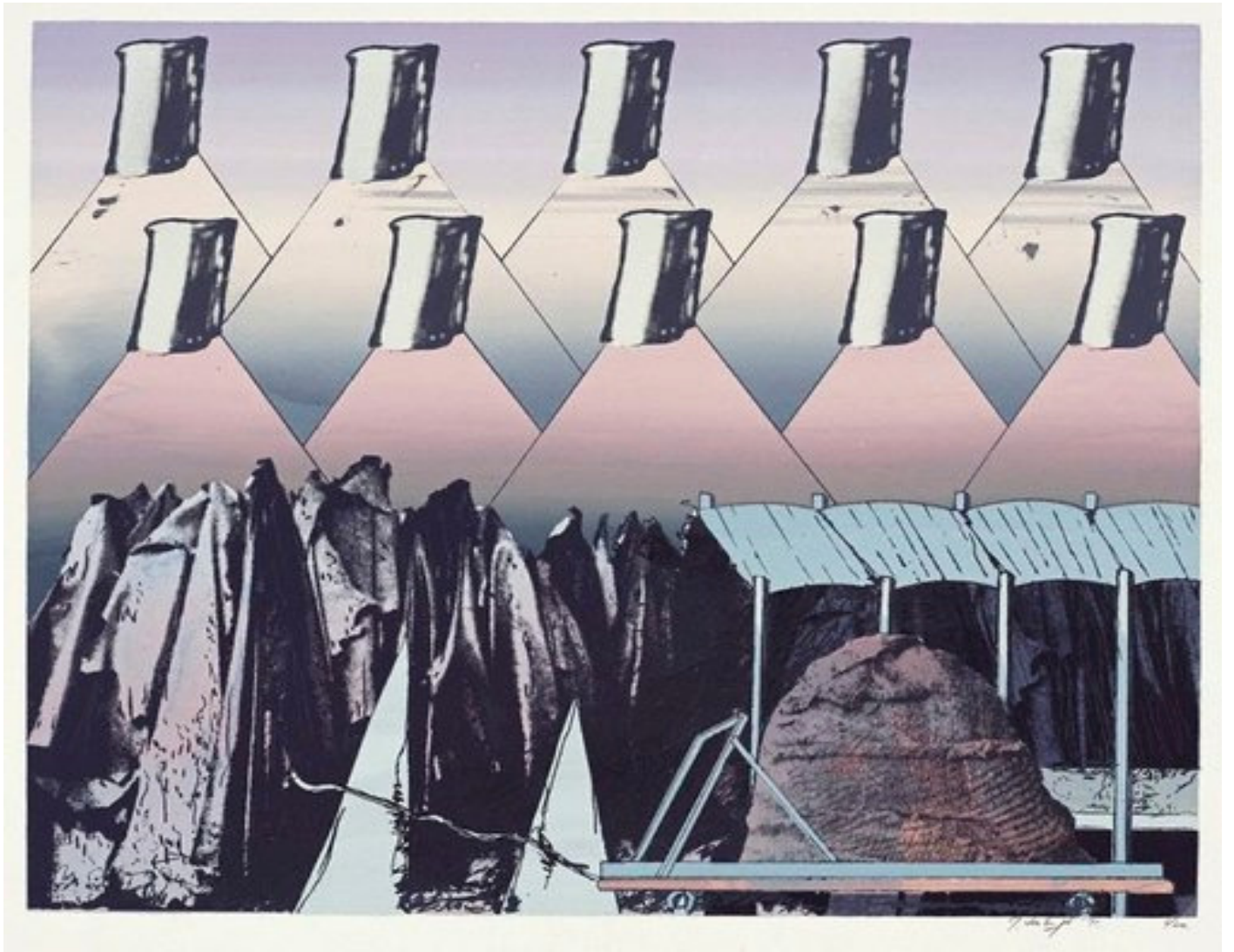
George Baldessin, *Personage with striped Dress* (11), (Etching and aquatint)



Fred Williams, *Forest of gum trees*, 1965-66 (etching)



Roger Kemp, Horizontal six, c.1972 (etching)



Jan Senbergs, *We're Moving*, 1971 (colour screenprint)