



BRETT WHITELEY

9 SHADES OF WHITELEY

ART
GALLERY
NSW

Education Kit

www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education

Brett Whiteley Studio 2 December 2006 – 29 April 2007

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EDUCATION KIT OUTLINE

This education kit highlights key works and themes from the exhibition *9 Shades of Whiteley*. The kit aims to provide a context for using the works and exhibition as a resource for K–6 and 7–12 education audiences. It may be used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition or as pre-visit or post-visit resource material.

The kit has been written with reference to the NSW visual arts syllabus. It specifically targets teacher and student audiences but may also be of interest to a general audience.

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Education kit coordination: Alec George, coordinator Brett Whiteley Studio

Essay: Barry Pearce, head curator of Australian art

Commentary: compiled from text by Barry Pearce and Alec George

K–6 Looking and making activities and 7–12 Framing questions: Danielle Gullotta,

coordinator K–6 programs; Leeanne Carr, coordinator secondary school and

Asian education programs; Victoria Collings, coordinator K–6 & family programs;

Tristan Sharp, senior coordinator education programs; and Alec George

Editor: Jennifer Blunden

Design: Karen Hancock

Additional content from original kit written by Jo Foster, Liz Gibson, Jennifer Keeler-Milne, Barbara Konkolowicz and Nike Savvas.

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Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney 2000 Australia

pp@ag.nsw.gov.au

www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education

www.brettwhiteley.org

Cover: *Far North Queensland – Port Douglas* 1992

oil, earth, charcoal, collage on plywood

183.5 x 198 cm board; 185 x 200 x 4 cm frame

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Brett Whiteley Studio

2 Raper Street, Surry Hills, Sydney Australia

www.brettwhiteley.org

SECTION 1

BRETT WHITELEY

9 SHADES OF WHITELEY



Brett Whiteley Studio (upstairs)

I hardly ever see my paintings around. I don't have the faintest idea where half of my life's work is. Sometimes that worries me. We should have a museum specially built for retrospectives. It would be ten feet wide and a mile long, like a railway tunnel, and you could walk down someone's life chronologically ...

BRETT WHITELEY Interview with Rudi Krausmann 1975 in McGrath 1995, p 214

This has been my secret, strange and abnormally mystical ambition to sit alone ... to retire entirely from everything and everyone that is important – and allow my understanding (or maybe it's my misunderstanding) of how environment can mould, shape or even stain the personality of a genius.

BRETT WHITELEY in Pearce 1995, p 15

... art was as much an essential of life as life was an essential of art. It was a creed rich in opportunity for an artist devoted to the exploitation of the human figure, just as he was devoted to the exploitation of the human opportunity in life.

EDMUND CAPON, director Art Gallery of New South Wales, in Pearce 1995, p 7

Introduction

One of Australia's most celebrated artists of the 20th century, Brett Whiteley was an intense and prolific practitioner who worked across an impressive spectrum of media. He was a draughtsman, printmaker, sculptor and writer, but ultimately flourished best at that which '... in his deepest conscience [he] most cared about: being a painter.'¹

The exhibition *9 Shades of Whiteley*, held in Whiteley's last home and studio, is a chronological artistic journey. It is a mini-retrospective tracing Whiteley's life and career, from his earliest work in 1955, *Self portrait at sixteen*, to *Far North Queensland – Port Douglas*, painted in 1992, just a few months before his death. The exhibition includes nine phases of his art: early works, abstraction, bathroom series, Christie and London Zoo series, Lavender Bay, portraits, birds, landscapes and late works. This astonishing body of work displays all the dexterity, imagination and ambition of a prodigious talent.

A foundational moment in this journey occurred while Whiteley was boarding at Scots College in Bathurst, New South Wales, when, one Sunday, he found a book on van Gogh at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church:

I picked the book up and studied it – it completely changed my way of seeing. The immediate effect was a heightening of reality in that everything I looked at took on an intensity ... That morning returning to school by bus, I remember the poplar trees were bare for winter ... but it took me years to paint what I saw. I remember having this very, very powerful sense that my destiny was to completely give myself to painting – that I would be a painter and it was a remarkable moment of knowing that.²

Whiteley won his first major prize at the age of 20, the Italian Travelling Art Scholarship, awarded by Sir Russell Drysdale. Three of the paintings that Whiteley submitted for the award are on display: *Sofala* 1958, *July painting* c1959 and *Dixon Street* 1959. The scholarship enabled Whiteley to travel to Europe and experience first-hand much of the art he had only seen in reproduction. His extended period overseas is represented with several works including *Woman in bath* 1964, *Chimpanzee* 1965, *Christie* 1965 and *Fiji* 1969.

Inspired by Matisse and his superb *The red studio* 1911, Whiteley produced *The balcony 2* 1975, in which he flattened the picture plane, saturated it with ultramarine blue and shifted the horizon line beyond the edge to allow the viewer to experience, with a kind of symphonic expansion, the natural beauty of Sydney Harbour, his home. The following year he painted *Self-portrait in the studio*, which went on to win the Archibald Prize.

Whiteley won the prestigious Archibald Prize for portraiture twice, the second two years later with his much-admired and confronting *Art, life and the other thing* 1978, which candidly examines the problem of drug addiction and the creative process. Both works are included here.



Self portrait at sixteen 1955, oil on board

Whiteley once said in an interview:

I hardly ever see my paintings around. I don't have the faintest idea where half of my life's work is. Sometimes that worries me. We should have a museum specially built for retrospectives. It would be ten feet wide and a mile long, like a railway tunnel, and you could walk down someone's life chronologically ...³

¹ Pearce 1995, p 40

² From *Difficult pleasure* 2006

³ Interview with Rudi Krausmann 1975 in McGrath 1995, p 214

Brett Whiteley: 9 shades

Of all the Australian painters who emerged during the mid 20th century, when Australian art first began to exude a collective smell of uniqueness internationally, Brett Whiteley was the most mercurial, the most ambitious to make an impact on the world at large. On the eve of his departure from Sydney in early 1960 at the age of 21, he had gathered his research and ideas about being a painter – and was poised to explore not only the techniques but also the very nature of charisma in his artistic heroes. This he did with a relentless poetic passion, noting upon arrival in Montparnasse, Paris:

I am now in Modigliani's country. This has been my secret, strange and abnormally mystical ambition to sit alone ... to retire entirely from everything and everyone that is important – and allow my understanding (or maybe it's my misunderstanding) of how environment can mould, shape or even stain the personality of a genius.¹

Whiteley had grown up in Longueville, a quiet suburb on the northern shores of Sydney Harbour during the 1940s and '50s, and it seems indeed that, at a very young age, Whiteley had become fascinated almost as much by the fame of art as by its making. For a time his father was involved in the reproduction of paintings, and William Dobell, a local art 'god', visited the house, demonstrating to the boy how to execute the dry-brush technique. Soon after, he discovered the work of another luminary, Lloyd Rees, who lived not too far from Longueville. Whiteley wrote to his mother from boarding school asking her to find him a second-hand easel, as well as books on the works of Augustus John and Jacob Epstein. His appetite became insatiable. He wanted to know how certain artists, be they William Dobell, Lloyd Rees, Vincent van Gogh or any number of others, had seen their subjects and turned them into the materials of drawing and painting. And, perhaps most eagerly, what it was that made those artists shine above the rest.

As his career developed, Whiteley's interest in the dynamics of fame was to repeatedly get him into trouble with critics. But the battle between hype and its antithetical reaction, as he planned his exhibitions with shrewd calculation of their public impact over some three decades, tended to obscure his real achievement. For underneath all the fuss of the publicity which surrounded him was a hard-working painter of tenacious dedication and sensitivity. In later years his drawings could become flashy and his paintings vulgar, but his work always reflected a fierce loyalty to the great traditions of drawing and painting which had come to his attention from the very outset of his career. From those traditions he snared what he needed: from Australia and Europe; and from the cultures of the East as well as the West.

Whiteley's contemporary Michael Johnson recalled the earnestness with which they both in the 1950s – then adolescent artists employed by the advertising agency Lintas – scoured the art classes and sketch clubs of Sydney: up and down George Street, from the Julian Ashton School in The Rocks to Central Station, over to the National Art School in Darlinghurst, and across the harbour to the Northwood group. They looked



Whiteley in Melbury Road studio, London 1962. Photo: Axel Poignant

for the harbour motifs of Rees and the street scenes of Sali Herman. They conjured up the palette and landscape forms of Russell Drysdale and of the gold-mining towns of Sofala and Hill End, and painted misfits in the charity soup kitchen as they might have been evoked by Dobell with Modigliani and Picasso hovering over his shoulder. Beckoned by the international art scene, they studied reproductions of modern and old masters in libraries and in Carl Plate's Notanda Gallery bookshop, where not just a few postcards disappeared into their pockets. They were learning the folklore as well as the skills of their future vocation.

After he arrived in Italy on a travelling scholarship in 1960, Whiteley harvested artistic inspiration from museums, galleries and churches. In London he produced a series of abstractions with which he strutted the world stage. One of the finest of these paintings was bought by the Tate Gallery, making Whiteley the youngest artist to enter the collection in the Tate's entire history. *Untitled red painting* 1961 glows with the colours of Australian earth and at the same time reflects Whiteley's early admiration for the British painter William Scott, whose abstract compositions derived from table-top still lifes, reinforced the younger Whiteley's passionate interest in shapes, edges and daring proportion on the picture plane. Adding erotic overtones from Arshile Gorky, Whiteley put into his youthful masterpiece most of the basic elements of his pictorial agenda to come. His command of them reached full pitch years later in paintings such as the Sydney Harbour-inspired *The balcony 2* 1975, where he was able to create at his best in landscapes on a large scale an extraordinary symphonic radiance.

Bedecked by a fear of stagnating, Whiteley moved from his early 1960s abstraction into a bathroom series, celebrating the sensuality of his wife Wendy's body, extolling the curve not as a product of reductive geometry, or even human movement, but quite simply as the coefficient of sexual desire. Sexual desire of course had its dark side, and Whiteley developed (stimulated not a little by a sense of competition with Francis Bacon) a series

based on the English necrophile murderer John Christie. These were macabre but strangely thrilling pictures, their dense indigo- purple backgrounds contrasted with the sumptuous flesh of violated female bodies. The swerve into something discordant with the mood of his most recent work became a conscious habit, a toying with opposites, and one which began at once to tantalise and disturb the art commentators of his day.

In 1965 Robert Hughes wrote in the *Bulletin*:

Every painting of Whiteley's is a roll in the hay with the muse of art history: as soon as an issue about the nature of art or perception was raised by another painter – Gorky, de Kooning, Bacon, Giacometti, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Piero della Francesca, Uccello, Masaccio – Whiteley was into it, either painting his way through it or arguing it out ... Like Arshile Gorky, with whose early years Whiteley's have much in common, his outstanding act as a painter is the decision not to be original – not to narrow his style into the crippling uniqueness of a trademark, but to keep it open, and to preserve the flow of ideas between his art environment and his own experience.²

At about this time Whiteley made a brief visit back to Australia. He had won prizes, been included in international surveys and was being talked about as one of the cream of young painters working both in England and in his country of birth. Inevitably, he wanted to try his hand in America, and on the strength of a Harkness Fellowship set sail from London to New York in 1967. He and Wendy, with daughter Arkie in tow, headed straight for the notorious Chelsea Hotel. Whiteley was now one of the Marlborough stable, and it seemed that his conquest of the international scene would be complete. Yet it was not quite to be.

The energy of New York intoxicated him. But he also felt its destructiveness, and his reading of the milieu was an infatuation that soon turned sour. America was then an agonised cauldron of change: old values were challenged by new; edifices of political power and ideology were undermined by protests and assassinations; alternative lifestyles were promoted by the writers and poets of the beat generation. The Vietnam War was at its worst and lines of battle were drawn between Americans themselves. Whiteley's first reaction to New York was to see it as a big piece of living sculpture, punctured by flashes of yellow, the colour of optimism and madness. But he soon began to fear America: its internecine violence and its potential to ruin the soul. Most of all, however, he hated its indifference to cultures outside its own boundaries. It was, to his amazement, provincial.

As he laboured to fit into a cultural pattern with which he felt uncomfortable, Whiteley's focus in New York showed signs of dissipation. Reviewers were good-natured about the apparent moral consistency of his political messages, written, printed or collaged with calculated irony, and admired especially his drawings of copulating couples. But unfortunately the tenuous combinations of material, including fibreglass, oil paint, photography, electric lights, steel, barbed wire and, in one instance, rice and a hand-grenade, consigned a good number of his works of this period to oblivion. His American interlude came to a spectacular end

with the creation of the vast multi-panelled *The American dream* 1969. This work, which his dealer refused to exhibit, proclaimed his anger and frustration, born partly of his futile ambition to change society which he saw descending into insanity, and partly of his domestic life. Drugs and alcohol may have offered the promise of perceptual enhancement – although he was still a few years from serious heroin usage – but already their influence shadowed his existence.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Whiteley's period in America was his development of persona, or more aptly, heroic alter-ego paintings, which he continued after his return to Australia at the end of 1969 following a brief but calamitous stay in Fiji. In New York he had constructed a composition on the theme of van Gogh, depicting a floating head, copied from a self-portrait of the Dutch painter, connected by a serpentine blood track to an open razor. Zoom lines linked the head to Arles landscape drawing, and a collaged, double-headed arrow pointed to the words 'life' and 'art' in symmetric opposition. Sometimes this strategy of symbolic homage worked, and sometimes it was prosaic: an obvious illustrative device which could border on cliché. But he was determined to push on with the genre.

Hence Whiteley returned to Australia carrying a baggage of interests in cultural personae from Europe and America – Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Gauguin, Brendan Behan, Bob Dylan – around which he constructed hugely ambitious drawings and paintings. It may be that these works are ultimately most fascinating for the questions they raise about Whiteley's regard of himself. Why did he need to declare such a pronounced interest in these luminaries of art, literature and popular music? Envy? Did he feel some sense of self-dissatisfaction deep within? Some of his hero portraits he destroyed to give birth to far more engaging creations. For example, one based on the Japanese revolutionary writer Yukio Mishima was turned into *Alchemy* 1972–73, another vast, multi-panelled painting like *The American dream* which explored nothing less than the artist's entire psychic and biological life to the moment transmuted into art. References to other artists abound in these homages, but it must be said in his favour that Whiteley never denied his influences. As artist Lee Krasner said of him earlier: 'When he sees a painter he admires, he meets his work head on, and paints through the middle of it'.³ In attempting to project the charisma of a host of famous personalities, most of whom he considered shared his addictive nature, he was in fact constructing and exploring his own alter-ego through much the same process.

The last two decades of Whiteley's career in Australia until his sad, isolated death in a motel room on the south coast of New South Wales in 1992 begs a summary free of the hype and controversy which pursued him. It is not an easy task. The simplest way might be to edit Whiteley to his classic paintings of landscapes and figures: his seductive arabesque from early abstraction; his bathroom and Christie pictures; the landscapes of Fiji with their exuberant vegetation and brilliant birds; the perfume-soaked colours of his Lavender Bay paintings of

nudes and Sydney Harbour; his birds and landscapes drawn and painted around the countryside of New South Wales and Queensland; and finally his drawings of Paris, made in 1989 three years before his death. In pure landscape genre particularly, Whiteley reached the most intense level of ecstasy it seemed conceivable, and even then yearned to go beyond. Just before Paris, he wrote with a sense that he had never quite reached far enough:

I am determined to crush a coloured picture from that area within me that is game and wild and intoxicated – I want a garden that is a smear of Cambodian lipstick, green and mauves and lettuce green and magenta purple and ultramarine and arctic pale blue with yellow and orange and cadmium yellow against apple green and baby pink apricots ... Can I do it?⁴

But this would be incomplete. For Whiteley aimed to put pain and discordancy into his work too. He made constructions which broke as much as embraced the aesthetic of Matisse, whose *The red studio* 1911, not to mention Gauguin's *The yellow Christ* 1889, Whiteley kept in his mind's eye like a mystical lighthouse. He did not want to be seen as merely a soft-centred lyricist. Something in him wanted to be a bad boy, a larrikin who might scratch the minds of his audience out of their complacency. In doing so he laid himself open to the charge of gimmickry: he built a piece of sculpture out of a shark's jaw; made an owl out of a beach thong; painted a work on the theme of van Gogh with a stretcher thrusting out from the picture, a little electric light, and masses of white pigment as if vomited onto the canvas; and he painted a self-portrait showing himself as a simian beast ravaged and savaged by heroin.

It is difficult to reconcile his sometimes shocking, sometimes crass, and occasionally ill-conceived projects with such paintings as *River at Marulan* 1976, or *Summer at Carcoar* 1977, and the most beautiful of his bird paintings, whose languorous movement and luminous colour speak of an artist with a joyous love of nature and its seasons. It is even more difficult to do so with the drawings of birds, animals, landscapes and the human figure made with a humour and tenderness that could almost meet on equal terms the Asian artists he so admired. But reconcile we must, because it was Whiteley's conviction that every imaginable mood conjured its opposite, and to him that state of affairs was an inevitable contract between art and life.

Barry Pearce
Head curator of Australian art

- 1 Artist's notebook 1960–61, private collection, quoted in Pearce 1995, p15
- 2 Robert Hughes, 'The Shirley Temple of English art? Brett Whiteley's splash in the mainstream' *The Bulletin*, (Sydney), 18 Dec 1965
- 3 Lee Krasner quoted in Hughes 1965
- 4 This statement, dated 3 March 1989, was one of several written by Whiteley in preparation for Don Featherstone's film on him entitled *Difficult pleasure*.



Whiteley in his studio at Reiby Place, Circular Quay, Sydney 1981
Photo: Graham McCarter

Biography

1939

Born 7 April, Sydney, Australia. Grew up at 18 Lucretia Avenue, Longueville.

1946

Won first art competition: annual RSPCA exhibition at Farmer's Blaxland Gallery for *The driver sits in the shade but what about the horse?*

1948

Sent to boarding school at Scots College, Bathurst.

1954

Saw Lloyd Rees's European paintings exhibition at Macquarie Galleries, Sydney. Briefly attended Scots College, Sydney 1954–55.

1956 Awarded first prize, Young Painters' Section, Bathurst Show, New South Wales. Left school mid-year, and worked in Sydney for Lintas Advertising Agency in the layout and commercial art department. His mother Beryl Whiteley left Australia for London.

1956–59

Met Wendy Julius, who was attending the National Art School in East Sydney, where Whiteley and Michael Johnson occasionally drew at the life drawing class. Sometimes attended sketch clubs such as John Santry's sketch club (also frequented by Lloyd Rees) on Thursday nights. Used the glasshouse at his home in Longueville as a studio. Sporadically attended life drawing at Julian Ashton Art School. Painted on weekends around Bathurst, Sofala, Hill End and the south coast of New South Wales. Painted at Sydney Soup Kitchen and night refuge.

1959

Encouraged by Australian artist William Pidgeon, left Lintas in August to paint works for the Italian scholarship. In November awarded Italian Government Travelling Art Scholarship for 1960, judged by Sir Russell Drysdale at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Whiteley submitted four paintings: *Sofala*, *Dixon Street*, *July painting* and *Around Bathurst* – the painting that won him the scholarship.

1960

Arrived on 25 February in Naples on board the *Fairstar*. Spent March to May in Rome and Florence. Had an apartment

in Rome near the Spanish Steps with his mother Beryl. Visited Australian sculptor Stephen Walker, recipient of the same Italian scholarship, in Florence, and found a studio in the same building.

Brief visits to Paris and London. While in London took portfolio around galleries and was selected for a group show by McRoberts and Tunnard. On 14 June met Wendy in Paris and after two weeks returned to Florence studio. From 20 July to 1 September exhibited in group show at McRoberts and Tunnard Gallery, London, with Tadashi Sato, Douglas Swan and Philip Weichberger.

Sold three gouaches for £18 and one reserved at £9. Travelled throughout Italy, including to Siena and Arezzo. Haunted the Uffizi Gallery immersed in work by artists of the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly Cimabue, Duccio and Piero della Francesca. In August spent three days in Venice to see the Biennale with Michael Johnson, visiting Morandi in Grizzana.

In November moved to London, 129 Ladbroke Grove W11, where Michael Johnson was already living. In December met British painters William Scott and Roger Hilton and other Australian artists then in London, including Arthur Boyd and John Passmore. Met Bryan Robertson director of Whitechapel Gallery. Included in *Survey of recent Australian painting* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, from which *Untitled red painting* was purchased by the Tate Gallery.

1962

Solo exhibition 9–31 March, *Paintings and gouaches*, Matthieson Gallery, London. Exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and travelled in Holland with Australian artist Lawrence Daws. Exhibited at the Berlin World Fair in the Stuyvesant Collection, then travelled to Baden-Baden, Stuttgart and to Venice for the biennale.

Married Wendy Julius on 27 March at Chelsea Registry Office, London. From April to September travelled through Europe with his father, Clem, visiting Rome, Paris, Barcelona and the Hautes-Pyrénées, where they stayed with American painter George Sheridan. Clem returned to Australia (the last time

Whiteley saw his father). With friend Wendy Paramour, the Whiteleys spent five months in the south of France in old farm houses at Sigean and travelled to Spain and Germany.

In October travelled to the United States, visiting New York, Connecticut and Washington. Met de Kooning. Returned to London in November and moved into 13 Pembridge Crescent.

1963

Spent six and a half months completing *Summer at Sigean*. Afterwards commenced the bathroom series. Work selected for *Australian painting* exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London, and *British painting in the '60s*, which opened at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, before touring Great Britain and Switzerland.

April in France. On 3 May Clem Whiteley died aged 55. *Australian group show*, Marlborough Gallery, London. Exhibited with Lawrence Daws, Jack Carrington Smith and Keith Vaughan at The National Gallery of Rhodesia, Africa. From 15 November to 22 December exhibited in the Dunn International, Fredericton, Canada, and Tate Gallery, London. In December moved to Holman Hunt's old studio at 18A Melbury Road, London.

1964

Awarded International Drawings Prize for *Bather and heater* 1964, Internationale der Zeichnung, Darmstadt, Germany.

Awarded travel grant from the Stuyvesant Foundation. Awarded Perth Festival Art Prize, Australia. From March to May exhibited in *The new generation* 1964, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, with *Woman in a bath* 5 1963–64, *Bather and mirror* 1964, *Figure at the basin* 1963 and *Sketch for large mirror painting* 1964. From May to June travelled to Deya, Majorca. Three works exhibited in *Documenta III*, Kassel, Germany: *Bather and mirror* 1964, *Woman washing her face* 1964 and *Woman sitting on side of bath* 1963. Daughter Arkie born on 6 November at St George's Hospital, London.

1965

Exhibited in Australia, France, Belgium and Italy. *Treasures from the Commonwealth*, Commonwealth Festival Exhibition,

Burlington House, London. From June to July travelled to Deya, Majorca. November to December exhibited *Untitled dark painting* 1963, and *Christie and Hectorina McLennan* 1964 in *The English eye*, Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York. Exhibited in group show *Marlborough Prints*, at Marlborough New London Gallery, London. Awarded T E Wardle Invitation Art Prize, Perth, Australia. In December returned to Australia for the summer, staying at Whale Beach, north of Sydney.

1966

In February included in a group show with David Hockney and Arthur Boyd. Exhibited at Clune Galleries, Sydney, with *The zoo graphics*. From 10 March to 16 April exhibition of the Mertz Collection, *The Australian painters 1964–1966* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC, USA: *Woman in bath* 1964, *The boxing match* 1965, *Cheetah in Rillington Place* 1964 and *Head of Christie* 1964. From 6 April to 22 May exhibited in *British graphics* at Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Exhibited in group show *Marlborough graphics*, Marlborough New London Gallery, London. Returned to London via Calcutta mid-year. Work selected for exhibition at Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

1967

Exhibited at Pittsburgh International Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, USA, and awarded Harkness Foundation Scholarship. May to June travelled in Majorca, Tangier and Madrid before sailing on the *Queen Mary* to New York in September. Moved into a penthouse apartment at the Chelsea Hotel. *Australian group exhibition*, Whitechapel Gallery, London.

1969

In July fled New York for Fiji and lived in a bure at Navutuleva, about 72km along the coast from Suva. Spent five months in Fiji. Group show at Cunard-Marlborough Gallery (on board the *Queen Elizabeth II* for its maiden voyage). Fined £F50 in Suva for possession of a drug. Returned in November to Australia, moving to Lavender Bay, Sydney.

1970–72

Involved with The Yellow House artist's community in Potts Point, Sydney.

1971

From 9–18 November showed in group exhibition *The bonsai show*, Australian Galleries, Melbourne. Rented Gasworks studio in Waverton, Sydney.

1972

In February began work on *Alchemy*. Exhibited in *Australian painters and tapestries of the past 20 years*, New South Wales House, London.

1973

In January completed work *Alchemy*. Exhibited *Alchemy* at Bonython Gallery, Sydney. In June travelled to Mauritius and Kenya.

1974

'Moved from alcohol to more serious mind altering chemicals', quote from interview with Philip Adams. Exhibited at The World Expo, Spokane, Washington, USA.

1975

Awarded Sir William Anglis Memorial Art Prize, Melbourne. Included in *Australian painting* exhibition, People's Republic of China. Moved from Gasworks studio in Waverton to downstairs in Lavender Bay house.

1976

Archibald Prize for *Self portrait in the studio* 1976. Sir John Sulman Prize for *Interior with time past* 1976 (genre painting).

1977

Wynne Prize for *The jacaranda tree (on Sydney Harbour)* 1977. March to April in London. In August stayed with Joel Elenberg at Arthur Boyd's Italian house, Casa Paletaio, in Pisa. Travelled to Venice, Florence and Rome.

1978

Archibald Prize for *Art, life and the other thing* 1978. Wynne Prize for *Summer at Carcoar* 1977. Sir John Sulman Prize for *Yellow nude* 1978. In June travelled to Bali. August in New Caledonia and back to Bali in September. Exhibited four works at Cologne International Art Fair.

1979

Joel Elenberg shared studio with Whiteley in Lavender Bay.

1980

June to September in Bali with Joel Elenberg and his family, Anna and Zahava, until Elenberg's death.

1981

Moved to studio in Reiby Place, Circular Quay. November in Vanuatu.

1982

Travelled to Spain, Germany, France. Returning to Australia, stopped in Rome to work with Walter Rossi on three etchings at Vigna Antoniniana, Rome.

1983

Travelled to Central Australia in the summer with Michael Driscoll and worked on the publication *Native rose*.

1984

Awarded Wynne Prize for *South coast after the rain* 1984. July in London.

1985

Purchased an old T shirt factory in Surry Hills, Sydney, and converted it into a studio. Travelled to London in May; Wendy remained in England.

1986

Travelled to India to meet Wendy in Bombay and returned to Australia together.

1987

Travelled to London with Wendy. Wendy remained in London.

1989

Divorced from Wendy. May to August in London and Morocco, spending two months in Paris in an apartment on Rue de Tournon. Travelled for five weeks in Bali, Tokyo and Kyoto with Janice Spencer. October in Byron Bay, New South Wales.

1991

Awarded Order of Australia (General Division) on June 10.

1992

Died at Thirroul, New South Wales, 15 June.

Glossary

Abstraction art that does not portray a physical likeness or representation of the real or imagined world. Instead, abstract art tends to use colour and form in a non-representational or subjective way.

Aesthetics pertaining to perception by the senses. Aesthetics in art refers to the artist's creative skills and to the audience's consideration of the finer aspects of art.

Alchemy the ancient tradition of sacred chemistry, in particular of attempting to convert base metals into gold.

Arabesque a scrolling or interlacing plant form, the most typical motif of Islamic ornamentation.

Autobiography a person's own life story written by that person.

Background area in a painting that appears in the distance.

Body of work series of artworks produced by an artist over a period of time.

Byzantine a general term to describe art during the medieval period that preceded the Renaissance. It was an art of stylisation which was also ritualistic.

Collage a work made from the assemblage of different materials, such as photographic images, newspaper cuttings and fabric into one whole form. Collage became an accepted artistic technique in the early 20th century with the production of various printed publications.

Calligraphy is the art of handwriting. In China and Japan the practice of calligraphy with brush and ink is one of the three perfections (calligraphy, painting and poetry).

Composition the plan and arrangement of the elements in a work.

Curator preserves and cares for artistic, historic or cultural items in a collection, gallery or museum.

Distortion pulling or twisting out of shape.

Figurative a drawing or painting of something recognisable rather than an abstract rendering.

Foreshortening a way of representing an object so that it conveys the illusion of depth – so that it seems to thrust forward or go back into space

Foreground the area in a painting that seems closest to the viewer.

Gaze the projected view of a figure; who or what they are looking at.

Gesture significant movement of the body, calculated or spontaneous.

Illustrative to make clear with pictures.

Landscape a piece of land-based scenery. Landscape art is the artistic depiction of landscape scenery.

Homage is a reference to someone within an artistic work. In this sense, homage is the artist's recognition of this person's influence on them.

Larrikin someone who is irreverent or mocking of authority.

Metamorphosis a transformation from one state of being to another.

Mixed media the use of a variety of media in an artwork.

Perspective the accurate representation of distance or depth as viewed by the human eye.

Portrait a painting, photograph or other artistic representation of a person.

Portfolio a selection of an artist's work to highlight their skills and strengths.

Pose position in which the body is held in place without moving.

Reductive taken back to the basics.

Renaissance a revival of cultural production and learning that took place in Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly in Italy. The period was characterised by a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman art and design, and included an emphasis on the environment, science, art and philosophy.

Retrospective the specific selection of artworks for an exhibition of an artist's career.

Reproductions printed or digital copies of original artworks, as found in art books or on the web.

Scholarship financial support for education, often made by an institution on the basis of academic or artistic merit.

Self-portrait the representation of yourself in a work of art.

Still life a work of art depicting inanimate subject matter, both natural (eg, flowers, fruit) or made (cups, vases) objects.

Studio the workroom of an artist, such as a painter, sculptor or photographer.

Style a characteristic way or technique of producing things, especially a work of art.

Traditions the principles held and generally followed by any branch of art or literature acquired from and handed down by experience and practice.

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