

PAST AND PRESENT:

Celebrating 60 years of the QUT Art Collection

EDUCATION KIT

Introduction:

Established in 1945, the QUT Art Collection has a long tradition of enriching the University's artistic life, its teaching, and research opportunities. Now sixty years old and entering upon a fresh phase of development embracing new media, the collection offers a unique cultural experience for students, staff and the community alike.

Past and Present marks the collection's sixtieth anniversary by presenting two exhibitions: *Foresight: The Genesis of the Collection*, covers the early years of collecting from 1945 to 1954 and focuses on Australian art of the first half of the twentieth century through media representative of the period, namely drawings, oil paintings, prints and watercolours. To complement this exhibition *The Recent Past: Contemporary Acquisitions* encompasses the period from 1995 to 2004 and highlights the diversity in contemporary Australian art through the varied cultural backgrounds of the artists and the distinct themes and issues represented.

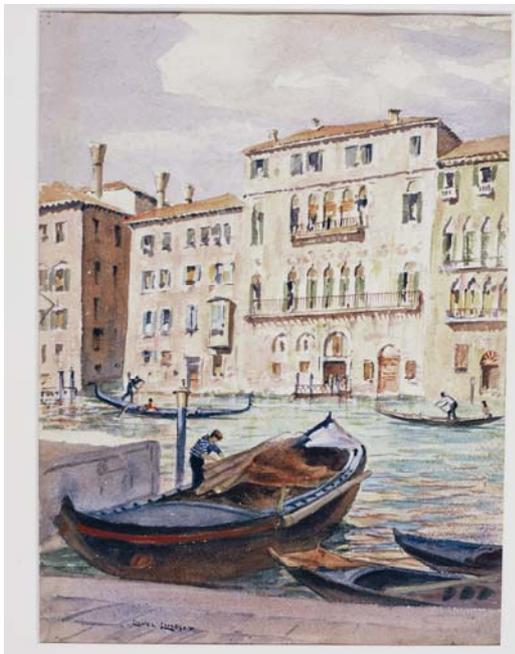
By surveying two contrasting periods of collecting, we hope to show that the 'art of collecting' essentially remains a timeless endeavour, consistently driven by cultural imperatives and processes and reflecting a community's values and spirit.

FORESIGHT: The Genesis of the Collection 1945-54

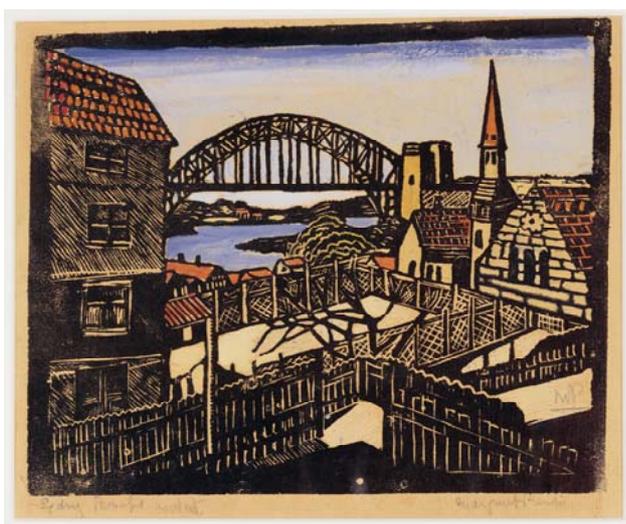
In 1945 an art collection was established by the Queensland Teachers' Training College (now forming part of QUT's Kelvin Grove campus). The founders foresaw the benefits of creating an art collection as a teaching resource. Funds for the establishment of the Collection were meagre. As a result various artists from around Australia were asked to donate a work of art to the College, and students donated funds to annually purchase artworks. Several artists generously responded and the QUT Art Collection was born. This handful of artworks were the genesis of the QUT Art Collection and from these humble beginnings the Collection has evolved over a 60 year period to boast some 2,000 works.

Works of art by notable Australian artists, with a focus on Queensland, form the core of the Collection. While the acquisition program now focuses on more contemporary work, when an appropriate opportunity arises we cast an eye back to the Collection's origins and consider works from earlier days in Australia's artistic legacy.

Selection of works from *Foresight: The Genesis of the Collection 1945-1954*



Lionel Lindsay 1874-1961
Ca' da Mosto, Grand Canal, Venice c1929
(39 x 28.5 cm)
Watercolour
George Daughtrey Bequest Fund, 1963



Margaret Preston 1875-1963
The Bridge from North Shore c1932
(23 x 25.5cm)
Hand-coloured woodblock print
Gift of Mary Corkery, 1945

Both Margaret Preston and Lionel Lindsay have focussed on a place.

How do the works differ stylistically? How have they used different mediums to achieve these styles?

Why do you think they chose these locations?



Jessie Traill 1881–1967

Avenue du Maine 1908

(22 x 30.5cm)

Etching and Aquatint

Gift of Robert Gibson under the Cultural Gifts Program, 2000

What feeling and atmosphere does this work capture? How is this created?

What do you think this image depicts?

Is it of an Australian scene?



Murray Griffin 1903–92

Thought 1940

(25 x 20cm)

Colour linocut on oriental paper

Purchased by student donations, 1952

How do the soft colours and the use of a sleeping bird relate to the title?

Is there an element of calm?

What do you think may have influenced the artist?

What technique has the artist used?

The Recent Past: Contemporary Acquisitions 1995-2004

Art acquisitions are the lifeblood of the QUT Art Museum's collection-building program. Established in 1945, the collection has grown significantly over the past six decades to include currently some 2000 works of art in a range of media.

Highlighting the Museum's commitment to in-depth collecting in specific areas, the collection offers a focussed perspective on Australian visual culture, Queensland art, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and, more recently, new media.

The Museum collects works of art, through purchase or gift, and also through bequests. Nearly 800 works have been acquired during the period 1995-2004. The majority of these holdings are contemporary works created from the mid 1990s by Australian artists, particularly young and emerging practitioners. They include various media such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, photography, assemblage, ceramics and video.

The central focus of *The Recent Past* is diversity, which is reflected in the varied cultural backgrounds of the artists represented and the different themes and issues covered by their work. The human condition, cultural identity, nature and the environment, the subconscious, fantasy and reality, and reclaiming the past are some of the themes explored here through different expressive means.

The exhibition celebrates the richness of the Museum's contemporary collection and investigates the issues and ideas it embraces. It looks at the complexity and variety of possibilities that exist within contemporary art and the new and imaginative ways Australian artists express their understanding of the versatile and at times chaotic world in which they live.

For the Museum, this means that its collection must be a laboratory where the public can explore the relationship between contemporary art and the art of the immediate past, in an ongoing effort to continue to define and appreciate the art of today and the cultural and social imperatives which shape it.

Selection of works from *The Recent Past: Contemporary Acquisitions 1995-2004*



How has Jon Molvig portrayed the theme of madness?

Jon Molvig 1923-70

Head of a madman 1957

(73 x 59cm)

Oil on composition board

Purchased 2000



Richard Bell 1953

Waiting 2004

(60 x 90cm)

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2004

What are the contrasts between *Waiting* and *Head of a Madman*, in terms of line and colour?

Which other artworks in the exhibition relate to identity?

Why do you think that identity is an issue of interest to contemporary artists?

Which famous American artist's work is Richard Bell appropriating?



Rover Thomas 1926-98

Cyclone Tracy 1996

(100 x 140cm)

Coloured ochres in vegetable gum on canvas

Purchased 1996 with the assistance of various donors

Do you think this work engages with the theme of its title? Why, or why not?

Choose another indigenous work in the exhibition and compare and contrast the two in terms of style and content



Rosalie Gascoigne 1917-99

Grassfest 1999

(106.5 x 101cm)

Sawn wooden soft drink crates on composition board

Purchased 1999

Why do you think Rosalie Gascoigne used sawn wooden, soft drink crates?

How does the work relate to the Australian landscape?

What other works in the exhibition utilise found or ready made objects?



Luke Roberts 1952

Lovers (From the '1 + 1 = 8' series) 2001

(32 x 30cm)

Giclée print from a photographic performance, 1989

Purchased 2002

Why do you think the figures' heads are covered?

What issues might this work be exploring?

Which other artists represent the figure in their work?

The Recent Past: Contemporary Acquisitions 1995-2004 and *Foresight: The Genesis of the Collection 1945-1954* exhibit artworks as part of a collection of works with varying themes, however can you find any common themes between works? Do you think they have been grouped in any particular way?

**Compiled by QUT Art Museum Intern
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