

Geelong Gallery

The Geelong Gallery was established in 1896 and is one of Australia's leading and oldest regional art galleries. Since its first year of acquisitions in 1900, the Gallery has amassed a magnificent collection of 19th and 20th century Australian and European paintings and decorative arts, including 18th and 19th century English porcelain, British art pottery, colonial Australian silver, as well as contemporary Australian paintings, prints, sculpture and ceramics. A particular focus of the collection is early images of the city of Geelong and the surrounding region. The Gallery's outstanding collection includes many works of national significance such as Eugene von Guérard's *View of Geelong* (1856) and Frederick McCubbin's *A bush burial* (1890). Works from the collection are regularly on display, along with a dynamic exhibitions program, and wide-ranging public programs calendar.

1. Damiano BERTOLI

Australian, born 1969

Continuous moment: requiem 2004

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Purchased with funds generously provided by the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation, 2004

The operatic grandeur and drama of Damiano Bertoli's *Continuous moment: requiem* invokes the Romantic sublime as espoused in Edmund Burke's influential 1757 treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry*. Burke regarded nature as the most sublime entity, capable of generating the strongest sensations of awe, terror and feeling of insignificance in its beholders. Bertoli's work is part of his ongoing research into the relevance of art history for contemporary artists, and the cyclical and evolutionary nature of the creative process.

2. Kate BEYNON

born China 1970; arrived Australia 1974

Graveyard scene / the beauty and sadness of bones 2014–15

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Geelong contemporary art prize, 2016

Kate Beynon's *Graveyard scene/the beauty and sadness of bones* was the recipient of the *2016 Geelong contemporary art prize*. The image is based on a scene from *An-Li: a Chinese ghost tale*, the artist's re-telling of a supernatural story of two young spirits who traverse opposing worlds: one aquatic, the other earthly. Beynon depicts the spectral form of An-Li as he makes a nocturnal visit to his grieving mother. The painting reveals an interest in connections between mother and child, ancestral spirits, and the cycle of life and death.

3. Mike BROWN

Australian 1938–1997

Levels 1977

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Purchased 1978

4. Mike BROWN

Australian 1938–1997

Mindscape 1979

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Purchased with the assistance of the Caltex Victorian Art Government Purchase Fund, 1985

Mike Brown was a unique leader of alternative avant-garde art in Australia and a true bohemian eccentric. His work was anarchic and polemical, but it also had a conscious order, beauty, and refinement in its formal resolution. During his 30 year career he waged an unwavering war on art world conventions and sensibilities, critiquing mass culture, consumerism, sex, advertising, censorship, and embracing counterculture, alternative lifestyles and socialism. During his lifetime, Brown produced a multiplicity of work including naïve landscapes, pattern based abstraction, pop and text paintings.

Geelong Gallery

Little Malop Street
Geelong 3220
T 03 5229 3645

geelonggallery.org.au

G E E L O N G
G E E L O N G
E E L O N G
T O N G
O N G
N G
G A L L E R Y

5. Lina BRYANS

born Germany 1909; arrived Australia 1910; died 2000

You Yangs 1966

oil on composition board

Geelong Gallery

Purchased with the assistance of the Lucy Shaw Bequest Fund, 2000

The picturesque and enigmatic You Yangs range features in many art works depicting Geelong and its surrounding landscape. As a place the You Yangs has inspired artists since the early 19th century. While modernist painter Lina Bryans was an acclaimed portraitist, by the 1960s it was her work in various Australian landscapes that brought her highly expressive and experimental picture making to further critical attention. The wild and ancient terrain of the You Yangs is interpreted in this lively abstract work through Bryans's exceptional balance of colour and painterly texture.

6. Nadine CHRISTENSEN

Australian, born 1969

Untitled (Tiled floor) 2008

synthetic polymer paint on board

Geelong Gallery

Fletcher Jones art prize, 2008

Untitled (Tiled floor) was the recipient of the *Fletcher Jones art prize* (now *Geelong contemporary art prize*) in 2008. This intricately composed painting assembles seemingly incongruous images and forms to examine the relationship between nature and artifice, old and new, real and illusionary, as well as notions of redundancy in a contemporary world of materialism and consumption, and rapid technological obsolescence.

7. Gunter CHRISTMANN

born Germany 1936; arrived Australia 1959; died 2013

Helau 1983

synthetic polymer paint and oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, 1983

At the time of his death in 2013, and after a 50-year career, Gunter Christmann's work was attracting a renewed critical and public attention, the kind that surrounded his striking debut as an artist in the 1960s. Christmann left his native Germany and arrived in Australia via Canada in 1959. He started painting three years later. Painting for himself rather than the market throughout his long career, he moved easily between personal subjects and themes with universal qualities.

His work reflected his European origins and sensibility, and his love of Sydney and the grit of his immediate environment. His painting ranged between figuration and abstraction, politics and pop culture. Helau is a German greeting used at Carnival time, and in this picture Christmann may be reflecting on the colour and chaos of the carnival atmosphere.

8. John COBURN

Australian 1925–2006

Setting sun 1980

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation, 1999

John Coburn sought to encompass the colour, light, ancient nature and indigenous heritage of the Australian landscape throughout his career, combining this primary interest with the development of a distinct lexicon of abstract symbols and motifs. In wanting to forge a uniquely Australian abstract language, he represented natural phenomena from the sun to flora and fauna in carefully arranged compositions he hoped would reverberate in the eye of the viewer. Numerous of Coburn's works invoke a spiritual approach to his considerations of landscape and human beings' place in it.

9. Janet DAWSON

Australian, born 1935

Foxy night 3 rising moon 1978

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Capital Permanent award, 1978

Janet Dawson is critically important in the early development of non-objective—or abstract—painting in Australia in the 1960s. She was one of only three women artists whose work was included in the historic exhibition 'The Field' that inaugurated the National Gallery of Victoria when it opened on St Kilda Road on 1968.

The 'Foxy Night series' was the product of Dawson's rural experience living in South-western New South Wales from the early 1970s. In the catalogue for the NGV's survey of Dawson's work in 1979, Robert Lindsay wrote of the series: *These paintings, like the moonlight, have an element of 'foxiness', of shifting light and ambiguity ... the surface is pulled and pushed in space, and just as moonlight creates changing optical illusions in nature so the painted surface is sometimes reinforced, at other times, denied, by the perspective effects created by the simple linear shapes.*

10. Terry EICHLER

Australian, born 1945

Passing storm, Cape Otway Road 2003

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of the artist, 2004

Terry Eichler's landscapes of the Otway ranges region are panoramas in which he seeks to convey the atmospheric beauty of changing light and climate as it passes over and briefly transforms his, and our, vision of particular landscapes. The darkness of Eichler's image is less melancholy than it is deeply meditative and calming. In Eichler's imagination, the landscape and the weather have a timeless power in world too easily altered by human beings.

11. Samantha HOBSON

Australian, born 1981; language group Kuuku Ya'u

Burn grass season 2000

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of Jim and Libby Cousins, 2006

Samantha Hobson was born in Lockhart River, on the eastern coast of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. She belongs to the Kuuku Ya'u (Sand Beach people) who live between the rainforest and the Coral Sea.

Her early, urgently gestural abstract paintings represented something of her experience of the violence and social breakdown occurring in remote communities, a stark contrast to the natural paradise of her and her ancestors' country. This work is from a series of fire paintings that are the result of Hobson's acute observations of her country. On the one hand this work reflects cataclysmic and transformative natural events like bushfire, and on another acts as a metaphor for physical and psychological trauma.

12. Robert JACKS

Australian 1943–2014

Metropolis c. 1985

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of Dr Colin and Mrs Elizabeth Laverty, 2005

Robert Jacks was one of Australia's most significant abstract artists. His Metropolis series of the mid-1980s is an extensive group of large abstracted representations of the city, and reflect his experience of Manhattan, New York (where he lived during the early 1970s) and Sydney.

While these futuristic images are subtle in their palette of grey, navy, black and white, their interlocking geometric shards construct visually powerful spaces in terms of pictorial depth and architecture.

13. Louis KAHAN

born Austria 1905; arrived Australia 1947; died 2002

Oil refinery 1962

oil on composition board

Geelong Gallery

Gift of Shell Refinery Company, 1963

Louis Kahan settled in Melbourne in the early 1950s and quickly established a reputation as a fine portrait artist. He won the *1962 Archibald Prize* for his dramatic portrait of writer Patrick White. This picture of the Shell Refinery in North Geelong is painted as if from the industrial products of the refinery itself. Kahan reflects on the necessity and terrible beauty of the industrial complex perched on Corio Bay.

14. Sam LEACH

Australian, born 1973

Peacock going up 2006

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Fletcher Jones art prize, 2006

Peacock going up was the recipient of the *Fletcher Jones art prize* (now *Geelong contemporary art prize*) in 2006. Sam Leach's works are influenced by art history, science, and philosophy. In the series of works from which this painting is drawn, Leach combined his interests in the tradition of still life, science and empirical data and observation, and the relationship between humans and animals, and our fleeting existence on a shared planet. The aesthetic refinement and visual precision of his images is a deliberate ploy by Leach to encourage viewers to engage slowly with the object of his picture, in order to summon deeper subjective, emotional responses to the lifeless but still beautiful peacock.

15. Stieg PERSSON

Australian, born 1959

Painting 1989, the first anniversary 1989

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of the Bank of Melbourne, 1997

This important early painting by Melbourne artist Stieg Persson is an exemplar of a period in which his predominantly monochrome paintings juxtaposed lyrical, free-flowing arabesque motifs, with painterly abstract spaces that evoked indeterminate spaces suggesting landscape or the recesses and subjective realms of the mind and imagination. The very act of painting and the communicative potential of the medium, itself was, and remains, of vital importance to Persson.

16. Sally ROSS

Australian, born 1969

Volcano (grey) 2013

oil on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Gift of the artist, 2015

Sally Ross's recent painting has reflected on landscape and portraiture. This image of an erupting volcano is from a larger series exploring the same subject in a variety of textural and colour treatments. Ross's paintings draw on the imagery of postcards, magazines and the travelogue. This picture of an unidentified volcano is enlivened by Ross's particular pointillist mark and lyrical patterning.

17. Murray WALKER

Australian, born 1937

Eleven faces 1982

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, 1982

Murray Walker's long practice of painting, sculpture and installation has been based on his innate sense of the value in the everyday—from people on the street to the weathered objects that he finds and reclaims as part of his bower-bird like collection of the stuff of life.

Walker's observations of people are poured repeatedly into sketchbooks, and populate many of his large scales paintings in jostling communities of types, such as we see here in *Eleven faces*.

18. Dick WATKINS

Australian, born 1937

The Cotton Club 1929 1990

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Geelong Gallery

Scotchmans Hill Vineyard art prize, 1990

The Cotton Club was a New York City nightclub located in Harlem from 1923 to 1935 before moving to midtown. The notoriously 'whites only' (apart from performers) club operated during America's Prohibition Era. It was the place where jazz composer and pianist Duke Ellington's career rose to prominence during his band's residency between 1927 and 1931.

Dick Watkins painting style from the late 1960s to the present has been wildly diverse in its abstract forms: from hard-edge to colour-field, abstract expressionism, action painting, lyrical abstraction. While American painter Jackson Pollock's spontaneous process and action painting are an influence, *The Cotton Club 1929* reveals Picasso as another dominant art-historical ancestor influencing Watkins's art. Here we apprehend something of the volume, dynamism and spatial organisation found in Picasso's paintings of the 1920s and 1930s of or biomorphic figures.

Geelong Gallery

Little Malop Street
Geelong 3220
T 03 5229 3645

geelonggallery.org.au

G E E L O N G
G E E L O N G
E E L O N G
T O N G A L L E R Y
O N G A L L E R Y
N G A L L E R Y
G A L L E R Y