



# In search of the picturesque— the architectural ruin in art

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At the outset of her remarkable *Pleasure of Ruins*, the author Rose Macaulay observes that ‘down the ages men have meditated before ruins, rhapsodized before them, mourned pleasurably over their ruination ... [and how] ... it is interesting to speculate on the various strands in this complex enjoyment’. Thus, Macaulay embarks on a sweeping account of ruins-related symbols and metaphors that encompass moral, morbid and religious pleasure in decay as well as the more straightforward emotional or visual pleasure to be had in the presence of mighty fragments of once glorious architectural schemes.

Macaulay’s *Pleasure of Ruins* effectively sums up the attraction ruined buildings have long held as pictorial subjects for artists in Europe and Britain without question but also, to a lesser degree, in Australia as well. The works in this exhibition belong in two broad categories: European works of the late sixteenth to late nineteenth centuries, that chiefly respond to architectural ruins from the ancient world and the Middle Ages, many on a grand scale; and Australian works whose subjects are generally much more modest in kind as is the extent of this aspect of the exhibition.

For many of the artists represented in the exhibition, the European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a crucial prelude. It was a period when the excavation of antiquities, a renewed interest in Greek and Roman architecture and sculpture, and the publication of new scholarly editions of Greek and Latin texts, were part of a simultaneous movement. By the end of the sixteenth century, a new artistic direction had emerged for the representation of ruins in art where the dominant considerations were the artist’s imagination, and the registering of a mood, rather than a simple documentary focus. It flowered fully between the Baroque and the Romantic eras.

Across the eighteenth century, this fascination with ruins was fostered and maintained by the Grand Tour, the cultural and educational travel undertaken by the aristocracy and gentry from all over Europe. For Grand Tourists seeking splendid and instructive ruins, Rome was the major destination until the mid-eighteenth century; after which time key Greek sites became more accessible. The Egyptian world followed with French and English penetration in the 1790s, and the ensuing decyphering of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The rediscovery of cities

such as Palmyra and Petra, ‘rose-red ... [and] ... half as old as time’, coincided with the publication of coloured lithographs of Egyptian and other Middle Eastern sites by David Roberts CAT. NOS 12–15.

The peak of imaginative art inspired by architectural ruins in the seventeenth century was reached in the work of French-born Claude Lorrain, who spent most of his working life in Italy. In one of his early works, *Capriccio with ruins of the Roman Forum*, c. 1634 CAT. NO. 3, buildings in the Forum (then still substantially concealed beneath ground level compared with today) are grouped with elements from another site in Rome, and at the right, Claude adds the imaginary ruins of a circular temple, whose column capitals are in a much later style. The area has been imaginatively recreated, while the artist’s treatment of light and sky invite the viewer into an expansive and luminous space.

More than a century later, Bernardo Bellotto faithfully renders the ruins of the Temple of Castor and Pollux in splendid isolation against the backdrop of an active Baroque cityscape in *Ruins of the Forum, Rome*, c. 1743 CAT. NO. 1. Grand Tourists congregate on the site, closely inspecting the architectural ruins, while locals carry out their daily tasks.

Of all Roman ruins, the single most frequently represented building is actually quite small, and not in Rome itself—the so-called Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli, close to dramatic waterfalls (since drastically diminished) in the hill country outside Rome. For his etching of this temple CAT. NO. 19, Dutch artist Jan Van der Velde relied on a version of the subject by another artist and on his own imagination, since he never visited Italy himself. Here the landscape setting is closer to the flat vistas of Holland than the Temple’s precarious hillside perch, as it is actually sited. Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s masterly etchings of the Temple CAT. NOS 6–8 all exaggerate the grandeur and scale of the subject, a characteristic of many other works in his series, *Vedute di Roma*. A passionate advocate of the superiority of Roman architecture over the Greek, he depicts the Temple as further proof of the dignity and magnificence of the Roman past, and the pettiness, almost sordidness, of the present. Lilliputian figures, at once lively and slightly grotesque, populate the ruins, often accompanied by goats, traditionally symbols of lust.

The serenity of Claude Lorrain’s painting of the Temple, *River landscape with Tiburtine Temple at Tivoli*, c. 1635 CAT. NO. 4, reminiscent of the mood of classical





Latin pastoral poetry, is very different from the sombre cast of Piranesi's three *Vedute*. It reminds us that for artists and viewers alike, the ruins were not neutral symbols, but laden with meaning. In depicting the Nativity of Christ or the Epiphany, many seventeenth and eighteenth century artists followed a convention that dated from the late Middle Ages, depicting the stable at Bethlehem as a classical Roman building, and even more strangely as a grand ruin. This symbolised classical civilisation's impermanence and its replacement by Christianity as the new world order.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione's dramatic chiaroscuro etching, *The raising of Lazarus*, c. 1647–51 CAT. NO. 22, presents essentially the same symbolism: Christ, bringing light and life, appears to one side of the overgrown ruins in deep shadow from which Lazarus emerges. Rembrandt, an inspiration to Castiglione, set his encounter between Jesus and the Woman of Samaria CAT. NO. 32 in the context of a classical ruin, the only New Testament subject he treated in this way. In Callot's *Le martyre de Saint Sebastien (Martyrdom of St Sebastien)*, c. 1634 CAT. NO. 20, the lushly overgrown Colosseum in the background might simply mark ancient Rome as the setting. However, it could also be viewed as a sign of the hollowness of the Roman imperial power that ordered the saint's execution; its mission to suppress Christianity would ultimately fail.

Castiglione's *Circe*, 1650–51 CAT. NO. 23, shows the enchantress who transformed many of Ulysses' crew into beasts. Accompanied by the peacock, symbol of vanity, she sits amid ruins, staring into the distance with charts for necromancy at her feet. The elements hint that her powers are all transient. Unlike the mythological Circe, Democritus and Diogenes were historical figures, highly valued for their contributions to Western philosophical tradition. Salvator Rosa and Castiglione both place them among ruins CAT. NOS 28 & 21. As Diogenes is pictured searching for the honest man, the ruins, combined with the animal symbols (the skull, the tortoise symbolising sloth and the monkey symbolising superstition), not to mention his use of a lamp in broad daylight, suggest the obstacles in his way. For Rosa's weeping Democritus, ruined classical structures, and a generous helping of skeletal remains, point starkly in one direction—human mortality. The text accompanying the image reinforces this: 'The mocker of all things, Democritus, here is stopped by the ending of all things'.

Dutch printmaker Jan Saenredam also sets his reminder of youth's powerlessness in the face of death in the context of a Roman tomb, with a pyramid (possibly a reference to the tomb of Mausoleus) in the background CAT. NO. 29. *Time, Apollo and the Seasons*, 1662 CAT. NO. 25, an etching from Claude Lorrain's later years, gestures more gently in the same direction. Not only lesser deities—here the Seasons—dance to the music of Time; so does the sun god, the youthful Apollo. The ruins behind the dancers hint that even in Arcadia, decay is inevitable: Arcadia too is subject to the ravages of time.

Despite Piranesi's serious interest in documenting the remains of classical Roman civilisation, in the most ambitious and large prints of his *Vedute di Roma* CAT. NOS 34–41, this motive is overruled by his artistic imagination, and like the works discussed in the previous paragraph, they carry complex layers of meaning. Piranesi could depict papal Baroque Rome as the inheritor and legitimate heir of the classical world he so admired. There is no sense of irony in his depiction of the columns once erected by emperors, now dominated by the cross or statues of saints. For all that they testified to the greatness of Roman civilisation, for Piranesi, Rome's ruins also demonstrated the delusory folly of the great.

In some *Vedute*, such as the work depicting the Sette Bassi CAT. NO. 35, figures gesture in the direction of a ruin (here the remains of a doorway in a villa built by the Emperor Domitian), as if inviting the question: to what end? The triumph of nature is absolute in others, particularly those showing remains of the grand structures built by the Emperor Hadrian as his country retreat at Tivoli CAT. NOS 34, 36–37. Buildings become mere frameworks for rampant and extravagantly trailing verdure, reminiscent of the tropical vines that had overwhelmed temples that would be rediscovered in central America a century after Piranesi's death. His first Italian biographer described him as 'the Rembrandt of the Ruins', perhaps sensing that for Piranesi, ruins functioned in the same way as timeworn or haggard human subjects did for other artists. If this is the case, his mighty representations of decay are addressed to all, not simply the great and the grand.

In northern Europe, including Great Britain, a nostalgic sympathy for the Middle Ages had emerged by the beginning of the nineteenth century and was expressed





in literature such as Sir Walter Scott’s novels, as well as in the visual arts. In its overall pastoral mood and in the glowing light that highlights Chepstow Castle, JMW Turner’s *River Wye*, 1812 CAT. NO. 53, pays tribute to Claude Lorrain. A pastoral atmosphere likewise permeated many works in watercolour and ink that were created at the same time, such as John Buckler’s *Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire*, 1809 CAT. NO. 46, or Paul Sandby Munn’s *Abbey ruins*, 1809 CAT. NO. 51. From this sympathetic treatment of the medieval past it was only a short step to the Victorian Gothic Revival, with archaeological referencing of actual medieval buildings, and scholarship focussed on the recreation of medieval practice among Roman Catholics, as exemplified by the influential architect Augustus Welby Pugin, and similarly among Anglicans, in the Oxford Movement and Anglo-Catholicism.

When AD Hope described Australia as ‘the last of lands, the emptiest ... without songs, architecture, history ... her hills, those endless outstretched paws/ Of Sphinx demolished or stone lion worn away’, he gave voice to something evident in the work of many Australian artists where the seemingly timeless landscape, rather than the ruins of man-made structures, is the symbol of age and corrective to the human *folie de grandeur*. Nevertheless, some Australian works pay conscious tribute to the earlier European tradition of the romantic, symbolic or simply picturesque ruin. The subject of Victor Cobb’s *Gothic windows, ruined shrine, Ivanhoe (since demolished)*, 1926 CAT. NO. 57, was a kind of folly built from remains of an earlier building on the site of the present-day St Patrick’s Cathedral. His print also references an etching of Notre Dame by nineteenth-century French printmaker Charles Meryon, whose prints were among the National Gallery of Victoria’s first print acquisitions.

Adrian Feint’s bookplate for Patrick White CAT. NO. 60 with its suggestions of the Temple of the Sibyl is a lighthearted fantasy. However, another bookplate CAT. NO. 68, showing Raymond McGrath sitting on a classical fragment while playing on panpipes, resonates with symbolism common to many European images—the fragility of youth and beauty in the face of age and the march of time. A similar mood pervades Lionel Lindsay’s *The deserted shrine*, 1907 CAT. NO. 62, essentially a meditation on time inspired by a visit to Hadrian’s Villa, the site earlier much

favoured by Piranesi. On the other hand, Lindsay’s book illustration showing the Colosseum by moonlight CAT. NO. 66 may well recall one of the more dramatic scenes in Dumas’ novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*, describing a secret and rather sinister encounter there.

Almost as soon as it closed, the Port Arthur prison became the only large building complex in Australia to be treated, artistically and commercially (in postcards), as a poignant or picturesque ruin. It attracted several etchers in the inter-war years, including Norma Bull CAT. NO. 56. More often it was modest-scale deserted rural buildings that provided the appropriately melancholic subject matter for Australian artists. In Sydney Long’s *The deserted selection*, 1923 CAT. NO. 67, or Lionel Lindsay’s *The dilapidated barn, Kurrajong*, 1924 CAT. NO. 63, the mood is basically a melancholy one. Buildings and landscape alike are devoid of human presence. A brooding silence prevails.

William Blamire Young’s *Rat’s Castle, Hobart*, c. 1919 CAT. NO. 71, captures something more grand and disturbing, a strong sense of waste and dereliction, even if it is very much the product of the artist’s imagination (the building, on the corner of Elizabeth and Brisbane Streets, had been demolished long before Young first visited Hobart: he was familiar with it from a photograph).

In 1947, when Donald Friend moved to live at Hill End, once a flourishing township during the gold rush in the Bathurst region in the 1860s, the attraction was precisely the ruinous state of its abandoned buildings. It drew other artists, including Russell Drysdale and Margaret Olley. In his diaries, Friend frequently described Merioola, his previous address in Sydney, as a Piranesi ruin. Though Hill End’s buildings were very recent by comparison with their European counterparts, Drysdale imbued them with a sense of grandeur. In *Hill End*, 1948 CAT. NO. 59, the building remains venerable and dignified despite the ravages of climate and time. For Drysdale, Friend and those around them, the attraction could be summed up in a phrase of Piranesi: these were ‘speaking ruins’. Even in this much younger sculpture, ‘the pleasure of ruins’ could inspire artists to some of their best work.

**Dr Colin Holden**  
Guest curator





CAT. NO. 59

CAT. NO. 71

List of works

All works height by width in cm  
or height by width by depth in cm  
(unless otherwise stated)

Group I

The Temple of the Sibyl and other  
ruins in the ancient world

Bernardo BELLOTTO

Italian 1720–1780

CAT. NO. 1

*Ruins of the Forum, Rome* c. 1743  
oil on canvas  
87.0 x 148.0  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1919

Ebenezer CHALLIS

British, active 1831–1863

CAT. NO. 2

*The Arch of Titus – Rome*  
(after JMW Turner) 1859–61  
engraving from *The Turner Gallery*,  
James S Virtue, London, 1859–61  
27.5 x 39.0 (sheet); 15.4 x 27.7 (image,  
arched)  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Purchased through donations, 2012

Claude LORRAIN

French c. 1604/05–1682

CAT. NO. 3

*Capriccio with ruins of the Roman Forum*  
c. 1634  
oil on canvas  
79.7 x 118.8  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide  
Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia  
Foundation assisted by the State Bank  
of South Australia on the occasion of the  
150th Anniversary of South Australia,  
1985

CAT. NO. 4

*River landscape with Tiburtine Temple  
at Tivoli* c. 1635  
oil on canvas  
38.0 x 53.0  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1967

Giovanni Battista PIRANESI

Italian 1720–1778

CAT. NO. 5

*Parte del Foro di Nerva* 1748  
etching from GB Piranesi, *Alcune Vedute  
di Archi Trionfali*, Rome, 1748  
22.2 x 34.9 (sheet); 13.6 x 26.9 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 6

*Altra Veduta del Tempio della Sibilla  
in Tivoli* c. 1765  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–74  
45.2 x 66.0  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 7

*Altra Veduta del Tempio della Sibilla  
in Tivoli (Another view of the Temple  
of the Sibyl in Tivoli)* c. 1765  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–74  
62.9 x 44.5  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 8

*Veduta del Tempio della Sibilla  
in Tivoli* c. 1765  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–74  
40.0 x 63.0  
Private collection, Melbourne

Hubert ROBERT

French 1733–1808

CAT. NO. 9

*La galerie antique* 1763–64  
etching from *Les Soirées de Rome* series  
14.0 x 9.4 (sheet); 13.7 x 9.1 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1923

CAT. NO. 10

*Le statue en avant les ruines* 1763–64  
etching from *Les Soirées de Rome* series  
13.9 x 9.8 (sheet); 13.7 x 9.4 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1923

CAT. NO. 11

*Le temple antique* 1763–64  
etching from *Les Soirées de Rome* series  
13.9 x 10.1 (sheet); 13.7 x 9.1 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1923

David ROBERTS

British 1796–1864  
**Louis HAGHE** (lithographer)  
Belgian 1806–1885

CAT. NO. 12

*Baalbec* 1843  
hand-coloured lithograph from David  
Roberts, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea,  
Arabia, Egypt and Nubia from Drawings  
Made on the Spot by David Roberts RA*,  
FG Moon, London, 1842–49  
44.1 x 59.6 (sheet)  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Purchased 1900

CAT. NO. 13

*Grand entrance to the Temple of Luxor*  
1848  
hand-coloured lithograph from David  
Roberts, *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea,  
Arabia, Egypt and Nubia from Drawings  
Made on the Spot by David Roberts RA*,  
FG Moon, London, 1842–49  
38.6 x 53.6 (sheet); 32.8 x 49.0 (image)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented through the Art Foundation  
of Victoria by Professor Jenny Zimmer,  
Member, 1997

David ROBERTS

British 1796–1864  
**Francois STROOBANT** (lithographer)  
Belgian 1819–1916

CAT. NO. 14

*Le Pilier D’Absalon (The Pillar of Absalom)*  
1843  
hand-coloured lithograph from David  
Roberts, *La Terre Sainte: Vues &  
Monuments*, Société des Beaux-Arts,  
Brussels, 1843  
26.7 x 34.2 (sheet); 18.3 x 25.8 (image)  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Purchased through donations, 2012

David ROBERTS

British 1796–1864  
**VINCENT BROOKS, DAY & SON**  
(lithographer)  
British, active 1867–1940

CAT. NO. 15

*Gaza* 1879  
chromolithograph from David Roberts,  
*The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia,  
Egypt and Nubia from Drawings Made  
on the Spot by David Roberts RA*,  
Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., London,  
Paris & New York, 1879  
24.7 x 31.7 (sheet); 15.4 x 23.2 (image)  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Purchased through donations, 2012

Joseph Mallord William TURNER

British 1775–1851  
**William SAY** (engraver)  
British 1768–1834

CAT. NO. 16

*Isis* 1819  
etching and mezzotint from JMW Turner,  
*Liber Studiorum*, part XIV, London, 1819  
29.0 x 43.0 (sheet); 20.7 x 29.0 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1949

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

CAT. NO. 17

*Arch of Septimius Severus,  
Roman Forum, Rome* c. 1890  
black and white photograph  
19.3 x 24.7  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Gift of Patrick Curtis-Lyon, 1986

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

CAT. NO. 18

*Temple of Vesta and fountain,  
Rome* c. 1890  
black and white photograph  
19.2 x 24.7  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Gift of Patrick Curtis-Lyon, 1986

Jan VAN DER VELDE

Dutch c. 1593–1641

CAT. NO. 19

*Horizontal landscape with the  
Temple of the Sibyl* 1615  
etching  
19.6 x 35.6 (sheet); 12.0 x 31.2 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

Group II

The ruin as symbol: moral  
and religious themes

Jacques CALLOT

French 1592–1635

CAT. NO. 20

*Le martyre de Saint Sebastien  
(Martyrdom of St Sebastian)* c. 1634  
etching and engraving  
17.7 x 34.8 (sheet); 16.1 x 32.7 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

Giovanni Benedetto CASTIGLIONE

Italian 1609–1664

CAT. NO. 21

*Diogenes searching for an honest man*  
c. 1645–47  
etching  
21.5 x 30.3 (sheet and image)  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 22

*The raising of Lazarus* c. 1647–51  
etching  
22.8 x 31.6 (sheet); 22.1 x 31.3 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 23

*Circe* 1650–51  
etching  
21.3 x 30.1  
Private collection, Melbourne

Claude LORRAIN

French c. 1604/05–1682

CAT. NO. 24

*The rape of Europa (L’Enlèvement  
d’Europe)* 1634  
etching  
20.4 x 26.8 (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1961

CAT. NO. 25

*Time, Apollo and the Seasons* 1662  
etching  
20.6 x 26.6 (sheet)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1933

MELBOURNE POTTERY

British, active 1770–1780

CAT. NO. 26

*Plate* c. 1770–75  
embossed creamware with transfer print  
2.3 x 25.2 (height x diameter)  
Private collection, Melbourne



**Giovanni Paolo PANINI**

Italian 1691–1765

CAT. NO. 27  
*The Cumaean Sibyl delivering the Oracles* c. 1741  
oil on canvas  
53.7 x 82.1  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented through the NGV Foundation by Primmy and Charles Bright, Founder Benefactors, 2001

**Salvator ROSA**

Italian 1615–1673

CAT. NO. 28  
*Democritus in meditation* 1662  
etching  
46.6 x 27.9 (sheet); 46.2 x 27.5 (image)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1939

**Jan SAENREDAM**

Dutch 1565–1607

CAT. NO. 29  
*Death surprising a young man* (after Hendrick Goltzius) 1592  
etching  
34.7 x 23.8 (sheet); 25.2 x 17.2 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Giovanni Battista TIEPOLO**

Italian 1696–1770

CAT. NO. 30  
*Magician and other figures observing a head on a pyre* c. 1743–60s  
etching from *Scherzi di Fantasia* series  
24.3 x 18.0 (sheet); 22.5 x 17.7 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1970

**Joseph Mallord William TURNER**

British 1775–1851

**Samuel REYNOLDS** (engraver)  
British 1773–1835

CAT. NO. 31  
*Christ and the Woman of Samaria* 1819  
etching and mezzotint from JMW Turner, *Liber Studiorum*, part XIV, London, 1819  
29.0 x 42.8 (sheet, irreg.);  
20.8 x 29.0 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1949

**Rembrandt VAN RIJN**

Dutch 1606–1669

CAT. NO. 32  
*Christ and the Woman of Samaria among ruins* 1634  
etching  
12.3 x 10.8 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1958

**Group III**

Art transcending archaeology:  
**Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma***

**Giovanni Battista PIRANESI**

Italian 1720–1778

CAT. NO. 33  
*Veduta di altra parte della Camera Sepolcrale di L Arrunzio (View of another part of the tomb chamber of L Arruntius)* 1748  
etching in *Le Antichità Romane II*  
39.5 x 60.0  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 34  
*Avanzi del Tempio del Dio Canopo nella Villa Adriana in Tivoli (Remains of the temple of the god Canopus at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
44.5 x 58.0 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 35  
*Avanzi d'un portico coperto, o criptoportico in una villa di Domiziano cinque miglia lontan da Roma su la via di Frascati (Remains of a covered portico, or a cryptoporticus, in a villa of Domitian, five miles outside Rome on the Frascati road ... the so-called the 'Sette Bassi')*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
42.0 x 60.0 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 36  
*Dieta, o sia Luogo che dà ingresso a due diversi grandiosi Cubicoli, e ad altre magnifiche Stanze, esistente nella Villa Adriana (Meeting Hall, or Entry to various grandiose rooms and other magnificent halls in Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli ... the so-called 'Accademia')*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
43.5 x 57.5 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 37  
*Rovine d'una Galleria di Statue nella Villa Adriana a Tivoli (Ruins of a Sculpture Gallery at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
45.3 x 59.1 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 38  
*Tempio antico volgarmente detto della Salute su la Via d'Albano, cinque miglia lontan da Roma (Ancient temple commonly called the Temple of Health on the Via d'Albano, five miles outside Rome)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
40.5 x 55.5 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 39  
*Veduta dell' Anfiteatro Flavio, detto il Colosseo (View of the Flavian Amphitheater, called the Colosseum)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
45.0 x 68.5 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 40  
*Veduta dell' Arco di Tito (View of the Arch of Titus ... with the Villa Farnese to the left)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
47.0 x 71.0 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 41  
*Veduta del Tempio di Bacco, inoggi Chiesa di S Urbano, distante due miglia da Roma fuori della Porta di S Sebastiano ... (View of the Temple of Bacchus, now the Church of S Urbano, two miles distant from Rome, beyond the Porta S Sebastiano)*  
etching from *Vedute di Roma* series  
1748–78  
38.5 x 62.0 (sheet)  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

**Girolamo ROSSI**

Italian 1682–after 1762

CAT. NO. 42  
*Il colombario dei liberti di Livia (The tomb of the freedmen of Livia)* (after Antonio Buonamici) 1727  
etching in Francesco Bianchini, *Camera ed Inscrizioni Sepulcrali de' Liberti, Servi, ed Ufficiali della Casa di Augusto*, GM Salvioni, Rome, 1727  
43.0 x 28.8  
Rare Books Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

**Group IV**

**Gothic ruins**

**Thomas BEWICK**

British 1753–1828

CAT. NO. 43  
*(Gothic ruins)/(Man relieving himself among the ruins)*1792  
wood engraving in Thomas Bewick, *A General History of Quadrupeds*, S Hodgson, R Beilby and T Bewick, Newcastle, 1792  
book: 22.2 x 13.0 x 3.5  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 44  
*(Decaying tombstone and Gothic ruin)* 1804  
wood engraving in Thomas Bewick, *History of British Birds*, vol II, T Bewick, Newcastle, 1804  
book: 20.2 x13.4 x 3.3  
Private collection, Melbourne

**John BLUCK**

British, active 1791–1819

CAT. NO. 45  
*Sudeley Castle* n.d.  
watercolour over pencil  
31.2 x 48.3 (sight)  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Purchased1949

**John BUCKLER**

British 1770–1851

CAT. NO. 46  
*Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire* 1809  
watercolour over pencil  
48.0 x 65.7 (sheet)  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Purchased 1951

**COALPORT**

British, established c. 1796

CAT. NO. 47  
*Plate* c. 1820  
hand-painted and gilded porcelain  
2.4 x 22.3 (height x diameter)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**David COX Snr**

British 1783–1859

CAT. NO. 48  
*Caesar's Tower Castle ruins, Kenilworth Castle* 1820  
watercolour  
18.5 x 29.5  
McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Victoria  
Purchased 1982

**DERBY**

British, established c. 1750

CAT. NO. 49  
*'Near Naples' plate* c. 1825  
hand-painted and gilded porcelain  
3.0 x 22.0 (height x diameter)  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Dorothy McAllister Bequest Fund, 1988

**HERCULANEUM POTTERY**

British c. 1794–1841

CAT. NO. 50  
*Jug* c. 1820  
hand-painted and gilded porcelain  
10.8 x 15.4 x 7.5  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Dorothy McAllister Bequest Fund, 1992

**Paul Sandby MUNN**

British 1773–1845

CAT. NO. 51  
*Abbey ruins* 1809  
watercolour  
34.1 x 23.3  
McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Victoria  
Purchased 1982

**SPODE**

British c. 1776–1833

CAT. NO. 52  
*Cup and saucer* c. 1820  
hand-painted (*en grisaille*) and gilded porcelain  
overall 6.7 x 13.9 (height x diameter); a) cup 5.7 x 10.4 x 8.3; b) saucer 2.8 x 13.9 (height x diameter)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Joseph Mallord William TURNER**

British 1775–1851

**William T ANNIS** (engraver)  
British, active 1798–1812

CAT. NO. 53  
*River Wye* 1812  
etching and mezzotint from JMW Turner, *Liber Studiorum*, part X, London, 1812  
28.8 x 42.7 (sheet); 21.2 x 29.2 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1949

**UNKNOWN ARTIST**

CAT. NO. 54  
*Prospect of the Ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, in Somersetshire* c. 1747  
engraving from Nathaniel Spencer, *The Complete English Traveller; or, a New Survey and Description of England and Wales*, J Cooke, London, 1776  
23.0 x 37.0 (sheet); 18.5 x 30.0 (plate)  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
Purchased through donations,2012

**UNKNOWN ARTIST**

CAT. NO. 55  
*Norham Castle* (after JMW Turner) n.d.  
watercolour  
21.5 x 25.9  
McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Victoria  
Purchased 1982

**Group V**

**An Australian perspective**

**Norma BULL**

Australian 1906–1980

CAT. NO. 56  
*Port Arthur* 1937–38  
etching and aquatint  
25.2 x 31.1  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of the Estate of Norma Bull, 1984

**Victor COBB**

Australian 1876–1945

CAT. NO. 57  
*Gothic windows, ruined shrine, Ivanhoe (since demolished)* 1926  
etching  
31.8 x 24.1 (sheet); 23.7 x 17.9 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**George COLLINGRIDGE (de Tourcey)**  
Australian 1847–1931

CAT. NO. 58  
*Ex libris: Noel Pearson* 1920s  
wood engraving  
13.0 x 10.2 (sheet); 10.5 x 6.8 (image)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Russell DRYSDALE**

Australian 1912–1981

CAT. NO. 59  
*Hill End* 1948  
oil on composition board  
76.1 x 101.2  
Geelong Gallery, Victoria  
JH McPhillimy and HP Douglass Bequest Funds, 1952

**Adrian FEINT**

Australian 1894–1971

CAT. NO. 60  
*Ex libris: Patrick White* 1931  
wood engraving  
9.8 x 8.7 (sheet)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Daryl LINDSAY**

Australian 1889–1976

CAT. NO. 61  
*The deserted home* c. 1921  
etching  
19.9 x 18.4 (sheet); 15.8 x 15.1 (plate)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased 2009

**Lionel LINDSAY**

Australian 1874–1961

CAT. NO. 62  
*The deserted shrine* 1907  
etching and aquatint  
23.2 x 19.1 (sheet, irreg.); 20.2 x 15.5 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of the artist, 1954

CAT. NO. 63  
*The dilapidated barn, Kurrajong* 1924  
spirit aquatint  
26.2 x 35.2 (sheet); 20.4 x 29.0 (plate)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Bequest of Alan Queale

CAT. NO. 64  
*A church in the Roman Forum* 1927  
drypoint  
25.2 x 17.6 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

CAT. NO. 65  
*San Lorenzo, Rome* 1928  
drypoint and plate-tone  
26.2 x 38.4 (sheet); 17.7 x 25.2 (plate)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1940

CAT. NO. 66  
*(The Colosseum by moonlight)* 1959  
wood engraving in Lionel Lindsay, *Discobolus & Other Verse*, FW Cheshire, Melbourne, 1959  
book: 25.0 x18.5 x 1.5  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Sydney LONG**

Australian 1871–1955

CAT. NO. 67  
*The deserted selection* 1923  
line etching  
24.0 x 29.6 (sheet); 15.1 x 22.4 (image)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
The Stephen Collection, purchased 1976

**Raymond McGRATH**

Australian 1903–1977

CAT. NO. 68  
*Ex libris: Raymond McGrath* 1925  
wood engraving  
16.4 x 12.2 (sheet); 11.6 x 7.4 (image)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**Margaret OLLEY**

Australian 1923–2011

CAT. NO. 69  
*Hill End ruins* 1948  
oil on canvas  
75.6 x 101.0  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased 1948

**Sydney URE SMITH**

Australian 1887–1949

CAT. NO. 70  
*The Old Mill, Mt Gilead, NSW* 1915  
etching  
22.0 x 21.5 (sheet); 17.4 x 15.3 (plate)  
Private collection, Melbourne

**William Blamire YOUNG**

Australian 1862–1935

CAT. NO. 71  
*Rat's Castle, Hobart* c. 1919  
watercolour  
46.7 x 59.2 (sight)  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Purchased 1923

**Acknowledgements**

When, in 1768, William Gilpin used the term 'picturesque' to denote 'that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture' he referred, albeit obliquely, to an aesthetic ideal that would provoke artistic, literary and philosophical debate in England over the ensuing decades. The term was applied both to aspects of the landscape—often to the emotional or visual appeal of decaying elements in nature—and to the noble if melancholy spectacle of ancient, decaying and ruinous architecture. This exhibition deals with the latter—the idea of an architectural ruin that is variously 'romantic', 'splendid' or simply 'pleasurable', as Rose Macaulay has it in her famous treatise on the subject—and the long tradition of artistic interpretation surrounding the concept.

While Gilpin's own publications led to a wider debate around notions of the picturesque, these notions in turn prompted droves of Grand Tourists—able to resume travel in Europe following the cessation of hostilities in 1815—to seek out the monumental remains of ancient Roman architecture. So earnest, in fact, was Gilpin's proselytising on the issue that his efforts were parodied in popular illustrated verse by William Combe working with the artist Thomas Rowlandson, who together poke fun at the peregrinations of a hapless but relentlessly inquisitive cleric, Dr Syntax, who travels far and wide 'in search of the picturesque'. If the title of Combe's narrative lives on in this project, it is more appropriately the great artistic exponents of the subject of the romantic ruin with whom this enterprise is concerned.

In pursuit of this concern, the Geelong Gallery is seriously indebted once again to guest curator, Dr Colin Holden, for his expert and enthusiastic involvement in the development of the exhibition and the accompanying publication, as well as for his generous and long-standing support of the Gallery in general.

This exhibition presents works from private and major institutional collections, and for this co-operation we gratefully acknowledge the kindness of our colleagues at the following institutions: Art Gallery of New South Wales; Art Gallery of South Australia; McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park; National Gallery of Australia; National Gallery of Victoria; and the State Library of Victoria. The presentation of works by Giovanni Battista Piranesi has been greatly enhanced by research undertaken by Dr Holden as the State Library of Victoria's 2010 Redmond Barry Fellow.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the support of Arts Victoria through the Indemnification Scheme that has made possible the loan of works of the calibre we see in the exhibition. Similarly we record our sincere gratitude to the William Angliss (Victoria) Charitable Fund for their sponsorship of the exhibition. We also recognise the ongoing support of all our annual program sponsors.

Not least, we record our thanks to David Pidgeon and Hamish Childs of Design By Pidgeon for the design of this publication, and Adams Print for its expert printing. Finally, I acknowledge the indispensable contribution of my colleagues at the Geelong Gallery.

**Geoffrey Edwards**

Director, Geelong Gallery





**In search of the picturesque—  
the architectural ruin in art**

**Geelong Gallery**

21 April to 24 June 2012

Guest curator: Dr Colin Holden

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Estate of Russell Drysdale

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COVER  
Bernardo Bellotto  
*Ruins of the Forum, Rome* (detail) c. 1743  
oil on canvas  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1919

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