

## **Outer Circle:**

### **The Boyds and the Murrumbeena Artists**

#### **Exhibitions Labels**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Boyd family is Australia's best-known artistic dynasty. From 1913 to the early 1960s, members of this family lived at the property Open Country in Murrumbeena, in Melbourne's south-east. Over these fifty years, a pottery, kiln, studios and outbuildings were built near the small weatherboard house. The property was hidden by an overgrown wilderness from the suburban street, which abutted Murrumbeena Creek and the remnants of the short-lived Outer Circle railway line. Here Merric and Doris Boyd raised their five children – Lucy, Arthur, Guy, David and Mary – who in turn married and started their own artistic careers and families.

Friends, including artists, writers, academics and musicians, were warmly welcomed into this loving and encouraging environment, which became a sociable meeting place. The vessels and figures produced by Merric and Doris Boyd from the 1910s onwards, and the domestic and decorated pottery made by their children, their spouses and friends from the 1940s provided incomes that enabled, in particular, Arthur and his brother-in-law John Perceval to further their painting careers. This exhibition is based upon the National Gallery of Victoria's collection with some additional loans, notably from the Estate of Marvin Hurnall, whose passion for Boyd ceramics was significant.

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## **BOYD FAMILY – ROOM 1**

The Boyd family had its Australian origins in early colonial Melbourne. Merric's father, Arthur Merric Boyd, descended from the military Boyd and landowner Martin families, while his mother Emma Minnie à Beckett descended from the judiciary à Beckett and beer-brewing, ex-convict Mills families. The Mills' fortune enabled the family to live in comfort and leisure during the nineteenth century, travelling in Europe and residing in England. Both Emma Minnie and Arthur Merric studied at the Melbourne National Gallery School, and painted and exhibited throughout their lives. They had five children: Gilbert, Merric, Penleigh, Martin and Helen, although Gilbert tragically died young in a riding accident.

Penleigh established himself as a successful landscape painter and, like his parents, exhibited at the Royal Academy in London. His career, however, was cut tragically short when he died in a car accident at the age of thirty-three. Penleigh's son Robin was later recognised as Melbourne's most noted modernist architect. Martin became a respected expatriate author, who often drew upon his extended family for his narratives, and Helen was a painter in her later years. Despite dwindling finances in the twentieth century, the Boyd siblings grew up in a supportive and creative environment; Martin recalled that 'sketching for us was as normal an activity as breathing'.

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## **Emma Minnie Boyd**

Australia 1858–1936, England 1890–93

### **Interior with figures, The Grange**

1875 Harkaway, Victoria

watercolour over pencil on paper on cardboard

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor,  
2004

2004.271

Emma Minnie à Beckett showed artistic talent from a young age. She was fortunate to study at the Melbourne National Gallery School, under Eugene von Guérard, and took private lessons with Louis Buvelot and, probably, Madame Vieusseux. Her work was first displayed at the 1874 Victorian Academy of Arts exhibition and she exhibited in these and other exhibitions throughout her life, showing great proficiency particularly in watercolour.

From 1919 to 1922 Emma Minnie, Arthur Merric and their daughter Helen lived in a house they built beside Merric's Open Country. Named Tralee, it still survives, at 12 Wahroongaa Crescent.

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**Emma Minnie Boyd**

Australia 1858–1936, England 1890–93

**The window seat**

1887 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Gift of June Stewart in memory of Dr Randall Stewart  
through the

Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

2009.447

*The window seat* is one of a group of paintings by Emma Minnie that depict friends and family members engaged in leisurely pursuits in elegant drawing rooms. This painting depicts the interior of Glenfern, her husband's family's Gothic residence on Inkerman Street, Balaclava, and it is likely that the figure is her sister-in-law, Lucy. The courting couple in *Interior with figures*, *The Grange*, were probably her own sister, Emily, and her suitor-cousin, shown in the Boyd family house in Harkaway, south-west of Melbourne.

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**Emma Minnie Boyd**

Australia 1858–1936, England 1890–93

**Corner of a drawing room**

1887 Melbourne

oil on canvas

K. M. Christensen and A. E. Bond Bequest, 2006

2006.37

‘Mrs. A. M. Boyd exhibits [in the Victorian Academy of Arts exhibition] two small pictures in oils, *The window seat* and *Corner of a drawing room*, both of them carefully drawn and well composed, full of painstaking detail, nicely worked out, together with an effective arrangement of direct and reflected light, which is noticeable in the second of the two pictures more especially.’

***The Argus*, 7 October 1887**

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## **Emma Minnie Boyd**

Australia 1858–1936, England 1890–93

### **To the workhouse**

1891 London

oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs Emma à Beckett, 1893

p.399.4-1

This was the first painting by a Boyd to enter the NGV's collection. It was donated in 1893 by Emma Minnie's mother, Emma à Beckett (née Mills), who was herself an accomplished amateur artist, and a dedicated supporter of her daughter's art. This painting is of particular significance because it is the work that Emma Minnie exhibited at the Royal Academy's annual exhibition in London in 1891. This study of a destitute couple was atypical in her art, but corresponds with an increasingly strict religious belief and concern for those less fortunate than herself, which she instilled in her children.

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## **Arthur Merric Boyd**

New Zealand 1862– Australia 1940, Australia from 1886,  
England 1890–93

### **St Kilda Pier**

1888 Melbourne  
oil on canvas

Purchased, 1967

1729-5

Arthur Merric Boyd and Emma Minnie à Beckett met while studying at the Melbourne National Gallery School: fellow students included Frederick McCubbin, Tom Roberts and Rupert Bunny. The couple married in 1886 and travelled in Europe in the 1890s, before the Depression of that decade reduced family funds. Back in Melbourne they devoted themselves to their art, receiving validation of their talents through exhibitions, sales and some teaching. This is the only painting by Arthur Merric in the NGV collection and reflects his love of the sea and of sailing, which he passed on to his grandson Arthur.

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Martin, the youngest son of Emma Minnie and Arthur Merric Boyd, became a noted expatriate author, living in England and then Italy. His first novel was published in 1925, and thereafter he published regularly. In a brief return to Australia in 1948–51, Martin bought the family property The Grange, Harkaway, and commissioned his nephew Arthur to decorate it with religious frescoes. Arthur encouraged Martin to explore the family's history, which led to the *Langford Quartet* series of novels (1952–62). *A Difficult Young Man* is based upon Martin's sometimes troubled relationship with his elder brother Merric, while Arthur appears in *The Cardboard Crown*.

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Like his parents, Penleigh studied at the Melbourne National Gallery School, under Bernard Hall and their friend Frederick McCubbin, and started exhibiting before his eighteenth birthday. At the school he also met the much-admired Doris Gough, who later married his brother Merric. Penleigh travelled to England, painting in Chelsea and at the artists' colony at St Ives, Cornwall. One of his paintings was selected for the 1912 Royal Academy exhibition, a triumph for such a young artist. In Paris he met and soon married the young model and artist Edith Anderson, whom he brought to Melbourne in 1913.

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## **Penleigh Boyd**

England 1890– Australia 1923, Australia from 1893,  
France and England 1911–12, 1915–18

## **The Warburton Ranges**

1923 Warrandyte, Victoria  
oil on cardboard

Presented by Dr Michael Elliott through the  
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013  
2013.404

While serving during the First World War, Penleigh was badly gassed at Ypres and sent home as an invalid in 1918. He retreated to his house in Warrandyte, determined 'to produce something enduring from the peculiar conditions of the Australian landscape'. His subsequent celebratory images, in oil and watercolour, offered a reaffirmation of the beauty, purity and truth found in nature, in contrast to the devastation he experienced in the trenches. Regrettably, his flourishing career was all too short: he was killed in a car accident on the road to Sydney in 1923.

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## **Robin Boyd**

Australia 1919–71

### **Plans, Arthur Boyd studio**

1938 Melbourne

blueprint

The Robin Boyd Foundation, Melbourne

In 1938 Arthur Merric Boyd gave his grandson Arthur a gift, funding him to commission his cousin Robin, then a nineteen-year-old architecture student, to design a studio, which Arthur built himself in the garden of Open Country. Like a spaceship landed in the suburbs, this contemporary International-style building, with its wall of sloping glass windows, served as studio and residence for Arthur, and later for his wife Yvonne and their children and others. In the 1960s Barbara Bilcock was residing there when she met Albert Tucker, whom she later married.

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## **Robin Boyd**

Australia 1919–71

### **The Australian Ugliness**

published by F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960

book: offset lithograph, 229 pages, cardboard and fabric cover, stitched binding, paper jacket

The Robin Boyd Foundation, Melbourne

Robin Boyd was the second son of Penleigh, raised by his mother Edith after his father's untimely death. Robin grew up surrounded by his parents' art and supported by the extended Boyd family: his wife Patricia was a niece of Doris Boyd's. As director of *The Age* Small Homes Service, he promoted well-designed houses, selling plans for £5. As well as a skilful architect, Robin was a lecturer, social and architectural historian, radio and television commentator. His controversial bestselling book *The Australian Ugliness* (1960) was influential in the growing public awareness of the interrelationship of design, architecture and urban planning.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **Oak tree in yellow field**

1939 Rosebud, Victoria

oil on canvas on composition board

The Warren Clark Bequest, 1997

1997.91

Following the death of Emma Minnie in 1936, Arthur lived with his much-loved grandfather, Arthur Merric, at his cottage at Rosebud, on the Mornington Peninsula. The teenage Arthur was free to paint, roaming the countryside and sailing on the bay, inspired by the light-filled landscapes of the Heidelberg Impressionists as well as the intensity of Vincent van Gogh's art. He often painted with family and friends, such as his cousin Pat Boyd (elder son of Penleigh) who showed him how to apply paint with a palette knife. In 1939 his grandfather's failing health required them to return to Open Country.

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## **MERRIC – ROOM 1**

Merric Boyd is considered the first notable artist potter in Australia. Unlike his more gregarious brothers, Merric took time to find his path, studying at the Melbourne National Gallery School, before undergoing training at an agricultural college and a religious seminary. He began working in clay in around 1907 when, inspired by the sculptor and family friend Charles Web Gilbert, he used the medium to model small sculptures. In 1910 he taught himself how to make wheel-thrown pottery and, with some assistance from commercial potter Archibald McNair, the process of glazing and firing. Merric held his first exhibition in 1912 – the first solo exhibition of studio pottery displayed in Australia.

In 1913 Merric established his pottery studio at Open Country, where he produced his distinctive wheel-thrown and hand-modelled earthenware forms. Often working in collaboration with his wife, Doris, the works typically drew inspiration from Australian flora and fauna and are characterised by sinuous, sculptural forms and an earthy charm. Merric had early success, but a disastrous fire in 1926 destroyed his kiln, a trauma that affected his output and long-term health. Nevertheless he continued to produce his art, including numerous drawings, until the 1950s.

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‘The first impulse of the maker of hand pottery is to obtain pleasure in making and decorating an article, and making that pleasure intelligible to others. Besides that, it is his ultimate aim to produce something beautiful which will give pleasure to all beholders. The use of our own flora and fauna is of the first importance.’

## **Merric Boyd**

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Doris Boyd was widely remembered for her sweetness of disposition, devotion to her family and her Christian Science faith in Divine Love. The daughter of Thomas Gough, a naval officer, and Evelyn, a journalist, socialist and feminist activist, Doris was a popular art student when she met Penleigh, and then his elder brother Merric. She married the latter in 1915 and was a dedicated wife to Merric, despite his complexities. Doris was also an accomplished artist, delicately painting and sketching when she was not mothering, or assisting Merric with the decorating, firing and selling of his ceramics.

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Doris used her creative skills in the Open Country studio and often collaborated with Merric, particularly in decorating the wares. Her contribution is sometimes acknowledged with an inscription on the base of the objects, but otherwise can be identified by her painterly style. She also played an important role in managing their finances and in promoting and selling the work, helping Merric transport it to Melbourne to sell at the Primrose Pottery Shop and other outlets.

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Philippa James was one of Merric's pupils from about 1919 to 1924. Merric's strong stylistic influence can be seen in the many works James created featuring Australian plant and animal motifs, as well as their rustic charm – a quality typically associated with Merric's work. James joined the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria in 1925 and exhibited regularly until the 1940s, when she stopped making pottery.

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Throughout his life Merric sketched, but in his later years, as his health failed him, he turned increasingly to small-scale, coloured pencil drawings. He would sit in the Brown Room at Open Country constantly drawing, and carried pencils with him, tucked in his socks, as he walked around the neighbourhood. He frequently gave his drawings away, although their loose style and often fantastic forms were not appreciated by everyone.

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## **Merric Boyd**

Australia 1888–1959, England 1917–19

### **Jug**

1934 Yarraville, Melbourne

glazed porcelaineous stoneware

Kenneth Hood Bequest Fund, 20122012.21

For a few months in 1934 Doris and Merric worked from a studio at the Australian Porcelain Insulator Company in Yarraville, Melbourne, where they were employed to produce a range of high-fired wares that were known as Cruffel Art Porcelain. Thrown and modelled by Merric and decorated by Doris, these works were made using the porcelaineous clay that was left over from insulator production and are characterised by their refined production values.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **Jug**

1931 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
glazed earthenware

Gift of Don McRae, 1991    D33-1991

This is one of the earliest known ceramic works by Arthur Boyd. Made when he was just eleven years of age, it shows the very strong influence of his father. It is an accomplished effort and foreshadows his competent approach to the medium which was a feature of his production at the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery.

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## **Hatton Beck**

Australia 1901–94, England 1966–70

### **Jug**

1950s Melbourne

glazed earthenware

Presented through the NGV Foundation from  
the Bequest of Barbara Parker, 20052005.574

Following the fire that destroyed the Open Country studio in 1926, Hatton Beck assisted Merric in firing his work in a kiln at his studio in nearby Oakleigh. By the early 1930s Beck was regularly working with Merric at Open Country and in 1939 he married Lucy, Merric's and Doris's eldest daughter. Around this time Hatton and Lucy set up Altamira Pottery in an old butcher's shop on Neerim Road, Murrumbena, where they produced a range of utilitarian ceramics. This was taken over by Arthur, John Perceval and Peter Herbst in 1944 and renamed the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery.

## WAR – ROOM 2

When the Second World War was declared in 1939, the Boyd family's pacifist beliefs were challenged. Arthur, Guy and David managed to avoid active combat, instead serving with the military in Victoria. Working in the Cartographic Unit in Melbourne, in 1941 Arthur and Guy met the impish young artist John Perceval. When Perceval was discharged the following year, he settled at Open Country and in 1944 married the youngest Boyd, Mary. In 1942 Arthur met his future wife Yvonne Lennie, an artist who was friends with Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, Sidney Nolan, John and Sunday Reed, and other members of the recently formed Contemporary Art Society.

At this time, Melbourne's small art community was intensely stimulated by the confronting art and personal experiences of émigré artists such as Yosli Bergner and Danila Vassilieff; the modern European art revealed to Melburnians at the *Herald* Exhibition in 1939; the vehement political arguments raging in Australia; the reports of fighting overseas and the sudden, sordid transformation of wartime Melbourne. In response, young artists such as Arthur, Perceval, Tucker, Hester, Bergner and others explored elements of Expressionism, Surrealism and Social Realism as they redefined the role of art in this troubled time.

## **Yosl Bergner**

born Austria 1920, Australia 1937–48, Israel from 1950

### **Father and child**

1940 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by  
Mr Yosl Bergner, Founder Benefactor, 1985

A6-1985

A Viennese-born Jew, Yosl Bergner spent his childhood in Warsaw. As a teenager, he fled Nazi Europe, arriving in Melbourne in 1937 where he soon became a vocal and persuasive presence. Bergner's dark images of European cities and Melbourne's inner suburbs, and his identification with the poor and dispossessed, were highly influential upon young Melbourne painters of his generation. Bergner met Arthur Boyd in 1938, and actively encouraged his development away from tranquil landscapes towards art that was more expressive and emotional. Desperately poor, Bergner was one of many émigrés and refugees who were welcomed (and fed) at Open Country during these years.

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## **Yosl Bergner**

born Austria 1920, Australia 1937–48, Israel from 1950

### **The village on fire**

1940 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by  
Mr Yosl Bergner, Founder Benefactor, 1985

A5-1985

En route to Australia, Bergner had travelled via Paris where he saw art by French Realists Jean-François Millet and Honoré Daumier, and early paintings by Pablo Picasso. This chilling painting suggests immediate events – the Warsaw ghetto was established in 1940 – as well as the centuries of persecution and pogroms suffered by Jews. Bergner saw an affinity between the discrimination against Jews and that suffered by Indigenous Australians; his empathetic paintings later influenced Arthur Boyd's important *Brides* series, (1957–60). In 1941 Bergner, Arthur and the communist social realist Noel Counihan exhibited together at the Rowden White Library, University of Melbourne.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **The weathercock**

1944 Melbourne  
oil on muslin board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of The Shell Company of Australia Limited, Founder Benefactor, 1988 A7-1988

Apart from a few brief months at the Melbourne National Gallery School, Arthur had little formal art training, while Perceval had none until after the Second World War. The two studied at the State Library of Victoria and in Melbourne's few enlightened bookstores, explored the National Gallery of Victoria's collection and chatted in friends' studios and local pubs. During the war, Arthur was stationed in South Melbourne, then a poor and depressed area of the city. In 1943–44 he produced a disturbing series of drawings and paintings based upon real and imagined events, set against terrace-lined houses and factories.

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'I used to see some weird characters walking up and down the beach at South Melbourne. The woman wheeling her paralysed dog by its hind legs, the man running up with a flower trying to ingratiate himself ... I sketched them on the spot ... The cripples, the factory girls and the factory chimneys. They were meant to serve as reminders.'

## **Arthur Boyd**

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With limited time for painting, Arthur produced numerous drawings, made with a bamboo reed pen. In their expressionistic violence and often irrational imagery, these marked a radical new direction for his art. Moths, coffins, flowers, cripples, recumbent or floating figures, entwined lovers and strange hybrid animals appear in various permutations in industrial or inner-city landscapes, and became the basis of the private iconography that he used throughout his life. In addition to scenes from wartime Melbourne, some of Arthur's fundamental images were drawn from disturbing personal recollections, such as when his father Merric collapsed during an epileptic seizure, or the sight of his grandfather's corpse.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Soul singer at Luna Park**

1942–43 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by  
Mr John Perceval, Founder Benefactor, 1986

A10-1986

The influx of tens of thousands of American servicemen to Melbourne during the Second World War led to a number of popular jazz and blues clubs being established, including at Luna Park and around Flinders Street Station. With wartime shortages, Perceval made use of materials at hand. This work was originally painted on the reverse side of *Survival*; the board was separated in 1967, and this work donated to the NGV by the artist in 1986.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Survival**

1942 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Amcor Limited, Fellow, 1982

A8-1982

In 1941 John Perceval met Guy and Arthur Boyd and joined the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), thus gaining support and stimulation from both the Outer Circle community and Melbourne's radical art group. Perceval first exhibited the following year, aged only nineteen, in the controversial Anti-Fascist Exhibition that was organised by the CAS. *Survival* was one of two works exhibited, and demonstrates the young artist's experimentation with powerful new ideas and artistic influences. The nurturing relationship of mother and child, so prevalent in European art, is here threatened by desperate poverty, the contorted child seemingly struggling to escape from the embrace of the exaggerated hands.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Exodus from a bombed city**

1942 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Dinah and Henry Krongold, Founder Benefactors, 1987

A2-1987

In this powerful painting the curved horizon and distorted perspective gives an impression of universal suffering; the world divided between the fleeing innocents, and the soldiers, now rotting, their bayonets like frozen lightning. Between them a plague of rats, with blood-red feet, streams towards the ruined city. Perceval is clearly calling upon the war imagery of artists such as Käthe Kollwitz and the German Expressionists, as well as the strong black outlines used by French artist Georges Rouault, most evident in the nuns' features. The skeletal figure in the foreground is a self-portrait.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Boy with broken pot**

1943 Melbourne

oil on muslin on composition board

Gift of the artist, 1989

AC7-1989

Children appear in many of Perceval's works of the 1940s, often in anxious, surreal settings. The fair-haired boy refers to his own fraught childhood, although the scene here may have more immediate references – the damaged jug has an amorphous form similar to Merric Boyd's work, and the curly haired dog is probably based upon Peter, the Boyd family pet who appeared regularly in Arthur's work. These early experimental paintings were not commercially successful and remained in the artist's personal collection: Perceval gave this painting to the NGV in 1989.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Boy with a kite, Fitzroy**

1943 Melbourne

oil on composition board

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor,  
2004

2004.204

1940s Melbourne was a period of intense experimentation and debate about the directions of contemporary art. Perceval embraced the styles of artists banned or exiled by the Nazis, such as Max Beckmann and Emil Nolde, as well as the social-realist style sanctioned by the Communist Party. He may also have been influenced by the Russian émigré Danila Vassilieff, whose vibrantly coloured and expressive paintings and interest in children's and folk art were a revelation to young Melbourne artists. A clear development from Perceval's earlier, monumental paintings, this gestural work, with its whorls of paint, seems both joyous and slightly sinister.

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## **Albert Tucker**

Australia 1914–99, Europe and United States 1947–60

### **Army barracks**

1942 Melbourne

enamel paint on plywood

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Westpac Banking Corporation, Founder Benefactor, 1992 A5-1992

A self-taught artist, Albert Tucker was articulate and a fluent writer who entered forcefully into the debates about the role of art being argued at the Contemporary Art Society and in the pages of the *Angry Penguins* journal. In 1942 Tucker was drafted into the army, but the harsh and dehumanising conditions of the training camp caused both physical and psychological distress, which resulted in him being invalided to Heidelberg Military Hospital. Here he worked as a medical illustrator among shell-shocked and maimed and disfigured soldiers, which further traumatised him. After his discharge, Tucker expressed his horror of war in compelling and claustrophobic paintings.

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**Albert Tucker**

Australia 1914–99, Europe and United States 1947–60

**Self-portrait**

1945 Melbourne

charcoal, brush and ink and wash

Purchased, 1980

P3-1980

Albert Tucker and his wife, the artist Joy Hester, became good friends with the Boyds and the Percevals, who visited each other at Open Country and at the Reeds' house, Heide. Tucker was a keen photographer and took many photographs of wartime Melbourne and his friends. His photographs of Open Country are some of the best surviving visual records of the property.

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**Albert Tucker**

Australia 1914–99, Europe and United States 1947–60

**(Images of modern evil)**

1945 Melbourne

coloured pastel on brown paper

Purchased, 1978

A34-1978

To represent his disillusionment with contemporary society and symbolise his disgust at the abandoned and self-destructive behaviour he witnessed on Melbourne's nocturnal streets, Tucker created a grotesque female form, with a bright, crescent-shaped mouth, who appeared in his series of paintings and drawings titled *Images of modern evil*. In this drawing she sprawls, drunk or abandoned, before a distinctive Melbourne tram. In 1946, when Tucker, Arthur Boyd and Sidney Nolan exhibited together at the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne, Tucker devised the publicity catch-cry: 'Tramway Tucker, Bible Boyd and Ned Nolan'.

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## **DIDACTIC**

In 1944 Arthur Boyd, John Perceval and émigré artist and philosopher Peter Herbst purchased Hatton Beck's pottery, Altamira, in a building near Murrumbena station in Neerim Road. It was renamed the Arthur Merric Boyd (AMB) Pottery and became one of Australia's most innovative and colourful postwar potteries.

The AMB Pottery was initially set up to make functional domestic ware to meet government requirements, a move that enabled Arthur to leave the army. As austerity measures were relaxed, Arthur and Perceval were able to exercise their artistic inclinations, creating vibrantly glazed and decorated one-off pieces, including bowls, plates, vases, coffee and tea sets, and tiles that were often applied to small tabletops.

When Herbst left AMB in 1950 to continue an academic career, his share in the partnership was taken up by artist, gardener and keen naturalist Neil Douglas, who was already employed at the pottery. Numerous people were involved in the collaborative production process over the years, including Yvonne Boyd, Mary Perceval, Charles Blackman, Tim and Betty Burstall, Carl Cooper, Valerie Herbst, John Howley, Margo Knox, Jean Langley, Dorothy Meyer, Tom Sanders, Martin Smith, Albert Tucker, John Yule and many others.

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'When I took it out it was still hot. It was a most marvellous feeling ... I'll never forget it ... a painting doesn't have anywhere near the impact of pulling something out that has been almost purged by being through fire ... It is a pure object and it is changed. It's formed in the fire and so the surprise is marvellous.'

**Arthur Boyd**

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## **Merric Boyd**

Australia 1888–1959, England 1917–19

## **Arthur Boyd**

1926 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
glazed earthenware

Gift of John Alexander Lyne through the

Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

2012.228

Merric Boyd began his artistic career as a sculptor – a plaster bust he modelled of Doris in 1911 was displayed in Open Country's Brown Room – and throughout his life he modelled the occasional figure. These two figurines are portraits of Arthur, his eldest son. This earlier, more realistic work was made when Arthur was six; the latter is a more idiosyncratic representation of him as a young boy, made when Arthur was twenty-nine years old.

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Yvonne Lennie was a talented artist who won first prize for drawing at the Melbourne National Gallery School in 1939, and during the early 1940s developed her painting style in the expressionistic social realist manner of the time. Like many of the Boyd women, following her marriage to Arthur in 1945, Yvonne's art was soon overshadowed by her domestic duties and her husband's career. Although most of the decorators who assisted at the AMB Pottery were not acknowledged, these vessels are signed 'YB'.

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Neil Douglas introduced a quirky depiction of the environment to the earthenware produced at AMB. Using a direct, tempera-style technique – applying the underglaze colour onto the leather-hard clay surface before the application of a clear overglaze and subsequent firing – he created idiosyncratic pieces that combined a feathery but skilful painting style with simple thrown forms.

Douglas was a passionate gardener who helped create Sunday Reed's garden at Heide in Templestowe, and his love of Australian flora and fauna is evident in his art. A charismatic and eccentric individual, he later became a conservationist crusader.

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**Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery** studio

Murrumbeena, Melbourne 1944–58

**Arthur Boyd** potter and decorator

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and  
England from 1971

**Decanter set**

1948 Murrumbeena, Melbourne

glazed earthenware

Gift of John Perceval, 1987D32.a-f-1987

The themes that Arthur and John Perceval were exploring in their paintings and drawings often crossed over to the designs they painted onto their ceramics. Betty Burstall and her husband Tim were close friends of the Boyds, and the families visited each other often. Betty's serene features and halo of brown curls were the source for Arthur's vision of angels that he painted at this time. Betty Burstall later founded La Mama Theatre in Carlton.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Self-portrait**

1938 Melbourne

oil on plywood

Gift of Stuart Purves, 2007 2007.22

Like Arthur and his siblings, John Perceval demonstrated his artistic skill from an early age – this self-portrait was painted when he was only fifteen. Raised on a wheat farm in Western Australia, and sharing his time between there and Melbourne, with each of his divorced parents, Perceval's childhood was further disturbed when he contracted polio, a disease that paralysed many. He was left with a permanent limp. During his long convalescence Perceval developed his precocious talents, which were soon recognised – an article about his painting appeared in the *Sun-News Pictorial* in June 1938.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **(The backyard, Open Country)**

1948 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
pencil on buff paper

Gift of the Reverend Ian Brown, 2014

Despite the multitude of artists who lived at and visited Open Country, only a few drawings and photographs exist of its overgrown garden, where children climbed trees, adults danced on warm evenings, and snails and weeds were safe. The shed and building in the background of this drawing hint at the assorted buildings that accumulated over the years, while the fence on the left may be the boundary, which was reduced as the properties once owned by Merric and Doris's mothers were sold. Perceval's skilful use of negative space allows this tranquil outdoor scene to float upon the sheet of paper.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Merric Boyd in the Brown Room**

late 1940s – early 1950s Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
pencil on buff paper

Gift of the Reverend Ian Brown, 2014

Merric and Doris frequently served as informal models for both Perceval and Arthur during the 1940s. As Merric's health deteriorated, his ability to continue with his pottery diminished, yet Perceval depicts him here in the Brown Room surrounded by his tools and vessels, with their distinctive amorphous forms and swirling shapes.

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In the years following the Second World War, the crowded domestic and social life at Open Country was vital subject matter for Arthur and Perceval. Each produced hundreds of sketches and studies of friends, family and surroundings. In his drawing style, Perceval developed a distinctive cursive freedom and fluidity of line, with little use of tonality, which conveys a sense of vigour and instantaneity. His fascination with children is also apparent, observing and enjoying their concentration and absorption in the world around them.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Baby (Matthew Perceval)**

mid – late 1940s Murrumbena, Melbourne  
pencil

Purchased, 1977

P24-1977

Having had no previous art training, following the the Second World War Perceval was able to take classes at the National Gallery School, focusing on portraiture. He had no shortage of children to model for him – the newborn baby swaddled in this undated drawing is probably his son Matthew (born 1945), but could also be his niece Polly (1946), his first daughter Tessa (1947), or his nephew Jamie (1948), all of whom lived at Open Country.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **(Figures on wheels)**

mid – late 1940s Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
pencil on buff paper

Purchased, 1977

P27-1977

This drawing depicts people borne upon wheels at various stages of life, from pram to tricycle to hand-propelled wheelchair, the latter a common sight with many paralysed by polio or crippled by war. Perceval was fortunate to regain his mobility after his polio infection, but his friend Carl Cooper had been confined to a wheelchair. Perceval's art demonstrates his often ribald sense of humour, influenced by artists such as William Hogarth, as well as contemporary characters including Charlie Chaplin. This image may be a gentle memento mori: 'As you are now, so once was I, As I am now, so you must be'.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, lived in England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **The Denial of St Peter**

1946–47 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
oil on canvas on composition board

Presented by Terrinalum Properties Pty Ltd, 1990

AC3-1990

In the years immediately following the Second World War, the art of Arthur and Perceval developed a close, if short-lived affinity. Biblical narratives appeared in their paintings, drawings and ceramics, inspired by Arthur's childhood recollections of his grandmother Emma Minnie's illustrated Bible, and Merric's nightly readings from the Bible. Many of Arthur's paintings at this time have an Old Testament darkness, with apocalyptic imagery often set in forbidding bushscapes under leaden skies. This painting, however, is a more direct rendition of the Apostle Peter denying his friendship with Jesus, as the rooster prepares to crow.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, lived in England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **Christ carrying the Cross**

1946–47 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
oil on canvas

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor,  
2004

2004.143

Unlike some of their contemporaries who considered historical art irrelevant, both Arthur and Perceval keenly studied earlier artists, in particular, during the mid 1940s, Rembrandt van Rijn and the Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Brueghel. Brueghel's relocation of biblical or mythical events into bucolic contemporary settings was appreciated by both artists, who placed their subjects into Melbourne streetscapes or distinctively Australian bush landscapes. Here Christ bearing his burden struggles to make his way through what looks like a country show, crowded with people, animals and tents, with the Australian institutions of church and football oval visible on the horizon.

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**John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

**Romulus suckling the wolf with Remus**

1946 Murrumbeena, Melbourne

pencil

Purchased, 1977

P25-1977

The twins Romulus and Remus are the mythical founders of Rome, abandoned by their treacherous uncle in the wilderness, where they were raised by a wolf. Perceval returned to this theme subsequently, including a ceramic sculpture of the boys being fed by their protective wolf mother, a late work in his *Angels* series, (1957–62).

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Study for The Nativity**

1947 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
pencil on buff paper

Purchased, 1977

P28-1977

The figures depicted worshipping the newborn baby are based upon those familiar to Perceval – the central female leaning forward bears similarities to drawings Perceval made of Doris in a stooped pose; the elderly naked figure on the right may be Merric; and the long-haired female to the left is possibly Mary Perceval. The blond-haired boy, who appears repeatedly in Perceval's oeuvre, harks back to himself as a fair child, or to one of the many grandchildren of Doris and Merric who were starting to populate Open Country.

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**John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

**The angel Gabriel descended (Study for The Crossing of the Red Sea)**

1947 Murrumbeena, Melbourne

pencil on buff paper

Purchased, 1977

P26-1977

In this expressive sketch, and the resulting oil painting, Moses is neither parting the Red Sea nor drowning the pursuing Egyptians, but rather is seated, a kindly patriarch, greeting the Chosen – a tumultuous, Boschian mix of humans and animals – like Christ at the Last Judgement.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Study for The Crossing of the Red Sea**

c. 1947 Murrumbeena, Melbourne

brush and ink and wash

Private collection, Melbourne

This work depicts the last of the Chosen, hastened by the angel Gabriel, rushing to reach land as the parted waves crash forth, drowning their enemies in swirls of foaming crests. Perceval's great ability is evident in the mass of lines, a controlled diagonal emphasis to the lower left creating an exhilarating sense of urgency and confusion.

## **DIDACTIC - SWIMMING POOL**

In the late 1940s Arthur started using the ceramic medium in more complex ways. Between 1949 and 1953 he produced a series of approximately 100 ceramic paintings on handmade tiles, which are remarkable for their brilliant, luminous colour – the results of intensive experimentation with firing and glazing techniques. The paintings combine imagery from the Bible, classical mythology and Arthur's own personal iconography. A second series was produced in London in 1962–64.

In 1953–54, Arthur created a number of figurative compositions constructed from slabs of terracotta clay and painted with underglaze colours. These works explored form and space and were clearly influenced by Cubism. These powerful sculptures were exhibited to great interest at Peter Bray Gallery, Melbourne, in 1954, from where the National Gallery of Victoria purchased *David and Saul*, c. 1952, the first of the sculptures the artist had made.

For the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, Arthur was commissioned to make a monumental sculpture, to be installed at the new Olympic Swimming Stadium, beside the Yarra River, where it still stands. Eventually constructed from more than 250 glazed terracotta bricks weighing a total of twelve tons, and standing at ten metres tall, the sinuous, abstracted form was seen as a triumph of Australian sculpture.

## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

## **David and Saul**

c. 1952 Murrumbeena, Melbourne  
glazed earthenware

Purchased, 1954

1482-D4

This is the first sculpture that Arthur Boyd made. When it was exhibited in 1954, John Reed wrote to Albert Tucker: 'All your faith in Arthur ... is now beautifully realised in work which could be confidently placed anywhere in the world ... When one enters the show one has that immediate feeling of monumentality, both in concept and execution, which one associates inevitably with the word "master" ... They are most richly painted and it is really hard to understand how anyone with a grain of sensitivity can fail to be bowled over by the force of their immediate impact'.

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**Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

**The whale putting Jonah into its mouth, tile**

c. 1953 Murrumbena, Melbourne  
earthenware

Purchased, 1953

1359-D4

This is from the series of glazed tiles that Arthur made between 1949 and 1953. Jonah, a prophet recorded in the Old Testament, disobeyed God and a terrible storm was brought upon his ship. He was cast into the sea, thus calming the storm, and then swallowed by a whale; subsequently he was saved by God. This is one of Boyd's more Cubist tiles which, in its frontal approach, conveys both the momentum of the approaching creature and the terror of Jonah. The luminous glazes that Arthur created were inspired, in part, by European ceramics he had seen in the NGV Collection.

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## THE OTHER BOYDS

All of the Boyds were involved in pottery making, which they had learnt by watching and assisting their parents' artistic activity. In 1946 Guy Boyd set up a commercial pottery studio in Sydney while he was studying sculpture at East Sydney Technical College. Initially named Guy Boyd Pottery, it was renamed Martin Boyd Pottery (after his uncle) in 1948. Guy was assisted in the studio by his brother David, and it operated as a successful concern until 1963. Over time, however, Guy withdrew from the studio, returning to Melbourne with his wife Phyllis in 1951 to continue his pottery and, later, sculpture.

While in Sydney, David met the young Hermia Lloyd Jones, who worked part-time as a decorator at the Martin Boyd Pottery. They married in 1948 and soon after established their own pottery, and for two years produced a stylish range marketed as 'Hermia Ware'. In 1950 they departed Australia and, until 1970, moved between England and France where they set up a number of pottery studios. Visits back to Australia often saw them working at Open Country or the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery. In 1967 they ceased making pottery, with David concentrating on his painting and Hermia on making sculpture.

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**Guy Boyd Pottery studio**  
Oakleigh, Melbourne 1952–64

**Ramekins**

c. 1957 Oakleigh, Melbourne  
glazed earthenware

Private collection, Melbourne

Ramekins were one of the main commercial items produced at the Boyd pottery studios in the 1940s and 1950s. Both the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery and the Martin Boyd Pottery sold large numbers of these small tureen sets that were particularly popular with postwar homemakers. In 1951 Guy Boyd left the Martin Boyd Pottery, which he had established with his brother David, and returned to Melbourne where set up a studio with his wife Phyllis. This group of ramekins is from the late 1950s and was produced at Guy's Oakleigh studio.

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## LATER WORKS

As the AMB Pottery developed and the wartime demand for utilitarian ware receded, the items produced became increasingly imaginative, with spontaneous and often humorous designs painted onto the earthenware forms in brightly coloured glazes. From 1948 Arthur withdrew from the business to concentrate on his glazed tiles, sculptures and, increasingly, on landscape painting. Thereafter Perceval, along with Neil Douglas and their many assistants, dedicated himself to the pottery until he too returned to painting in the mid 1950s. Each artist found Australian scenery that captivated him, in particular the Wimmera, Gaffney's Creek and Williamstown.

Change was inevitable at Open Country. One by one the children moved away as their families grew and their careers developed, and the AMB Pottery formally ceased in 1958. Upon the death of Merric in 1959, and of Doris in 1960, Lucy and Hatton Beck returned to the house and briefly used the pottery facilities again. In 1964, the decision was reluctantly made to sell the now run-down property, and a block of flats was built in its place. The land of the Outer Circle railway line is now named Boyd Park, in memory of this extraordinary family and the role Open Country played in the artistic and creative life of mid-century Melbourne.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **The wheatfield**

1948 Harkaway, Victoria  
oil on composition board

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by  
Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor,  
2004

2004.144

In the later 1940s Arthur's art took on a tranquillity not seen since before the Second World War. While working on the murals commissioned by his uncle Martin, and living with Yvonne and their children at The Grange, Arthur was able to relax amid the undulating hills of the Berwick countryside. He was particularly taken at this time with the painterly style and scenery of landscapist Louis Buvelot, with whom Emma Minnie had studied. He was also exploring the Old Master paint medium of tempera, and thinned oil paint to create a translucency akin to that of ceramic glazes, as demonstrated in this quintessentially Australian vista.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **Irrigation lake, Wimmera**

1950 Wimmera, Victoria

resin and tempera on composition board

Purchased, 1950

2331-4

During the 1950s Arthur was increasingly attracted to Australia's harsher landscapes. In 1950 Yvonne and her family were invited to visit friends in Horsham, western Victoria, and they returned in subsequent years. Arthur was familiar with the bold, abstract paintings that his friend Sidney Nolan had created of this region, yet his own interpretation was markedly different. These luminous paintings show the glare and harsh nature of the dry farmland, here backed by the Grampians, with cockatoos screeching from the dead, dammed trees. This was the first painting by Arthur purchased by the NGV, in the year it was made.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

### **Burning off**

1958 Gippsland, Victoria  
oil on composition board

Purchased with funds donated by Mr Roderick Carnegie,  
1971 A11-1971

After a period devoted to the ceramic sculptures and Olympic Games commission, Arthur returned to landscape painting during the summer of 1956–57. These paintings of the Victorian bush and Peninsula are marked by an unprecedented variety in both their subjects and techniques. Arthur painted this scene, of bush destroyed for human consumption, in Gippsland, where he was painting a mural for St John's Anglican Church, Yallourn. Other painting trips with friends, such as John Perceval, Charles Blackman and Fred Williams, took them to many country and seaside areas.

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## **Arthur Boyd**

Australia 1920–99, England 1959–71, Australia and England from 1971

## **Shelly beach**

1958 Portsea, Victoria

oil on canvas on composition board

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria from the

Bequest of Mrs G. H. Hillas, Founder Benefactor, 1999  
1999.109

In 1955 Yvonne and Arthur moved from the tiny Robin Boyd–designed studio at Open Country to their own house, a weatherboard cottage in bayside Beaumaris. The following year Arthur signed with Australian Galleries, the newly formed gallery of Tam and Anne Purves, which provided a much-needed regular income. Visits to the Purves' beach house in Sorrento awoke memories of Arthur's teenage years in Rosebud, seen here in both textural technique and in the pastel tones that evoke the work of the Australian Impressionists. After the dissolution of the AMB Pottery in 1958, Arthur, Yvonne and their three children sailed for England.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **(Potato field)**

1948 Victoria

oil on canvas on composition board

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

2004.205

In 1939 at the *Herald* exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art, Perceval saw for the first time, among many other eye-opening works of art, landscapes and portraits by Vincent van Gogh. His great admiration for van Gogh's art changed the way he applied his paint in the postwar years. This painting, which in title and subject pays tribute to van Gogh, shows this new direction where paint texture and brushstrokes articulate the forms. *Potato field* may have been exhibited in Perceval's first solo exhibition, in 1948.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Gannets diving**

1956 Williamstown, Melbourne

enamel paint and gouache on composition board

Presented by the National Gallery Society of Victoria  
as the winner of The John McCaughey Memorial Prize,  
1957 3763-4

In 1956 Perceval discovered the Melbourne port of Williamstown, and began painting there en plein air. He described it as 'like finding Venice', but Williamstown was a grubby equivalent, with its working naval dockyard, crowds of tankers, yachts and sailing craft, and water bobbing with buoys, markers and black swans. Perceval painted there on many weekends, often joined by Arthur and Charles Blackman. His first series of Williamstown paintings formed the opening exhibition of Australian Galleries in 1956, and was well received, bringing a degree of prosperity to the Perceval family.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Study for Tug boat in a boat**

1956, dated 1957 Williamstown, Melbourne  
fibre-tipped pen

Private collection, Melbourne

Perceval enjoyed finding quirky or humorous scenes around him, in this case a boat within a boat. In the drawings he produced at this time, his technique shows a progression from the linear studies of the 1940s to one of greater exuberance where flourishing fibre-tipped lines are combined with dashes, dots, swirls and squiggles. When translated into paint, the thickly applied strokes, often in exaggerated primary colours, enhance the movement and bustle of these seaside scenes.

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## **John Perceval**

Australia 1923–2000, England 1963–65

### **Ocean beach, Sorrento**

1957 Sorrento, Victoria

enamel paint and tempera on canvas on composition board

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by

Mrs G. H. Hillas, Governor, 1997

1997.66

In January 1957 Perceval visited Portsea and Sorrento as the guest of Tam and Anne Purves. Inspired by the irregular coastline, he painted a small group of works, some of which were shown later that year at the Purves' Australian Galleries in a joint exhibition with Arthur. Painted in two hours, *Ocean beach, Sorrento*, also known as *Diamond Beach*, depicts a rocky portion of shore under the dry heat of a summer's day. The paint is applied frenetically, dribbled and scratched onto the surface to convey the sparkling turbulence of the foaming waves and ruggedness of the landscape.

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## **John Brack**

Australia 1920–99

## **John Perceval and his angels**

1962 Surrey Hills, Melbourne

oil on canvas

Purchased with funds donated by Mr Roderick Carnegie,  
1970 1786-5

In 1957, at his new home and studio in the Melbourne suburb of Canterbury, Perceval began a remarkable series of ceramic figures. Based upon observations of his children, their cousins and friends, he threw and modelled gnomonic and elfin figures, glazed and fired in a rich *sang-de-beouf* red. Perceval finished making his sculptures in 1961, the year before his friend John Brack painted this portrait of him with his clay creations.

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The National Gallery of Victoria's collection of John Perceval's ceramic sculptures will be installed in the adjoining room in December 2014, following their return from the Shepparton Art Gallery, where they are currently on display in *Delinquent Angel: John Perceval's Ceramic Angels* (29 August – 24 November 2014).

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## THE BROWN ROOM

The Brown Room, as the all-purpose living and dining room at Open Country was known, was the heart of the house. Crowded with art materials, canvases and pots, it was sparsely furnished with a large dining table and wooden furniture designed by Merric's brother Penleigh, with family paintings and sculptures by Merric around the walls. Numerous visitors recall the convivial atmosphere of this space, where people gathered to sing, dance, play or listen to music, perform and read aloud; where readings from the Bible were supplemented with poetry and philosophy texts. Amid this, Doris would perch, intrigued by discussions underway, while Merric sat in his rickety armchair, its broken leg propped upon bricks, accompanied by Peter the dog. It was a haven of constant encouragement and loving support, underpinned by humanist cultural values.

The photographs displayed here were taken between the 1910s and the 1960s by a number of photographers, in particular Albert Tucker during the 1940s. These images have been kindly provided by the Bundanon Trust, the Albert Tucker Photographic Collection (Heide Museum of Modern Art & State Library of Victoria, Melbourne), and other sources.

Any recollections or photographs of Open Country or the Arthur Merric Boyd Pottery are welcomed and may be sent to [outercircle@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:outercircle@ngv.vic.gov.au). These may be used by the NGV for future social/online promotion or research.

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‘There were parties and gatherings and so on; it was all very nice and friendly. Max Nicholson, the Langleys, the Coutts, Sid Nolan, Charlie and Barbara Blackman, and Tim and Betty Burstall would come over. I think Yosl Bergner was still in Melbourne at that time. There’d be fifty people or more in the brown room. Maybe I’d be playing piano and people would be dancing around, maybe smaller groups would be discussing something to do with the arts or literature or politics, anything.’

**David Boyd**

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## **Albert Tucker**

Australia 1914–99, Europe and United States 1947–60

### **Entrance to Open Country, Murrumbeena**

mid 1940s

Albert Tucker Photographic Collection,  
Heide Museum of Modern Art & State Library of Victoria,  
Melbourne

Joint gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

This is the only known image of the entrance to 8 Wahroongaa Crescent, Murrumbeena, known as Open Country. The figure in the tree (above the gallery doorway) could be one of several young men, such as John Perceval or David Boyd, who grew up climbing the trees in this overgrown garden.

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## **Marvin Hurnall, 1938–2014**

Marvin Hurnall was a collector of Australian decorative arts, and an acknowledged expert in the field. His particular interest was in ceramics, and he bought his first piece when he was in his early twenties. Over more than fifty years of collecting, Marvin amassed arguably the finest private collection of studio ceramics in Australia before his death in August 2014. He was closely associated with the development of this exhibition and maintained enthusiastic support for the NGV's Australian decorative arts collection and its presentation through exhibitions. The NGV is very grateful to the Estate of Marvin Hurnall for making it possible to honour his wish in lending works to this exhibition.