

LURID BEAUTY

Australian Surrealism & its *Echoes*

‘let me not call you lovely. Be the chaos of the
dream that knows nor nature nor lurid beauty. (...)’

MAX HARRIS, 1940

Let Me Not Call You Lovely

Artwork labels

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Lurid Beauty: ***Australian Surrealism and its Echoes***

Lurid Beauty: Australian Surrealism and its Echoes explores the profound influence Surrealism, from its historical origins to the present day, has had on Australian art. The exhibition identifies particular subjects and approaches begun by Surrealism taken up by subsequent generations of artists, including contemporary Australian artists.

Approximately 250 works are included, by more than eighty artists, embracing a gamut of media; from painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and printmaking to fashion, installation and video. Presenting historical and contemporary art in dialogue and correspondence, *Lurid Beauty* is an exuberant exploration of Surrealism and its echoes, reverberations and repercussions in Australian art.

Judith Wright

born Australia 1945

A journey

2011–12 Brisbane

found objects, wood, metal, bamboo, cork, fibreglass, glass, sequins, tin, rubber, synthetic polymer paint, palm fronds, synthetic fur, synthetic hair

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of an anonymous donor through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2015

2015.108

This major installation by Judith Wright introduces the exhibition *Lurid Beauty: Australian Surrealism and its Echoes*, and many of the conceptual territories examined within it.

A journey is made up of a procession of twelve figures, mannequins and dolls. On account of its appearing both lifelike and lifeless at the same time, the mannequin was one of two examples of 'the marvellous' mentioned by André Breton in the *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924).

Judith Wright's poignant work is part of a large body of recent practice centred on the death of her daughter, and the lost potential of a life. Together the figures form an otherworldly phalanx as they proceed on their unsettling journey.

Barry Humphries

born Australia 1934, lived in England 1959–

Forkscape

1958 Melbourne

steel, solder

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of John Perceval, 1991

S6-1991

As a schoolboy, Barry Humphries read about the early twentieth-century international art movement named Dada, and 'decided then and there to become a Dadaist, starting immediately'. Later, while a student at University of Melbourne, Humphries founded a Dada group, and they undertook a series of pranks and performances whose objective was to shock and provoke. He later recalled, 'I had a gift for that peculiar combination of ferocity and absurdity that marked the authentic Dadaist'.

Barry Humphries

born Australia 1934, lived in England 1959–

Exhibition catalogue for Barry Humphries' 'Second Pan- Australasian Dada Exhibition'

1953 Melbourne

colour lithograph

Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne
Gift of Barry Humphries, 1981

1981.202.098

Barry Humphries is considered to be Australia's first Dada artist. In 1952 while a student at University of Melbourne he staged the *First Pan-Australian Dada Exhibition*. This was followed by a second exhibition in 1953. Both exhibition catalogues used classic Dada typography and imagery and included provocative manifestos. The 1953 manifesto declared:

DADA HATES YOUR GUTS
CIVILIZATION IS A RACKET.

Like Dadaism, religion, cookery, cannibalism, football, etc.

Don't be deceived
ADMIT CULTURE STINKS.

Barry Humphries

born Australia 1934, lived in England 1959–

Single-breasted hat

1953, remade 2003 Melbourne
fur felt, zip, satin lining, leather

Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne
Gift of National Portrait Gallery, 2003

2003.038.002

Barry Humphries

born Australia 1934, lived in England 1959–

Surgical glove

1958, remade 1968 Melbourne
knitted wool

Performing Arts Collection, Arts Centre Melbourne
Gift of Barry Humphries, 1981

1981.202.886

In 1958 Humphries held a solo exhibition at the Victorian Artists' Society gallery in Melbourne. He exhibited *Single-breasted hat*, *Surgical glove* and *Siamese shoes I* as a group entitled *Dress Reform for the Australian Male*. These irrational objects are in the spirit of Dada, confounding expectations and poking fun at middle-class sensibilities. This glove (originally one of a pair) was knitted by Humphries's sister in 1968, and is a recreation of a glove in the 1958 exhibition.

Barry Humphries

born Australia 1934, lived in England 1959–

Siamese shoes I

1958, remade 1968 Melbourne
leather, silk scarves

Private collection, Melbourne

This work recalls *Das Paar (The couple)*, 1936, a pair of brown shoes attached at the toes, by the German-born, Swiss Surrealist Meret Oppenheim. During the 1930s Surrealist artists were deeply interested in combining and transforming ordinary functional items to create object-sculptures which challenged reason or gave rise to unexpected associations. In a similar vein, Humphries created irrational and absurd objects such as these shoes.

Lou Hubbard

born Australia 1957

Bore me

2007 Melbourne

two channel colour digital video, sound, 4 min

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

Stuart Ringholt

born Australia 1971

Untitled (Baroque)

2014 Melbourne

wood, upholstery

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Alex Vivian

born Australia 1981

Entry level sculpture (Things)

2015 Melbourne

fencing, iron, wire, handbag, clothing, rust, flannelette, food packaging, soiled bed sheets, used tissues, polyvinyl acetate and super glue, beach towel, wool hair and fur, scissors, pocket knife, spray adhesive

Courtesy of the artist and Sandy Brown, Berlin

Alex Vivian's recent practice makes commonly utilised objects unsettling and abject. Domestic objects from childhood are either smeared in Vaseline or covered in teddy bear fur; both treatments provoke confusion and disgust while creating an unnerving tension between nightmare, sexual and childhood imagery.

In this work, commissioned specifically for *Lurid Beauty*, objects are attached on walls strangely, like repressed and perverted memories emerging out of the structure of the space. These absurd objects unsettle the viewer, and poke fun at or question learned or conditioned associations.

Alex Vivian

born Australia 1981

Entry level sculpture (Dream, thoughts, etc.)

2015 Melbourne

wire, toys, bird cage, composition board, doll's ballet shoe and jacket, soiled bed sheets, flannelette, hat, found wooden sculpture, synthetic fur, spray adhesive

Courtesy of the artist and Sandy Brown, Berlin

Surrealism was officially launched in Paris in 1924 with the publication of André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*. As imagined by Breton and the writers and artists who formed the original Surrealist group, the movement aimed for nothing less than the radical transformation of society. Based upon the psychological theories and dream studies of Sigmund Freud, Surrealism sought to liberate the unconscious mind from the dominance of reason and the restriction of social conventions, in order to enable the expression of 'true desires'. Although it was not conceived primarily as an artistic movement, Surrealism was to have its greatest impact in the visual arts.

From the 1930s into the 1950s, Surrealism played a crucial role in Australian art and was the most visible and debated of the modern movements. Surrealist artists were fascinated by the world of dreams, the illogical, absurd and irrational. They explored new techniques of generating imagery directly from the unconscious through the relaxation of conscious control, and championed a new kind of beauty typified by irrational juxtapositions, transgressive subjects and dream imagery. This was to transform viewers' understanding of art, and Surrealism's ongoing influence is evident in works by contemporary artists included in this exhibition.

Sam Atyeo

born Australia 1910, lived in France 1936–90, died France 1990

Surrealist head

1932 Melbourne

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1986

A1-1986

In 1932 Sam Atyeo completed his studies at the National Gallery School in Melbourne and began to experiment with a range of modern styles, including Surrealism and abstraction. At this time he would only have known of Surrealism through reproductions of works in imported magazines, or from friends and colleagues who had travelled overseas. With its looping lines, reminiscent of automatic drawing, and its prominent eye (a Surrealist symbol of consciousness), this was one of the earliest Surrealist paintings produced in Australia.

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Massive journey of personally nocturne'd object

1938 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Mrs J. McCaughey, 1984

A2-1984

In 1937 James Gleeson studied at the Sydney Teachers College where he encountered the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud. He also learned of Surrealism through books and journals in the college's library. In 1938 Gleeson created his first Surrealist paintings and poem-drawings, and it was a path he followed for the rest of his life. *Massive journey of personally nocturne'd object* was exhibited together with Gleeson's *The attitude of lightning towards a lady-mountain* in the first exhibition of the Contemporary Art Society, Melbourne, in 1939.

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

The attitude of lightning towards a lady-mountain

1939 Sydney

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased with the assistance of
James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.969

The attitude of lightning towards a lady-mountain is one of James Gleeson's earliest Surrealist paintings. It caused a sensation when exhibited in the inaugural Contemporary Art Society exhibition in Melbourne in June 1939 and brought Gleeson to prominence as Australia's foremost Surrealist. Gleeson's earliest paintings were inspired by the dreamlike imagery and precise style of Salvador Dalí, whose work Gleeson knew only through reproduction. It was not until the end of 1939 that he saw his first original painting by Dalí, when *L'Homme fleur*, 1932 (now known as *Memory of a child-woman*), was shown in Australia in the *Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*.

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

We inhabit the corrosive littoral of habit

1940 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Anonymous gift, 1941

1096-4

‘Surrealism has always been suspicious of the weight put upon us by habits of thinking. Established patterns can restrict our reactions to reality by predetermining our response to an event or condition. Tradition, and habit, often stand in the way of an instinctive and personal response. It is a corrosive factor that can eat away and hollow out the truth of the matter.

The influence of Salvador Dalí is obvious in the finished painting ... though another source of the initial image could probably have come from a reading of T. S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men* of 1922.’

JAMES GLEESON

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Salvation from the evils of earthly existence

1940 Melbourne

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Anonymous gift, 1941

1095-4

Melbourne artist Eric Thake was one of the first artists in Australia to become interested in Surrealism. He was particularly drawn to the English Surrealists Edward Wadsworth and Paul Nash, whose work he first saw in reproduction in imported art magazines.

In 1940 Thake's *Salvation from the evils of earthly existence* shared the Contemporary Art Society's prize for 'new expression of thought in art' with James Gleeson's *We inhabit the corrosive littoral of habit* (displayed nearby). Despite vigorous opposition from some of the National Gallery of Victoria's trustees, both works were subsequently presented to the Gallery, becoming the first Surrealist works to enter the NGV Collection.

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Archaeopteryx

1941 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 1964

OA6.1964

Eric Thake maintained a lifelong interest in flight, and such images appear repeatedly in his work. Archaeopteryx is a genus of dinosaurs regarded as being the evolutionary link between non-avian feathered dinosaurs and modern birds. Thake's creature is similarly transitional – both aeroplane and bird – an image of the classic Surrealist theme of metamorphosis between two opposing states; in this instance machine and animal.

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

No. 35 Madame Sophie Sesostoris (A pre-raphaelite satire)

1947–48 London

Beech, painted wood

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Gift of James Gleeson and Robert Klippel 1970

SA3.1970

This collaborative work was carved and assembled by Robert Klippel and painted by James Gleeson in the years 1947–48, when both artists were living in the same studio complex in London. The title derives from T. S. Eliot's prose poem *The Waste Land* (1922) which features the character 'Madame Sosostoris, a famous clairvoyant'. The finished work reminded Gleeson of the mysterious women painted by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones and hence he added the additional title *A pre-raphaelite satire*, as well as deliberately misspelling the character's name. The paintings on the plinth are taken directly from images in the poem.

Roy de Maistre

born Australia 1894, lived in England 1928–68, died
England 1968

Conflict

1932 London
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 1960

OA24.1960

One of Sydney's leading modernists in the 1920s, Roy de Maistre departed for London in 1930 where he quickly established himself in avant-garde art circles. In 1933 he was included in Herbert Read's influential publication *Art Now* and invited to exhibit at London's Mayor Gallery. The gallery was the leading promoter of modern art in London, showing artists such as Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, Joan Miró and other members of the international avant-garde. Although Surrealism was at that time still little-known in England, through contact with these artists' work and regular visits to France, Surrealism came to influence de Maistre's practice.

Roy de Maistre

born Australia 1894, lived in England 1928–68, died
England 1968

New Atlantis

c. 1933 London

oil and scraffito on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 2006

NGA 2006.387

Soon after his arrival in London, de Maistre developed a friendship with painter Francis Bacon, who is an acknowledged influence on the younger artist. *New Atlantis* depicts a corner of Bacon's sparse, modern studio – a subject de Maistre returned to in at least eight paintings. Employing a skewed perspective and sharp diagonals, de Maistre's composition is complex and sophisticated. One of his abstract paintings leans oddly angled against the open doorway, providing a vibrant contrast to the circular mirror suspended opposite. This mirror likely represents one designed by Bacon in 1932, produced while he was working as an interior designer.

J. W. Power

born Australia 1881, lived in Europe
1906–43, died Jersey 1943

Group or Bathers

Groupe or Baigneuse

1931–32 Paris or England
oil on canvas

The University of Sydney, managed by Museum of Contemporary Art
Mrs Edith Power Bequest 1961

PW1961.84

After studying with Fernand Léger at his Académie Moderne in Paris during the mid 1920s, Sydney-born J. W. Power became closely involved with the Parisian avant-garde and in 1931 was a founding member of the group Abstraction-Création. Among his paintings of the 1930s are several examples of biomorphic abstraction, a thread of Surrealism that drew upon imagery of the natural world and most commonly associated with the rounded sculptural forms of Jean Arp and the paintings of Joan Miró.

J. W. Power

born Australia 1881, lived in Europe 1906–43, died Jersey 1943

Head

Tête

1930 Paris or England

oil on canvas

The University of Sydney, managed by Museum of Contemporary Art
Mrs Edith Power Bequest 1961

PW1961.87

J. W. Power completed a number of head studies during the early 1930s. Rather than representing individuals, these works take on universally recognisable forms which embody the ideas of biomorphic Surrealism. In *Head*, overlapping planes mimic the features of the human face. The arched brow, graceful slope of the nose and sharp angle of the jaw are rendered as loops of fabric and coarse stone. Several of these paintings, including this one, were displayed as part of Power's first exhibition at the Abstraction-Création gallery in Paris in 1934.

James Cant

Australia 1911–82, lived in England 1935–39, 1950–55

Objects in a landscape

1936 London

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased 1995

NGA 95.1011

Sydney artist James Cant lived in London during the heyday of Surrealism. In 1936 he became a member of the British Surrealist Group, and his work was exhibited in several important Surrealist exhibitions. During the summer of 1936 Cant lived in Barcelona. The biomorphic forms of *Objects in a landscape* are reminiscent of the work of Spanish Surrealist Joan Miró, whom he met at this time. Cant returned to Australia at the beginning of the Second World War and in 1940 exhibited his Surrealist paintings in Sydney.

James Cant

Australia 1911–82, lived in England 1935–39, 1950–55

Surrealist hand

c. 1936 London

wax, oil on plaster, wood, glass

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Dora Chapman Bequest Fund 1999

996S6

James Cant was the first Australian artist to make Surrealist sculpture using the technique of assemblage. During the 1930s, Surrealists increasingly began arranging objects in combinations that challenged reason and summoned subconscious and poetic associations. In 1937 Cant participated in the *Surrealist Poems and Objects* exhibition at the London Gallery which was opened at midnight by Herbert Read, the chief spokesperson for Surrealism in England.

James Cant

Australia 1911–82, lived in England 1935–39, 1950–55

Welcome to Empire Day

1938 London

wood, pencil, ink on paper, paper collage, leather, found objects

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Purchased 1999

996S7

James Cant

Australia 1911–82, lived in England 1935–39, 1950–55

Floating head, screaming man buried in landscape

1936–37 London

pen and ink

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Dora Chapman Bequest Fund 2001

200111D5

In 1936 James Cant, together with his friend Geoffrey Graham and other members of the British Surrealist Group, took part in a clinical trial of the effects of the hallucinatory drug mescaline. Knowing that Surrealist artists were interested in accessing the subconscious mind, doctors had specifically asked members of this group to be involved. After taking the drug the artists were encouraged to draw their visions, with Cant recalling that the effects were 'marvellous'. It is possible that these drawings were produced as part of this experiment.

James Cant

Australia 1911–82, lived in England 1935–39, 1950–55

Naked man tearing head off

1936–37 London

pen and ink and pencil

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Dora Chapman Bequest Fund 2001

200111D6

Geoffrey Graham

Australia 1911–86, lived in Europe 1935–39

Leaning figure supported by one arm

c. 1938 London

etching

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Elizabeth Graham 1991

NGA 91.975

Geoffrey Graham

Australia 1911–86, lived in Europe 1935–39

Striding bone figure

c. 1938 London

etching

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Elizabeth Graham 1991

NGA 91.978

Geoffrey Graham studied at the East Sydney Technical College, where he met fellow student James Cant. In 1935 he travelled to England and for a while shared a studio with Cant. Graham joined the British Surrealist Group in 1936 and was included in the *Realism and Surrealism* exhibition in Gloucester in 1938. On his return to Australia at the beginning of the Second World War, Graham exhibited with the Contemporary Art Society, where his work was singled out for special mention by James Gleeson in his 1940 article for *Art and Australia*, 'What is Surrealism'.

Peter Purves Smith

Australia 1912–49

The mad woman

1938, dated 1939 Paris

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of Ballarat

Gift of Mrs Russell Drysdale, 1968

1968.2

In early 1938, following a visit to New York, Peter Purves Smith took up a studio in Paris, where he remained until the outbreak of war the following year. During this period he produced several paintings that reflect the political tensions and anxieties of the prewar period. Among the most surreal of these is *The mad woman*. Amidst a palette of psychedelic purples and greens, a female figure appears to disintegrate into a wild, abstracted landscape. Her headless form is almost entirely lost, subsumed into the psychedelic display of the background.

Peter Purves Smith

Australia 1912–49

New York

c. 1936 London

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 1960

OA39.1960

Like many other Australian artists living in London, Peter Purves Smith was deeply impressed by the *First International Surrealism Exhibition* held at the New Burlington Galleries in 1936, which included almost 400 works by sixty-nine artists. Later that year Purves Smith travelled to New York where he saw *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* at the Museum of Modern Art, the exhibition that catapulted Salvador Dalí to art-world stardom and made his name synonymous with the Surrealist movement. Dating from this time, the forked branch form of Purves Smith's *New York* pays direct homage to Dalí's paintings, such as *The persistence of memory*, 1931, which was included in the 1936 MoMA exhibition.

Russell Drysdale

born England 1912, arrived Australia 1923, died 1981

Man reading a newspaper

1941 Albury, New South Wales

oil on canvas

University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney

Donated by Lucy Swanton 1953

UA1953.8

In 1941 Russell Drysdale painted three works which clearly show the influence of his friend Peter Purves Smith's Surrealism, and also that of Salvador Dalí. In *Man reading a newspaper* the forked trees resemble Dalí's ubiquitous crutches and, similarly, the deeply receding plain littered with strange objects recalls Dalí's dreamscapes. Drysdale would have become very aware of Surrealism during the ten months he spent in Paris and London in 1938–39, during the heyday of Surrealism in England. At this time Drysdale stayed in Paris with Purves Smith, who was painting Surrealist works, including *The mad woman*.

Russell Drysdale

born England 1912, arrived Australia 1923, died 1981

The rabbiters

1947 Sydney

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1947

1762-4

In contrast to earlier, pre-Second World War depictions of Australia as a pastoral arcadia, Russell Drysdale's 1940s paintings of the desolate outback and its inhabitants presented a radical new vision of Australia. While Drysdale did not proclaim himself a Surrealist, many of his works reflect his interest in Surrealism, particularly the work of Salvador Dalí, Giorgio De Chirico and British artists Henry Moore, Paul Nash and Graham Sutherland. In *The rabbiters*, Drysdale has hidden a face in the tangled roots of the upturned tree, while the shadows cast by the two figures are a reference to the work of Dalí.

Case label

Minotaure was founded in Paris in 1933 and was co-edited by André Breton, founder of the Surrealist movement. It included illustrated articles about cutting-edge contemporary art, historical European art and artists, as well as art, sculpture and architecture from many diverse cultures. Covers depicting the mythical bull-man were commissioned from artists such as Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dalí. An eye-opening experience for those far removed from the epicentre of Surrealism, *Minotaure* was one of the magazines avidly read by young artists in Australia.

André Masson

France 1896–1987

Melancholy of the Minotaur

Melancholie du Minotaure

reproduced in *Minotaure*, 1938, third series, no. 11
photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library
National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Unknown

Stone objects from Boeotia, 9th–7th century BC

reproduced in *Minotaure*, 1936, second series, no. 9, p. 44
photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library
National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Salvador Dalí

Spain 1904–89, worked in United States
1940–48

Premonition of civil war

reproduced in *Minotaure*, 1936, second series, no. 9, p. 45
photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library
National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Man Ray

United States 1890–1976

Occultation of Venus

En Pleine Occultation de Vénus

Veiled erotic

Érotique-Voilée

reproduced in *Minotaure*, 1934, no. 5, pp. 14–15

photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library

National Gallery of Victoria

Shaw Research Library

René Magritte

Belgium 1898–1967

Cover

for *Minotaure*, 1937, third series, no. 10

colour photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library

National Gallery of Victoria

Shaw Research Library

Case label

Salvador Dalí

Spain 1904–89, worked in United States
1940–48

Cover

for *Minotaure*, 1936, third series, no. 8
colour photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library
National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Pablo Picasso

Spain 1881–1973, worked in France 1904–73

Crucifixions and An anatomy ***Crucifixions et Une Anatomie***

reproduced in *Minotaure*, 1933, third series, no. 1, pp. 6–7
photo-offset lithograph

Friends of the Gallery Library
National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

By the later 1930s, leading Australian magazines, such as *Art in Australia*, were publishing articles about Surrealism, including essays written by, and even commissioned from, some of the leading European proponents of the movement. Australian followers, such as James Gleeson, also wrote about the theoretical principles and rationale behind the seemingly irrational art being created.

Pablo Picasso

Spain 1881–1973, worked in France 1904–73

Guitair

Guitare

reproduced in *Art in Australia*, 1939, third series, no. 77,
p. 38

photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Salvador Dalí

Spain 1904–89, worked in United States 1940–48

Memory of a child-woman

La Mémoire de la femme-enfant

formerly known as

The male flower

L'Homme fleur

reproduced in *Art in Australia*, third series, no. 77, p. 38

photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria

Shaw Research Library

Both of these paintings were included in the *Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*, which toured Australian capital cities in 1939. Salvador Dalí's *Memory of a child-woman* (at that time known as *L'Homme fleur*), 1932, became the star attraction of the exhibition and the focus for heated debate around modernism and Surrealism.

Case label

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

What is Surrealism?

essay in *Art in Australia*, 1940, third series, no. 81, p. 27
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

André Breton

France 1896–1966

Originality and liberty

essay in *Art in Australia*, 1941–42, fourth series, no. 4, p.
11
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

André Masson

France 1896–1987

Life and liberty

essay in *Art in Australia*, 1942, fourth series, no. 5, p. 9
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

The earliest proponents of Surrealism initiated it as a textual movement, created from the written or spoken word. But collage – the use and juxtaposition of diverse and assorted images and materials – was swiftly employed as the quintessential visual equivalent of their writings, allowing Surrealist artists to create illogical and unsettling works that challenged perceptions of reality and aided access to unconscious thoughts through chance encounters.

Australian artists in England during the 1930s had opportunities to see examples of Surrealist collage and to explore the technique, and young experimental artists in Australia began utilising its possibilities. A decorative and accessible form of Surrealism manifested itself in fashion photography, graphic design and advertising, and a number of commercial designers and illustrators began creating work from juxtaposed images or unusual material. Photomontage, as well as dramatic lighting and unexpected props, were used to great effect by photographers.

During the second half of the twentieth century, collage and its many sculptural and photographic permutations, such as assemblage and photomontage, were employed in a wide variety of ways. The rise of digital technology has simplified collage processes and many contemporary artists now employ it as one of the diverse techniques available in their repertoire.

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

Solarised hands and flowers

c. 1934 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Purchased 2007. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation

2007.234

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

Solarised lily

c. 1934 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Purchased 2007. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation

2007.235

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

The Debussy Quartet in G

1937 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
d'Auvergne Boxall Bequest Fund 1995

961Ph2

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

Homage to Man Ray

1937 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund of Visual Arts Board 1980

801Ph9

Max Dupain was one of the few photographers in Australia to fully explore Surrealism, and he became the leading portrait photographer in Sydney in the 1930s and 1940s. Dupain greatly admired the work of the American-French Dadaist and Surrealist photographer Man Ray, which appeared both in art magazines as well as popular magazines such as *American Vogue*. Like Ray, Dupain experimented with solarisation, double exposure and photomontage techniques, combining the human figure with natural forms, such as shells, and mechanical components.

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

Impassioned clay

1937 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased 1976

NGA 79.51

The title *Impassioned clay* refers to a philosophical and spiritual book of the same name by the English writer Llewelyn Powys, who considered 'man' an elemental being who draws power from his or her association with nature. Here Dupain merges the outline of the female body with the sinuous curves of an enlarged shell, encouraging the viewer to appreciate the similarity in texture and form.

Max Dupain

Australia 1911–92

Surrealist study

1938 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of

James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.949

Zoë Croggon

born Australia 1989

Challenger

2012 Melbourne

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2013
2013.700

Zoë Croggon

born Australia 1989

Fonteyn

2012 Melbourne

digital type C print

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2013
2013.699

Zoë Croggon revels in the unexpected connection of disparate images – one human, one not, typically – sourced from magazines, newspapers, books and other media. In contrast to Christopher Day's soft melding of images (seen in works nearby), Croggon crisply dissects her chosen images, freezing them mid-movement and manipulating their scale to create hybrid forms suggestive of the mythical mermaid or centaur. Croggon often employs cinematic techniques, such as the graphic match or mismatch, a film editing method based on formal similarities and dissonance.

David Noonan

born Australia 1969

Leicester Square

2005 Melbourne

archival inkjet print on paper from original paper collage

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

The relationships between painting, photography and film are explored in the photomontages of David Noonan, for whom collage is an essential technique. In the *Images* series, cut-paper collages of found images gleaned from films, photographs, magazines and the internet are subsequently photographed, allowing the merging of images to become seamless, and thus increasingly deceptive. Characterised by emotional intensity and a complex layering of historical and cultural references, these uncanny conjunctions between real and imagined spaces make connections between art and everyday life.

David Noonan

born Australia 1969

Harlem

2005 Melbourne

archival inkjet print on paper from original paper collage

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

David Noonan

born Australia 1969

Untitled

2005 Melbourne

archival inkjet print on paper from original paper collage

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Christopher Day

born Australia 1978

Untitled

2015 Melbourne

pigment on paper

Courtesy of the artist

A multitude of texts, images and ideas cascade through today's digital landscape. The fluidity of the digital stream is apparent in the work of Christopher Day, a self-taught artist who has built up a personal archive of images prized from a diverse range of photographic sources. Selecting from these, Day digitally manipulates and distorts elements to create ethereal monochromatic photomontages which retain the perversity and eroticism of Surrealist collage, and in which objects and disjointed elements seem to appear from a mist, like a memory or a hallucination.

Christopher Day

born Australia 1978

Untitled

2015 Melbourne
pigment on paper

Courtesy of the artist

Christopher Day

born Australia 1978

Untitled

2015 Melbourne

inkjet print

wallpaper backdrop commissioned for *Lurid Beauty:
Australian Surrealism and its Echoes.*

Courtesy of the artist

Case label

Carl Plate

Australia 1909–77, lived in England 1937–40

30

1945 Sydney

collage of cut printed magazine illustrations

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Jocelyn and Cassi Plate, 2009

2009.216

Carl Plate lived in London from 1934 to 1940 where he witnessed the emergence of British Surrealism and visited the *First International Surrealist Exhibition* in London in 1936. On his return, Plate became an active member of the Sydney branch of the Contemporary Art Society, and his Notanda Gallery became Sydney's epicentre for art books, magazines, reproductions of contemporary art, postcards and theoretical debate. Plate's collages of the mid 1940s employed magazine illustrations and postcards, onto which incongruous images were applied, suggesting fantastic or absurd narratives or dreamlike combinations. Collage was a significant medium employed by Plate throughout his life.

Case label

Carl Plate

Australia 1909–77, lived in England 1937–40

33

1945 Sydney

collage of cut printed magazine illustrations

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Jocelyn and Cassi Plate, 2009

2009.217

Carl Plate

Australia 1909–77, lived in England 1937–40

37 ('Home sweet home')

1945 Sydney

collage of cut printed magazine illustrations

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Gift of Jocelyn and Cassi Plate 2009. Donated through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

224.2009

Carl Plate

Australia 1909–77, lived in England 1937–40

39 (Pink snail)

1945 Sydney

collage of cut printed magazine illustrations

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Gift of Jocelyn and Cassi Plate 2009. Donated through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

226.2009

Lurid Beauty: Australian Surrealism and its Echoes

Case label

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

A mythological battle

1938 Melbourne

collage of cut engraving and oil pastel on engraving

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Sir Sidney Nolan, 1982

P5-1982

Sidney Nolan's collage series, produced between 1938–40, are among the first Australian examples of this quintessentially Surrealist art form. Inspired by nineteenth-century poet Arthur Rimbaud, who was greatly admired by the Surrealists, Nolan created collages that respond to the rich imagery and irrationality of Rimbaud's poetry. Using nineteenth-century steel engravings, Nolan cut out small squares which he pasted onto other engravings. In this way he created an unstable, constantly shifting image – a jumbled 'nonsense' image – defying visual or narrative interpretation.

Case label

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

London and the Thames from Waterloo Bridge

1940 Melbourne

collage of cut wood-engravings, coloured crayons

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Gift of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

2007.886

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

Mountain scene in the Scottish highlands

1940 Melbourne

collage of cut wood-engravings, coloured crayons

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Gift of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

2007.888

Case label

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

Untitled

c. 1940 Melbourne
collage of cut wood-engravings

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 2003

52.2003

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

Untitled

c. 1940 Melbourne
collage of cut wood-engravings

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 2003

49.2003

Case label

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

Untitled

c. 1940 Melbourne
collage of cut wood-engravings

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 2003

50.2003

James Pickering

Australia, worked 1940s

Rememory

1941 Melbourne
collage of cut and printed paper and cardboard, pen and
ink
in *A Comment*, no. 5, July 1941

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Irvine Green

Australia 1913–

Passion waiting

photo-offset lithograph

reproduced in *A Comment*, no. 12, July 1942

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

A Comment provided a venue for the artistic and design skills of many young Melbourne artists, some of whom are little-known today. The collage by James Pickering is an original work, tipped into this journal, and is an early example of the use of collage in Australian art. Irvine Green worked as a writer, photographer, designer and printmaker, and had co-founded *A Comment*, with his cousin and later wife Cecily Crozier, who modelled for this image. *Passion waiting* was the first photograph to be exhibited by the Contemporary Arts Society, who agreed that photography was a contemporary art form.

In addition to the illusionistic dream imagery typified by the paintings of Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, Biomorphicism, associated with painter Joan Miró and sculptor Jean Arp, was another important strand of Surrealist art influential in Australia.

Early biomorphic imagery often found its source in natural forms, such as pebbles, bones or shells, or resembled organic structures. Part of the Surrealists' fascination with nature was that it was seen as fundamentally unstable and subject to processes of metamorphosis and evolution. The rounded and pierced forms of English sculptors Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were to be particularly influential upon sculptors in the 1930s and 1940s. By the 1950s this kind of biomorphic imagery had given way to spiky and menacing forms resembling crustaceans and insects. The seaside, a constantly changing zone inhabited by creatures that can live in both land and sea which is symbolic of the meeting of the conscious and unconscious minds, was another important source of imagery for Surrealists.

In mid-1950s Melbourne a flurry of Surrealist activity took place around artists Ian and Dawn Sime, who encouraged others to explore automatic Surrealist techniques. For some this became a means of generating images, while for others it became a pathway to abstraction.

Bernard Boles

Australia 1912–2001, lived in England and United States
1946–47, England 1949–64

Girl with blimp

1945 Melbourne
watercolour

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Sir James and Lady Cruthers, 2005

2005.3

Melbourne artist Bernard Boles studied at the Melbourne Technical College from 1936–38. After serving in the Second World War, he travelled in Britain and America, before returning to Australia in 1948–49. Depicting an air hostess walking across Essendon Airport, *Girl with blimp* was rejected from the 1948 exhibition of the Victorian Artists' Society. In protest Boles hung it (together with another painting) on the fence outside the Gallery. Boles subsequently lived in England for many years and, in addition to making his own painting and sculpture, worked as an exhibition organiser, critic and writer.

Mervyn Cassidy

Australia 1926–2000

Guardian forms

1956 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Gift of the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and Design of Australia, to the National Gallery of Victoria 1981. Transferred to Heide Museum of Modern Art by the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria 2005

2005.35

Little-known Melbourne artist Mervyn Cassidy was part of a group interested in Surrealism that formed around artists Ian and Dawn Sime. Cassidy studied at the George Bell School alongside Erica McGilchrist and worked in the finance section at the Myer department store on Bourke Street where he was friendly with artist Julius Kane, who was employed in the display section. In 1953 Cassidy was elected to the council of the re-activated Contemporary Art Society and in 1956 Cassidy, McGilchrist and Dawn Sime held a joint show at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Melbourne.

Erica McGilchrist

born Australia 1926

Underwater parade

1955 Melbourne

coloured pencils and pencil on paper

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Gift of Erica McGilchrist 2005

2005.107

In Melbourne during the early 1950s, Ian and Dawn Sime introduced a small group of artists, including Julius Kane and Erica McGilchrist, 'to Surrealist methods, automatic painting, automatic writing and various sorts of ways of producing accidents ... as triggers to start off a work'. McGilchrist consequently began to use Surrealist techniques such as frottage, in which a rubbing is taken from an uneven surface to generate an image which would then be developed into another image.

Julius Kane

born Hungary 1921, arrived Australia 1949, died 1962

Organic forms

1962 Melbourne

Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga sp.*)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1963

567-D5

From the mid 1950s Julius Kane developed his sculpture towards a biomorphic-abstraction closely allied to natural forms, stating that his aim in sculpture was 'to preserve the sense of nature and her growth'. In this, one of his last works, Kane has hollowed the interior of the sculpture to create an cavity filled with forms reminiscent of bodily organs or seed pods.

Gerald Lewers

Australia 1905–62

The plough

1934 London

limestone

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
South Australian Government Grant 1963

S138

From 1934–35 Sydney artist Gerald Lewers studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London under sculptor John Skeaping. With its smooth forms suggestive of natural, organic forms, *The plough* reveals Lewer's interest in the biomorphic sculpture of English artists Barbara Hepworth, whom Skeaping had been married to, and Henry Moore.

Ivor Francis

born England 1906, arrived Australia 1924, died 1993

Growth

1941 Adelaide

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007
2007.960

NGA

In this work embryonic forms appear in the ocean, and in stages evolve into more complex beings, eventually taking root on land. A shape resembling an eye, symbolising consciousness, becomes more defined in each stage. *Growth* refers to Charles Darwin's theory of evolutionary biology in which all life begins with a common ancestor in the ocean. In turn, Darwin's theory underpinned Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung's notion of the 'collective unconscious' in which structures of the unconscious mind are shared among beings of the same species. This idea was to be influential among Surrealists, and Francis's painting explicitly refers to it.

Helen Maudsley

born Australia 1927

The listening lady

1956 Melbourne

gouache

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of the artist, 2013

2013.1044

'It's in one sense a Man light and a Lady light, but gender, not sex, so these two pieces together made a sort of essay on gender difference ... The Lady's head is completely receptive, is the culmination of herself, and her spine is poised to hear what she's listening to. The way I placed the base of the light, her pelvis, was also intended to be like giving birth, the flesh of the legs being also the flesh of the new-born ... The Man is fastened to his base and he himself illuminates. He listens but he also controls ... He Knows.'

HELEN MAUDSLEY

Helen Maudsley

born Australia 1927

The listening man

1956 Melbourne

gouache over pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of the artist, 2013

2013.1045

‘[In these works] I was trying to find another way of representation and was profoundly influenced by discovering the double images in [Jan van Eyk’s paintings]. I’d be wanting to describe something I saw happening and I’d trawl through my mind and the world of objects to find something that would visually fit ... I don’t think this process stems from Surrealism or Freud or psychoanalysis, but perhaps there’s a far distant common relative. Van Eyk was my teacher.

HELEN MAUDSLEY

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

Sheet of studies including drawing for No. 42

1947 London

pen and brush and coloured ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of James Mollison AO, 1989

P168-1989

Top

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

No. 40 (Red sandstone carving)

1948 London

sandstone

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased, 1969

69.201

Robert Klippel and James Gleeson formed a lifelong friendship in 1947 in London when both were resident at the Abbey artist studios. Through Gleeson, Klippel became increasingly interested in Surrealism. *No. 40 (Red sandstone carving)*, was included in their joint exhibition at the London Gallery in 1948. Of this work Klippel wrote, 'I am thinking of it as an "abstract" – organic but with a certain element of geometric and machine form'. This bringing together of the natural with the man-made was to be an important aesthetic strategy for Klippel over the next decade.

Bottom

Inge King

born Germany 1915, lived in England 1939–49, Europe and United States 1949–50, arrived Australia 1951

Flower dancer

1948 London

sandstone

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria

by Inge King, Fellow, 1997

1997.233

After the Second World War, a number of Australian artists lived and worked in London at the Abbey Arts Centre, owned by gallery director William Ohly. These included Robert Klippel and James Gleeson, art historian Bernard Smith, abstract painter Mary Webb, Melbourne artist Grahame King and German artist Inge Neufeld who met and married King while living there. Through Ohly, they met important figures in the British Surrealist movement, including Roland Penrose, Herbert Read, Henry Moore and the Belgian Surrealist E. L. T. Mesens, Director of the London Gallery, who invited Klippel and Gleeson to exhibit in 1948, and King in 1949.

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

Not titled (P19, organic machine with suspended shape in electro-magnetic field)

1949 Paris

pen and brush and brown ink

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007 2007.1068

In December 1948 Robert Klippel moved to Paris where he soon became part of the Surrealist group centred around André Breton. In Paris, Klippel turned his energies to drawing, creating an extraordinary series of sinister biomorphic forms, including this work. James Gleeson considered that 'it is with this sequence of drawings that [Klippel] makes his closest approach to Surrealism, and through them we are drawn into the darkest chambers of his imagination.'

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

Untitled

1955 Sydney

collage of cut printed illustrations, gouache and pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of James Mollison, 1981

P54-1981

It was not until Klippel's reluctant return from Europe to Sydney in 1950 that he began exploring collage, a creative alternative during a period of little sculptural production. His vast output of works on paper during this decade was extraordinary for its spontaneity and inventiveness, and reflected his intense self-scrutiny as he sought to define his personal interpretation of Surrealism, Tachism and abstraction. Klippel used his profound knowledge of the natural world to endow his constructions with an organic vitality that animated his creations.

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

Untitled

1956 Sydney

collage of cut printed illustrations

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of James Mollison, 1981

P55-1981

Robert Klippel

Australia 1920–2001, lived in England and France
1947–50, United States 1958–63, 1966–67

No. 38, Child's God

1948 London

Walnut, ball bearings

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of

James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.1073

Lenton Parr

Australia 1924–2003, lived in England 1955–57

Head of Christ

1958 Melbourne

steel, brass on wood base

McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery
Purchased, 1993

1993.66

Lenton Parr

Australia 1924–2003, lived in England 1955–57

Standing figure

1958 Melbourne

steel, enamel paint

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Sue Walker through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2011

2011.326

In 1955 Melbourne sculptor Lenton Parr travelled England and for almost two years worked as a studio assistant for Henry Moore. Parr's works from this time and immediately after his return to Melbourne in 1957 were influenced by postwar British artists such as Reg Butler and Lynn Chadwick. Their anxious works, typically featuring torturous forms and harsh angles, was described as the 'Geometry of Fear' by Herbert Read.

‘For a while, especially during the war years, I did think of Surrealism as a revolutionary weapon. I accepted Breton’s contention that by utilising the subconscious one could arrive at a condition that held the rational mind in balance and perhaps prevent such disasters as war, indifference or fanaticism.’

JAMES GLEESON

Surrealism was embraced by a generation of young Australian artists coming to maturity during the Second World War. For some, Surrealism appealed as a radical movement aligned with anti-fascist politics; for others, it was a means of expressing personal anxieties and addressing a world in chaos.

In Melbourne, Surrealist activity crystallised around the modernist journal *Angry Penguins* – started by Max Harris and others in Adelaide in 1940 and published by Harris and John Reed in Melbourne from 1943 – and the Contemporary Art Society, which was founded in 1939 (of which Reed and Albert Tucker were committee members). Reed and his wife Sunday lived at ‘Heide’ on the outskirts of Melbourne, and their circle included artists Sidney Nolan, Tucker and Joy Hester, as well as various poets, writers and intellectuals. Sydney and Adelaide were also important centres of Surrealism, and in both cities branches of the Contemporary Art Society were established. The Society’s annual exhibitions became important showcases for Surrealist art.

Arthur Boyd

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

The cripples

1943 Melbourne

oil on muslin on cardboard

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Gift of the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and

Design of Australia, to the National Gallery of Victoria 1981.

Transferred to Heide Museum of Modern Art by the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria 2005

2005.24

'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

Arthur Boyd

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

Butterfly man

1943 Melbourne

oil on muslin on cardboard

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Bequest of John and Sunday Reed, 1982

1982.45

Arthur Boyd

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

Figure with flowers in ear beside figures with moth in coffin

1942 Melbourne
reed pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1964

1591-5

Arthur Boyd

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

Figure in factory chimney with beast

1942 Melbourne

reed pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1964

1597-5

Arthur Boyd had limited time for painting during the war, and instead produced numerous drawings. In their expressionistic violence and often irrational, surreal 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 Boyd used throughout his life.

Erwin Fabian

born Germany 1915, arrived Australia 1940

Beast-like creature leading a group of anthropomorphic figures

1941 Hay, New South Wales

monotype

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1997

1997.59

Erwin Fabian

born Germany 1915, arrived Australia 1940

Huts, night

1941 Hay, New South Wales

monotype

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gordon Darling Australasian Print Fund 1997

NGA 97.1024

In 1938, threatened with persecution because of his Jewish background, Erwin Fabian fled his native Berlin for London. In 1940, together with more than 2500 mostly German and Austrian 'enemy aliens', he was deported to Australia on the infamous *HMT Dunera*, and subsequently spent almost two years in internment camps in country New South Wales and Victoria. Many of the internees were artists and intellectuals who had fled Nazi Germany, and a rich artistic culture flourished in the internment camps at Hay and Tatura.

Erwin Fabian

born Germany 1915, arrived Australia 1940

Mail

1941 Hay, New South Wales

monotype

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gordon Darling Australasian Print Fund 1997

NGA 97.1026

In the Hay internment camp, Erwin Fabian and his friend Klaus Friederberger participated in art classes run by Surrealist painter and stage designer Hein Heckroth. They also had contact with Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack, a former teacher at the Bauhaus. Fabian may have learned from Mack the monotype technique he developed with Paul Klee in the early 1920s. Produced by drawing on the back of a sheet of paper laid down on an inked surface, the monotypes were made using scrounged and recycled materials; ink from the office duplicating machine mixed with boot polish, and discarded glass or masonite.

Erwin Fabian

born Germany 1915, arrived Australia 1940

Noon

c. 1944

monotype

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1997

1997.58

After being released from internment in 1942 and joining a labour corps unit in the Australian Military Forces, Erwin Fabian spent the occasional weekend in Melbourne where he made contact with local artists such as Arthur Boyd and Sidney Nolan, as well as John Reed, president of the Contemporary Art Society. In December 1944 one of Fabian's monotypes was reproduced in Reed and Max Harris's modernist journal *Angry Penguins*.

Ivor Francis

born England 1906, arrived Australia 1924, died 1993

Sunblast

1943 Adelaide

oil on fabric on cardboard

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with the assistance of the

National Gallery Society of Victoria Century Fund, 1986

A3-1988

Ivor Francis was one of Adelaide's most prominent modernist artists, and his work was strongly influenced by Surrealism. In 1942, together with poet Max Harris and painter Douglas Roberts, Francis was instrumental in establishing the South Australian branch of the Contemporary Art Society. Their first exhibition sent a shock wave through the staid Adelaide art establishment. Francis later preferred to identify himself as an Apocalyptic painter, aligning himself with the British literary movement.

Herbert McClintock

Australia 1906–85

Dawnbreakers

1939 Perth

oil on canvas on composition board

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 1969

OA3.1969

While Melbourne and Sydney were the centres of Surrealism in Australia, other cities also felt its reverberations. Herbert McClintock, a longstanding member of the Communist Party of Australia was Surrealism's first proponent in Perth McClintock exhibited paintings under the pseudonym 'Max Ebert' in 1939 and 1940 before moving to Sydney later in 1940. For a brief time he rivalled Gleeson as Australia's most recognised Surrealist, willingly playing up his Surrealist persona to the media.

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

The sower

1944 Sydney
oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Purchased 1966

OA13.1966

‘For a while, especially during the war years, I did think of Surrealism as a revolutionary weapon. I accepted Breton’s contention that by utilising the subconscious one could arrive at a condition that held the rational mind in balance and perhaps prevent such disasters as war, indifference or fanaticism’.

JAMES GLEESON

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Funeral procession in a wounded landscape

1945 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased with the assistance of
James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.976

'[In this work James Gleeson] pictures himself in the form of a youth setting out in a coffin-shaped contraption whose sail will drive it where the winds of war dictate ... [The female nude] is conceivably a mother figure, the only protector the young protagonist will have as he ventures into the awesome unknown. It is hard to suppress the thought that she is, at the same time, the generator of the whole dystopic display before them – a globally scaled vagina dentata. That the painting speaks of war does not preclude it from speaking of sex.'

BRUCE JAMES

Oswald Hall

Australia 1917–91

War

1945 Melbourne

pen and ink and brush and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1992

P4-1992

Bernard Smith wrote that 'war, the fear of war, and the disquiet growing out of the aftermath of war, when present with a general instability of social and political institutions' provided the social conditions necessary for the existence of Surrealism. Oswald Hall was the son of long-serving Director of the National Gallery of Victoria Bernard Hall, and studied at the NGV School from 1934–38 alongside Clifford Bayliss and Sidney Nolan. Like many young artists, in the early to mid 1940s Hall experimented with the irrational imagery of Surrealism, with many of his works responding to the Second World War.

Joy Hester

Australia 1920–60

Fun fair

c. 1946 Melbourne

brush and ink, watercolour, coloured chalk and pencil on paper

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Gift of Barbara Tucker 2007

2000.360

While Joy Hester's work overall is more closely aligned to Expressionism, *Fun fair* has a strong Surrealist element. The monstrous black mask, a reference to Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series and to the clown's-face entrance of St Kilda's Luna Park, looms behind a supine female figure. Hester locates this nightmarish scene in an archetypal Surrealistic setting, a featureless landscape on the edge of the sea.

Joy Hester

Australia 1920–60

Gethsemane V

c. 1946 Melbourne

brush and ink and gouache

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Gift of Barrett Reid 1990

1990.3

Joy Hester was the only female artist in the Angry Penguins group who congregated and were supported by John and Sunday Reed at their farm Heide, in Templestowe, Melbourne. Others included Hester's husband Albert Tucker, Sidney Nolan, John Perceval and, to a lesser extent, Arthur Boyd. Hester and Sunday were close friends, and Hester often depicted Sunday's handmade doll Gethsemane. In these works and other studies of faces, Hester emphasised and exaggerated the eyes to convey powerful emotions and psychological states.

Joy Hester

Australia 1920–60

Face (With eye on a stalk)

c. 1947 Melbourne

brush and ink and wash

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Gift of Barrett Reid 1990

1990.6

Douglas Roberts

Australia 1919–76

The ambassador

1944 Adelaide

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
South Australian Government Grant, 1977

7711P19

Douglas Roberts was one of the most outspoken advocates of modernism and Surrealism in Adelaide during the 1940s and was closely associated with Max Harris and Ivor Francis. Robert's wartime paintings reveal personal emotions and anxieties, their fluid forms suggestive of a distorted reality as a result of these internal realities. Roberts's Surrealist style was particularly influenced by French Surrealist André Masson, whose work featured in the magazine *Art in Australia* in 1942.

Vera Rudner

born Germany 1922, arrived Australia 1938

Sacrilege

c. 1948 Sydney

oil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of

James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.1126

Vera Rudner arrived with her family as a refugee from Nazi Germany in 1938. Having started her art training in Berlin, she studied briefly at the East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School), and then at the Julian Ashton Art School under the tutelage of Eric Wilson, who had recently returned from Europe. Rudner ceased painting around the end of the war, but this is one of several dramatic works that she subsequently exhibited at the Contemporary Art Society in 1949.

Bernard Smith

Australia 1916–2011, lived in England and Europe 1948–1951

Pompeii

1940 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased, 2008

NGA 2008.667

Bernard Smith became Australia's greatest art historian; however, in the late 1930s he also briefly worked as an artist. In 1939 Smith joined the Communist Party and became active in the Teachers' Federation Art Society in Sydney. Under his influence the society played a major role in the promotion of modern art, in particular Surrealism. Smith's own paintings of the time (of which few have survived) were exhibited under the pseudonym 'Joseph Tierney' and were influenced by Surrealism and Expressionism.

Albert Tucker

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

The futile city

1940 Melbourne
oil on cardboard

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
Purchased from John and Sunday Reed, 1980

1980.92

The futile city was inspired by the themes of despair and the search for redemption of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922). The painting reflects Tucker's emotional state in response to the Second World War.

'The mood was one of depression – a sense of inadequacy walking down a city street. There was a relaxation of conscious focused thought ... Under these conditions a brief image flashed involuntarily into my mind – an image of a glaring white space, with a large key throwing a thin blue shadow across the bottom and, simultaneously the word "futile".'

ALBERT TUCKER

Albert Tucker

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

Army barracks

1942 Melbourne

enamel paint on plywood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
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 debates about the role of art being argued at the Contemporary Art Society and in the pages of the *Angry Penguins* journal. In 1942 he was drafted into the army, but after a period spent in a training camp in Wangaratta, Melbourne, was invalided to Heidelberg Military Hospital. Here he worked as a medical illustrator among shell-shocked, maimed and disfigured soldiers. After he was discharged as unfit for duty, Tucker returned to full-time art, expressing his horror of war in compelling and claustrophobic paintings.

Albert Tucker

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

Army breakfast

1942 Melbourne
enamel paint on plywood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

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

A6-1992

Albert Tucker

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

Hospital ward

1942 Melbourne
coloured pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1980

P1-1980

Albert Tucker

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

Clown

1943 Melbourne

watercolour, pen and ink and gouache

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1978

A35-1978

Darkle city doom. Inked iron lace
Rococo marks the room
of a twitching clown. The blistered door
opens. We drown
Splayed thighs and the honey nest
flush for the pelvic thrust

...

the encircling grins tightens

ALBERT TUCKER, c. 1942

Albert Tucker

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

Image of modern evil: woman and clown

1943 Melbourne

oil on canvas on composition board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist, 1983

NGA 83.2859

Albert Tucker

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

Memory of Leonski

1943 Melbourne

oil on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of The Shell Company of Australia Limited,
Founder Benefactor, 1995

1995.2

In May 1942 Melbourne was shocked by the serial killings of three young women. The murderer was eventually caught and identified as Private Edward Joseph Leonski, an American stationed in Melbourne. Known as the 'Brownout Strangler', Leonski had grown up in an abusive home with a controlling mother, leading the psychologist who interviewed him to label his crimes 'symbolic matricide'. Tucker's painting shows a deconstructed body with allusions to both female and male genitalia. One hand holds a white dove, traditionally an emblem of peace, while the other gestures to an aeroplane, a clear symbol of war.

Albert Tucker

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

Flirting

1945 Melbourne
coloured pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1980

P2-1980

Albert Tucker

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

Image of modern evil

1945 Melbourne

pen and coloured inks on buff paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

The Joseph Brown Collection.

Presented through the NGV Foundation by

Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Honorary Life Benefactor, 2004

2004.301

In the 1940s Tucker was closely involved with the magazine *Angry Penguins*. He wrote articles on art, edited the 'Sociology' section, and designed this image to be used as the cover for issue 7 in 1945.

Albert Tucker

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

Sunbathers

1945 Melbourne
oil on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Commonwealth Industrial
Gases Limited, Governor, 1982

A3-1982

Albert Tucker

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

Image of modern evil

1945 Melbourne
coloured pastel on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1978

A34-1978

After his discharge from the army in 1942, Albert Tucker worked on a series of unsettling paintings and drawings, collectively titled *Image of modern evil*. These works show the blacked-out streets of Melbourne inhabited by hideous leering clowns and predatory, sexualised women, and express what Tucker considered to be the decay of social and moral values caused by the war. Like a number of other artists, as the war progressed Tucker became disenchanted with Surrealism in his quest for a more politically involved art; however, motifs developed at the time, such as the crescent, remained significant in his work.

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Meteorological balloon, Alice Springs

1945 Alice Springs, Northern Territory

gouache over pencil

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Gift of the Commonwealth Government, 1947

1:0414

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

**Parachute store, No. 31 Squadron,
Morotai**

1945 Morotai, former Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia
gouache and pencil

Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Presented, 1947

ART26789

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Night time – Alice Springs

1945–47 Alice Springs, Northern Territory
watercolour, pastel and charcoal

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1947

1748-4

During the Second World War Eric Thake served as an official war artist with the RAAF from 1944 to 1946, a period that offered him his first opportunity to work as a full-time artist. Thake made two extensive journeys through northern Australia, Timor and Indonesia, and often chose to depict the detritus of war, such as the twisted wreckage of crashed aeroplanes, and nocturnal scenes in which jagged bands of light punctuate and make patterns in the darkness. Thake's Surrealist leanings are given flight in this whimsical image of a solitary man's contribution to the war effort.

Case label

Two Australian magazines devoted to avant-garde art and literature were founded in 1940: the better known *Angry Penguins*, in Adelaide (later moving to Melbourne); and the small journal *A Comment*, in Melbourne. *A Comment* was the work of Cecily Crozier, an Australian who had grown up in Europe but returned to Australia at the start of the Second World War. Twenty-six monthly issues, printed on cheap brown paper due to the war restrictions, were published, including poetry, commentary, linocuts, photographs and collages laid out according to contemporary graphic design trends. Some of these volumes come from the library of James Gleeson, who was the Sydney agent for the magazine.

Unknown

Cover

for *A Comment*, no. 17, October 1943
colour linocut on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Robert Miller

Australia 1916–

Cover

for *A Comment*, no. 15, March 1943
colour linocut on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Poem

in *A Comment*, no. 11, April 1942
letterpress on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Unknown

Cover

for *A Comment*, no. 13, October 1942
colour linocut on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Maintenance of identity

reproduced in *Angry Penguins*, 1943, no. 4, p. 15
colour photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Frank Kellaway

born England 1922, died Australia 2012

Poem

in *Angry Penguins*, 1943, no. 4, p. 14
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Max Harris

Australia 1921–95

The Pelvic Rose (to Salvador Dalí)

poem in *Angry Penguins*, 1941, no. 1, p. 23
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92,
died England 1992

Arabian tree

cover for *Angry Penguins*, Ern Malley commemorative
edition, 1944, p. 34

colour photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

The Ern Malley affair was Australia's greatest literary hoax. In 1944 the *Angry Penguins* journal, edited by Max Harris and John Reed, devoted an entire issue to the Surrealist poems of the recently deceased Ern Malley, who was, in fact, the creation of the young poets Harold Stewart and James McCauley, who wished to ridicule what they considered the pretentiousness of the *Angry Penguins* group. Exposure of the hoax led to a huge media outcry, but Harris, Reed and others argued that, despite the hoaxers' intentions, the poems were indeed valid examples of Surrealist poetry.

Case label

Albert Tucker

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

Art, Myth and Society

essay in *Angry Penguins*, no. 4, 1943, p. 49
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Albert Tucker

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

Image of modern evil

cover for *Angry Penguins*, 1945
colour photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

Albert Tucker

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

Image of modern evil

reproduced in *Angry Penguins*, 1944, p. 98
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Erwin Fabian

born Germany 1915, arrived Australia 1940

Untitled

reproduced in *Angry Penguins*, 1944, p. 99
photo-offset lithograph

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Case label

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

The necessity for Surrealism

essay in *A Comment*, 1941, no. 5

letterpress on brown paper

National Gallery of Victoria
Shaw Research Library

Peter Booth

born England 1940, arrived Australia 1958

Drawing (Figure on all fours with red shoes)

1982 Melbourne

black chalk and pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria

with the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1985

P115-1985

Peter Booth

born England 1940, arrived Australia 1958

Drawing (Hybrid man/insect with four legs)

1982 Melbourne

black chalk and pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1985

P112-1985

Peter Booth

born England 1940, arrived Australia 1958

Drawing (Cyclops eating leg)

1982 Melbourne

pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1985

P108-1985

Peter Booth

born England 1940, arrived Australia 1958

Drawing (Saltimbanques)

1982 Melbourne

black chalk, gouache and watercolour

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1985

P113-1985

Peter Booth

born England 1940, arrived Australia 1958

Drawing (Small monster with human head)

1984 Melbourne

black chalk and pastel

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1985

P123-1985

Peter Booth's exploration of a disturbing nocturnal world commenced in the mid 1970s. The works, which emerged after a process of recording his dreams, were figurative and highly expressive and had the appearance of nightmares. The subject matter, to which he returned compulsively, presents terrifying scenarios, including lonely travellers in apocalyptic landscapes, helpless humans fleeing the destruction of cities, and cannibals devouring their prey. Like Francisco Goya, Booth created monsters and hybrid creatures to communicate the failings of humankind he perceived in contemporary life.

Louise Hearman

born Australia 1963

Untitled #475

1996 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Collection of Dr David Ellison, Melbourne

Untitled #1328

2011 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Untitled #994

2003 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Courtesy of the artist

The experiences of the Second World War and the widespread trauma associated with it resulted in a flood of imagery depicting nightmarish and grotesque scenes.

Related imagery continues to be mined today: in many of Louise Hearman's contemporary works, eerie, disembodied heads of domestic animals – cats and dogs – or infants float over cinematic, hyper-real scenes. Situated in her dreamlike landscapes are renditions of unnaturally large teeth, a source of waking and sleeping anxiety for many, appearing resolutely pearlescent and sinister. These are realms where the dream tips into the nightmare.

Louise Hearman

born Australia 1963

Untitled #282

1991 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Collection of Dr David Ellison, Melbourne

Untitled #724

1999 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Courtesy of the artist

Untitled #1339

2011 Melbourne

oil on composition board

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Automatism, or acting in ‘unthinking’, automatic ways, was central to André Breton’s *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924). The technique was simply to undertake writing, or later drawing, in a state of mind that tapped into the unconscious – whether in great haste, in a trance, or even under the influence of drugs – to bring forth text and images from that realm into reality, uncensored by the conscious mind.

Over the decades, Australian artists have explored this technique in a variety of ways, from the early drawings of James Cant inspired by hallucinogens, and the found images of Eric Thake – in which the image is purely in the eye of the beholder – to the large-scale performative drawings of Dale Frank, collaborative works of Zilverster (Goodwin & Hanenbergh) and video-performance work by identical twins Gabriella and Silvana Mangano. Artist Peter Ellis summarises the artistic potential of automatism as follows:

One must hallucinate in front of the surface. Somewhere in this process the artist’s conscious thought metamorphoses with the unconscious desire and the picture tells you what it wants to be ... The idea that one thing can be transformed into another assumes that there is no unbeachable gulf between different realities.

Zilverster (Goodwin & Hanenbergh), Melbourne

est. 2010

Sharon Goodwin

born Australia 1973

Irene Hanenbergh

born the Netherlands 1966, arrived Australia 1998

Eighteenth-century equaliser (500 years)

2010–15 Melbourne

pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015

Zilverster (Goodwin & Hanenbergh), Melbourne

est. 2010

Sharon Goodwin

born Australia 1973

Irene Hanenbergh

born the Netherlands 1966, arrived Australia 1998

In tenderness we seek

2010–15 Melbourne

pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015

Zilverster (Goodwin & Hanenbergh), Melbourne

est. 2010

Sharon Goodwin

born Australia 1973

Irene Hanenbergh

born the Netherlands 1966, arrived Australia 1998

It's in your self-interest to find a way (The Chambers)

2010–15 Melbourne

pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015

These mesmerising drawings are the result of a five-year collaboration between Irene Hanenbergh and Sharon Goodwin. While the two artists share many interests and concerns, including art history, fantasy, cult iconography, alchemy and supernatural phenomena, each operates within a distinct temporal and imaginative framework. Goodwin's contributions are rooted in a medieval and Gothic context, while Hanenbergh's derive from a Romantic sensibility. By swapping back and forward, with each artist working independently, the drawings undergo various transformations until, by mutual consent, they are deemed complete.

Dale Frank

born Australia 1959

The appealing eyes of the blacksmith facing the tyrant

1981 NSW

graphite on paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Michell Endowment, 1982

DC34-1982

'The paper goes up on the wall, no sketches, no constructed plan of how it's going to look. Visually a mark is put close to the centre, then it spreads out from there. It seems to evolve ... [it is] not constructed. The paper is the peripheral of perception at that time.'

DALE FRANK, 1982

In this monumental drawing, Dale Frank's bodily involvement, through the rhythmic circling and sweeping of his arm across the expansive surface, is paramount, and performative. With its deliberately obscure title, this automatist work becomes an ominous and mesmeric self-portrait, the repetitive swirling patterns depicting auras; visible energy emanating, in this case, from the artist's own psyche.

Gabriella Mangano

born Australia 1972

Silvana Mangano

born Australia 1972

If... So... Then...

2006 Melbourne

black and white digital video, sound, 7 min 47 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Identical twin artists Gabriella and Silvana Mangano have largely worked together as a duo throughout their artistic careers. The title of their video work *If... So... Then...* perfectly encapsulates the activity of the unconscious: successively repeating the same operation in response to the last, in this case producing a drawing by tracing around the figure of the twin facing opposite, spinning them around before they perform the same act. The mirroring of the twins and the action proposes a collapse of discrepancies between the self and the other and a strange, automaton-like mutuality.

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England
1953–92, died England 1992

Untitled (Head with ladder and stars)

c. 1940 Melbourne
monotype printed in red ink on tissue paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of James Mollison, 1998

1998.50

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England
1953–92, died England 1992

Untitled

(Weeping head and stars)

c. 1940 Melbourne

monotype printed in red ink on tissue paper

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Unilever Australia, Pty Ltd,
Fellow, 1982

P8-1982

In the late 1930s and early 1940s Sidney Nolan went through an intensely experimental phase in his art. He created numerous collages, abstract studies and monotypes such as these, which explore the idea of intuitive artistic ability that can be drawn from one's subconscious through automatic drawing. The latent talent in the art of children, naïve artists and the insane was a topic under much discussion and research at this time.

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Omnivorous bulldog

from the *Accidental animal* series 1967–68

1967 Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1971

PH121-1971

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

Rathdowne Street kangaroo

from the *Accidental animal* series 1967–68

1967 Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1971

PH120-1971

Throughout his long career, Eric Thake sought the irrational and the humorous in his daily life. While employed as a medical draughtsman at the University of Melbourne, where he had to prepare precise diagrams and information panels, during his lunchbreaks Thake wandered the streets of Carlton. Here he often found 'accidental images', in these cases splashes of paint on footpaths, which suggested a form that he photographed and enhanced with a suggestive title.

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

The white rat

from the *Accidental animal* series 1967–68

1967 Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1971

PH122-1971

Eric Thake

Australia 1904–82

The black bunyip

from the *Accidental animal* series 1967–68

1968 Melbourne

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1971

PH123-1971

Peter Ellis

born Australia 1956

Sensitive teeth

2015 Melbourne

synthetic polymer emulsion

Courtesy of the artist

Surrealism was particularly influenced by the writings of Sigmund Freud and his model of the human mind as a dynamic, active system, and artists today have often remained interested in psychoanalysis and the unconscious. The challenging and reworking of Freud's theories, particularly via the lectures of Jacques Lacan, provided fertile ground for feminist theorists' and artists' reimagining of the female subject. Contemporary women artists have regularly leaned on these discourses in their depictions of the feminine, employing uncanny, doubling and metaphysical elements in their work, in contrast to the ideal and sexualised imagery found throughout art history.

The term 'monstrous feminine' was used by theorist Barbara Creed to characterise the presentation of the woman within popular culture as abject and feared. Creed's argument that women have historically been 'constructed as "biological freaks" whose bodies represent a fearful and threatening form of sexuality' is a point of departure for artists interested in undermining a patriarchal mode of representation. Her concept can also be linked back to the ideas of Biomorphic Surrealism, and is a position that has been utilised productively in contemporary art.

Susan Norrie

born Australia 1953

Shudder I

1994 Sydney

oil on canvas

Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne

Purchased 1995

1995.54

Susan Norrie

born Australia 1953

Shudder VI

1994 Sydney

gouache

Monash University Collection, Melbourne

Purchased 1995

1995.55

Susan Norrie

born Australia 1953

Shudder (Pathology)

1994 Sydney

oil on canvas

Monash University Collection, Melbourne

Purchased 1995

1995.52

Susan Norrie

born Australia 1953

Shudder (Dialogue)

1995 Sydney

lacquered timber, digital iris prints

Monash University Collection, Melbourne

Purchased 1995

1995.43

Susan Norrie

born Australia 1953

Shudder (Dialogue)

1995 Sydney

lacquered timber, digital iris prints

Shudder VI

1994 Sydney

gouache

Monash University Collection, Melbourne
Purchased 1995

1995.43, 1995.55

Susan Norrie's *Shudder* series was inspired by Michelangelo Antonioni's film *L'Avventura* (1959), and these two small landscapes bring to mind its rocky coastline setting. Despite the softness of the gouache, the scenes depicted are grim and portentous. These feelings are also evoked by two large-scale oil paintings from the series: dense, abstract works that bring the interior and architectural into relationship with the corporeal and psychological. Norrie's cabinets continue these strange relationships; their legs unusually tall and appearing extruded as if made of stretched skin instead of wood. It is an uncanny combination of ideas and sensations that may indeed induce a shudder, as the title suggests.

Vivienne Binns

born Australia 1940

Untitled

1965–66 Sydney
blue ballpoint pen

Untitled

1965–66 Sydney
blue ballpoint pen

Untitled

1965–66 Sydney
blue ballpoint pen

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for
Living Australian Artists, 2008

2008.543, 2008.542, 2008.544

These works are from a large group of spontaneous pen drawings that represent a pivotal moment in Vivienne Binns's artistic development. She said, 'It felt like the floodgates had opened, suddenly I broke through to something else'. Influenced by Dada and Surrealist art, emergent feminism and long and intense discussions with fellow artist Mike Brown, Binns's art radically challenged representations of sexuality and social expectations of the female body.

Pat Brassington

born Australia 1942

Starlight

from the *Gentle* series 2001

2001 Hobart

colour digital print, ed. 1/4

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2001
2001.164

'Too much digging into one's motivation runs counter to free-flowing spontaneity, but I do seem to be attracted to the enigmatic. When morphing an image I baulk prior to resolution and prefer to leave it hovering in uncertainty. Our visual brain endlessly seeks resolution and hence the real exerts a magnetic attraction. My aim is to use this gravitas to spin off towards other possibilities.'

PAT BRASSINGTON

Pat Brassington

born Australia 1942

Voicing

from the *Gentle* series 2001

2001 Hobart

colour digital print, ed. 1/4

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds arranged by Loti Smorgon for Contemporary Australian Photography, 2001
2001.165

Susan Fereday

born Australia 1959

Not for reproduction

from the *Patrimony* series 2007–13

2008–13 Vienna and Wiesbaden

colour inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

Susan Fereday's *Patrimony* series references the picture-poems of René Magritte, a member of the French Surrealist movement before his expulsion. His famous work *The treachery of images*, 1929, with its inscription *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (This is not a pipe), is mirrored in Fereday's *Not for reproduction*, which itself puns on the reproduction of the work and biological reproduction; the text 'Remember me' inferring loss and lack.

Susan Fereday

born Australia 1959

Tathata (There it is!)

from the *Patrimony* series 2007–13

2009–13 Vienna and Wiesbaden

colour inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

In *Tathata (There it is!)* a phallic cigar hovers above a rug; the word 'ding' is a reference to the biological organ as well as to the imagined sound of a 'lightbulb moment' as one achieves insight; and *tathata* is Sanskrit for 'suchness', or the true nature of things. This work shows the influence of Jacques Lacan whose restructuring of Sigmund Freud's work using linguistics introduced a notion of the phallus, creating a new way of conceiving the formation of the (female) subject. Lacan's model centres on a mother's desire instead of a child's physiology, a key development in the employment of psychoanalytic theory by Feminist artists.

Susan Fereday

born Australia 1959

The origin of the word

from the *Patrimony* series 2007–13

2007–13 Vienna and Wiesbaden

colour inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

This work is a pun that references psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's work, its influence on the artist and on female subjectivity. Lacan uses a story about seeing, and being seen by, a glinting sardine can floating in the sea to describe the relationship between the subject and the object in a key insight into the instability of the subject. 'The gaze' would become a key concept in Lacanian theory. Fereday's title refers to Gustave Courbet's controversial 1886 painting owned by Lacan *Origin of the world*, which depicts a woman's naked body, her legs splayed and head out of frame.

Fiona Hall

born Australia 1953

Paradisus Terrestris Entitled

1996 Adelaide

aluminium and tin

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with
the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1997

1997.299.a-o

Paradisus Terrestris Entitled comprises fifteen sardine cans, transformed from mundane rubbish into refined aesthetic objects. The wound-down top of each tin reveals a human erogenous zone or body part. Sprouting above these are botanically correct representations of native flora – suggestive equivalents of the anatomical details below. Hall uses the juxtaposition of the human body and native flora to imply a collision between Culture and Nature. Each component of the work bears three titles: the Aboriginal plant name specific to the language group indicated in parentheses, the Latin (botanical) name, and the common English name.

Claire Lambe

born England 1962, arrived Australia 2002

Shhhh men at work I

2013 Melbourne

polyurethane foam, transparent synthetic polymer resin,
fabric, bronze

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.71

In this sculpture Claire Lambe combines tactile abjection, an aesthetic favoured in feminist art, with hard-edged abstraction. Drawing on her rich memories of the experimental art, music and club scenes of the United Kingdom in the 1970s, her work uses the female body to address underlying histories of violence, social discontent and sexual promiscuity, unsettling conventional notions of gender and sexuality.

This sculpture incorporates a crumbling foam cushion, split down its centre, splayed like the legs of the model in Gustave Courbet's painting *Origin of the world*, 1866. The dainty feet, cast in luminous bronze, bring a fetishistic quality, sexualising the work further.

Julie Rrap

born Australia 1950, lived in Europe
1986–94

Vital statistics

1997 Sydney

fibreglass, rubber, synthetic polymer paint, chromed metal,
cibachrome photographs

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
for Living Australian Artists, 2004

2004.785.a-e

Jacques Lacan's theory of *manque* (lack) – the opposite of presence – though not 'feminist', allowed a new engagement with Sigmund Freud, and provided the psychoanalytic language for a feminist retort to castration theory. Lacan articulates the difference between 'being' and 'having' the phallus: men are positioned as men insofar as they have the phallus. Women, lacking, are theorised to be the phallus. By casting the negative space between her legs for her installation *Vital statistics*, Julie Rrap renders Lacanian lack into presence – the negative space inciting desire rather than horror.

Jill Orr

born Australia 1952, lived in the Netherlands 1980–85

She had long golden hair

1980 Adelaide

black and white video transferred to Mac mini, sound, 3 min
39 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Fehily Gallery, Melbourne

In her 1980 performance at Adelaide's Experimental Art Foundation *She had long golden hair*, Jill Orr addresses the symbolic nature of women's hair; both the expectation for it to be long, and the pulling of it or cutting of it as punishment. Orr entered the room to a male chant of 'witch, bitch, mole, dyke; witch, bitch, mole, dyke', and fixed her hair to suspended chains. Members of the audience were invited to cut off sections of the artist's hair as she narrated stories of women forcibly having their hair cut.

Dusan and Voitre Marek spent their formative years in Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic). During the 1930s and 1940s the city was one of the most important centres of European Surrealism after Paris and Brussels, and the Mareks immersed themselves in its ideas, literature and art. This was the start of a lifelong commitment to Surrealism, particularly for the younger Marek brother, Dusan.

When their country was invaded by Communist Russia in 1948, the Mareks fled to Adelaide, hoping the 'city of churches' would have some affinity with Prague; they were greatly disappointed. At the time, Adelaide was insular and parochial, and when Dusan and Voitre exhibited their challenging Czech-Surrealist art there in 1949 it met with puzzlement, criticism and even censorship.

Dusan and his wife Helena abandoned Adelaide in 1951 and moved from state to state within Australia, and lived for a period in Papua New Guinea where Dusan exhibited his Surrealist art. From the early 1950s he also added experimental filmmaking to his working practice. Voitre Marek remained in South Australia, and Dusan later returned there. Little known outside Adelaide, the Mareks' lyrical Surrealist art is an important chapter of the movement in Australia.

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Equator

1948 en route to Australia, *SS Charlton Sovereign*
oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
South Australian Government Grant, 1972

721P4(B)

Dusan Marek painted *Equator* on a discarded card table top, to mark their ship's crossing from the Northern to Southern Hemisphere on 12 October 1948. A naked female form with mechanised body parts is connected to a petal-like propeller; a disembodied hand unmask her; and a tiny figure, standing upside-down, his feet on the equator line of a sphere, suggests the great distance the emigrants were travelling.

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in
Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Gibraltar

1948 en route to Australia, *SS Charlton Sovereign*
oil and pencil on cardboard

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Gift of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.870

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Gravitation – The return of Christ

1949 Adelaide

oil on wood panel, mirror

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007
2007.1080

NGA

This unsettling painting is one of Dusan Marek's earliest works produced in Adelaide. In it he creates a menacing mood with a barren landscape populated with amorphous and humanoid forms and a phallic canon dominating the left side of the composition. Adding to the sense of unease, a convex mirror on a boat, floating on the rolling ocean, gives a distorted vision back to the viewer. Marek uses the mirror to draw the spectator into the composition and to suggest an alternative and distorted reality, while the boat on the ocean is suggestive of journeys and transformations.

Left to right, top to bottom

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Not titled (Prostrate biomorphic figure and geometric forms)

1951 Sydney

pen and ink

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Gift of Helena Marek 1995

NGA 95.380

Untitled (Creatures)

c. 1949 Adelaide

pen and ink

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Gift of Helena Marek 1996

962D2

I eat myself which obstructs to know myself

1949 Adelaide

pen and ink, gouache

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Gift of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson

OAM 2007

NGA 2007.1314

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Scientific priest

1965 Sydney
oil on plywood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Presented through the NGV Foundation by The Agapitos/Wilson Collection, Member, 2000
2000.202

Dusan Marek declared that he became a Surrealist at the age of thirteen. His commitment may have influenced his move in 1954 to Papua New Guinea, which was placed at the centre of the 1929 *Surrealist Map of the World*. During his five years there, Marek held an exhibition of his Surrealist art in a Red Cross hall in Rabaul, to the surprise of the local community. Marek is a rare and important example of an artist who remained firmly dedicated to Surrealism throughout his life and artistic career, melding it with mysticism, philosophy and a lyrical form of abstraction to create landscapes filled with figures and forms caught mid metamorphosis.

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Cobweb on a parachute

1966–67 Sydney

black and white 35mm film transferred to DVD, sound, 62 min

National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra

524498

Dusan Marek experimented with filmmaking from the early 1950s, using puppets and animation to make short features and documentaries. *Cobweb on a parachute* was his first full-length, live-action film, and is one of the few truly surreal works to emerge in Australian cinema. Throughout the film, a protagonist, played by Marek himself, contemplates his life and relationship with the world, relentlessly pursued by a creature signifying 'the fight between the conscious and the sub-conscious mind'. Legal disputes meant the film was never resolved as Marek had originally intended, yet it remains among his most ambitious cinematic projects.

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in
Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

Absit Invidia (Let there be no ill will) / Positive negative

1968 Sydney

charcoal on canvas on plywood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Presented through the NGV Foundation by The Agapitos/Wilson Collection, Fellow, 2002 2002.64

Dusan Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1926, arrived Australia 1948, lived in
Papua New Guinea 1954–59, died 1993

2000

1987 Adelaide
oil on plywood

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Gift of the artist, 1988

884P15

Voitre Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1919, arrived Australia 1948,
died 1999

My Gibraltar

1948 en route to Australia, *SS Charlton Sovereign*
oil on wood panel

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
d'Auvergne Boxall Bequest Fund 1996

965P88

Together with one thousand other displaced Europeans, the Marek brothers sailed for Australia in 1948. Mechanical problems delayed their ship en route, particularly in Gibraltar, inspiring both Dusan and Voitre Marek to create paintings using materials they scavenged, along with those supplied by the crew. *My Gibraltar* depicts a merged male and female head (possibly referencing Voitre's fiancée, Vera, who had fled from Czechoslovakia with them, but sailed on a different ship), which wears the Rock of Gibraltar like a crown. A ship follows its set route across the image to the distant horizon over which Australia lies.

Left to right, top to bottom

Voitre Marek

born Czechoslovakia 1919, arrived Australia 1948, died 1999

Victim of the world

1952 Adelaide

pen and blue ink on photographic paper

All secrets remain hidden

1956 Kangaroo Island, South Australia

pen and ink on photographic paper

Mood

1952 Adelaide

pen and ink on photographic paper

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
d'Auvergne Boxall Bequest Fund 1999

996D17, 996D18, 996D15

Apart from a brief period spent working as lighthouse keepers on Kangaroo Island, Voitre Marek and his wife Vera remained in Adelaide. Like his brother Dusan, Voitre produced numerous fantastic and metamorphic creatures in pen and ink drawings. In his later years his increasingly devout Catholicism led to a career in religious art and sculptural ornamentation, strongly influenced by his folk art heritage.

Petr Herel

born Czechoslovakia 1943, arrived Australia 1973

Untitled

6 plates from the *Borges sequel* portfolio

1982

etching, soft-ground etching, fowl-bite and plate-tone, ed.
9/55

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Mrs Gwen Frolich, 1994

P18.6-1994, P18.7-1994, P18.3-1994,
P18.1-1994, P18.8-1994, P18.2-1994

The continuing impact of Surrealism is apparent in the art of Petr Herel, a Czech-born artist who studied in Prague and Paris before arriving in Australia. Herel's art has been influenced by the fantastical figures of earlier artists such as Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Breugel the elder and Jacques Callot; and by the nineteenth-century writers Comte de Lautréamont and Arthur Rimbaud. These skilfully drawn and imaginative plates were originally created to accompany a publication of three short stories by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges.

'[The *Borges sequel* etchings] are like pages from a half-retrieved mediaeval manuscript, no longer legible but where the marginal grotesques are still alive and have begun to take over the page, playing on our dreams, fears, fantasies, disgust, and also our sense of humour.'

DAVID SPODE, 1983

Sigmund Freud's theory of the structure and workings of the mind influenced the development of Surrealism enormously. Freud suggested the existence of a dynamic unconscious responsible for the content of dreams and into which the mind exiles forbidden desires and urges. Because the unconscious was central to the Surrealist aim for dreams and reality to coexist as Surreality, dreams were at the very heart of the movement.

Viewing the dream as a liminal site of exchange between the conscious and unconscious, the Surrealists used various techniques, such as automatic drawing and free association, to create a situation where the unconscious could intrude into the waking world. One of the lasting effects of Surrealism was the popularisation of dreamscape images: paintings featuring impossible landscapes, or bleak vistas in which only the significant symbols of a dream appear, sometimes warping or melting to represent the liquid nature of dream logic. The uncanny nature of the dream, in which everyday situations are often heightened to a point of anxiety, combined with a lack of fixed logic or reason, remains rich terrain for art today.

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Pursuit (Eyeball balloon in net over landscape)

mid 1940s London
pen and blue-black ink

Untitled (Woman with flowing hair beside stairs with molten form)

mid 1940s London
pen and brown-black ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.12, 2014.10

Clifford Bayliss's image of the balloon/eye was inspired by a famous lithograph *The eye like a strange balloon mounts toward infinity*, 1882, by the nineteenth-century French Symbolist artist Odilon Redon. The Surrealists were particularly interested in the fantastical imagery of Redon, whom they regarded as one of their precursors.

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Nude with hair caught in a door (recto)

c. 1945 London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007
2007.928AB

NGA

Untitled (Naked man with mask in landscape with female torsos)

mid 1940s London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.6

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Untitled (Torso of man with twisted neck, prosthetic arms and banner in landscape)

mid 1940s London
pen and ink

Untitled (Figure with flowing hair lying within tent with banner)

mid 1940s London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.8, 2014.15

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Spinning mobiles

mid 1940s London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2012

2012.28

Untitled (Hand holding branch form)

mid 1940s London
pen and brown ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.13

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Man adjusting his spectacles

mid 1940s London
pen and brown ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2012

2012.29

Clifford Bayliss's art has been described by art historian Juliet Peers as a Surrealist checklist of 'sexual narratives, anthropomorphic ruins, dissolving flesh, suppurating wounds, mechanical frames and skeletons'. His drawing style shows his study of the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, and that of contemporaries such as André Masson and Salvador Dalí, who was himself greatly influenced by the draughtsmanship of Renaissance masters.

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Untitled

1940s London
oil on composition board

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation Patrons, 2014

2014.35

Clifford Bayliss was a star student at the National Gallery School in Melbourne, and won the coveted Travelling Scholarship in 1935. Arriving in London in 1936, he most likely saw the *First International Surrealist Exhibition* that year. Bayliss began his own Surrealist explorations around 1940, during the Second World War when he was part of a Rescue Squad during the bombing of London. He remained in England for the rest of his life and rarely exhibited. As a result, Bayliss's early Surrealist works remained virtually unknown until after his death.

Surrealism had set out to liberate desire – considered to be the authentic voice of the inner self – and Bayliss reportedly explained that the winding sheet motif that appears repeatedly in his work referred to the unwrapping of his fantasies.

Clifford Bayliss

born Australia 1912, lived in England
1935–89, died England 1989

Nude with hair caught in a door (recto)

c. 1945 London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007
2007.928AB

NGA

Untitled (Naked man with mask in landscape with female torsos)

mid 1940s London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

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pen and ink

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National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.8, 2014.15

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mid 1940s London
pen and ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2012

2012.28

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mid 1940s London
pen and brown ink

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
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National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation Patrons, 2014

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James Lynch

born Australia 1974

Nadine's dream of me #1

from the series *Other peoples' dreams of me* 2003–06

2003 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred to digital video, 2 min 24 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Over a period of some years, James Lynch collected family and friends' accounts of dreams in which he appeared. The resulting series of hand-drawn animations, which play out irrational narratives, present a challenge to the modernist idea of the unconscious as the source of dream content. Inspired by his experiences working in the large artistic collective DAMP and the changes in perspective and subjectivity that it facilitated, Lynch conceptualised the unconscious as, in part, a shared domain, following Edmund Husserl's development of phenomenology.

James Lynch

born Australia 1974

Nadine's dream of me #2

from the series *Other peoples' dreams of me* 2003–06

2003 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred
to digital video 2 min 25 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

James Lynch

born Australia 1974

I was running and running...

from the series *Other peoples' dreams of me* 2003–06

2004 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred
to digital video 5 min 30 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

James Lynch

born Australia 1974

You were moving...

from the series *Other peoples' dreams of me* 2003–06

2005 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred
to digital video 30 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

'We each have unspoken roles to play in one another's
lives.'

JAMES LYNCH

James Lynch

born Australia 1974

We awoke...

from the series *Other peoples' dreams of me* 2003–06

2004 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred
to digital video 2 min 40 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

James Lynch

born Australia 1974

Everybody was...

from the series Other peoples' dreams of me 2003–06

2006 Melbourne

pencil, ink and synthetic polymer paint on paper transferred
to digital video 3 min 30 sec

Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Tom Moore

born Australia 1971

Self-preservation

2014 Adelaide

glass, wood

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.31

Anne Wallace

born Australia 1970

Damage

1996 Brisbane

oil on canvas

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Purchased 1997 under the Contemporary Art Acquisition Program with funds from Alex and Kitty Mackay through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation and the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation Grant

1997.144

The ideas around dream symbols are useful for reading the uncanny imagery in the paintings of Anne Wallace. *Damage*, featuring blood running in rivulets down the backs of a woman's legs, issuing from beneath her pressed skirt, can surely be read as a quintessential anxiety dream.

Anne Wallace

born Australia 1970

Sight unseen

1996 Brisbane

oil on canvas

Private collection, Sydney

Water seeping under a door and pooling on the floor in *Sight unseen* – perhaps a trivial domestic incident of leaving the bath running – is made to feel decidedly unhomely and otherworldly with the painting's lurid green walls, and again points to anxiety made manifest in the dream world.

Anne Wallace

born Australia 1970

Talking cure

2010 Brisbane

oil on canvas

Collection of Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Brisbane

This work's title makes a nod to Sigmund Freud, whose approach to the treatment of psychological conditions, proposed talking cure and the interpretation of dreams represented the birth of psychoanalysis. The strange perspective in *Talking cure* is quite dreamlike: the office plant in the background seems to be in the foreground as the reclining female, her analyst's chair empty behind her, presents the scene as a heightened interior reality.

Alison Burton

born Australia 1951

Archaeology

2014 Melbourne

vitrine, plaster, clay, synthetic hair, synthetic polymer paint
and found objects

Courtesy of the artist and Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art, Melbourne

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Harbinger

1986 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Presented by the National Gallery Society of Victoria as the winner of The John McCaughey
Memorial Prize, 1987

AC11-1987

‘Now, of course, it’s obvious that my optimism, and the hopes of the Surrealist movement in its initial phase, have not been justified. It hasn’t been a cure for all the ills of life. It has changed nothing ... But, if it has not changed the world it has at least enriched it by broadening the field in which the creative imagination can act. And that, I think, makes it worthwhile.’

JAMES GLEESON

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Icons of hazard

2001 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented through the NGV Foundation by the artist,
Governor, 2004

2004.354

James Gleeson

Australia 1915–2008, lived in England and Europe
1947–49, Europe and United States 1958–59

Rising to the night

2001 Sydney
oil on canvas

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented through the NGV Foundation by the artist,
Governor, 2004

2004.353

After several decades dividing his energies between his art practice and his endeavours as a writer and critic, James Gleeson returned to painting with renewed vigour from 1983. The monumental group of works he produced during this late phase of his career are considered among his most challenging. In the sensuous *Rising to the night*, literal figuration is abandoned for a new visual vocabulary. Painted in fleshy hues, semi-recognisable elements merge with biomorphic shapes, creating unsettling new forms. Suggesting the real and the fantastical, Gleeson's liquefied imagery foreshadows the turmoil of apocalyptic catastrophe.

Alex Pittendrigh

born Australia 1966

**Cartouche for the Column House at the
garden of Le Désert, near Retz I**

2014 Melbourne

papier mâché, synthetic polymer paint, gesso, cardboard,
oyster shells and styrofoam on plywood

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room, Melbourne

Alex Pittendrigh

born Australia 1966

**Cartouche for the Column House at the
garden of Le Désert, near Retz III**

2014 Melbourne

papier mâché, synthetic polymer paint, gesso, cardboard,
oyster shells and styrofoam on plywood

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room, Melbourne

Alex Pittendrigh

born Australia 1966

**Cartouche for the Column House at the
garden of Le Désert, near Retz V**

2014 Melbourne

papier mâché, synthetic polymer paint, cardboard,
styrofoam, gesso and natural materials on plywood

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room, Melbourne

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

Rinaldo

2009 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Tim Schultz is an artist particularly interested in recovering and mining art-historically outmoded, unpopular or 'abhorrent', movements, and his paintings reference Baroque, Rococo, Art Nouveau and Surrealist art. In this series, voluptuous figures inspired by French Rococo painter François Boucher are distorted and elongated, set in dreamlike landscapes of the kind popularised by Salvador Dalí. Further references include the *Venus di Milo*, c. 100 BC; ornate designs of Hector Guimard, the Art Nouveau architect of ornate Paris Metro entrances; and a reworking of *Oedipus and the Sphinx*, 1864, by French Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau.

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

Original hunger

2010 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

The famous onyx staircase

2011 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

Hotel Schlupfyr

2012 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

**Ideal reconstruction (the Venus of
Agesandros)**

2012 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Tim Schultz

born Australia 1960

The perfume burner

2012 Sydney

oil on linen

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Peter Daverington

born Australia 1974

The Hanging Gardens of Nineveh

2014 New York

oil on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne

Adrian Feint

Australia 1894–1971

The lighthouse

1943 Sydney

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Purchased with the assistance of James Agapitos OAM
and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.955

The early involvement of Surrealist artists with theatre, ballet, dance and performance made the stage a principal site for the transmission of Surrealist ideas, techniques and aesthetics. In particular, Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes was instrumental in introducing the work of leading avant-garde artists, such as Max Ernst, Joan Miró and later Giorgio de Chirico and Andre Masson, to Australian audiences. Touring nationally between 1936 and 1940, these visually and conceptually spectacular ballets made an enormous impact on the development of the arts in Australia, helping to propagate a fantastical Surrealist 'style' that soon informed the language of design, fashion and advertising.

Fashion, especially, offered Surrealism a vehicle by which to explore a range of psychological and sexual ideas. Seen first in the collaborative works of Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí from 1936, perverse bodily themes were still visible in Leigh Bowery's 'looks' and performances throughout the mid 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, the legacy of Surrealist aesthetics can be seen in the dramaturgy of Centre for Style's chaotic and collaborative *mise en scène*.

Charles Atlas

born United States 1949

Because we must

1989 London

colour video transferred to MPEG 4, sound, 52 min 30 sec

Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix

In 1989 Leigh Bowery collaborated with the Scottish-born 'punk' choreographer Michael Clark on this dance work, both by contributing a series of costumes based on his own clubbing outfits and participating in the performance. Based on the original 1987 ballet production staged at Sadler Wells Theatre, London, this film by Charles Atlas highlights the irrationality and artifice of the *mise en scène* through extended sequences featuring a chainsaw-wielding nude and Bowery as a perverted teapot.

Cerith Wyn Evans

born Wales 1958

Leigh Bowery

Australia 1961–94, lived in England

1981–94

Anthony d'Offay performance

1988

colour video transferred to MPEG 4, 54 min 17 sec

Courtesy of Cerith Wyn Evans and The estate of Leigh Bowery

Infamous Australian Leigh Bowery was a key figure in London's cultural scene throughout the 1980s. As host of the decadent nightclub Taboo, Bowery blurred the lines between art, fashion and performance with his surreally perverse 'looks' and burlesque on-stage endeavours. Described by Boy George as 'modern art on legs', in 1988 Bowery was invited to undertake a week-long residency at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. The performance saw him adopt a different 'look' for two hours each day over five days. Reclining on a cushioned chaise longue in front of a two-way mirror, all Bowery could see was his own reflection.

Olive Cotton

Australia 1911–2003

Design for a mural

1942 Sydney

gelatin silver photograph

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1983

NGA 83.2895

In Australia the association between ballet and the irrational realm found unlikely expression in the commercial sphere. In 1938 Max Dupain produced a series of fashion illustrations for David Jones that used the stage as a symbol, and the ballerina as a romantic figure of unconscious desire. *Theme for a mural*, commissioned by Sydney architect Sam Lipson for a client, was produced by Olive Cotton while managing Dupain's studio while he was in active military service. A composite of two negatives – a background and the dancers – the final printed image plays with scale, shadow and depth to create a magical dreamlike landscape.

Centre for Style, Melbourne

est. 2013

Matthew Linde

born Australia 1989

Atrophy Amphitheatre

2015

wood, metal (railing), metal (furniture), carpet

Courtesy of the artists, Melbourne

Atrophy Amphitheatre takes the theatrical stage as its departure point for a collaborative and chaotic dramaturgy of art, props, steel mannequins, and clothing made by a number of local fashion designers. Mannequins – the embodiment of the uncanny because they are lifelike and lifeless – featured heavily in international Surrealist practice throughout the 1930s, culminating in the infamously fetishist Rue Surrealist at the *Exposition Internationale de Surrealism*, 1938, Paris. Here the *mise en scène* is a site of disrepair, an untidy zone that questions the use of art as prop and the moral struggle between art and commerce.

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists
Left to right

Liam Osborne

born Australia 1991

Hanging ember #2

2015 Melbourne

resin, wicker (basket), plastic

Courtesy of the artist

Natasha Havir Rose Smith

born Australia 1989

Costume II

2015 Melbourne

polyester

Courtesy of the artist

Blake Barnes

born Australia 1983

Outfit

2015 Melbourne

cotton, acetate, paper, feathers

Courtesy of the artist

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Blake Barnes

born Australia 1983

Outfit

2015 Melbourne

cotton, polyester, silk, hessian, dried flowers, diamantés

Courtesy of the artist

Zac Segbedzi

born Australia 1991

Punk of the rags

2015 Melbourne

newspaper, adhesive, wire, cotton, polyester

Courtesy of the artist

Joshua Petherick

born Australia 1979

Scalper

2014 Melbourne

paper, carbon, synthetic hair, spirulina, fabric dyes,
galvanised steel

Courtesy of the Christo Crocker Collection

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Joshua Petherick

born Australia 1979

Scalper

2014 Melbourne

paper, carbon, synthetic hair, spirulina, fabric dyes,
galvanised steel

Courtesy of the artist and Minerva, Sydney; Croy Nielson, Berlin; Robert Heald, Wellington

Kate Meakin

born Australia 1989

Shirt

2014 Melbourne

cotton, tape

Courtesy of the artist

Blake Barnes

born Australia 1983

Outfit

2015 Melbourne

cotton, acetate, paper, sequins

Courtesy of the artist

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Alison Pyke

born Australia 1987

Soft stiletto

2015 Melbourne

silk, synthetic fibre, polyester (thread)

Courtesy of the artist

Susan Jacobs

born Australia 1977

Prospects

2015 Melbourne

aluminium, lead, magnetite

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents

Kate Meakin

born Australia 1989

Model

2015 Melbourne

paper (tissue), steel (pole), metal (floristry frog), cotton

Courtesy of the artist

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Jason Matthew Lee

born United States 1989

Doves: bliss to pain

2015 Chicago

inkjet print on adhesive vinyl

Courtesy of the artist

Josey Kidd-Crowe

born Australia 1987

Swiss cheese back

2015 Melbourne

oil on canvas

Courtesy of the Neon Parc

Blake Barnes

born Australia 1983

Outfit

2015 Melbourne

cotton, acetate, paper

Courtesy of the artist

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Virginia Overell

born Australia 1985

Flag of convenience

2014 Melbourne

hand-dyed fabric

Courtesy of the artist

Quintessa Matranga

born United States 1989

Tijuana mud bath

2014 New York

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Blake Barnes

born Australia 1983

Outfit

2015 Melbourne

cotton, acetate, straw

Courtesy of the artist

Atrophy Amphitheatre participating artists continued ...
Left to right

Kate Meakin

born Australia 1989

a crust of bread

2015 Melbourne

painted steel, tape, fur (rabbit)

Courtesy of the artist

Grace Anderson

born Australia 1991

Ghost girl

2015 Melbourne

plaster, paint, straw, fabric, plastic

Courtesy of the artist

Matt Hinkely

born Australia 1976

Untitled

2014 Melbourne

polyurethane, pigment, sand, copper (filings), wire

Courtesy of Sutton Gallery

Greatest Hits, Melbourne

est. 2008

Gavin Bell

born Australia 1985

Jarrah de Kuijer

born Australia 1985

Simon McGlinn

born Australia 1985

Untitled

2012

taxidermied cat, electronic components

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014

2014.138

Hein Heckroth

born Germany 1901, lived in England 1935–40, Australia 1940–41, England from 1941, died the Netherlands 1970

Australia

1941 Hay, New South Wales
oil on composition board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased with the assistance of
James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.1065

German theatre designer and Surrealist painter Hein Heckroth immigrated to Britain in 1935 to avoid Nazi persecution. Ironically, during the Second World War he was interned as an 'enemy alien' and sent to Hay camp, New South Wales. Later returning to London, Heckroth won an Oscar for his surreal and hallucinatory set designs for the 1948 film *The Red Shoes*. Painted while at Hay, *Australia* shows Heckroth's affinity for staging with its careful arrangement of figures, including his own self-portrait at lower left. Suggestive of inner emotional turbulence, the work also invokes a subverted reality through the effect of doubling and mirroring.

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917, lived in England 1953–92, died
England 1992

Orphée

1948 Sydney

enamel paint and silver foil on composition board

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

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James Agapitos OAM and Ray Wilson OAM 2007

NGA 2007.1101

Jean Cocteau's play *Orphée*, a Surrealist influenced reinterpretation of the Orpheus myth, was first performed in Paris in 1926; with Cocteau playing the part of the angel Heurtebise in the 1927 revival. In 1948 Sidney Nolan was invited to design the sets, program and poster for a Sydney University Dramatic Society production. This painting follows Nolan's design for the stage drop curtain. Alluding to the symbolism in Cocteau's script, Nolan depicts the mirror, incorporating silver foil from a Cadbury chocolate wrapper, as the play's portal to the Underworld and a threshold between differing states of reality.

Loudon Sainthill

born Australia 1918, lived in England 1949–69, died
England 1969

The actress

1947 Sydney

watercolour, pen and ink and coloured inks over pencil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1947

1770-4

Unable to make a living as a theatre artist in Australia, Loudon Sainthill worked across the fields of interiors, fashion, advertising and theatre design, and exhibited with the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), Sydney, stamping his highly decorative Surrealist aesthetic onto the public consciousness. His richly fantastical compositions were jarringly colourful and notable for their illusory references. *The actress*, with its distorted perspectives, apertures and central mannequin form, suggests a formal engagement with the works of Giorgio de Chirico.

Loudon Sainthill

born Australia 1918, lived in England 1949–69, died
England 1969

Costume for a Vivandiere

1942 Sydney

gouache over pencil

Private collection, Sydney

Touring Australia between 1936 and 1940, Colonel Wassily de Basil's Ballets Russes made a lasting impression on the aesthetics and career of Loudon Sainthill. Introducing modern choreography, music and design to Australian audiences, several of the ballets performed featured set designs and costumes by the Surrealists André Masson and Joan Miró and the metaphysical painter Giorgio de Chirico. In 1941 Sainthill was commissioned by the Kirsova Ballet to design sets for several productions. These were shown in the *Australian Art for Theatre and Ballet* exhibition of 1942, along with a number of Sainthill's costumes designs.

Loudon Sainthill

born Australia 1918, lived in England 1949–69, died
England 1969

Prologue curtain design for Le Coq d'Or

1954

gouache and chalk on gauze

Private collection

A fantastical Surrealist 'style' came to inform the language of design, fashion and advertising in the 1940s. In Australia, this effect was visible in the commercial work of artists such as Loudon Sainthill and Max Dupain. In 1938 Sainthill's biomorphic murals for society interiors were featured in an issue of *Australian Home Beautiful*, while in 1946 he produced three 'Surrealist' fashion covers for the *Australian Women's Weekly*. This 1942 cover for *The Home* is a dreamscape of ambiguous perspectives and elaborate costumes.

Martin Sharp

Australia 1942–2013

Mr Tambourine Man

1967 London

screenprint printed in black and orange ink on gold foil

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Prints and Drawings, 2014

2014.300

During the 1960s and early 1970s there was a revival of interest in the organic and the fantastic, inspired in part by the widespread use of hallucinogens. Art movements such as Art Nouveau and Surrealism were among the many influences incorporated with images and influences from popular culture at the time. Martin Sharp is one of Australia's quintessential Pop artists, best remembered for his involvement in the controversial Oz magazine and for the wildly psychedelic posters he made in London, in which he collaged pictorial elements – in this case the radical folksinger Bob Dylan – with text.