



PROPERTY FROM THE MALCOLM ENRIGHT COLLECTION, BRISBANE (Lots 82-93)

Since the early 1970s Malcolm Enright has honed a passionate understanding of contemporary art and collected with the prescient knowledge that great artworks are the ones that seem to nestle at the heart of a whole constellation of ideas. The collection he assembled, important parts of which are now offered by Christies, has the hallmarks of rigour, cohesion and excellence.

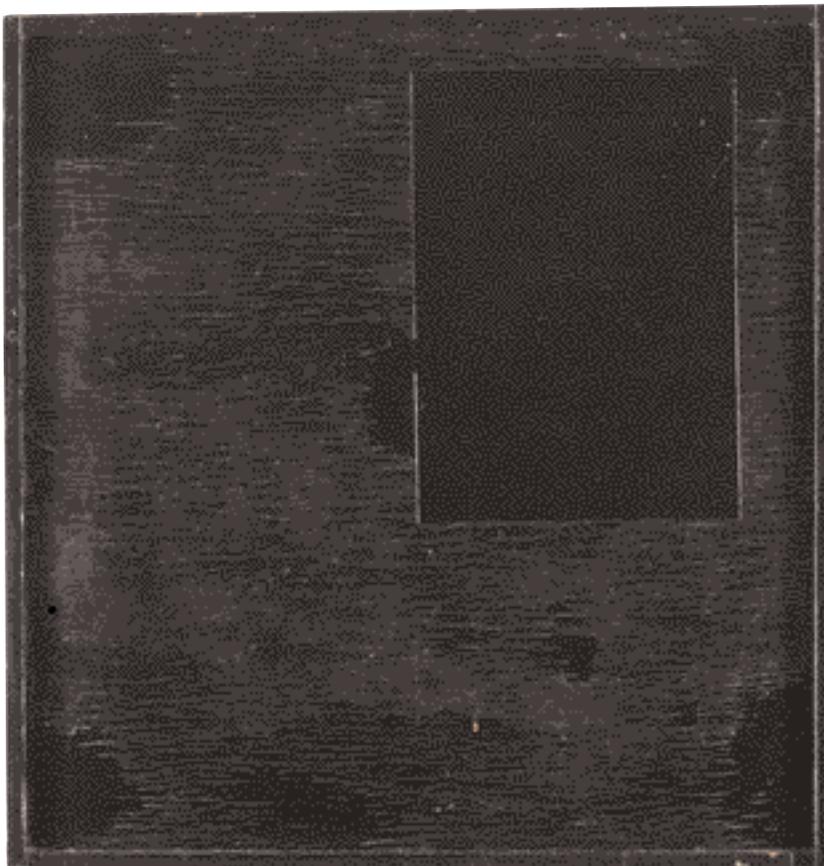
At the Queensland Contemporary Art Society in the late 1960s, Enright engaged with ideas and images that would lead him into the professional worlds of Creative Direction, Graphic Design and advertising. It was this predilection for concepts and

images that eventually fuelled and facilitated his capacity to collect. As an early advocate of artists such as John Nixon, Scott Redford and Jenny Watson he began organising exhibitions and got involved with Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art, ultimately co-curating important exhibitions on, among others, Minimalism and Robert MacPherson. Following an association with art dealer Ray Hughes, he began to buy their work. Several outstanding works acquired in Brisbane at the time, including rare early pieces by Stephen Killick from 1969 in the form of conceptual and topographical 'maps', and a hauntingly beautiful monochrome

assemblage by Redford are unique. Other works, by John Nelson for instance, show just how central looking, seeing and reading art has been to Enright the curator and collector.

It is the major works on offer by Robert MacPherson and John Nixon, who uses found/received image systems as forms of ready made self-portraiture, however, that best underscore the connective tissues and conceptual practices of the 1970s, acting as precursors and influences for much of today's most important art.

We are grateful to Simon Wright for this catalogue entry.



82

John Nixon (B. 1949)
Untitled

paper, oil on wood in a wooden constructed frame
56.5 x 54.5 cm
Executed in 1981

Estimate: \$4,800-5,500

PROVENANCE:

The Institute for Artistic Culture,
Brisbane
Ted Riggs, Brisbane
A gift to the present owner from Ted Riggs in 1990



83

Robert MacPherson (B. 1937)

Royco

each inscribed with panel number; and further panel 1 inscribed '10 panels'; panel 2 inscribed 'install in line 3" Space'; panel 7 inscribed 'FEB 14 '77'; panel 8 inscribed 'FEB 14 '77'; panel 9 inscribed "'ROYCO" 1' and panel 10 inscribed 'FEB 14 '77', (all on the reverse)
acrylic on stretched canvas
31 x 31 cm each panel
10

Estimate: \$45,000-60,000

PROVENANCE:

Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1978

EXHIBITED:

Brisbane, Ray Hughes Gallery, 1978

LITERATURE:

P. Cripps, *Robert MacPherson*,
Brisbane, 1985, cat., pp.5-6

Robert MacPherson's 'Royco' 1977, acts as logical closure on a sequence of investigations into mark-making, Action painting, scale of the brush and artist's reach. The year is important for MacPherson, for in 1977 he took up a Visual Arts Board grant to visit New York, yet we suspect as always, local factors held equal sway in the conception of these works.

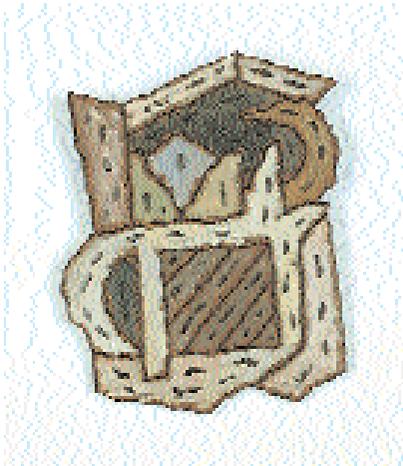
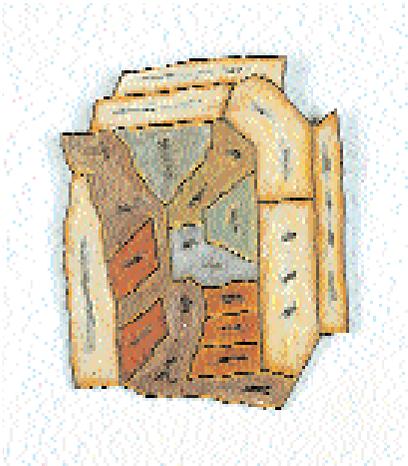
One of MacPherson's first jobs in Brisbane was as a ship painter. It was here that the artist saw the effect created by paint waste flowing and dripping over large areas, and it was from this perhaps, MacPherson augmented ideas that underpin important serial works. Completed in groupings known as 'Sarah's Merles' 1976, 'Swanboro' 1976-7, 'Smithfield' 1977 and 'Royco' 1977, many of these are now in permanent public collections, united by his uses of incident as total image and subject matter rather than as an interesting by-product.

For 'Sarah's Merles' 1976, which hang vertically in six units, the top panel in each series was painted with a heavily loaded brush with the result that excess paint splashed and dripped down over the raw canvas units below.¹ The group thus becomes a reflection of the whole process.

Through 'Swanboro' 1976-7 the theme of modernist reduction is extended in horizontal sets until we see in 'Royco' 1977 - named after the brand of house painting brush MacPherson used for the work - a conclusive statement on the concept and process. Over the course of working on ten panels the artist has systematically exhausted a fully loaded brush until cleaned out.

¹ see Cripps, Robert MacPherson,
Brisbane, 1985, cat., pp 5-6

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84

Stephen Killick (B. 1947)

France #1, #2, #3

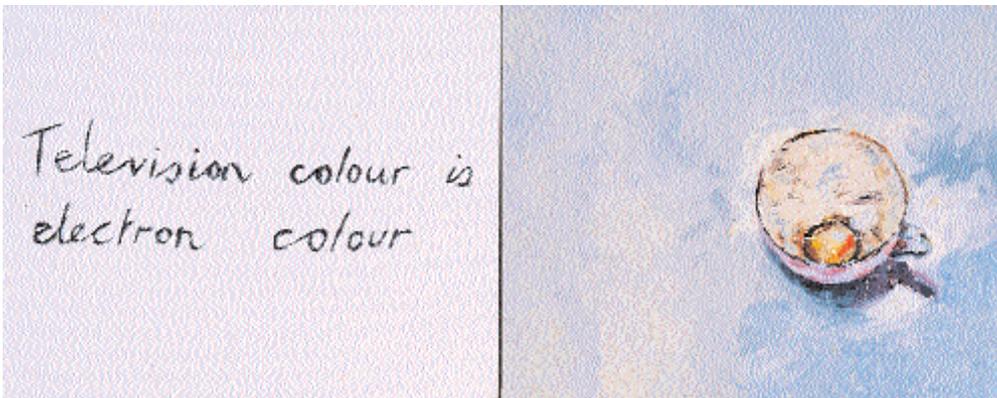
signed, dated, titled and inscribed 'STEPHEN KILLICK/FRANCE..MAY..1982/No: 1/c/o RAY HUGHES GALLERY/AUSTRALIA/KILLICK', the other two signed, dated and titled identically except for 'No. 2' and 'No. 3' (on the reverse of each) acrylic on ply with hangers made by the artist
24.1 x 19.4 cm; 24.7 x 20 cm; 23 x 19.2 cm
3

Estimate: \$2,000-3,000

PROVENANCE:

Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1982.

These works were made during the artists' travels and are true precursors of all the 3-dimensional works which followed.



85

Jenny Watson (B. 1951)

Conversation Piece

signed, dated and titled 'CONVERSATION PIECE/BRISBANE 1981/Jenny Watson/1981' (on the reverse of panel 1); signed, dated, titled and inscribed 'CONVERSATION PIECE/BRISBANE 1981/Jenny Watson/1981/To Malcolm/Thanks for all your support + Merry/Christmas/to you,/Jen/Jenny/Dec 81' (on the reverse)
oil on canvas boards
20.4 x 51 cm
2

Estimate: \$2,400-2,800

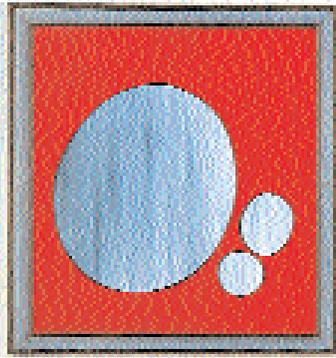
PROVENANCE:

A gift to the present owner from the artist, Christmas 1981

EXHIBITED:

Melbourne, Art Projects, *Jenny Watson: Art Projects*, October 1981

This work was initially exhibited as part of a 24 panel piece in 1981. "A wall installation of Conversation Piece was reproduced on the A4 flyer. Everyone who was anyone wanted these and they were divided up into pairs and sold." [P Taylor, *(Pop)ism*, Melbourne, 1982]



LITORIA INFRAFRENATA

LITORIA PHYLLOCHROA

LITORIA FALLAX

86

Robert MacPherson
(B. 1937)
Three Frog Poems for
E.T.

inscribed by Edward Tull "'3"
CIRCLES...'76'; further inscribed by
Robert MacPherson 'THIS WORK
IS/A FOUND PAINTING/BROUGHT
BY ME/IN 1983 TO USE/IN A
POSS/SYLVA HOLMES WORK/RM
'83' (on the reverse of found
painting); signed with initials, dated
and inscribed 'RM 1988-89/3
PANELS/+ FOUND/PAINTINGS' (on
the reverse of Panel 1 and Panel 2)
Melt-stik on wood with found
painting
76.7 x 270 cm

Estimate: \$35,000-45,000

PROVENANCE:

Yuill/Crowley, Sydney
Acquired from the above by the
present owner in 1989

Since he began using the collective
title of 'Frog Poems' in 1988 for an
ever-expanding body of work,
MacPherson has presented subtle
formal arrangements determined by
an invisible rationale in the act of
their naming. Related to the
exploration of painting's prescriptive
tropes and his ultimate
abandonment of them, we are
offered a new personal language in
which an ordained correspondence
still exists between the name and

the object, the work and its title.¹
More specifically, he engages a
consistent set of regulative ideas, in
this case visual puns and language
games, to highlight the operation of
other classificatory systems. These
systems exist not only in science
(herpetology is the study and
classification of frogs), language
(Latin is used to classify things in
nature, and like the frog, happens to
be endangered in contemporary
Australia), but also in art (activated
by the work in combination with its
title).

In '3 Frog Poems for E.T.' the
relationship of the signboards to the
found painting can also be
understood as an allusion to the
particularities of place. Selected by
the artist for the Enright Collection,
it's a reference to the suburban
landscape around Brisbane, as the
three frogs listed on the boards,
while physically absent in the work,
are local tree-burrowing varieties
that make holes/homes in old box
trees, as found in Enrights' garden.
The work is also significant for its
direct relationship to the major work
'Where Are You Now Sylvia Holmes'
1982-83 (Private collection). In it,
MacPherson pairs two found
abstract paintings he found in a junk
shop with an open letter to the
artist, Sylvia Holmes, and

speculates as to how chance has
prevailed in the final work.
The found painting in '3 Frog Poems
for E.T.' was bought from the same
shop on the day MacPherson
acquired the Holmes pictures. On
this occasion, however, the amateur
artist - Mr Eddie Tull - is named by
his initials, in keeping with so many
of the works the artist has
dedicated.

By incorporating these found
paintings into his own work, he
makes a point in support of so many
lost and unappreciated artists.... the
gap between the gallery wall and
the junk shop wall is not that great.
Less a test of faith for the viewer,
it's more a rewarding insight into his
highly ordered world. Focussed on
the backyard and everyday, it is here
that he finds the beautiful,
descriptive, wonderful and
metaphorical - in his words "it is
poetry."²

- 1 see: I Perez, *The Described and the Undescribed*, cat., Sydney, 1994, p.11
- 2 D Thomas, *Landfall: Bea Maddock and Robert MacPherson*, cat., Sydney, 2000

*We are grateful to Simon Wright for
this catalogue entry*



87

Scott Redford (B. 1962)
In a Hole (S.T.H) A.K Straight to Hell

signed with initials and titled 'in a hole/(s.t.h.)/S.R' (on the reverse) enamel over acrylic on objects on board
 28.5 x 39.5 x 11 cm

Estimate: \$2,400-2,800

PROVENANCE:

Bellas Gallery, Brisbane
 Acquired from the above by the present owner in 1987

EXHIBITED:

Melbourne, George Paton Gallery, *Exchange Four x Artists*, 1985
 Brisbane, Bellas Gallery, *Flag of Convenience*, 21 March - 4 April, 1987, cat.no.15

LITERATURE:

G. Petlin, 'Review', *Eyeline #1*, 1987, p.20, illus.
Surf or Die, p.35, illus.



88

John Nelson (B. 1951)
Bells of St Clements
(Listening To Barra-barra
Singing To His Paintings)

acrylic, paper, metal and plastic on canvas
 74 x 149 cm
 Executed in 1989

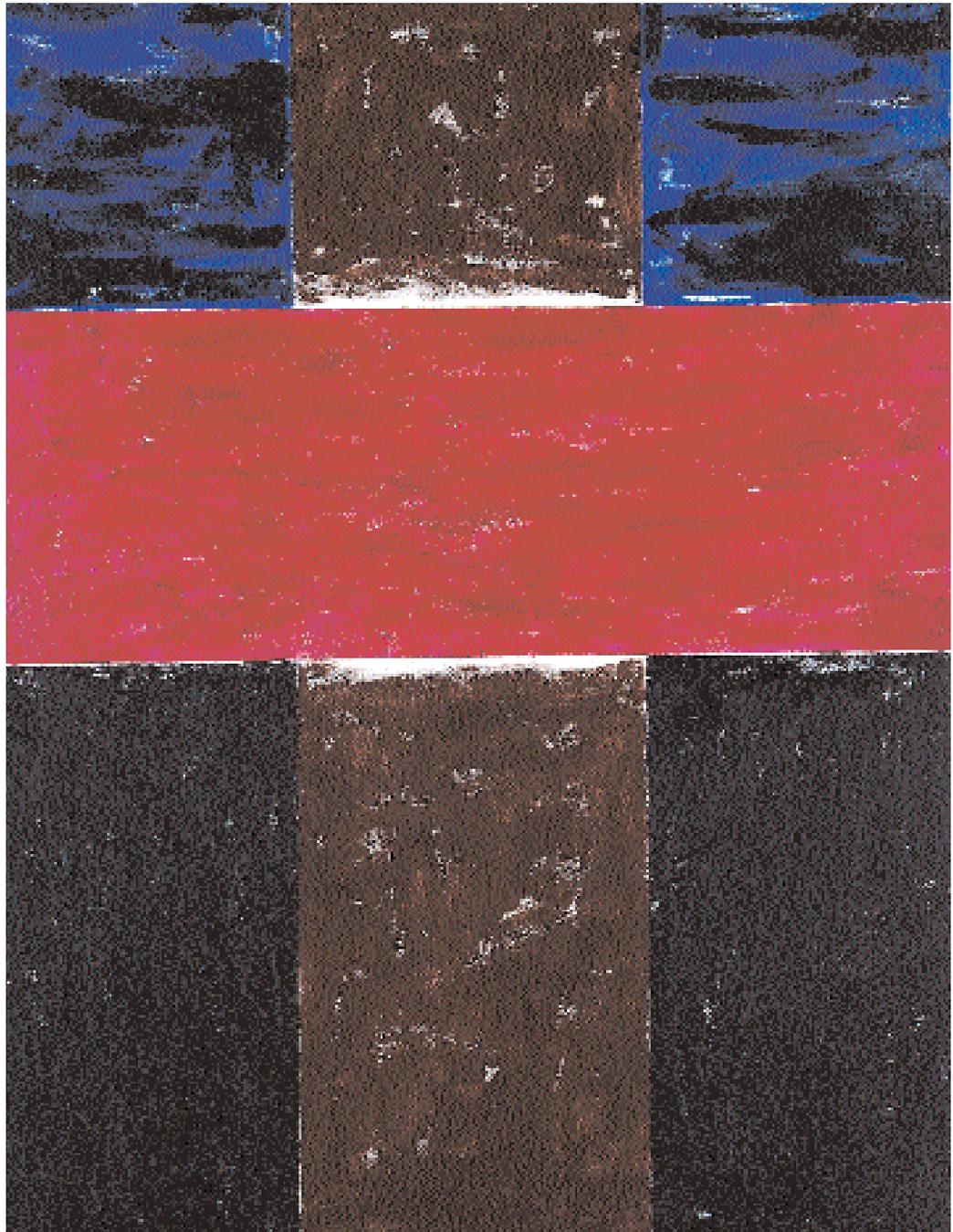
Estimate: \$2,400-2,800

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the present owner in 1989

LITERATURE:

Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Master Concert Series, brochure, 1992, illus. p. 5



89

John Nixon (B. 1949)
Self-portrait, Non-objective
Composition

acrylic on canvas
70.5 x 56 cm
Painted in 1983

This work is number 5 of 6 paintings from this series. It is also known as the 'Night Picture'

Estimate: \$7,500-8,500

PROVENANCE:

Art Projects, Melbourne
Acquired from the above by the present
owner in 1984

EXHIBITED:

New York, Solomon Guggenheim Museum,
*Australian Visions: 1984 Exxon International
Exhibition*, 1984

90

Robert MacPherson
(B. 1937)

Untitled Series One

nine panels, acrylic on canvas with
different wire lengths
61 x 45.6 cm each panel
Painted in 1979
9

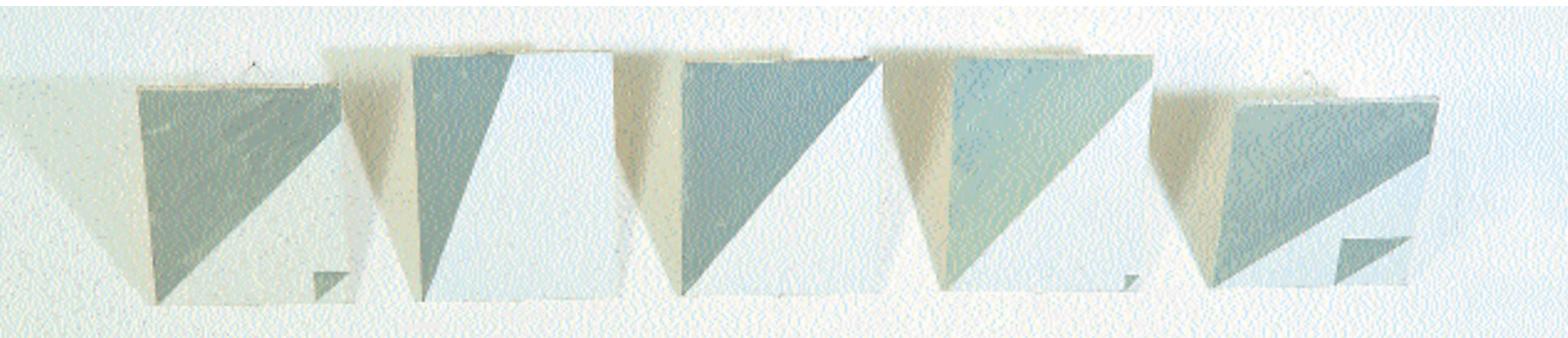
Estimate: \$120,000-140,000

PROVENANCE:

Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
Three works were acquired from the
above by the present owner in 1979
The remaining six were acquired
directly from the artist by the
present owner in 1983

EXHIBITED:

Brisbane, Ray Hughes Gallery, 1979
Brisbane, IMA, *Robert MacPherson:
Survey Exhibition*, 1985.



Conceived by the artist in 1979, these panels were acquired by Mal Enright in two instalments, firstly from Ray Hughes Gallery in 1979, and following their exhibition as a set in the important 'Robert MacPherson: Survey Exhibition' at the Institute of Modern Art in 1985. A smaller work from the series, 'Untitled Paintings' 1980-81, forms a crucial part of MacPherson's representation in the Art Gallery of Western Australia's extensive collection.

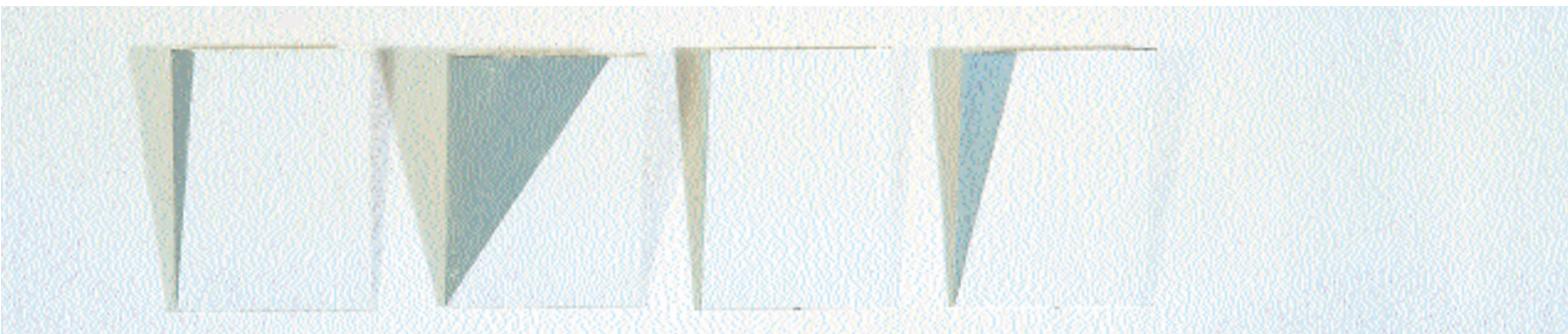
As a fascinating premeditated enigma – a painterly conception with a typical simplicity of means – each self-referential piece is a seminal work in major investigations by the artist into; painting as a container, pictorial space, Russian Constructivism and the icon as a religious and domestic signifier.¹ We might see the panels as naming the three dimensional space they occupy, as according to Cripps, they describe their own display.² His regulative idea is the subject matter describing how the work is hung, the canvasses installed at an angle to the wall. Each grey-green form describes the dimensions and shapes of the hanging angle of the canvas, and correspond to the volume of space behind and beyond the picture plane.

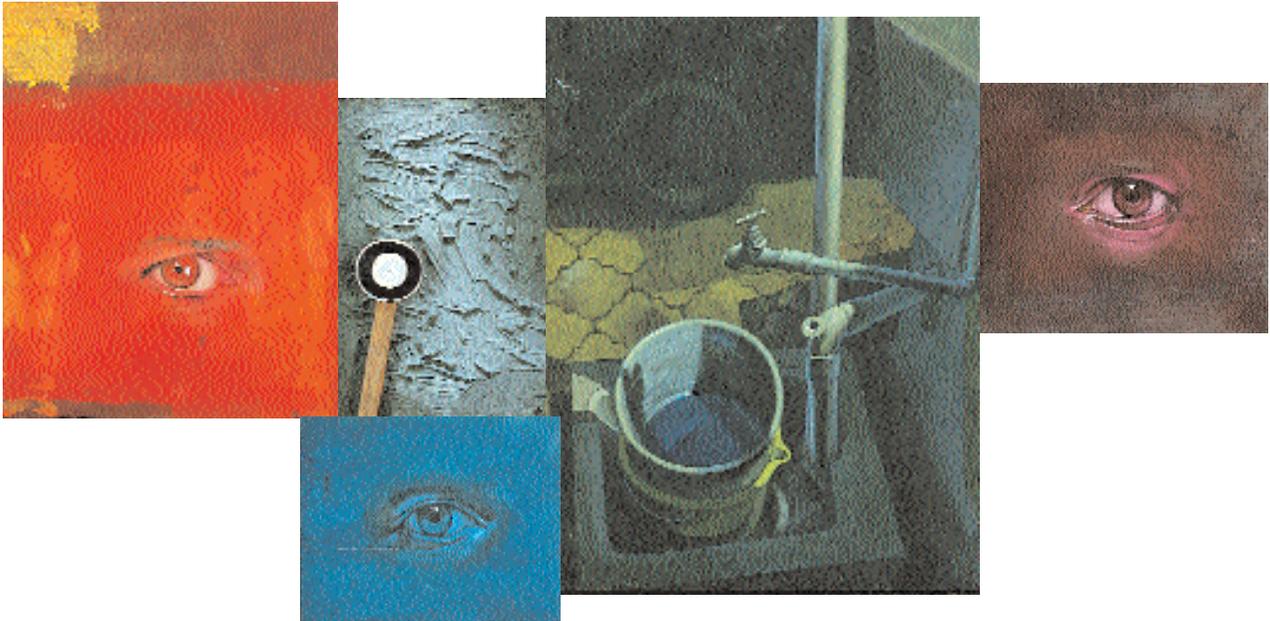
A void, then, is the 'real' pictorial space of the works. Further, the deliberate confusing of the imagery of his paintings with the painting itself paradoxically abolishes traditional notions of 'pictorial space' and has a constructive dialogue with the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. The piece catches a shift in the artist's formal logic of applying found systems to painting as object and container, comprehensively extending these notions to include the container of art in the space of the spectator. For Periz, there is another insouciant poke at key debates in 1960s formalism here, namely the disciplinary demarcation between painting and sculpture³. Utilising the formal and material conditions that constitute an imminent pictorial language – although not textual in this instance – he paths the way to eventually include in his work, text and image, and currently, text as image. It might be argued the work itself defines precisely a space 'between' readings of MacPherson's oeuvre. The space 'Untitled Series One' 1979 creates, so it would follow, allows us to juxtapose concerns of his past (investigations of the painterly process) with a different present (his explorations of language and other sign systems).

If we were to read much further into it, we might ultimately see these painted forms as shadows of reason that inform and unify with astonishing efficiency his entire output to date. In them the door is left slightly ajar; Robert MacPherson is nothing if not discreet.

We are grateful to Simon Wright for this catalogue entry

- 1 see: T. Smith, 'The World in My Paintbrush' *Robert MacPherson*, Perth, 2001, cat., p. 60-62, and 'Artist's Statement' *Robert MacPherson: A Proposition to Draw 1973-78*, cat., Brisbane, 1993 for extensive coverage of MacPherson's idea for the 'painting as container'.
- 2 see: P. Cripps 'Robert MacPherson' *Robert MacPherson: Survey Exhibition*, cat., p.8-9, IMA, 1985.
- 3 I. Periz 'Close your Eyes' *Robert MacPherson: Survey 1975-1995*, cat., (unpaginated), National Gallery Victoria, 1995.





91

John Nelson (B. 1951)

Looking/seeing

Do You See When You Look?

Do You Look When You See?

I Know You Do!

Take That For Granted

5 panels, oil and mixed media on five
canvases

81 x 160 cm

Executed in 1991

5

Estimate: \$2,400-2,800

PROVENANCE:

Acquired directly from the artist by the
present owner in 1991

LITERATURE:

*Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Master
Concert Series*, brochure, 1992, illus. back
page



92
 Stephen Killick (B. 1947)
 You've got to look in every
 Ditch #13

acrylic on canvas with artist's own frame
 62.7 x 39.1 cm
 Painted in 1969

Estimate: \$6,000-7,000

PROVENANCE:
 Llewellyn Gallery, Adelaide
 Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
 Acquired from the above by the present
 owner in 1969



93
 Stephen Killick (B. 1947)
 Melamie #9

acrylic on canvas with artist's frame
 61.9 x 39.2 cm
 Painted in 1969

Estimate: \$6,000-7,000

PROVENANCE:
 Llewellyn Gallery, Adelaide
 Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
 Acquired from the above by the present
 owner in 1969