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Art and Oedipus

by

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I certify that the thesis entitled

Art and Oedipus

submitted for the degree of

PhD.

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any other university or institution is identified in the text.

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Date: 28.05.2004
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Exegesis Katherine Hattam 22/11/03

Introduction Argument

In late December 1993, I read an opinion piece in *The Age* newspaper by Australian artist Albert Tucker, (1914-1999). The article enraged me in its didactic and narrow insistence on there only being one way to make art; yet something in his argument niggled and in a way provided a focus for my thinking over the next ten years, shaping the nature of this research. The articles en ‘Will a painting that looks like something from real life ever be called art again?’, presented an argument by Tucker that the image is essential to painting. The strength of my irritation in reading the piece, revealed to me that the existence (or not) of the image in painting is an issue for me. This led me to ask the question: to what degree is the undefined territory that exists between the abstract and the figurative shaped by the unconscious; or to what degree is the form an artist chooses defined by and revealing of the unconscious?

The title ‘Art and Oedipus’ is two-pronged: firsts it refers to my being a second-generation artist, working in the same territory (two-dimensional painting and drawing) as my artist father - this means that any ambition I may hold entails the metaphorical killing of my father; second, my title also suggests a more far-reaching meaning, encompassing the use by Sigmund Freud (b. Moravia, I 856) of the term, the unconscious’. In Freud’s account of the unconscious, how it is formed and works, the Oedipus complex plays a central role. To some extent, my title could equally have been ‘Art and the Unconscious’. However I wanted to highlight the particularity of my circumstance, that is, second generation. It also points more clearly to my argument, which is not the truism that art springs from the unconscious, but that it is in the form the artist chooses where we most dearly find evidence of the working of the artist’s unconscious.

‘Oedipus’ also signals a relationship across the sexes, in my case that of a daughter to a father. Though Freud changed his mind about the differences between male and female Oedipal experiences, he suggests that, while the Oedipal

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experience is not symmetrical for male and female, it is in essence an experience that forms a human beings, regardless of sex.

Because my relationship to the particular figure of my father was so significant in my development, it seems possible to me that, subsequently, many significant figures have been male in particular, Matisse. My relationship to the art world was for many years a relationship to a patriarchal art history, tradition and art world.

The word ‘Oedipus for me is Freud’s though it is necessary to acknowledge the relevance in general and to Freud - of the plays contained in the ‘Oedipus Cycle2. Oedipus Rex Oedipus at Colonus and Antigone, in which Sophocles dramatises the ancient myth of Oedipus. A brief retelling of the story may clarify Freud’s theory: Oedipus is sent out to die by his family. as his parents have been warned of a prophesy that their son will kill his father and marry his mother Oedipus survives and grows up, aware of the prophesy, but ignorant of who his real parents are. To avoid fulfilling the prophesy he shuns the city of Corinth and King Polybos, believing him to be his father. At the opening of the play Oedipus Rex Oedipus is king of Thebes and married to Jocasta, whose first husband, Laios, has been killed years before. Thebes is tossed on a murdering sea’ of plague and will only recover when Labs murderer is discovered and punished. A blind seer, Teiresias, is summoned to help and it is discovered that Oedipus in spite of all his efforts, has in fact fulfilled his destiny, that of the prophesy, and has killed his father and married his mother. Jocasta kills herself, Oedipus puts out his eyes and Creon Jocasta’s brother, becomes king. This all occurs in the first play Oedipus Rex

In Oedipus at Colonus, we observe Oedipus and his children (in fact also his brothers and sisters) in particular Antigone. For my purposes, in Oedipus Rex, what is crucial is that what is dramatised is the unknowable, Oedipus non-knowledge. This is central to Freud’s concept of ‘the unconscious’ and the notion that what is repressed there is unknowable. What we see in Oedipus at Colonus is that Oedipus, though a tragic figure, blind and exiled, is unrepentant and dignified. In Antigone, it is Creon who, refusing to bury Oedipus’s son Polyneices, and killing Oedipus daughter Antigone for burying her brother, is the evil character not tragic - just bad, and Creon is punished by his son Haimon killing himself, just as Croon has killed

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Antigone whom Haimon loved. In contrast, Oedipus is a tragic figure whose crime is more akin to that of original sin. What Sophocles and, in turn, Freud are proposing is that human nature is darker than is commonly perceived.

Oedipus is told that his destiny is that he will kill his father and marry his mother; he spends his life avoiding that fate but in fact does just that. What is essential to an understanding of Oedipus is that he did not, could not know what he was doing. According to Freud, Oedipus fate is touching, because he represents a central human concern that crystallises within an individual developmental history as a core conflict.3

Agreeing with Wassily Kandinsky, in his notes ‘On The Problem Of Form’ when he states, ‘thus the spirit of the individual artist is mirrored in the form; the form bears the stamp of the personality’, I argue that the form I choose (or any artist chooses) is shaped by the unconscious. Furthermore, I argue that there has been too much focus on the subject matter and content of work, especially in psychoanalytic interpretation, and that it is through the form that we have the most profound access to the artist and the art. In psychoanalytic theory, the influence of what is unconscious and repressed has in art been too often limited to interpreting the subject matter, image or manifest content. I use Freud’s differentiation between the dynamic unconscious and its use of primary processes and that of the descriptive unconscious involving secondary processes, to argue that the formal qualities of any work and the process of making that work are energised by the unknowable, repressed, and therefore powerful, unconscious.

The unconscious, the word and the idea it describes, has been completely absorbed into contemporary language and thinking. If Freud’s discovery were to be summed up in one word, it would be the unconscious. He first published The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900 when he described dreams as ‘the royal road to the unconscious’.5

3 Edward Erwin ed. The Freud Encyclopaedia Theory Therapy and Culture.
It has been over one hundred years since this discovery, which tells us that, in a profound way, we are not fully masters or mistresses of our own house.

From the beginning, art, literature and psychoanalysis have been intertwined and have fed off one another. Freud wrote an analysis of Leonardo da Vinci and his work and the Surrealists sought to access the unconscious in their automatic drawings. The writer, Thomas Mann speaking about Freud’s significance, talks of ‘the close relation between literature and psychoanalysis’ and ‘the profound sympathy between the two spheres’. In both my work and this related research, psychoanalytic thinking and its tools are essential in several quite different ways. I propose to explore the relationship between the form an artist chooses and the unconscious - in particular why my work is figurative. This necessitates a workable definition of what is abstract and what is figurative; also a more specific or more clinical definition of the ‘unconscious’, a word that in its acceptance into everyday language has become too inclusive and too general. My experience and the comments of artists such as Jasper Johns, Francis Bacon and others make it clear that much of significance can occur between the artist’s intention in making a work and the finished result. I see this mysterious gap as evidence of the unconscious at work - through process, through form and not just through choice of subject matter or content.

It is generally agreed that in the best art, form and content are indivisible. However, for my purposes here, it is necessary and possible to prise open that indivisible whole. There are as many ways of talking about the making of art as there are artists. The experience ranges from that of a strategic purpose being carried out where the result is the same as the artist’s intention, to that where the artist refers to or even deliberately calls upon a more exploratory approach, where in the making of the work accident and happenstance are accepted and welcomed. I argue that whatever the artist says, thinking about and planning are different from doing and

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6 Mann, op. cit., p.585.
7 Mann, op. cit. p.585.
making. It is that gap which interests me here. Therefore, I am distinguishing between content, subject matter and process. I also distinguish between abstract and figurative work, as well as work that has no reference to reality and that which does. There are works at either end of this continuum, for instance, Barnett Newman at the abstract end, and John Brack at the figurative. These are easy to define and are often self-evident. A large number of artists fall into more murky territory in between, for example, Brice Marden, where the work looks figurative but whose titles can suggest otherwise. Marden’s titles are interesting, in that they make clear his movement between the abstract and the figurative. His titles range from Decorative Painting (1964-65) [fig.1] and Blue Painting (1972) [fig.2] to Grove Group (1976) [fig.3], and Cold Mountain 6 Bridge (1989) [fig.4]. The Australian artist, Peter Booth, has produced both abstract and dramatically figurative works. Until the 1980s, early works, like the large abstract ‘door’ paintings, at first glance look like a combination of rectangles of paint. Looking closer, the bottom and sides of the canvas reveal layers of paint drips, the surface giving the appearance of one layer covering many underneath I see these paintings as abstract, suggesting whole figurative tableaux underneath. Conversely, his more recent work, for example the exhibition in 2002 at Anna Schwartz gallery, all works on paper, clearly depict images of a world disintegrating. Uniform in size, and all but one in black and white, the exhibition transmuted before the viewers’ eyes, from a series of figurative works making strong emotional and political statements about the world, into a series of cool studies on the infinite possibilities of black and white. The fact that all the works were not titled, say ‘Apocalypse’ or ‘End of the World’, but were labelled Untitled’, underlines this. He is using all his painting and graphic skills to explore and play with the infinite variations possible within black and white, line and form, as can be seen in an early figurative work, Painting (1982) [fig.5].

For my purposes here, it is possible, even essential, to accept gradations between the two extremes. What I am arguing is that the form an artist chooses and takes in a work is a more profoundly unconscious decision than that of the choice of
The Art Museum, Princeton University. 
105cmH x 44cmW
Blue Painting 1972. Oil and wax on canvas, 72 X 72” (3 panels). Private collection

fig.2. Brice Marden, *Blue Painting*, oil and wax on canvas, 1972 private collection, 183cmH x 183cmW
Grove Group V 1976. Oil and wax on canvas, 72 x 108” (3 panels). Collection Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago.

fig. 3. Brice Marden, Grove Group, oil and wax on canvas, 1976. Collection Gerald S. Elliot, Chicago. 183cmH x 274cmW
Cold Mountain 6 (Bridge) 1989-91. Oil on linen, 108 x 144". Private Collection.

fig. 4. Brice Marden, *Cold Mountain 6 (Bridge)*, oil on linen, 1972. Private collection, 274cmH x 366cmW
fig. 5. Peter Booth, *Painting 1982*, oil on canvas. Art Gallery of South Australia
197.7cmH x 274.9cmW
Looking back at my working process, this is how I see it: I experience a wish or desire to draw or paint an object or scene, the work being organised around an image. Once the process of making the picture begins, all the decisions are formal ones. By ‘formal’, I mean those decisions that govern the way the finished work looks, as opposed to what it means or what I define as content’. Decisions are made as to underpainting: how thin, what colour, whether before or after the image is drawn in? Should the image be drawn freehand, painted first or outlined with a stencil then painted? In some works, I know from the outset that I want the layers of paint left exposed at the bottom of the picture in a decorative frieze of dripped colour, whilst in others I want the ground to go flat to the edge. All these decisions that I have described are formal. My initial desire is to create an image, even to ‘say something’, but from the moment the process of making the work begins, what dominates my decision-making is how does it look, not what does it mean. Yet looking back to my formative years, I find myself unwittingly in the thrall of the Antipodean Manifesto and its argument about the necessity of the image. The image remains an issue for me.

Combining art, autobiography and psychoanalytic theory, I will explore the relationship between the unconscious and the form an artist chooses. The following chapter headings sketch out the form of my argument:

**Chapter 1 Definitions**

For my purpose it is necessary to define, what I understand of the unconscious, of abstract art as opposed to figurative art, and to distinguish form from content.

I rescue the word unconscious from its everyday use and define it specifically in its psychoanalytic use. I argue that, according to Freud’s definition, it is in the form rather than the content where we may find the key expression of the artist’s deepest, often repressed, energies.
Chapter II  
**Autobiography and the Antipodeans**  
I am uniquely placed, as a second generation artist and child of that time, to look back at the 1950s including the Antipodean Manifesto and movement, to explore the effect of those ideas and that milieu on my current practice. I place my father in that time, looking at various historical commentaries on the era, in particular Patrick McCaughey’s article on my parents and their collection in *Art and Australia* Vol. 6 No. 1 June 1968, ‘Two versions of Melbourne humanism in the Hattam Collection’.

Chapter III  
**Subject Matter**  
Taking the imagery of my recent work I trace its origins, give an account of both my intention in choosing these subjects, placing this against what I see I have in fact done. I then examine the interpretations of others, both written and spoken to me and noted down during various exhibitions and studio visits.

Chapter IV  
**Influences**  
At the beginning of the twentieth century Matisse and Picasso stand as two giants of artistic practice. For me, it is Matisse whose shadow has been the largest and most productive. I tease out his influence in my work through various incidents: my father quoting from Flam’s volume *Matisse on Art* with Matisse talking about size and that you can’t just scale up a small drawing; a trip to New York in 1984 to see the Matisse retrospective at MoMA; the very significant recent biography by Hilary Spurling, *The Unknown Matisse*; the influence of several other artists, some directly and others who I see as working in similar territory. In my discussion in this chapter, I locate and contextualise my own work.

Chapter V  
**The Un/Homely**  
I return to psychoanalysis: Freud, his notion of ‘Heimlich Unheimlich’ and Jacques Lacan (b. France, 1901) with his reworking of Freud in the (un)homely, and see this notion of the uncanny expressed in the domestic as illuminating and informing upon my work. As I had until recently been unaware
of Freud’s Heimlich-Unheimlich theory, it seems evident to me of how
unconscious and unthought out the main drives for my work are, both in
relation to subject matter but more particularly and perhaps surprisingly, its
form. The desire comes first, then the working and doing and, at the end, the
thought and interpretation.
Chapter 1  Definitions

In this chapter, I isolate, define and separate from one another four concepts: subject matter, content and process; content and form; the abstract and the figurative; finally, the artist’s intention and its realisation, that is both the artist’s and the viewer’s.

1.  Subject matter, content and process

The distinction of this concept is not the same as that between form and content. Content or subject matter can include what the artist says and thinks this is, on the one hand, and what a viewer sees on the other which may vary from viewer to viewer. However, the subject remains what the work is about. The process is that stretch between the subject or idea and its formal outcome. Marcel Duchamp, in his essay ‘The Creative Act’, takes the proposition that the artist is a medium, concluding that, ‘If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the aesthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it. All his decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self-analysis, spoken or written or even thought out.’

What he wrote here in 1957 puts beautifully what I mean when I cite Freud’s concept of the ‘dynamic unconscious’ to describe what happens in the making and doing, in the actual process of the work. Duchamp’s account of the most important part of the process does not mean that an artist is not at the same time making all those decisions necessary to making a work but may be making them for reasons quite other than the artist thinks. This is the art version of not being master or mistress of one’s own house. Literally, process includes all the doing and making between the two poles of the artist’s intention and what is in the end expressed. It includes the physical act of delineating the objects, the covering or not of the support with paint, choices of colour and texture and all those decisions about edges, soft or hard, layers of thickness, the quality or obviousness of brush strokes and whether

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they are emphasised or eradicated. There is content, the subject or ideas expressed in a work, and there is form, not how that content is expressed, but what it looks like; in between is the process of making.

2. **Content and Form**
In the ‘process’ described above, these two become one in the work. Yet there is the content, subject matter, which the artist may or may not understand differently from the viewer. For example, *In My Father’s House* [fig.6] the subject content of the painting is the chairs but it can also include notions, such as vulnerability, becoming, dysfunction or celebration. The form includes the facts that, it is an oil painting on canvas in a flat rather than illusionistic style, that it’s 2D not 3D and the colour, size and all its physical object qualities.

3. **The Abstract and the Figurative**
In art books, abstract art is often defined by what it is riot At the very least, it is described in opposition to (say) figurative art or the decorative. Figurative art in general is not defined at all, possibly because it is assumed there is no need to do so. In dictionaries, the clearest definitions are format, assuming a more general, less specifically knowledgeable, audience.

In *The Art of the 20th Century* Karl Ruhrberg, referring to painting, sees abstract art in a practical context He writes, ‘Art was enlisted by the opposing dialogues as an instrument of political propaganda, chauvinistic. There was socialist realism on the one side and, on the other, abstract art, which was touted as a symbol of Western freedom.’ Mark Rosenthal, in a catalogue essay for a 1975 American exhibition entitled, ‘Critiques of Pure Abstraction’, extends the notion that the abstract was thus allied with the western and the modern. His definition of the abstract includes its history. ‘Abstraction’, he says, ‘was pioneered in the second decade of the century by the painters Wassily Kandinsky, Kasimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian, as a mode in which there appeared to be no referents to the world of

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fig. 6. Katherine Hattam, *In My Father’s House*, gouache & charcoal on paper, 1997. collection the artist, 76cmH x 168cmW
appearances'.

He continues, ‘in relation to abstraction’s purity, the absence of signs of anecdotal art was often accompanied by notions of spirituality and lofty idealism.’ He cites abstraction longevity ‘as an option in the face of multitudinous, competing aesthetic thrusts, [that] had made it virtually ubiquitous as a sign of the modern period.’ Consequently, its character, purity and self-importance has been the subject of criticism by postmodern artists, critiquing it as superficial, anachronistic and ignorant of social concerns

Markus Bruderlin, in his book, *Ornamentation and Abstraction* examines the complex relationship between abstraction and ornamentation. In his introduction, Bruderlin argues that early abstractionists, such as Kandinsky and Mondrian, defended their work against ornamentation, whereas he argues that ornament was in fact an essential component to the development of abstraction He claims, ‘it has been the much postmodern era that has finally dissolved the irreconcilable opposition between the avant and ornament, permitting them to engage in a fruitful dialectic of enmity and reconciliation...’

Oleg Grabar, in the catalogue entry for *Ornament and Abstraction*, defines abstraction as ‘a word used to define the quality of a painting. It is an attribute given to a work of art by its viewer and/or its maker in order to distinguish it from its representations; it implies that whatever is seen (or to be seen) cannot be defined by its subject, but a mental or spiritual concept, at worst a technical procedure.’ He

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11 Rosenthal, op. cit., p 9
12 Rosenthal, op. cit., p 9
challenges the modernist assumption of a hierarchy of aesthetic significance where the abstract is on some higher plane than ornament. Implicit in these definitions so far are larger arguments in contemporary art to find a pure and simple definition. What becomes clear to me is that any argument between the abstract and the figuration is only part of a bigger, longer argument. The Antipodeans, the manifesto and exhibition, are symptoms and outcomes of this more general argument, meaning that my argument with myself about the necessity of the image, is also part of a larger, more generally relevant discussion.

In *The Oxford Companion to Art*[^15], abstract art is defined in opposition to traditional European art and its imitation of nature. The definition further states that abstract art is a term commonly applied to the more extreme styles in reaction to the traditional European art’s imitation of nature. The definition then differentiates between several strands of abstract art. The first, is the reduction of natural appearances to simplified terms and such artists as Cezanne, Klee and Brancusi. This tendency describes very well the group of Melbourne artists Patrick McCaughey, in his article ‘Two Versions of Melbourne Humanism’,[^16] writes about as ‘the Symbolists’ (French [fig.7], Kemp [fig.8] and Senbergs [fig.9]) whose work, he says, involves the depiction of things by reducing them to their essential forms. This tendency may involve distortion and stylisation of form. The aim of artists working in this way can be to convey these ideas and thoughts about qualities of things beyond perception and casual appearance. Alternatively the aim can be to create a construct, incorporating shapes and colour, that is to say ‘form’, to have an independent life as an art object, such as a piece of music.

The second tendency involves the construction of art objects from non-representational basic forms. This leads to the making of non-representational or non-figurative objects, not by abstraction from natural appearances but by building up

Fig. 9. Jan Senbergs, *People Above The City*,
enamel on hardboard.
Hattam collection
183cmH x 137cmW

fig. 7. Leonard French, *The Grand Performance*.
enamel on hardboard, c. 1950s.
private collection,
76cmH x 122cmW
fig. 8. Roger Kemp, *Configuration*, oil on hardboard, 1955. Hattam collection, 122cmH x 137cmW
with non-representational formal shapes, patterns, colour, line. Works by Malevich, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Barnett Newman and Rothko address this tendency [fig. 10].

Abstract art is defined by *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* as follows, ‘Paintings and sculpture making no identifiable reference to the visible world. Such works, which must have some claim to exist in their own right if they are to be distinguished from ornament or decoration, are often considered analogous to works of music.’

Even here the definition is complicated by the vexed question, Is it art or merely decoration? What remains of the definition is that abstract is art that makes no identifiable reference to the visible world. While this is not watertight as a definition, it is workable. What is also relevant here is the continuing argument over a concept as entrenched in contemporary practice as abstract art.

Another way of putting this is to devise a continuum with figurative art at one end, the second tendency in abstract art at the other end, and the first tendency in between. The first type of abstract art, where art works are made by reducing natural appearances to simplified and essential forms to convey something more or beyond appearances, best describes my work.

4. **The artist’s intention and its realisation**

*Freud: the Oedipus complex repression and the unconscious*

My argument is that when artists set out to convey their intentions, their choices of form are in fact unconscious ones. Therefore, the chosen form and process may be more revealing of the artist than the more overtly accessible and intellectually chosen subject matter.

Having defined content, form and process, and abstract and figurative, it becomes necessary to define my understanding of Freud’s ‘unconscious’ To convey this, first I must define briefly his concept of the Oedipus complex that is instrumental in creating those repressed thoughts and desires that in turn form the unconscious.

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Repression is where the subject attempts to repel or confine to the unconscious, thoughts and images that are unacceptable (most commonly, instincts and desires that the superego knows to be unacceptable) Repression begins with the Oedipus complex. As the name suggests it is taken from the Greek play where Oedipus unwittingly marries his mother and kills his father As Freud states in his account ‘The Oedipus Complex’ in the *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1916), ‘At about the time when the mother becomes the Love object the mental operation of repression has already begun in the child and has withdrawn from him the knowledge of some part of his sexual aims.’\(^{18}\) In his writings, Freud changes his mind on various issues, including the difference between the experience of the male and female child. But for our purpose here, it’s enough to note that he decides the experience of the Oedipus Complex is not exactly the same for females as males and that the experience is not symmetrical but rather, that the resulting repression and formation of the unconscious is. He writes, ‘But since all men and not only neurotic persons have perverse, incestuous and murderous dreams of this kind, we may infer that those who are normal today have also made the passage through the perversions and the object inversions of the Oedipus Complex; and that this is the oath of normal development.’\(^{19}\) Lacan, in his rewriting of Freud, describes this process as that of the law of the father, and language, mediating the imaginary, the symbiotic relationship between mother and child is cited as an essential step in normal development.

The Unconscious

The unconscious refers to mental processes of which we are unaware. There are different kinds of mental processes, some conscious, others not According to Freud, there are also two different kinds of unconscious processes - those which become conscious easily and those which are subject to repression. It is the first kind of

\(^{18}\) Freud, Sigmund ‘The Oedipus Complex’ General Introduction to Psychoanalysis 1916, ed. Ellman & Feidelson pub.1965, OUP, p. 576

\(^{19}\) Freud, op. cit., p. 576.
unconscious process that are most often referred to in the everyday use of the un(sub)conscious. These include memories and information which can be recalled when needed. These are described by Freud as ‘descriptively unconscious’. Phantasies and wishes, which only become conscious after the removal of some resistance or can be inferred, for example, through interpretation of dreams or through analytical procedures such as free association (automatism in drawing), are ‘dynamically unconscious’. It is necessary to distinguish between these two forms to make the point that, in this second more clinical use of the term unconscious, the conscious is by definition unknowable. Dynamically unconscious processes conform to the primary process of thought Preconscious and conscious processes conform to secondary processes of thought. Primary processes are characteristic of unconscious mental activity. Secondary processes are characteristic of conscious thinking. Primary processes deploy condensation and displacement therefore, in art one image can symbolise another. Such an image may use mobile energy and work on psychoanalytic rather than real space and time, that is, it moves between the present and the past. The secondary process obeys the laws of grammar and formal logic and is governed by the reality principle. Primary processes are exemplified in dreaming, secondary processes by thought. I want to suggest that where daydreaming, imaginative and creative activity and emotional thinking contain a mixture of both these processes, in the physical (often almost automatic) doing, the process of making a work contains primary processes not unlike dreaming. This is when the unconscious really takes hold. In the more thoughtful process of choosing subject matter (however abstract), there is a mixture of various levels of the conscious and unconscious mind at work.

Jasper Johns puts this very well when he says, ‘... in a painting, the process involved in the painting are of greater certainty and, I believe, greater meaning, than

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the referential aspects of the painting. I think the processes involved in the painting in themselves mean as much or more than any reference value that the painting has.²²

Sylvester picks up on Johns privileging of process over subject matter and takes it further, suggesting that something of psychological significance may occur through that process in the doing and the making of the work. He asks, ‘Is it possible that what has happened in the painting can be analogous to certain processes outside painting, for example, on the one hand psychological processes, such as concentrating one mind on something, attention wandering, returning, the process of classifying again - or that there might be some analogy to certain processes in nature, such as the process of disintegration or reintegration, the idea of something being held together?’²³

Johns replies, the final suggestion, the final statement, has to be not a deliberate statement but a helpless statement t has to be what you can’t avoid saying, not what you set out to say.’²⁴ Johns continues, Then what one sees one tends to suppose was intended by the artist I don’t think that is so. I think one works and makes what one makes and then one Looks at it and sees what one sees.’²⁵

David Sylvester, later in the interview, pushes Johns further on this when he puts to him, ‘Again and again you return to the way in which something is posed and then contradicted or departed from, so that you are constantly interested in the way intention and improvisation work together In other words, it seems to me, your constant preoccupation is the interplay between affirmation and denial, expectation and fulfilment, the degree in which things happen as one would expect and the degree in which things happen as one would not expect.’²⁶

²⁴Johns, op. cit., p. 724
²⁵Johns, op. cit., p.271.
²⁶Johns, op.cit.,  p.275.
Both what Jasper Johns describes as ‘a helpless statement one that is ‘what you can’t avoid saying, not what you set out to say,’ and Sylvester use of the word ‘improvisation’, I understand as ways of recognising the force of the unconscious I agree with Johns when he argues that the process involved in a painting means more than any ‘reference value’ or subject matter Further, his views resonate with Freud’s differentiation between the dynamic unconscious and the primary processes where someone does something in a dream rather than consciously thinks of something. In John’s case it is an artist who does the painting, referring to the process of making a work and not the conscious intellectual choice of subject matter. Similarly, Francis Bacon in an interview with David Sylvester talks about ‘accident’. He says, ‘because I don’t know how the form can be made. For instance, the other day I painted a head of somebody [“Head I” 1961] and what made the sockets of the eyes, the nose, the mouth were, when you analysed them, just forms which had nothing to do with eyes, nose or mouth but the paint moving from one contour into another made a likeness of this person I was trying to paint. I stopped I thought for a moment I’d got something much nearer to what I want Then the next day I tried to take it further and tried to make it more poignant, more near and I lost the image completely. Because the image is a kind of tightrope walk between what is called figurative painting and abstraction.’

Here, I have clarified relevant definitions in order to make the point that, in my experience and that of other artists, an artists’ intention is modified in the doing’ or making of a work. I argue that the intention is modified by the artist’s unconscious. In the next chapter, I recall in autobiographical and anecdotal terms the intellectual and artistic climate that formed me. My intention is not to psychoanalyse myself, rather to write down, as exploratory evidence, those experiences and place them in the context of critical and art historical accounts of the time.

Chapter II  
**Autobiography and the Antipodeans**

In a newspaper interview about his exhibition, ‘Rick Amor - The Sea’, Amor, the artist, comments ‘It’s all childhood in the end isn’t it?’, this practice of artists ‘pillaging’ their childhood, consciously or not, persists throughout history, cutting across or moving beneath all the other forces that can be traced in the making of a work of art.

Amor grew up at Frankston, beside the sea. The sea fascinates him - to the point of obsession. While he feels certain limitations painting landscape, seascapes explode before him. ‘Amor says, Interesting point, this. I never thought of it before. I find I can really take my landscapes anywhere like I can with seascapes. I’ve rarely pulled it off. But seascapes, no problem, because the sea resonates.’ For Amor, childhood and unconscious forces are not an essential part of all his work - but he recognises this force and the pull of particular subjects like the sea. He continues, ‘I began to paint subjects that I found personal significance in, especially; the sea. I rediscovered my childhood - that's Frankston pier in Nightmare.’ So it was through the painting that he became aware then chose to create work deliberately from this force.

**Autobiography**

My interest in the Antipodean period reflects, not so much any objective historical significance but more its significance in my personal artistic history. Here, I am working with psychoanalytic rather than historical time - the non-linear temporality that is the time of subjective history. This time acknowledges that experiences can be repressed, can return, can lie dormant or recur. My purpose is to comprehend better the hold the image has on both me and my work. Therefore, to look back to the Antipodeans and their manifesto in 1959 or to the exhibition, *Two Decades of American Painting* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1968, is not to examine in

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29 Johnston, op. cit..
30 Johnston, op. cit..
31 Johnston, op. cit.
chronological order their historical significance but rather, it is an attempt to trace their impact via the open-ended, less rational approach of the psychoanalytic. This is only possible with an acceptance of the notion of non-linear time.

My title, ‘Art and Oedipus underlines the generational forces in art: international, Australian and my personal art life. The difference between being a first or second-generation artist in a family is the moment when the artist discovers art. For me, it was always there - on the walls, in the talk - something I took in almost without realising it. In contrast, for my father, Hal Hattam (1913-1994), the discovery was much later in life and came absolutely from outside the family. He was an established obstetrician and gynaecologist who had grown up, like many Melburnians of his era, in a house with nothing but Victorian prints. Suddenly, that all changed. While visiting a patient whose child he had delivered at home, he saw a book on the French Impressionists and was bowled over - to the extent that he eventually gave up medicine altogether to paint full time.

This is his version, but I have discovered other possible influences - for instance, he had a great aunt who painted and played the piano and, as a young man at the end of WWII, he was one of three Australian army medicos who, having served in the Middle East and New Guinea, were sent to England. Stationed at Stavely House in Easthourne, they were to talk with Australian servicemen about their anxieties of returning home to family and civilian life. During this time he met, quite separately, both my mother in the WAAF and Australian war artist Stella Bowen who painted his portrait. After he became engaged to my mother, the couple went to stay with Stella Bowen. This I knew about before but hadn’t seen it clearly as an introduction to art. What I was not prepared for was the revelation that my paternal great-aunt painted and played the piano. This is of no great significance in itself but she was an important influence on my father. Art in a direct personal way in the form of a significant figure making art was part of his childhood, yet he never mentioned it.

Where my father talked of the life-changing flash of an impressionist work in an art book, my mother’s recollection is different. She records that they had seen a
John Perceval tile-top table at someone’s house, wanted to buy one and so went to the Boyds’ house and pottery at Murrumbeena to do so, thus meeting the Percevals and Boyds. In effect, the connection was made through the less ratified, more popular pottery.

Friendships developed from that visit, including painting trips. These painting trips were to outer suburban Melbourne in the company of John Perceval, Charles Blackman and Arthur Boyd. The men went on ahead with boards, paints and easels. The women and children followed with the picnic lunch. Later my father painted regularly with Fred Williams, taking him to the You Yangs, Dights Falls and Eltham after the bushfires. [fig.11]. I went on several of these trips and drew them painting. Throughout this time, babies were being born, most delivered by my father, payment often being made with a painting then worth less than his fee, but later to form part of a significant collection. Pictures were also swapped throughout this period. Barbara Blackman has written in an article in *Art and Australia* that 1959 was the year of the Antipodean Manifesto and exhibition where artists Arthur and David Boyd, Perceval, Pugh, Brack, Dickerson, Blackman and Bernard Smith as “the non-painting member and theorist of the group” defended the image in painting against the enemy, abstraction.

Had I, on some powerful unconscious level taken in all these arguments, beliefs and images by which I had been surrounded in those formative early years? From the time of my first exhibition at the George Paton Gallery (Melbourne University) in 1978 my work has been, to varying degrees, figurative. I ask myself or the work asks itself: to what degree is the choice of the figurative over the abstract an unconscious one? In the immediate personal area of my practice, what holds my interest in each painting and drawing are the abstract, formal qualities such as the hard and soft edges, the placement of the objects and the negative space between the objects. In short, the process and the making of the work. Could I make the work simply from these concerns without contemplating what meaning may lie in or behind

In particular I'm thinking of the area around One Tree Hill. They were just black stumps – everything else gone, but there were the tree ferns, tall great magnificent ferns. It made you weep to look at them. And within a month there were small fronds, starting at the tops. 

Two small sketches of these ferns, drawn simply in pen and ink, can be dated from the artist's diary specifically to 25 November 1968 when Williams once again worked at One Tree Hill Road with Hal Hattem: 'Hal here at 11.30 – we go without lunch – first to O.T.H. road & make (3) etchings of the "ferns". After that to Lysterfield & I make half a dozen ink drawings – it's a very nice afternoon indeed – with its changing moods etc. I gather a great bouquet of wild-flowers'. In this pair of sketches executed in the open air (en plein-air), Williams concentrates his focus upon the supremely elegant tendril forms, as they unfurl in sensuous arabesques as if in celebration of nature's survival.

From these humble recordings of Fred Williams' wonder before the regenerative power of nature, came the inspiration for a larger series of fern drawings, fashioned the following year in charcoal over ink spray-painted backgrounds. It was common practice for Fred Williams to consider themes and motifs over an extended passage of time, resuming work on subjects after a suitable gestation period of looking at their possibilities and pondering their final composition. In January 1969 Fred and Lyn Williams had moved back to Melbourne, to a new house in Hawthorn East. It was here in the winter of 1969 that Williams produced a consummate suite of large-scale drawings depicting the regenerating ferns.

This small but exquisite group of drawings has the intensity and 'finish' of the related oil paintings of the bushfire subject. This was intentional, as was the artist's use of high quality English watercolour paper (Saunders) in their production. 'I start early & work on my drawing all day. I have plenty of sketches to work from (quill drawings I made before I left Upwey). They are mannerist in a sense – but working on the assumption that 'formal' invention is endless? I am using the best possible quality paper and this does make a vast difference to the look of the drawings when they are finished'.

The large fern drawings concentrate upon a single 'exotic' motif – tiny tendrils of green growth emerging from the seemingly dead and charred stumps of native tree ferns, months after the Upwey fire. By repeating this minute motif with slight variations, in a manner akin to the subtle notes played in a piano concerto, Williams pays tribute to enduring spirit of Australian nature, witnessed by the irrepressible regeneration of the fire-ravaged bushland. This was a miracle that both he and Lyn Williams admired: 'There was this small extraordinary landscape where you just felt there was no hope of recovery: and yet within five years things had regrown. Which just shows the nature of our Australian environment, and how accustomed it is to adjusting – how fire is probably a natural part of the cycle here'.

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fig. 11. page from Ted Gott: 'Fred Williams, Drawing the exotic', 1999. Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
each image of tables, trees in front of the sea and the simple wooden kitchen chairs of my contemporary family life.

Artists/painters can be divided into the clearly figurative the clearly abstract and those who consciously explore the in-between territory, an amalgam of both abstract and figurative, that can be neither solely one nor the other. Explorations of the tension between the areas serves to drive the work of many artists. Two movements can be identified that shaped me as an artist: the Antipodean (Melbourne) and Abstract Expressionism (New York). Though the Abstract Expressionists were working in America in the 1940s and 1950s, their impact was felt throughout the 1950s in Sydney and in Melbourne where the ‘Antipodeans’ rallied to stem and combat the influence of international abstract art. These were my formative years.

In addressing the question whether a figurative artist can be an abstract artist or whether their roles are determined by the unconscious and somehow fixed, there are related issues that need to be discussed. For example, what the image is that demands definition: is it the object (say the chair in fig 1) or is it the object and the ground? Is it the black armchair or the mint-green gouache surrounding it (as in fig.6 ch.2)? Image is not to be confused with meaning which can be just that, the object itself, or it can be something beyond or quite different from what is apparent. It is clear that the moment abstract art emerges, artists begin defending themselves against the danger of becoming ‘merely decorative’.

Looking back to the beginnings of the Antipodean movement, and its focus on the significance of the image that lies beneath the very personal relevance of arguments about meaning versus decoration that has underpinned my work, I include some of these arguments and their context in international art history, because they both put in place the Antipodeans concerns and, in turn those which have informed and engaged my work. What I have taken from artists such as Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, who invoke the sublime, was the fact that, not only can art be made without narrative, imagery or realism, but that meaning is given more prominence as
these qualities recede. Rosalind Kraus’s essay on the Grid points to the writings of American Abstract Expressionist artists, arguing that if we open any tract on non-objective art, ‘we will find that Mondrian and Malevich are not discussing canvas or pigment or graphite or any other form of matter. They are talking about being a mind or spirit.’ She takes this to mean that ‘the grid is a staircase to the universal and they are not interested in what happens below in the concrete.’ The grid, she argues, is modern art’s ‘will to silence’, that is anti-literature, anti-narrative, thus creating a division between the visual and the verbal. Here she is turning Clement Greenberg’s argument, expressed in essays such as ‘Abstract, Representational and So Forth’ (1948/1958), ‘The Crisis of the Easel Picture’ (1948) and ‘American Type Painting’ (1955-1 958)], that painting should do what it alone can do and not move into the territory of say literature and film, in other words - back against itself.

Tucker argues abstract art is merely decorative, whereas Newman, seeing this as a possible failing, argues for meaning in the sublime. Again, Krauss argues that Modernism’s privileging the grid and critics such as Greenberg not allowing narrative and the image, results in Modernism sealing itself up in an impenetrable silence. Taking a more sophisticated and complex approach, she argues that the grid both contains and enacts visually the repetitions of the traumatic experiences of the unconscious. Here we have Rosalind Krauss, Barnett Newman and Albert Tucker, from often diametrically opposed positions, all tackling the perceived limitations and problems of non-figurative art.

34 Krauss, op. cit., p.10
35 Krauss, op. cit., p.9
37 Albert Tucker, The Age, Wed. Dec 29,1993, p.15 ‘Will a painting that looks like something from real life ever be called art again?’
In her article39 ‘Miriam Shapiro and Femmage’, Norma Broude examines the conflict between decoration and abstraction in twentieth century art. Broude sees the fear of the decorative in political feminist terms. She argues that with the emergence of abstraction, some artists have felt the need to distinguish between decorative low art, exemplified in domestic crafts such as quilt making, and the high serious art of abstraction. Broude focuses on the example of Matisse and Kandinsky, revealing that it was precisely their involvement with, and attraction to, the decorative, Art Nouveau and the Arts and Craft Movement, that enabled them to move into the ‘high art’ of abstraction. Art history sees Matisse and Kandinsky as transferring the merely decorative to the significantly abstract. Broude argues that what is not stated is the implied hierarchical division between art and craft, high and low, fine and applied, male and female.

A brief autobiographical aside, reveals the defensiveness and reality of the arguments between abstract and figurative art in the late 1950s. During a family visit to the Australian abstract painter Len French as a nine year old I precociously presented him with a small abstract, pattern picture I had made. His reaction was, ‘It’s just a pattern, just a decoration.’ It is interesting, not in relation to my attempt at the abstract, but in the vehemence and defensiveness of his response.

Things have changed since then and, similarly, things have changed since Newman was writing in the 1940s, as can be seen in Robert Hughes’s account in his book, The Shock of the New (1980). Discussing Barnett Newman’s painting Vir Sublimus Heroicus I 950-51, he says that Newman’s version of American transcendentalism, in so far as it applied to art, ‘had been debased to fustian’40 that it was now out of date. All that Newman can claim, says Hughes, is a modicum of originality, that ‘now seems to have lain more in the formal qualities of his meticulously painted canvases’.41

41 Hughes, op. cit., p. 318.
Stuart Koop, in his essay on contemporary Australian artist Angela Brennan, finds it a positive quality that ‘Brennan’s paintings fail to transcend they don’t take off, they are rooted to the spot in the late 1980s and early 1990s’. Here Koop is celebrating the ‘palpably real and material before our eyes and body’ in the quality of paint, colour and drips. He not only feels there is no need to claim sublime or transcendent meaning but celebrates its absence.

More recently in the 1980s, there was a spate of exhibitions in Melbourne, both problematising and celebrating ‘the decorative’ which, when used with ‘art’, had become synonymous with ‘bad’. In fact, most art, most painting which, after all, is usually destined to be hung on a wall, has a decorative element, some of it good and some not. This concern with, and fear of, the decorative, emerged with the arrival of abstract art where more profound meaning became elusive. The catalogue for the exhibition ‘Ornament and Abstraction’ (Beyler Foundation 2001) celebrates and examines this historically problematic relationship exhaustively. To many, this argument about the validity of the decorative was relegated to irrelevance in the 1970s with feminist theory and the 1980s with that of postcolonial theory. It has had a longer life for me because of the strength of my identification with patriarchal male figures. I do not come from a background of the stunning traditional dyeing and weaving seen in the exhibition of Indonesian fabric ‘Sari to Sarong’ at the National Gallery of Australia nor from the different, but related, tradition from which Aboriginal artist Emily Kngwarreye emerged. Unlike artist Sally Smart, I do not connect with a female tradition of quilt making and sewing. Not only is the tradition to which I relate that of male-dominated modernism, but I have shown that, for me, the elements

42 Stuart Koop, ‘Wonky Art: The paintings of Angela Brennan’ *Art and Australia*, Vol 34, No. 2
43 Koop, op cit.
44 Bruderlin ed. *Ornament and Abstraction: the dialogue between non-western, modern and contemporary art* Dumont Yale 2001
45 cat ‘Sari to Sarong — Five Hundred Years of Indian & IndonesiartTextiie Exchange’, Robyn Maxwell, National Gallery of Australia 2003.
of abstraction and meaning were an issue and remain so, in spite of feminism and postcolonialism.

I include these arguments and theories, not because they are current (in fact they are not, having been absorbed into contemporary understanding) but I include and analyse them in order to unravel their significance in my development as an artist. What I am describing here are attitudes and beliefs that I hold out of time, clearly without a rational basis and face, therefore best elucidated by the psychoanalytic. By placing up against one another my personal experience, art history and art theory and arguments of the times, I hope to build up a ‘portrait of an artist’. I have chosen to both create and analyse this portrait through the lens of psychoanalytic theory.

Psychoanalytic theory describes an individual. It is not a scientific theory in the sense that it cannot be used to predict future behaviour but rather its real value exists in being able to understand human and individual behaviour after the fact, retroactively. Adam Phillips, psychoanalyst and author who is editing a new collected Freud for Penguin, says about Freud’s theories, “I don’t think they are scientific” and then “I don’t think they are verifiable or falsifiable. I don’t think they’re anything other than consensually acceptable.” He argues “we should see Freud as another, very skilled, very imaginative, late nineteenth, early twentieth century writer, on a par with say Stendhal or Lawrence.” Phillips says, “You read Proust and Freud together, you realise they’re both writing about memory, the way certain experiences in childhood become meaningful, such that we bring them into adult life. It is actually very difficult to know what happens to one’s childhood.” This describes well my views on psychoanalysis.

I have chosen to concentrate on Freud’s theory of the unconscious and repression to illuminate my understanding of creativity. There are many others within

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47 Crampton, op. cit.
48 Crampton, op. cit.
psychoanalytic theory and, in fact, Freud also looks at the subject in different ways. At some points, he links creativity, day dreaming and children’s play, whilst at other times he locates creativity in the sublimation of the sex drive. For Melanie Klein the notion of ‘reparation’ is crucial. Reparation is where the subject seeks to repair the effects its destructive phantasies have had on its love object, the mother or, more precisely, the breast.

Initial the child perceives the mother/breast as part of itself. This involves endless repetition and a desire to return to the pre-oedipal and integrated relationship between the mother and child. There is some similarity here with Winnicott’s notion of the transitional object but where Klein refers to internalised objects, Winnicott refers to actual objects such as a blanket or doll or teddy bear, and later on, the subject’s work. Winnicott describes the child treating this first ‘not me’ object as being halfway between himself and another person. The relationship with this intermediate object allows the baby to negotiate the transition from the initial absolute dependence on the mother to a more independent relationship with a person other than itself. The baby treasures the blanket or teddy bear and is comforted by it but can also express angry hostile feelings towards it without the guilt these emotions would cause the baby if expressed to another person, such as, the mother. This perspective enables the baby to work through its ambivalence.

Lacan describes a similar process in his use of the term “desire”. Elizabeth Grosz defines Lacan’s meaning this way: “desire is conceived of as a fundamental lack in being, an incompletion or absence within the subject which the subject experiences as a disquieting loss which prompts into the activity of seeking an appropriate object to fill the lack and thus satisfy itself.” For Lacan, desire is always marked by the desire for the Other. He sees desire as negative - a hole, an absence.

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50 D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*.
Lacan also shifts the focus in analysing creativity to include the viewer, not just the artist.

Individual development is fundamental in understanding an artist but this development takes place in a wider social, historical context. Over the first fifteen years of my life (and at a formative time in my aesthetic development), at least three art movements coexisted and dominated - the Antipodeans developed in response to the perceived threat of Abstract Expressionism (international art) which, in its turn, developed into Minimalism. In 1968 the reality of international art made its impact with the exhibition ‘Two Decades of American Painting’ at the National Gallery of Victoria, to which I made repeated visits.

In my research, I have looked back to and analysed those moments in art history in which my art practice was founded attempting to locate my work, developing much later, in a wider historical context. In understanding and analysing my individual attitude to the image and to subject matter, the account becomes of necessity a personal and, in part, an autobiographical one. My aim is to uncover and explore some of the assumptions imbedded in the way that I make a work and to see how they were formed by a fit with those of the time I look first at the Antipodean Movement, then the aspects of American Abstract Expressionism from 1968, and finally Minimalism to which I am increasingly drawn for future work.

**Eruption of the Autobiographical Significance of the Antipodean Manifesto**

I surprised myself with the vehemence of my response to Albert Tucker’s opinion piece I refer to in my introduction. The article appeared in *The Age* in late December 1993.

Essentially Tucker argues that to be an artist you must finally produce an image on the canvas - ‘not a photographic one but an allegorical one which explores life from all levels of the human mind and which is significant and relevant to its times.’ 52 He refers to abstract art during WWI, as ‘grammatical exercises in

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52 Albert Tucker, *The Age* Wed. Dec 29,1993, p.15 ‘Will a painting that looks like something from real life ever be called art again?’
painting in balancing colours, in playing with textures and shapes. These are only legitimate things for an artist to do for an experimental period. He cites Malevich’s painting of a white square on a white canvas as total negation and continues that where painting tries to illustrate itself it is negative and self-destruct. Minimalism and conceptualism are anti-art. In a romantic way he sees great art as changing the world in some way. Abstract art, he argues, is safe and unchallenging. Artists, according to Tucker, must seek to explore the deeper levels of their conscious and unconscious awareness, with its source of allegorical memories. He quotes DH Lawrence as saying, ‘All life is an allegory pointing to a hidden reality, much more profound than the one evident to our own external senses.’

Rereading this newspaper article nearly ten years later, I am reminded how problematic it is to argue from the general to the particular about what makes good or great art. There are no rules but there are guiding principles: often the single-minded vision produces strong art but then one artist’s strength is also another’s weakness. It’s not only more useful - but easier - to move from seeing a great work of art to thinking from the particular about what it is that makes it so good, rather than predicting what makes great art from general principles.

Tucker’s argument, thirty-four years on, gives an insight into what the Antipodean Manifesto and the exhibition meant to the participating artists. In what might otherwise seem difficult to comprehend in the current context, it is necessary to recall that era and circumstance in which Tucker himself had been formed - all the personal privations of a working class upbringing during the depression.

Christine Dixon and Terry Smith, in their catalogue for the exhibition ‘Aspects of Australian Figurative Painting 1942-1962’ place the Antipodeans and other artists in the social, political and economic context, times of fear and uncertainty. It was the time of the Cold War and anti-communism a time of debts and shortages.

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53 Tucker, op. cit.
after WWI - a general desire for security. Menzies came to power in 1949 with his ‘promises of freedom and property - that little house and perhaps a car’⁵⁵ - also the end of economic controls and petrol rationing and the banning of the Communist Party.

Dixon and Smith argue that ‘responses to threat vary: it is possible to fight back, to reject its existence or to withdraw’, and that most Australian artists’ response, other than social realists like Noel Counihan and James Cant, was to withdraw. Such artists withdrew to pursue technical and aesthetic aims, but Dixon and Smith argue that the anxieties of the period manifested themselves in varying forms of alienation. Artists, such as Blackman, escaped into romance with his schoolgirl series and later the Alice in Wonderland paintings. His works and those of Dickerson depicted the isolation of individuals. Again, rejection by society can be expressed through the portrayal of the Australian land as harsh barren landscape, evident in the works of Nolan, Tucker and Drysdale. Dixon and Smith use the fact that so many artists not only travelled but lived for extended times in Europe⁵⁶ (at least thirty major artists were away from Australia in the years between 1947 and 1962) as exacerbating the sense that Australia was distant and peripheral to the centres of Europe and America. The distance and significance of such a centre, as somewhere essential to travel, would heighten the power of its potential influence and helps explain the wish to react against it, as expressed in the Antipodean Manifesto.

From where I stand now in 2002, having read Tucker’s opinion piece, then the Manifesto itself, it is clear how much things have changed in the intervening years and how much that 1959 document was of its time. It is essentially a document reserved for male artists. Smith refers to The great black bull of Lasceaux’.⁵⁷ The artists I met, not just in the 1950s, but also into the 1960s and 1970s were all men.

⁵⁵ Dixon & Smith, op. cit, p. 31.
⁵⁶ Dixon & Smith, op. cit, pp. 21-32.
⁵⁷ Bernard Smith, Australian Painting, p. 329.
Some artists’ wives had been art students but stopped painting, publicly anyway. For instance, Merle Kemp married to Roger Kemp and Yvonne Boyd married to Arthur Boyd stopped making art. Exceptions were Helen Maudesley who married John Brack and continued to paint and exhibit and Joy Hester whom heard about and knew only through her work. Ann Hall, a student at RMIT with Robert Jacks, painted and exhibited during the 1960s and early 1970s and lived with John Perceval when he was in and out of Larundet; she has since disappeared from public view. In 1993 Tucker acknowledges the importance to artists of the deeper levels of the conscious and unconscious with its endless source of allegorical memories that go back to our origins… whereas in 1959 Smith argues, not only less interestingly but even perhaps wrongly, ‘Art is willed. No matter how much the artist may draw upon the instinctive and unconscious levels of his experience, a work of art remains a purposive act, a humanisation of nature.’

Despite these differences, the argument is essentially the same, ‘to be an artist you must produce an image… allegorical one which explores life from all levels…’ The Manifesto is very clear in demanding not something general like art should have meaning but very specifically and literally ‘an image’: ‘Art is, for the artist, his speech, his way of communication. And the image, the recognisable shape, the meaningful symbol, is the basic level of his language. . .lines, shapes, colours, though they may be beautiful and expressive, are by no means images. For us, the image is the figured shape or symbol, fashioned by the artist from his perceptions and imaginative experience.’

I have already mentioned Barnett Newman, in relation to his fears of being merely decorative. It’s revealing to look at him again, writing at the same time as the Antipodean Manifesto, to show how much these ideas were in the air. Interestingly, in a slightly different form and coming from a diametrically opposed position, Barnett Newman, the American Abstract Expressionist, wrote an essay. The Plasmic Image-

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59 Smith, op cit p228
60 Patrick McCaughey, *Fred Williams*, p. 121.
thoughts on painting (1943-45) which comes to surprisingly similar conclusions His writing is more open, thoughtful and less didactic but he, like Tucker, warns against the decorative, which he refers to as ‘ornament’: The present feeling seems to be that the artist is concerned with form, colour and spatial arrangement This objective approach to art reduces it to a kind of ornament The whole attitude of abstract painting, for example, has been such that it has reduced painting to an ornamental art whereby the picture surface is broken up in geometrical fashion into a new kind of design-image. It is a decorative art built on a slogan of purism where the attempt is made for an unworldly statement…”61 He goes on to argue, ‘The present painter is concerned not with his own feelings or with his own personality but with penetration into the world of mystery, His imagination is therefore an attempt to dig into metaphysical secrets To that extent his art is concerned with the sublime.’62

I include these quotations from Barnett Newman, an abstract artist, as he was one of the American international artists whom Bernard Smith and the Antipodeans felt they had to defend themselves against. They did this to emphasise: first, a basic assumption that ‘the decorative’ was what was to be feared and avoided at all costs. This is the argument pursued by the Antipodeans in the 1950 and at the same time by Barnett Newman, one of the main American Abstract Expressionists, and again by Albert Tucker in 1993; second, these ideas had some currency in the 1950s (although it is true that Kandinsky and others had similarly defended against the decorative years earlier).

I was a nine-year-old when the Antipodeans held their exhibition in 1959 at the Victorian Artists Society but what I have taken from a combination of childhood memory and later talk and reading, is that the project was from the outset problematic. The painters themselves were divided in their opinions about abstract

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versus figurative art. Many felt the division between the two was too simplistic. Bernard Smith manifesto was more dogmatic and extreme than the artists expected. Conversations I remember at the time involved arguments such as: was Len French too abstract? His paintings, my father argued, clearly referred to embodied and symbolised images.

It’s clear that early on I would have been aware of ‘the image’ in painting and its presence or absence, as an issue. Whether I used it or not, the presence of the image had been made a ‘problem’ for me and was something I had taken in with my Weeties.

Barbara Blackman, in an article in *Art and Australia*, wrote that Hal Hattam, Fred Williams and Len French were considered as possible members of the Antipodeans but were decided against - my father because he was too amateur (as an obstetrician and gynaecologist, he was then only painting at weekends - a ‘Sunday painter’), French because he was too abstract and Fred Williams because he was as yet too unformed. My father is nowhere in the indexes or accounts of this time by Robert Hughes or Bernard Smith which both says something about his limited involvement but also about the selective nature of a history that leaves out such details. Nor is he mentioned by Christopher Heathcote in *A Quiet Revolution - The Rise of Australian Art 1946-1968* which focuses in far greater detail on a shorter period, often resulting in a different perspective. For various reasons, my father did not go on to have anywhere near the profile or fame of the ‘Antipodean’ artists - and so (it seems) becomes less interesting historically but he was there, as Barbara Blackman makes clear. Although my parents’ role in the Melbourne art world is not there in the histories by Smith, Hughes or Heathcote, it is recorded in two articles which provide an objective balance to my memory.

Patrick McCaughey, in his article, *Two Versions of Melbourne Humanism in the Hattam Collection* puts forward the view that ‘The Hattam collection does

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suggest a new perspective on Melbourne painting in the fifties’. Arguing from the perspective of the Greenbergian 1960s, McCaughey looks back to the 1950s and sees it as more complex and part of this complexity was there in my parents’ collection which subsequently has largely been sold, much of it to the National Gallery in Canberra. For instance, the Fred Williams Steep Road is in the collection of the NGA and on the cover of the most recent edition of Robert Hughes’s classic *The Art of Australia*. [fig. 12]. I mention this because it gives my personal aesthetic experiences a more general context. McCaughey uses the collection to argue that the Antipodean affair has been seen as too central. He refers to a group of painters, Roger Kemp, Leonard French and Jan Senbergs, whose work was more symbolic than realistic. These two streams, the Antipodeans and the Symbolic Abstractionists, meet up in my parents’ collection in a way they rarely did in their professional lives. Looking at these two streams, McCaughey argument gives a richer, truer picture of the 1950s.

What I recall is visiting, and being visited by, two distinct groups of artists: those who lived and worked in or nearby Surrey Hills (Brack), Hawthorn (Charles Blackman followed by Fred Williams in the same studio/flat out the back of a large house in Christobel Crescent), Canterbury (John Perceval was just down our street) whereas Len French, Roger Kemp and Jan Senbergs all lived at various spots down the suburban coast, such as Black Rock and Cheltenham, though Arthur Boyd, as an Antipodean, doesn’t fit the pattern, living along the coast. My parents moved between

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fig. 12. cover painting to *the Art of Australia* by Robert Hughes
*Landscape with a Steep Road*, oil on composition board, 1957.
National Gallery of Australia, ACT.
110.3cmH x 90.9cmW
left: *Four Kitchen chairs*, oil on canvas, 170cm x 170cm. & 3D sculpture: chairs, painted wood, 2001  
right: the artist with *Kitchen Chair and its Component Parts*. painted wood, 2001. 183cm x 183cm
both groups and often brought artists together across divisions. Clearly even this going between the two groups embodies and plays out my thoughts about the importance of the image.

McCaughey, in his monograph *Fred Williams 1927-1982* looks at the historical importance of the Antipodeans through the prism of their excluding Williams and what this meant to him and what it prefigures about Australian art from that moment on. He sees Williams’s exclusion from the group, and their one and only exhibition, as underlining the major difference between him and his contemporaries. It also signalled a change in ethos from the expressionist painterly sensibility of the Antipodeans’ concerns with the literary content of the work and that ethos of the 1950 and 1960s, to that of the cooler more minimalist 1960s. Williams, influenced by Cubism and Matisse had a more impersonal aesthetic. His art did not symbolise or carry any meaning beyond the objects depicted. The paintings were about his perception, his handling of colour, shapes, line formal concerns. Robert Hughes, in *The Art of Australia*, compares Williams to the Italian artist Morandi and his bottles. He says of *Sherbrooke Forest* (1961) ‘The figurative element nearly vanishes.’ In *You Yangs Landscape* (1963), 1 trees are mere dots of paint, hung on a neutral ground… ‘But that’s just it the figurative element nearly disappears but it doesn’t. That tension and play between the abstract and the figurative is central.

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65 Patrick McCaughey, *Fred Williams 1927-1982*, pp. 120
67 Hughes, op. cit., p. 220.
Christopher Heathcote, in his chapter ‘Antipodeans Aweigh’, from his book, *A Quiet Revolution* Looks back thirty-six years Later to 1959 and pieces together what happened, through talking to and interviewing many of those who participated at the time. He gives a close-up picture of who said what to whom at whose house Though he quotes directly from various artists, his main focus is art historian Bernard Smith, whom he describes as politically Left wing, adopting a Marxist approach in his disapproval of Surrealism Heathcote argues that Smith was influenced, probably indirectly, by Hegel in his belief that we understand reality through a process whereby we begin with a proposition However, the thesis proves inadequate and therefore suggests its opposite - the antithesis. These then combine to create the synthesis. Heathcote claims Smith argued in *Place, Taste and Tradition*, ‘that the contemporary artist begins with a received figurative base (thesis), then experiments with the latest non-figuration (antithesis), but finding each deficient, combines their attributes to arrive at a new image painting (synthesis).’ Therefore, non-figuration was an intermediary stage in the revolution of Western Art.

Robert Hughes, in his chapter ‘Myths and Personae’, analyses and criticises the ideas and issues evident in the Antipodean Manifesto. He argues that, not only were the concerns at issue vast, such as the relationship of images to art, but the language of the document meant that they never became clear. Hughes tackles the fact that there is no evidence to back up the statement that celebration of pure

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70 Hughes, op. cit., p 247.
71 op. cit, p. 248.
form is not a meaningful activity, similarly that there is no analysis of what ‘meaning is in art’. He cites Herbert Read,\(^{72}\) in arguing that where the manifesto implies that art is a rational discourse, it is in fact a symbolic one whose elements are visual, not linguistic. Painting must be conceptualised as a language of a quite different order, not more or less than verbal language but altogether different. Without this being clarified, concepts such as ‘meaning and the image were in fact defined as a ‘figured shape or symbol fashioned by the artist from his perceptions and imaginative experience’\(^{73}\). As Hughes argues this could equally fit abstract painting and therefore where in fact does figurative painting end and abstract begin? Hughes also refers to the social realist, Marxist and moralist elements implied in the Manifesto to further cloud what is meant by ‘the image’.

Bernard Smith, interviewed in *The Age*,\(^{74}\) ‘Culture Review’ Wednesday, 25 September 2002, by Megan Backhouse, is still talking about ‘why the Australian art world... hasn’t come to terms with the Antipodean Manifesto... penned in 1959, proclaiming the importance of figurative art’ In contemporary pluralist postmodern times, there is room for both the abstract and figurative. Hence, such arguments are no longer central.

Early in 1966, a cousin of mine brought Patrick McCaughey to my parents’ house for dinner. He was The Age art critic at the time and from this meeting he wrote the article in *Art and Australia*, ‘I refer to two versions of Melbourne Humanism

\(^{72}\) op. cit., p. 248.
\(^{73}\) op. cit., p.247.
in the Hattam collections, June 1968 Vol 6, No 1. He later wrote the monograph on
Fred Williams. He was an admirer of the American painters. The exhibition ‘Two
Decades of American Painting’ came to the National Gallery of Victoria that year. On
one of my visits to the show, I was given a tour of the show by an enthusiastic and
knowledgeable McCaughey. At the time, I was overwhelmed, not so much by the
non-objectiveness of the works but by their sheer size and the fields of colour. These
pictures were not painted on easels with oil paint and palettes but on vast expanses
of canvas or cotton duck with buckets of acrylic and large house painting brushes.
Again, it was the formal qualities that hit home. Australian artists were already
working on their own regional and individual versions of abstract expressionism,
colour field painting and hard edge but the impact of the exhibition ‘The Field’, which
opened the new building of the National Gallery of Victoria, was profound. In my
Year 11, 1967, I had some tutoring in literature by Bruce Pollard who was then a
school teacher and soon to become the owner of a significant gallery, Pinocotheca,
first in St Kilda and then in Richmond. The framer my parents used was also a friend,
Martin Smith, who lived and worked in Hawthorn. Through him my parents met
Robert Jacks. His then wife Kerry, a gifted teacher, spent several afternoons tutoring
me. This association led to Robert Jacks, Dale Hickey and Robert Hunter frequently
visiting our house. Robert Jacks lived there for three months before leaving to follow
Kerry who had gone ahead to Canada to teach. Later, they went on to live in New
York for several years. Through these artists, I learnt what was meant by Colour
Field and Hard Edge. In many ways, my intellectual engagement with their more
minimal, thoughtful and cooler art was more deliberate, more independent.
Nevertheless, primary influence occurred in those earlier less self-aware times of the 1950s. I am arguing that an artist’s choice of form is decided early along with the formation of general personality, and is profoundly influenced by the unconscious.

My purpose in detailing in autobiographical style the ‘Antipodean’ affair and the issues surrounding it, is as evidence of formative influences. It’s clear that, not only was ‘image versus abstraction’ a problem for me, but movement between the two was uncommon. My work has mined my childhood explicitly since 1997, and more instinctively before then. Decisions about colour and placement on the canvas or page have been formal ones and actually move into abstract territory.

Citing the unconscious as crucial to the making of work does not mean I intend to analyse my work, it more the general principle that interests me. Yet, it’s clear that my choice of the domestic as subject matter as opposed to history, war or landscape, could be seen as ‘oedipal’, a typically female, less confronting, choice aimed at finding a place in a patriarchal world. And I have argued that the domestic has the advantage that it’s not as tame as it appears.
Chapter III My Imagery

In this chapter, I will describe the dominant and persistent imagery in my recent work and how I came up with it - and then I will balance this with various other written and spoken interpretations. Perhaps strangely, with reference to ‘my imagery’ I give considerable space to the role of the viewer, first theoretically and later detailing numerous different views from different viewers. This is not because my imagery is not mine or what others say it is, but because meaning is constructed between the artist’s created object and what the viewer sees. In fact, the sheer variety of possible views reduces the validity of any one viewer interpretation over another.

‘A fragment of music or poetry, a page, a picture begin to live in the act of their creation but they complete their existence when they circulate, and it does not matter whether the circulation is vast or restricted, strictly speaking the public can consist of one person, so long as that one person is not the author himself.’ This is Eugenio Montale describing what he calls ‘the second life of art’. Marcel Duchamp, in his essay ‘The Creative Act’ 1957, puts it this way, there are ‘the two poles of the creation of art: the artist on one hand, and on the other the spectator who later becomes posterity.’ Both Montale and Duchamp privilege the importance of the role of viewer, reader and listener in completing the process of creating. The insistence on there being two people involved in the making of any work of art the artist and the viewer - is one of the distinguishing features of the postmodernist view as distinct from the modernist. Implied in this is the acceptance of the fact that there can be many interpretations of a work of art and that the artist’s statement of intention is just one of many equally valid views. Duchamp describes the artist as a ‘mediumistic being’ and concludes about the artist that all his decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a...

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77 Duchamp, op. cit., p.138.
self-analysis, spoken or written, or even thought out. Duchamp describes as ‘pure intuition’, I would extend to include the influence of the artist’s dynamic unconscious’ on his working process. The psychoanalytic view, recognising unknowable unconscious energies and forces, which may mean the artist does not in fact do what he thinks he is doing or sets out to do, underlines this approach. As Duchamp describes; ‘In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realisation through a chain of totally subjective reactions His struggle toward the realisation is a series of efforts, pains, satisfactions]; refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious unless at least on the aesthetic plane.

‘The result of this struggle is a difference between the intention and its realisation, a difference which the artist is not aware of Duchamp describes a gap which represents the ‘Inability of the artist to fully express his intention’ He describes the relation between ‘the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed.’

At sixteen, I began a series of autobiographical linear ‘portraits of myself and my immediate family. These developed from small pencil drawings on writing paper to large black and white charcoal works, influenced by Matisse in their flatness, their emphasis on line rather than volume and pleasure in the decorative Patterns within domestic life (floor boards, rugs, what I had absorbed intuitively) was a mixture of oriental and traditional Western perspective and flatness. From the outset I was more interested in the surface than depth. I made a few hundred of these smaller detailed pencil drawings and less of the larger works. In 1983, living in the Adelaide Hills, our house was burnt down on Ash Wednesday and all these early works were destroyed. What remained of that work were those I had given away. I continued to work, on increasingly larger black and white decorative, domestic drawings. Ted Gott, when curating the drawing show Backlash came to see my work, none of which was finally

78 Duchamp, op. cit., p.139.
79 Duchamp, op. cit., p.139.
80 Duchamp, op. cit.,p.139.
included, but he has remained a supporter. In 1994, after the death of my father, my mother unearthed five of these early small pencil drawings and gave them to me. Looking at them, I was struck how my perspective on the family has shifted from insider to outsider looking back, whereas these drawings were an unreflective, spontaneous record of family life from within.

Later that year my mother visited my sister in America Checking on the house, I wandered through it and the past alone I remember experiencing a conscious wish/desire to draw the chairs that were to me emblematic of that childhood, this time from the outside. Feeling like Goldilocks in the empty house, I returned and photographed the three chairs and the staircase, all of which had originally grabbed my interest and continued to do so. I have drawn from these and made stencils, wanting to create an emotional distance in the quality of the line - a line drawn around and through a stencil is more arbitrarily inflected. The images also take on a more repeated, decorative, less expressionist quality when stencilled. I saw the wing-backed armchair where, in fact, my father often sat reading, drawing and talking, as him or, at least, as representing him. The William IV chair represented my mother, the Australian Krimper chair, the one I sat in to do my homework, was the child. In the early drawings, the figures were in the chairs but when I redrew the series I took the figures out for aesthetic reasons.

One viewer, a Lacanian psychoanalyst (whom I shall call Psychoanalyst S.), has commented in a letter to me, ‘there is something of the traumatic object in these chairs produced precisely by the absence of their occupants. Looking at the chairs, I am aware of the traces of the occupants.’\textsuperscript{81} This seems absolutely true to me now but it is not why I made the decision to leave out the figures - that decision was a formal one.

The choice of the kitchen chairs as subject matter for my more recent work was made by looking around at my immediate surroundings and my contemporary life. Looking at, then drawing and painting these chairs, I kept seeing the abstract

\textsuperscript{81} Psychoanalyst S., Letter to K. Hattam, Aug. 2002.
shapes between the wooden bars. I realised that I would be able to do something with this. I wanted to move from a more figurative, literal figure and ground composition to a more all over abstraction, organised around shape and colour, rather than an actual image.

Comments from critics

1) Robert Nelson, *The Age* art critic, in his review Saturday June 15 2002, wrote 'so while the chairs are drawn with a graphic notation that spells out their volume, the colour and figure-ground relationship act against the illusion; they negate the space proposed by the box-like outlines. Zones of bright colour are used in the negative spaces (as when between the bars of the backrest) so you don read the background through the area as a flat arrangement. Your eye and imagination flicker between three-dimensional illusions and decorative flatness.'\(^8\) This describes exactly what I set out to do. He later mentions that these chairs come from the less illustriously end of the house and its labouring female inhabitants.\(^9\) While this is true, they also could be seen as school chairs. There was no conscious feminist agenda in my choice of subject but they are open to that reading: chairs from the studio. Artist Sally Smart commented that, in their basic workmanlike quality, they symbolised the studio.

2) Psychoanalyst S. saw the dysfunctional kitchen chairs, both the three-dimensional sculpture piece where I had taken away legs and parts of the back and both the drawing and the 3D Dysfunctional Chairs’ [fig. 13,13a] as vulnerable because the chairs seem to be caught in a moment between becoming or deconstructing.\(^9\) She related this to Lacan’s ‘mirror phase’ where a mother and child look into the mirror and the child recognises what is me and what is not me. This is the beginning of the end of the mother and child dyad, the symbolic

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\(^9\) Nelson, op. cit.

fig. 13(a) Katherine Hattam, *Dysfunctional Chairs*, pastel on paper, 2002. collection the artist, 132cmH x 125cmW
relationship where, for the child, the mother is not separate but an extension of itself. It is the beginning of its becoming.

Howard Arkley and Juan Davila collaborated on two large installations, shown at Tolarno Gallery in River Street, South Yarra, when Georges Mora was director. The works consisted of two very large canvases of interiors, from these spilled chairs and tables, all highly decorated in an ironic celebration and mockery of suburbia. I went to the Benalla Art Gallery last year where they are now. These influenced the three-dimensional works included in my recent exhibition, ‘The Vocabulary of Chairs’. My works are more minimalist and have none of the social comment nor are they subversive. These I described as sculptures or ‘non-paintings’. They included found objects, altered, works where the three-dimensional element repeats that two-dimensional element in the painting as if it had fallen out of the picture. For example, the sloping table in *Two Tables and Rodchenko’s Teapot* [fig.14, 15], I discovered in making three-dimensional work I was able to reinforce a statement I had made before in my two-dimensional work. At the time, I was preoccupied with family dysfunction. Psychoanalyst S. picks up on this. However, her interpretation is far richer and its complexity more positive than I was consciously thinking. It’s as if my ambivalence about the family has won over my disillusionment.

3) Curator Jenny Long, in her catalogue essay for ‘Perfect Day’, the exhibition Angela Brennan and I staged at Bendigo Art Gallery in 1999, describes the three family chairs. She sees these chairs as having gathered extra layers of significance since I first encountered them in childhood. ‘They have become dense with repetition. Hattam has worked at these chairs in much the way a writer might have… (it) appears to be a simpler straightforward description, but is saturated with meaning.’ She sees the chairs as a ‘point of connection, pulling together disparate states or elements around them’. Long says that ‘even when they are apparently isolated in

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86 Long, op. cit.
74. Tea Pot (Chainik dlia kipiaku).
10¾ x 14 11/16" (27 x 37.2 cm)

fig. 14. Rodchenko, design for a tea pot, ink on paper, 1922.
27cmH x 37.2cmW
fig. 15. Katherine Hattam, *Two Tables & Rodchenko’s Teapot*, 2002. Private collection, oil on canvas, painted wood & painted objects, 59cmH x 159cmW, 2D, 32cmH x 15cmD x 103cmW, 3D
fields of colour”87 -she is here describing the triptych 1997 In My Father’s House [fig.6,ch.1] – ‘the blackness forms against the mint blanket of their surrounds makes them appear as openings or keyholes in the surface of the work”88. Keyholes suggest to me that the images enable ways back into the past again something I did not intend consciously but now understand to make sense

4) Graham Little, in his essay Seashores and Porcupines’ 1999, saw the chairs as characters whose attitudes change, whose meanings are complicated and contradictory. He saw the triptych, In My Father’s House [fig.6 ch.1] where each of the three chairs is painted sitting alone, as being like portraits commissioned to hang in the family house. For him, ‘the wingback is fixedly father, the William IV is defiantly both female and male and it’s the symbol which appears to change the most. The Krimper is pert and undeveloped at the same time the chair of the novice in life, the adolescent and the creator in art. It is the artist always attending the birth, always starting again, always just beginning.”89  For me the surprise interpretation is the account of the mother/William IV chair. Looking back, I see it’s the one that does change the most. This chair has also been used by me, interchangeably in some instances, with the more obviously male armchair. Lithe calls up the story of Goldilocks as I did at the moment of deciding to make the pictures He does more with it. Goldilocks and the three bears, he says, is the story of the child/adult universally and perennially confronted by the father, mother and child and asks the question - where do I fit?

Little sees the works where I have painted over earlier works as being where selves are painted over, unconscious selves out of which comes depth and biographical strength I chose to work with gouache in earlier charcoal and pastel work because the water-based opaque paint absorbed much of the coloured dust from the charcoal and pastel and took on a richness and depth that was hard to

87 Long, op cit.
88 Long, op cit
achieve with just the gouache. However, it also true that what is underneath is the work of an earlier self. Little describes creativity as making history; he says that here the child develops and the artist creates ‘in the small space between their past and their becoming the past themselves’.\textsuperscript{90} This space, he says, is a space of constant intrusion, ambivalence and struggle, where the prize is a passing place in the sun. This is no less accurate a description of the making of a work of art because it also describes life.

5) Drusilla Modjeska in her essay, \textit{The Vocabulary of Chairs}, discusses my 1999 triptych [fig. 16], \textit{The Return of the Repressed - Red}, seeing chairs pushed up against each other, jostling for position in the claustrophobic childhood house. I was very conscious at the time of making the picture, of ‘fitting’ images into too small a space clearly a problem of my own making. I chose to put in more than could easily fit and to make it work. I have made several works on this theme, this title and with variations on the composition. In the 1980s I made a large collage work on paper which the National Gallery of Victoria bought from my solo show at the Warrnambool City Gallery in 1988. This work entitled, \textit{The Family Yours and Mine}, was divided in two. The top half depicted chairs and a table and teapot from my parents’ house. The bottom appeared similar, but different; chairs and a coffee pot at the top, surrounding the images were photographs of my parents and siblings, the bottom of me and the family that I myself had created. I wanted to convey visually how we come from one family and create another, similar but different. Ten years later my aim in the series, ‘The Return of the Repressed’, was to convey something in the same vein but less literal, more poetic and visual. I wanted to get across more of the difficulty and ambivalence, the deadly quality in the family that Drusilla Modjeska refers to in her essay ‘The Vocabulary of Chairs’\textsuperscript{91}, while simultaneously celebrating these relationships. I now look at the triptych and see it as a celebration of red and all its possible permutations - it relates more to Barnett Newman’s vast (540 cm) red \textit{Vir

\textsuperscript{90} Little, op. cit., p.4.
\textsuperscript{91} Drusilla Modjeska, ‘The Vocabulary of Chairs’, 2002.
*Heroicus Sublimis* but I needed the repeated imagery (the red armchairs), not so much for their meaning, but as a formal organising device.

Drusilla Modjeska perceives the background decorative detail of my etching, *In My Father House* 1998 [fig.17], as a reference to Grace Cossington-Smith’s *The Sock Knitter*. Indeed, these details are taken from that painting Modjeska sees this as me connecting with a lineage of female art. This, she argues, is in contrast to my account of identifying and competing within a mate tradition, the big figures for me being first my father, then Matisse and the artists I have mentioned almost all of whom are male. It’s true that the imagery comes from *The Sock Knitter* but it’s equally true that unlike many feminist accounts mine is not one of a tradition of female craft, for instance quilt-making Cossington-Smith, herself, has taken from Cezanne[fig.19] and male modernist art. My identification was across the sexes, not within a female tradition For Modjeska, the kitchen chairs are no longer emblematic of the past but represent a complex present She notes these kitchen chairs are not identified with fixed positions in the family - some come forward, others recede - there is no hierarchy.

Modjeska discusses the three-dimensional chairs [fig. 13, 13a], referring to their deceptive sizes, ‘their chairness without utility’ She sees that ‘Freed from the canvas, they say something about their own materiality, as well as the dysfunctional tendencies of families’. She then quotes the French/American artist Louise Bourgeois as saying, ‘when you go from painting to sculpture, it means you have an aggressive thought…I became a sculptor because it allowed me to express…what I was embarrassed to express before.’ My non-painting/sculptures are more explicit in their ambivalence about the family. They are also more simply about their form.

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92 Modjeska, op. cit.
93 Modjeska, op. cit.
94 Modjeska, op. cit.
fig. 17. Katherine Hattam, *In My Father’s House II*, etching, APW, 1998. 56cmH x 76cmW
fig. 18. Grace Cossington Smith, *The Sock Knitter*, oil on canvas, 1915. Art Gallery of New South Wales. 61.6cmH x 50.7cmW
fig. 19. Paul Cezanne, *Madame Cezanne in a Red Chair*, oil on canvas, 1877. No size given in John Rewald’s *Paul Cezanne*, Thames & Hudson.
Modjeska cites paint drips across the chairs, marking them, much as fluids drip and mark the body - 96 ‘Flecks of paint mark the chairs as life marks us’. [fig.20&fig.21]. The Curator for Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, Jason Smith, was the first to express this view to me. He saw the chairs as the body which is marked by life I think this is absolutely right. Nevertheless, while making the paintings I am aware first and foremost about activating the surface, relieving the flatness. It is no doubt not an accident that almost in all instances the drips are restricted to the objects, the chairs, a couch and to the bottom of the picture. In the drawings I pick up handfuls of the pastel dust which has dropped to the floor (I work flat on the wall) and throw it onto the image. I am conscious that the bottom of the painting with its archaeological layering of drips is not just pretty but reveals the stages, colour changes and depth of layers the work has gone through. That layering can also refer to meaning. It seems to me a purely formal decision to keep the background colour flat and to contain the drips within the images. In retrospect, it may be that the critic and the curator are right to read more into this decision.

During my exhibition ‘Perfect Day’ at the Bendigo Art Gallery (1999) with Angela Brennan, she and I gave talks to high school students. I began mine with the statement that I was not an abstract painter. Her comment was, ‘But I see you as an abstract artist.’

6) Another curator, Robert Lindsay, older and possessed of a longer view, when visiting my exhibition at Span Galleries (2002) [fig.22], commented that the work fitted into a particular recent tradition. All the best 1970 abstract painting, he said, related to and commented on architectural images, to which he related my references to furniture. He cited Peter Booth’s door paintings, Dale Hickey’s paintings of patterns from suburban fences and John Firth abstractions of ships and the harbour.

Recently, in a successful application for the residence in Beijing (April 2003), publisher Diana Gribble emailed the Australia-China Council, that my ‘work is

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96 Modjeska, op. cit.
fig. 20. Katherine Hattam, *Chair, Light Bulb & Vent*, pastel & charcoal on paper, 2001. collection the artist, 120cmH x 80cmW
fig. 21. Katherine Hattam, *In My Father’s House*, oil on canvas, 2003. Collection the artist, 76cmH x 112cmW
concentrated on the underlying meaning and the juxtaposition of objects, signifying family relationships, communication, rituals and generational tensions’, going on to say, ‘Her palette is vivid and decorative, the paintings are tense and dramatic.’

Lecturer, artist and writer, Robin Wallace-Crabbe when opening my exhibition, ‘The Vocabulary of Chairs’ at Span Galleries, commented that with regard to my subject matter, I was like ‘a dog with a bone, worrying it obsessively’. He remarked on my refusal to make the paintings and their surfaces suitable for apartments.

7) Tony Ellwood, deputy-director of the National Gallery of Victoria, when opening ‘The Vocabulary of Chairs’ at the Geelong Art Gallery talked about the influence of the Italian artist Alberto Morandi [fig.23], who has in fact been a strong influence, in that I take great pleasure in his work. This influence, which has not been cited before, I see as linking in with Robin Wallace-Crabbe’s likening me and my subject matter to ‘a dog with a bone’. It is certainly true that both Morandi and I focus on a limited subject matter. Ellwood’s comment circles back to the reference in Chapter III Autobiography where I discuss Robert Hughes’s comparison of Fred Williams’s gum trees with Morandi’s jugs. There is certainly an affinity in the chosen narrowness of my subject matter with that of both these artists whose work I happen to admire. There is perhaps a correlation between the tension of abstract versus figurative and the limitation of subject matter. Neither Williams nor Morandi are particularly interested in the subject matter but nor could either man make the work without it. This goes to the heart of my question: to what extent is the choice an artist makes about the form a reflection of the unconscious and determined by it?

8) Writer, Murray Bail, said of the work at Span Galleries that there had been movement and improvement since my exhibition at John Buckley Fine Art in 2001, but that I should ‘do more with the chairs’.

Norbert Loeffler suggested that I look at the work of Mona Hatoum and Doris Salcedo, who were both represented at this year Documenta. Others suggested the
fig. 23. Alberto Morandi, *Still Life*, oil on canvas, 1953. private collection
36cmH x 43cmW
same comparison, commenting that my work sees the domestic as a less violent and dangerous site than those two artists. I have since looked at a catalogue of Mona Hatoum’s work. There are connections, in that we both work with some domestic themes, but in the outcome we are poles apart.

Salcedo is a Columbian artist, born in Bogota in 1956, who first studied there, then New York University, and now works in Bogota but exhibits internationally. Like Hatoum, the work expresses the political through the domestic, for instance old shoes sewn into the wall [fig.24] which she sees as symbolising missing persons. She works with old, just out of date, furniture, transforming it by cutting it up and reconstructing it, sometimes using concrete, or reconfiguring it in other ways [fig.25, fig.26]. From reproductions of her work that (have seen (and it’s not enough of either artist), Salcedo speaks to me in a way that Hatoum does not. Salcedo’s work is moving and conveys terrifying circumstances but also transcends the extremes of reality, creating something profoundly beautiful yet unsettling, implicitly proffering criticism yet pointing exciting ways forward.

9) Poet and academic, Chris Wallace-Crabbe has written for an exhibition of my work this coming December, nominating ‘objects as intercessors has long been the case in her paintings and pastels’. Of the chairs, he writes cover and over, there was a chair as mute protagonist: whether her father’s wingback chair or that strange chair with an eye in the back, which had figured so tellingly in her early black and white work. Against backgrounds of almost mall colour, these chairs maintained their authority, ex cathedra. The sea and the window spaces increasingly vanish, the chairs become more siblings, multiple kitchen chairs in space, even in three dimensions’. Looking back at my recent work, I find this to be true; I have deleted the landscape, the outside world.

Artist, Andrew Browne, said of my work in the Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales this year, that my works are not so much still-lives or interiors but ideas for and about still-life and interior [fig.27]. This made so much sense, that I quoted it about myself on ABC TV in June this year.
fig. 24. Doris Salcedo, *Atrabiliarios*, animal fibre, nazarene wood. 6 shoes, surgical thread, 1993. 200cm x 100cm x 8cm
13cm x 34cm x 17cm
no longer extant
fig. 26. Doris Salcedo, installation of untitled works, Le Creux de l’Enfer, Thiers, France, 1996. animal fibre, Nazarene wood, 6 shoes, surgical thread, 1993. 200cm x 100cm x 8cm
fig. 27. Katherine Hattam, *The Hazardous Kitchen*, 2002
oil & enamel on canvas, 80cm x 120cm.
painted wood 3D, 32cm x 152cm x 103cm.
Artist, Brent Harris, commented that I am as influenced by Matisse as he is himself. He suggested that I try a Japanese woodblock technique that has been very successful for him.

Art critic John McDonald, seeing my exhibition at John Buckley Fine Art, commented on the influence of Jasper Johns and Philip Guston and pointed out that it would be possible to put on an exhibition, ‘The Light Bulb in Art’

A literary theorist sent me a card commenting on the way I portrayed vulnerability in the three-dimensional work, *The Blind Leading the Blind* She was impressed with how ‘present’ and physical I made this abstract emotional statement Others have commented on the sexual implications of the work For me, it was a homage to the work of the same name by American artist, Louise Bourgeois, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia [fig.30]. Her work is more abstract and more minimalist but also a strong pink. My work came out of art, not life. In making this work, *The Blind Leading the Blind*[fig.30a]. I was celebrating and recognising an artistic influence. Nevertheless, vulnerability is there in both my work and that of Louise Bourgeois.

A collector who followed me up through the exhibition at the Geelong Art Gallery commented on the work being in the same territory as Howard Arkley.

A commercial gallery dealer, known for his velvet jacket and pink shirts, said that the work was not corporate but more suited to a private collection. However, he felt that such collectors could find the chairs problematic, Could I take them out and perhaps paint some landscapes?’

A consultant said that I had far too many works in the show which detracted from its impact.

A commercial dealer, known for his love of painting as opposed to installation, rang and told me he had come out of the show with different thoughts about my work than those he went in with. He commented that there were two shows there, the
fig. 28. Jasper Johns, *Study According To What*, 1967. graphite wash, watercolour & graphite pencil on paper, 60.6cm x 50.2cm
fig. 28(a). Jasper Johns, *Light Bulb*, 1957. graphite wash, watercolour & graphite pencil on paper. collection the artist, 38.7cm x 11.9cm
fig. 28(b) Jasper Johns, *Daffodil (Shiner)*, 1967. acrylic on stainless steel with metal, collection the artist, 184.8cm x 122.4cm x 16.2cm
fig. 29. Jasper Johns, *Light Bulb (i)*, lead relief, 99cm x 43cm, 1957. *Light Bulb (ii)*, bronze, 10cm x 15cm x 11cm, 1960.
fig. 29(a)i. Jasper Johns, *Watchman (i)*, 1964.
graphite pencil, graphite wash, watercolour & pastel on paper,
The Sogetsu Art Museum, Japan.
52.4cm x 39.4cm

graphite pencil & oil on paper,
collection the artist,
57.5cm x 44.5cm
fig. 29(b). Katherine Hattam, *Kitchen Chair, Light Bulb & Vent*, 2000. mixed media on paper, private collection, 76cmH x 56cmW
fig. 29(c). Katherine Hattam, *Kitchen Chair, Light Bulb & Vent*, 2001. mixed media on paper, private collection, S.A. 125cmH x 125cmW
fig. 30. Louise Bourgeois, *The Blind Leading The Blind*, 1947-49. painted wood, private collection, N.Y. 170.5cm x 163cm x 41cm
fig. 30(a), Katherine Hattam, *The Blind Leading The Blind*, (homage to Louise Bourgeois), 2002.
painted wood,
collection the artist,
142cm x 60cm x 86.5cm
paintings and the three-dimensional work. He particularly praised the small paintings - the most recent. He went on to say that the paint quality was better in these works than in the larger earlier ones. To some extent I agree with these comments but conceived of the exhibition as a combination of the two- and three-dimensional works and saw them as bouncing off and reflecting each other.

A prominent and very commercial dealer took two works from the exhibition at Span Galleries in 2002 and, after three months, told me he had shown them to thirty of his clients interested in contemporary art with no response.

I received a long, thoughtful and critical letter from an experienced and influential art world figure. In essence, his comments were enlightened and conservative, suggesting that I think more about paint quality and brushes, whether or not to frame works and, if so, when. He suggested that I read Velasquez’s theories on tone and, in general, discussed the paint quality. This struck right to the heart of the issues I consider I next need to work with.

These viewers’ responses are invaluable as they do in fact complete the process. What they underline, in their variety, is that while it is an essential part of the process for me to want to say something in a work, or more accurately, want to depict an image, that is just the beginning. It’s a mistake to place too much emphasis on the overt subject matter, a mistake on the part of the artist. It is the making, the doing, the actual process, that is really significant. It’s here that these repressed energies, tapping into the unconscious, are expressed uncensored by the artist because they are unknown to him or her. Therefore it is in the form the artist chooses and works with that he or she is revealed. What the viewer sees is the result of that process combined with some or even none of the artist’s conscious intention. It’s not that the subject matter or interpretation of a work is not relevant or important but the artist’s interpretation does not necessarily provide any more insight than that of the viewer. The American minimalist feminist artist Eva Hesse said acutely that, in making a work, the desire comes first. This is my pattern: I feel a wish or desire to paint, draw or make something. I may think what it means or how to do it. I begin the
process of making the work and my sole concerns are formal ones; wherein I am thinking about the edges the surface, colours and composition

My purpose here, in listing the responses to - and analysis of - my work, is not so much to say what the work means in contrast to my initial intentions, rather it is to illustrate that many meanings are possible - that what a viewer sees in a work reveals something about the viewer white adding to understanding of the work, in that I take notice of some, not all, opinions and analyses of my work. There an initial intention on my part that is modified by what I see has emerged in the making of the work and may reveal another quite unintended meaning to me.

One painting or drawing leads to the next. What’s important to me is: does it come off, is the colour right, should that chair be bigger or smaller, does the composition work? I strongly believe that not much notice should be taken of the artist’s stated intention, what should be believed is what is actually seen.
Matisse’s influence on the art of the twentieth century is far reaching and subtle. Matthew Collings, in his TV show and book of the same name, This is Modern Art, organises his chapter 11 ‘Lovely, Lovely’ around Matisse. Matisse, he says, wanted only to be ‘soaring and swelling and beautiful like lovely music’[97]. ‘There is nothing in painting that happened since 1900 that can be traced back in some way to… [Matisse and Picasso]… them.’[98] My work certainly falls within the category of contemporary art that is influenced profoundly by Matisse and driven by aesthetics, not politics.

As I have suggested, it is not easy to define precisely the influence of Matisse on my work, other than to make the general statement that it has been far-reaching and continuous. This means it is also necessary and worthwhile for me to attempt to do just that - define that influence.

Matisse represented to me a father figure, one of the fathers of modern art, a powerful male figure about whom, by the 1950s, there was no doubt or argument as to his ability and significance. There was no doubt in my mind anyway - but it was significant that his greatness was generally accepted in a way no Australian artist (my father included) has yet been. It’s a relevant fact that Matisse is a successful figure in world terms, not (say) an unsuccessful or forgotten one. This is a crucial difference in (say) his significance to me as opposed to (say) if I had been looking at his work in 1907. From the outset, I could take works like ‘The Piano Lesson’, The Large Red Interior’, ‘The Red Studio’ as accepted icons of twentieth century art - something on which to model myself, something to emulate Hilary Spurling, in her recent biography[99] ‘The Unknown Matisse’, gives a detailed and moving account of just how difficult Matisse’s early years were, how mad many people thought what he was doing was, the self doubt, the self belief. One effect of this, on a reader such as

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[97] Matthew Collings, This is Modern Art, pub. Seven Dials, UK, p.103.
me, has been to reinforce how much his work is now accepted as part of our western modernist heritage.

The first actual Matisse painting I remember, as opposed to a reproduction, was \textsuperscript{100} \textit{The Large Red Interior}, 1948, a comparatively late work, and for me a typically Australian experience, that of a teenager living far away from a collection, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This painting came as part of an exhibition to the National Gallery of Victoria in the mid 1970s. What struck me about the actual qualities was the thinness of the paint, the airy freshness, the almost unfinished quality. Even though it’s not one of the radical and challenging works, such as the 1911 \textit{Red Studio} but, in its all-over colour, flatness and relatively schematic drawing, it has more the rigour of those early works and less of the later decorative Nice interiors I made the pilgrimage to MoMA in 1984 to see the Matisse retrospective curated by Alfred Barr. Like most commentators, I responded more to the early, more geometric, tougher works whose compositions were not so dominated by the odalisque and the decorative images, wallpapers and furnishings. However, twenty years on, looking through that catalogue, the audacity of the thinness of the paint (again), the amount of bare white canvas, made me realise that I had underestimated the later work. Where I first responded to the flatness combined with the rich and lovingly portrayed detail of the domestic in say \textsuperscript{101} \textit{The Painter’s Family}’ 1911, I now look harder at \textsuperscript{102} \textit{The Pink Studio}’ (also 1911), where the oil paint has much of the quality of water-colour and the painting has retained that directness, often reserved for drawing. The accepted critical view of Matisse’s career is that the great work all occurred around 1907-1921. Then came the decorative interiors, many of them painted in Nice, which are seen as just that, decorative, and less historically important. The work of his old age, the cut-outs, are again radical and significant. However, there is enormous pleasure to be had in his \textit{Decorative Figure}

\textsuperscript{100} Matthew Collings, \textit{Large Red Interior, This is Modern Art}, Seven Dials, UK, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{102} Flam, op. cit., \textit{The Pink Studio}, fig. 299
This painting where the figure of the odalisque becomes just another part of the patterned whole of the painting is no more or less significant than the blue and white pot or the pot plant the lemons or the bold arabesque of the wallpaper design. There is a light playful quality not present in the earlier more important works. As always with Matisse drawing is essential and visible, pattern is celebrated.

In terms of the influence of Matisse on my work, there are two distinct ways this can occur: one is in the work itself, the other less immediately apparent, is where the life of an artist becomes a model of how to be an artist. At a talk in the Monash Visual Arts department in the 1970s, Australian abstract artist Roger Kemp gave an artist’s talk to a group of students. One student asked him to discuss his influences. ‘Rupert Bunny he said firmly No one could see any connection between his abstract configurations and the figurative scenes of Bunny. He elaborated that it was Bunny life, it was through meeting and knowing him as a man that he first began to understand what it was to be an artist. Australian art in the 1950s was, like its American equivalent, essentially a masculinist tradition. In the recently released film, *Pollock*, we see Jackson Pollock telling Lee Krasner she’s a really good ‘woman’ artist and then we witness her turning herself into the ideal artist’s wife, her absolute belief in Pollock’s genius being what keeps her there, managing his career, his neediness and self-destructive drinking until, finally, he kills himself in a car accident. The film takes the view, not that his work is great in spite of his emotional limitations but because of them. The flaws in the man being an essential part of his genius and perhaps of genius *per se*.

As I remarked in my introduction, initially there were no female artist models of the same importance for me as Matisse, not just in terms of the actual work, but how to live and work as an artist. Looking back, it’s clear that my perception was limited, because there were many, past and present, such as Artemesia Genteleschi, Stella Bowen, Grace Cossington-Smith, Modersohn Becker to name just a few. But I

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103 Henri Matisse: A Retrospective MoMA, New York fig. 271, p342.
chose not to see them. In my twenties, when I was working solely on paper, Margaret Preston’s woodblocks and largely graphic practice were significant. Fifteen years later, while doing my Masters in Painting at the VCA, when an art historian showed me a catalogue of the work of Louise Bourgeois, I came upon a woman with whose life as an artist I could identify. It was the fact she had borne three children and began making her best work in her forties, rather than her feminism, that connected with me. It is her early minimal sculptures that still engage me [fig.31]. The trajectory of her working life is slower and later to form than that of the typical male Australian artist - say Nolan, who made his best work in his late twenties.

To return to Matisse and the influence of his work: not only is he one of the two biggest figures in twentieth century art but his career was long and productive. As it is not possible to cover all the work, I have chosen to focus on The Red Studio as the painting which best sums up his influence.

Hilary Spurling’s biography of Matisse, while taking nothing away from the radicalness of his achievement, humanises it. For any artist reader, there is room for enormous consolation in witnessing a career that begins so unpromisingly but triumphs so convincingly. Moreover, it’s not a success that comes too late or after his death, like Van Gogh. Spurling details the lives of several other artists who worked alongside Matisse (including women) and who did not become ‘Matisse’. Through biography, she arrives at a perceptive explanation of the origins of his radical approach to colour. Spurling argues that Matisse’s original discovery, that colour can have an independent reality no less emotionally charged than the forms paintings depict, and his celebration of the decorative, did not come as a result of his genius. Rather Spurling relates this revelation to Matisse’s background, growing up in Bohain, a town with a strong tradition and trade in weaving. At the end, she argues ‘throughout the single most critical phase of his career, in the decade before the first world war, when he and others struggled to rescue painting from the dead hand of a debased classical tradition, textiles served him as a strategic ally, flowered, spotted, striped or plain, billowing across the canvas or pinned flat to the picture plane, they
fig. 31. Louise Bourgeois, 1947 – mid 1950s. figures in painted wood, private collection, N.Y. each 170cmH
became in Matisse hands between 1908 and 1917 an increasingly disruptive force mobilised to subvert and destabilise the old oppressive laws of three-dimensional illusion. On a purely practical level, he resorted as a painter to old weavers’ tricks, like pinning a paper pattern to a half-finished canvas or trying out a whole composition in different colour ways. The Red Studio was initially blues and greens. Matisse, as if dyeing a fabric repainted it red.

The point of my quoting at such length Hilary Spurting on this is that she is explaining the origins of the change in the possibilities of painting that has been Matisse’s greatest contribution to a particular strand of contemporary art. It’s this strand with which my work best fits In my earliest work, I could take that flatness for granted. There was no struggle with ‘these laws of three-dimensional illusion’, thanks to Matisse.

The all-over composition, the patterning, the delight in the decorative, in particular the combination of the domestic and the decorative - all these influences are more apparent to me with hindsight though at the time, I was conscious of the use of the window as a door device to mediate between inside and outside, between the physical world and the inner or psychological Jack Flam describes the experience of looking at The Red Studio [fig.32], as not one of looking at a real space, but at ‘a projection of something in the artist’s mind that is a mental rather than a physical reality.’ Through him, we learn that Matisse’s father died a year earlier or, more exactly, that the painting is organised around the clock, and that a variety of objects included tell the story of Matisse’s autobiography He sees the painting as a meditation on time, citing the figure of Andromeda, and going on to read into the work an oedipal theme, remarking on Matisse problematic relationship with his father For him, this explains the colour red While I don’t object to this reading, I don’t find it particularly illuminating, seeing as I do the work as possibly being a mediation on the past and on memory Flam quotes Bergson and his notion of the

\[104\] Spurling, op. cit., p. 27.

\[105\] Flam, op. cit.
fig. 32. Matisse, *The Red Studio*, oil on canvas, 1911. Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. 181cmH x 219.1cmW
two manifestations of memory, voluntary as we use it when we analyse things and involuntary as it appears in the works of Marcel Proust as the reservoir of our entire past.106 There is a quality in the painting that is more than the detailed notation of a room suffused with red, but it also a great celebration of the colour red. Matthew Collings talks of the ‘stopping point’107 for Matisse not being so far out as it was for some other artists, for instance Mondrian. ‘For Picasso and Matisse he says ‘the stopping point was well before pure abstraction’.108 The stopping point, for me too, continues to be well before pure abstraction’. The reasons for that ‘stopping point’ may well be found in the artist’s unconscious, regardless of the obvious difference between the two moments in art history, 1954 when Matisse died and 2002. From Matisse I learnt to use tine as a means of notating and describing objects, my personal world rather than through volume and depth.

Other artists, who have influenced my work, have also in their time been influenced by Matisse of particular relevance is Date Hickey, who has moved between a range of styles and approaches, all of which are contained within what is him [fig.33]. When I discuss an artist, such as Hickey or Bourgeois as having been an influence, it means that I pick and choose bits that connect. Whereas the influence of Matisse has been one of complete absorption, it is Hickey’s later work, the interiors, the studio interiors that have most influenced me [fig.34]. Here, the real subject is paint and painting. The viewer is made conscious of the decisions and choices he has made and the process of painting is laid bare, not hidden. The drips that remain are the result of decision and thought Hickey takes the area between the abstract and the figurative and plays [fig.35]. A black interior for years was particularly significant. In essence, what I took from this painting was the covering capacity of enamel, its continuing wet look, contrasting with the texture of oil paint. It enabled me to achieve in paint what I had done with my ‘Food and Water’ pastels, a

106 Flam, op. cit., p 322.
108 Collings, op. cit., p. 110.
fig. 33. Dale Hickey,
90 black & white photographs on cards with index cards in box,
National Gallery of Victoria,
18.5cm x 13.1cm x 9.5cm
collection Daniel Thomas,
32.5cmH x 32.5cmW
fig. 34. Dale Hickey,
(left): Blue Studio, oil & acrylic on canvas, 1983-84.
National Gallery of Australia, ACT
183.7cmH x 246cmW
(right): Night Window, oil on canvas, 1982-83.
Monash University Gallery,
183.7cm x 246cm
fig. 35. Dale Hickey, *Blue Table*, mixed media on paper, 1991. private collection, 23.3cmH x 31.2cmW
layering of contrasting colours, deliberately leaving bits of the under-colour evident. Hickey made conceptual work in the 1960s but it’s his knowledge, skill and intellectual approach to the possibilities in painting that continues interest me.

For the first fifteen years I worked only on paper, in black and white. Jan Senbergs, with his graphic descriptions of his immediate surroundings and later all-over compositions edging towards abstraction in spite of themselves, were an early influence. There is a quality in the works on paper of his work and that of John Wolseley to which I respond and belong, qualities particular to and only possible with paper. Ian Fairweather layered gouaches on paper or board where his profoundly personal images reappear amongst the delicate, yet rough and risky line, colour and drips were an early influence (fig.36), that has been revived, as I contemplate making a group of works on paper.

As with Fairweather, what I am drawn to in Ken Whisson’s work is the development of, and working within, a personal language. Drusilla Modjeska describes my work as a ‘vocabulary of chairs’ - a vocabulary, a language, has an endlessly and subtly changing, expansive quality, able to con and express the inner and outer worlds.

Both Fairweather’s and Whisson’s work has a linear, drawn quality even in their paintings. American artist, Brice Marden, has a particular and very beautiful take on the possibilities inherent in line in his ‘Cold Mountain’ series [fig.37]. These works range from black and white ink drawings to groups of etchings to large oil paintings. The works on paper are sometimes made with the brush or charcoal attached to a long stick. He stands back from the support and so introduces into the work an intentionally accidental quality - the lines are subtly febrile and are often erased, painted over, then reworked, creating a depth and richness in the paintings. This is also achieved by his playing about with a distinctly original and personal sense of colour. From more immediately appealing and accessible ‘Cold Mountain’ paintings, I came to appreciate Marden’s more minimalist earlier works such as ‘Decorative Painting’ 1964-65 p.53 [fig.1ch.1] or ‘Summer Table’ 1972-73 p.80 [fig.38]
fig. 36. Ian Fairweather, *Mother and Child*, gouache & watercolour on paper, 1949. private collection, 21cmH x 17cmW
fig. 37. Brice Marden, *Cold Mountain 2*, oil on linen, private collection, 274cmH x 366cmW
Summer Table 1972-73, Oil and wax on canvas, 60 x 105” (3 panels). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Purchase with the aid of funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

fig. 38. Brice Marden, Summer Table, oil and wax on canvas, 1972-73.
Whitney Museum, N.Y.
152.5cmH x 267cmW
Any attempt to locate the field in which my work currently sits must underline the pluralist nature of today contemporary art world. I will start by defining where my work does not fit. It is not in the postmodern territory where the viewers first response is, ‘How did he do that?’ - the area of obvious skill Nor is my work intentionally political and, significantly, most viewers do not read it as in any way political

Where my work is both celebratory of and ambivalent towards the domestic, the works of Hatoum and Salcedo depict the home as an unambiguously frightening and violent place, perhaps reflecting different political and personal experience.

Mona Hatoum ‘was born in Beirut to Palestinian parents who were living in exile in Lebanon because of the war in their homeland.’109 Verzotti observes, ‘Belonging to a people without a country, the artist herself lives as a displaced subject and her work reflects on this lack of name and official identity. She makes identity itself a process on exhibit, a place of exchange and, as we have said, collision.’110 Hatoum’s environment can be physically treacherous: ‘razor-sharp steel wires hung from wall to wall, at ankle, groin and shoulder height, defined a path through the Mario Flecha Gallery’111 in London (untitled 1992). Despite the common themes of identity and the domestic (which is not tame), there is more than a difference between my work and that of Hatoum, there is a chasm due to unimaginable economic, political and social circumstances and consequent experience.

Integral to the domestic and the personal is the everyday, the objects that make up our daily lives. Not so much as an influence but as providing a context, I discovered that Jasper Johns had drawn and painted simple wooden chairs [fig.28] and a light bulb [fig.28a] on an electric cord [fig28b]. He has also taken these objects into three dimensions [fig.29, 29a, 29b] Australian artist Peter Atkins’s

110 Verzotti, op cit., p
111 Verzotti, op cit., p
[fig.39] large and rough abstract paintings, made from the images of often small everyday objects such as nail clippers, offer something to me, not just in their subject matter I am struggling to reconcile refining and enriching the paint quality and surface without losing the drawing, the graphic nature of the work. The edges remain important. Wooden stencils like Atkins uses, may offer a solution and I will now move on from my paper stencils that tear with too much pressure.

I presently sit between the abstract and the figurative but what I observe in the work of those artists, whom I currently find of interest, is that capacity to balance both, while also achieving a rich and seductive surface.
Heimlich Unheimlich

A review describes Sylvia Plath poetry as ‘radically domestic’\(^\text{112}\) - going on to say, ‘domestic here does not mean knives and forks.’\(^\text{113}\) Reading the review I thought, Yes, that’s how I would Like my work described: domestic in subject matter, preoccupation and scale, but not tame. Graham Little, in his essay ‘Seashores and Porcupines’ (1998), questions the notion of the domestic as tame, pointing out how critics assume that paintings with domestic settings have to be innocuous. He continues, ‘In psychoanalysis, the Bible, Shakespeare George Eliot, Christina Stead and a film like Happiness... domesticity is fraught and intense Indeed the world could appear as an anticlimax, a mere rerun of family life.’\(^\text{114}\) Taking an exhibition like Heimlich Unheimlich at RMIT Gallery 2002 (part of the Melbourne Festival) as an example, it seems that attitudes to the domestic are changing.\(^\text{115}\)

I have never believed the domestic was innocuous. It has always been for me subject matter for a lifetime’s work. Freud’s essay has confirmed me in this and made it clear to me why, in the word heimlich. is contained the meaning of its opposite Unheimlich. Heimlich can mean withdrawn from knowledge, unconscious, obscure, inaccessible to knowledge, in other words heimlich can mean almost the same as unheimlich, containing the notion of something hidden and dangerous. This is confusing, unless it is seen as evidence of an inherently ambivalent quality. Freud’s use of ambivalence can be defined as ‘the simultaneous existence of contradictory tendencies, attitudes or feelings in relationship to a single object, especially the existence of love and hate.’\(^\text{116}\)

\(^{112}\) Karl Miller, ‘Et In America Ego’, *Times Literary Supplement*, a review of Ted Hughes’s *Birthday Letters*, 1998, p.3.
\(^{113}\) Miller, op. at, p2
\(^{114}\) Little, op cit
However, it’s more complex than that; it always is. These ideas are not new. Though Freud only wrote his essay ‘The Uncanny’ in 1919, throughout history artists and writers have portrayed the domestic as over-determined and their feelings towards it ambivalent, in no way regarding it as innocuous. Freud’s essay ‘Heimlich Unheimlich’ is actually more radical than the RMIT exhibition of the same name. Nevertheless, the exhibition sought to convey and embody what was Freud’s notion of the unheimlich, an idea deceptively simple but tougher than it first appears. The exhibition, with its dimmed lights and range of approaches, largely achieved the sense of strangeness that Freud’s writing suggests but, beyond this, the concept remains elusive and open-ended, which is not necessarily a bad thing, and much preferable to over-simplification.

The exhibition gives us some instances where the uncanny is clearly embodied, for example, even allows some that are heimlich, whereas Freud argues that there is nothing that is helmlich that is to say, not unheimlich. Thus the exhibition Heimlich Unheimlich does not quite go as far as Freud did in 1919. Where this exhibition sees the uncanny in some instances clearly embodied, Freud defines heimlich ‘as a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite – unheimlich.’ What Freud [and later Lacan rewriting Freud and using the term ‘(un)homely’] means by the heimlich being simultaneously the unheimlich, is that the only way of seeing the domestic as tame is on the level of fantasy that covers over the uncomfortable truth of the home that is simultaneously unheimlich.

As I have argued, there is (in the process of making art) the artist and the viewer or, as Marcel Duchamp defines it, the artist and ‘the posterity’. Implicit in this concept is the fact that a work made by an artist can have different interpretations, according to time and context. For example, looking at Robert Storr’s catalogue essay for the exhibition Dislocations (MoMA New York 1991), it’s clear that Louise Bourgeois’ Twosome [fig.40] or Ilya Kabakov’s Bridge [fig.41] could just as accurately

117 Freud, op. cit., p.347
have been described as examples of the *unheimlich*, whereas Robert Storr makes no reference to the term. He writes of Kabakov’s installation of a wooden bridge then a gap, then piles of wooden kitchen chairs, as comfortless nostalgia. The clock has stopped for these orphaned objects and vacant chambers and it stops for us as well. ¹¹ eighteen He describes Louise Bourgeois as giving shape to memory, working out needy ambivalence and furious anxiety. The fact that Storr, writing about this work, nowhere refers to the uncanny or *unheimlich*, tells us nothing more about the work But it does tell us what ideas are and are not current and probably something about his attitude to or knowledge of psychoanalytic theory.

Here we have two related different themes: the gap between the artist’s intention and what is in fact expressed, and then a two-part process that takes place between the artist and the viewer Underpinning both these aspects is the role of intention and instinct, as opposed to intellect or theory, which appropriately occurs after making or experiencing the work As Doris Salcedo remarks, I can only give form to works which once completed, are autonomous creatures, independent of my intentions. ¹¹¹ nine I reiterate the argument running throughout this research: regardless of what an artist says about his/her intention and choice of subject matter in the making of a work, what is significant is what occurs in the intervening process, influenced by the unconscious Evidence of the influence of the unconscious is perhaps better grasped by looking at the form an artist chooses not, as usually happens, the subject matter or a written statement about such things However, this is still to oversimplify, because experience touches and modifies us We in turn are influenced by our own work or (in our turn) become its viewer. Looking at the finished work, it’s possible to then gain insight into what I have done and into where my work sits In that way, I can catch a glimpse of ways forward. The words, the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich* perfectly allude to and contain all these strands.

Melbourne artist, Sally Smart, commented on my oversized three-dimensional sculpture, *Chair and its Component Parts* [fig.42], saying that the photograph had an uncanny quality. The comment pleased me, in part because she has worked in this territory, staging two exhibitions entitled The (Un)homely Body, but a because my experience as a viewer at *Heimlich Unheimlich* at RMIT tells me this quality, which is so definitely part of an individual experience of the home and family, is elusive and very difficult to recreate in art. Psychoanalyst S. wrote to me, ‘Looking at the plates in the catalogue, I am struck by the sense of uncanniness conveyed by the images, particularly the parental chairs; there is something of the traumatic object in those chairs produced precisely by the absence of their occupants. Looking at the chairs, I am aware of the trace of the occupants.’ Originally, in my first exhibition in 1978, the occupants were drawn into the chairs, the decision (as I have said in an earlier chapter) to remove them was aesthetic, as was the decision to leave a drip or stain of colour down the chair. I am struck by how much that mark called up the trace of the former occupant - a parent.

Doris Salcedo makes the connection between the *unheimlich* and her work when saying, Whenever art enters this field of the “uncanny”, or what is beyond the human sphere, it arouses my interest.”120 The (un)homely is an elusive quality to communicate. It’s the ability to do so which enables Salcedo strange reconfigurations of found furniture through dismemberment then containment in concrete and finally reconnection in disconcerting ways that enable them to communicate political atrocities but go far beyond the political.

Juliana Engberg, curator of the RMIT exhibition, *Heimlich Unheimlich* quotes Freud: ‘Some neurotic men declare that they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs. This *unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance to the former *heim* (home) of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning. There is a jocular saying that ‘love is homesickness’ and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to

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120 Princenthal, Basualdo, Huysen, op. cit., p.11.
181cm x 89cm x 82.5cm
himself, while he is dreaming, ‘This place is familiar to me, I’ve been here before’, we may interpret the place as being his mother genitals or her body. In this case too, then, the unheimlich is what was once heimlich, familiar; the prefix ‘un’ is the token of repression.’ I see the (un)homely as being in the odd territory of the sexually repressed and ambivalent. Freud acknowledges that the term is open to wide and various interpretation. This is evident in the RMIT exhibition. To me, the less successful works are Simone Landwehr’s Cyberwolf [fig.43], where the focus is on the violent rather than the sexual, or Gillian Wearing Trauma, which reduces something far stranger to the contemporary issue of child abuse. It is clear to me from my personal responses to Freud’s essay, the RMIT exhibition and my own work, that what is uncanny is subjective and elusive Therefore, Rosslynd Piggott’s High Bed 1998 [fig.44] conveys in a fairytale beauty something of the uncanny to me. The variation or reduction of size in this work triggers memories and Robert Gober’s Untitled [fig.45] where a perfectly rendered child’s leg protrudes from a wall, does, as the catalogue states ‘take us back into the primary moment of entry to the world - for the infant that dreadful emergence which for ever separates it from its original home - the womb - and the mother place.’ Here, as Schelling wrote (influencing Freud), is an example where everything should remain secret and hidden, but has come to light.

To return to my original question: to what degree is an artist’s choice of form that will best represent both ‘the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed’ (as Marcel Duchamp puts it influenced by his/her unconscious? Taking the domestic or the (un)homely as my subject, several things become clear: my knowledge and experience of the process is a complex and unconscious one. In works like Blue Gums at the Shoreline 1998 [fig.46], the form chosen is figurative - yet decorative in a Matissean way. The layers of pastel over charcoal suggest a

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121 Juliana Engberg, Heimlich Unheimlich, Melbourne Festival, 2002, RMIT Gallery, p. 3.
122 Engberg, op cit., p.4.
123 Freud, op cit., p.364.
fig. 43. Simone Landwehr, *Cyberwolf*, mixed media, 2001. Collection the artist, 20cm x 15cm x 8cm
fig. 44. Rosslynd Piggott, *High Bed*,
wood, metal, cotton, dacron, satin, Perspex and painted walls.
National Gallery of Australia, ACT.
370cm x 200cm x 230cm
fig. 45. Robert Gober, *Untitled*, beeswax, cotton, leather, aluminium & human hair. collection the artist, 17.2 cm x 47 cm x 9.5 cm
collection the artist, 
76cmH x 112cmW
reality more complex and deep than it first may appear, nevertheless the general
effect is celebratory, with little of the (un)homely. in a work such as The Hazardous
Kitchen [fig.27] 2002, which is both more abstract and tougher in painting style and
general effect, the title signals a more ambivalent attitude to the domestic, but the
title came after the fact of making the work The introduction of 3D elements into a
work, such as this or with the complete 3D work Kitchen Chair and its Component
Parts [fig.42], occurs where what is expressed both intentionally and
unintentionally is that (un)expressed aspect of the homely and the domestic. The
large oil on canvas, Representing the Family [fig.47], surprised me when finished
with its aggressive anger All these works are figurative yet these last two mentioned
are more abstracted. I conclude that the fact I am a figurative and not an abstract artist
is determined by an expression of my unconscious, whether that was in fact formed
by my experience of the cultural argument in 1950s Melbourne, as evinced in the
Antipodean Movement, is harder to know and perhaps less important I am arguing
that to understand an artist, the form provides at least as significant an insight as
analysis of the content or subject matter That initial choice of form is an expression
of an artist’s unconscious However, it doesn’t stop there, as the work is seen by and
commented on by others, the viewers. In part, the artist then becomes the viewer
looking critically at work, incorporating critical insights and moving on. What I am
drawn to at this stage is a more minimalist abstract work that will inevitably modify
the initial unconscious formation. However, what is very clear in the exhibition
Heimlich Unheimlich is that, especially when trying to convey visually an abstract,
psychoanalytic idea, it is most likely to succeed when it is not thought up intellectually
but arrives through a more organic and unknowable process, where the artist allows
the unconscious to determine the form

The title ‘Art and Oedipus’ is relevant to all my work, as I have always been
second generation and in competition with my father The work has always drawn on
childhood and is influenced by the unconscious. However, it’s in this body of work
that I have for the first time consciously explored and developed that aspect in the
fig. 47. Katherine Hattam, *Representing The Family*, oil & enamel on canvas, 2002. 183cmH x 183cmW
fig. 48. Katherine Hattam, *Krimper chair & TV Aerial*, oil on canvas, 2003. collection the artist, 76cmH x 56cmW
fig. 49. Katherine Hattam, *Representing the Family/Red*
collection the artist,
90cmH x 90cm W
knowledge that, in this work I invite in and open up the work to the unconscious forces. Integra to the notion of the unconscious is that of layering. The psychoanalytic assumes the meaning ties beneath or behind that there is more than the surface. This I now see as the quality shared by my current work.

In *Chair Light Bulb and Vent* (fig. 20), the gouache drips of yellow are layered first over a black charcoal that is then covered with yellow pastel. In the painting *My Desk Chair* (fig. 51), red enamel covers a thinner layer of oil paint blue drips, then more oil paint goes over the enamel, giving an effect of the chair disintegrating or emerging (fig 52).

In this group of new works on paper all incorporating books in some form - either pages or covers - I have deliberately introduced an element of chance enabling another layer of meaning. An added dimension of interest and pleasure in the making of the work may be the choice of book and title or even the focus on some detail. (I’m drawn to the distinctive orange for fiction, green for crime, blue for science of the 1950s and 1960s Penguin Books - perhaps an unconscious harking back to childhood).

In the work *Middle Pages of a Novel* (fig. 53) the first layer live put down is a grid of middle pages from a novel; over this is placed a stencil that includes and excludes meaning at random. My focus is on the edges of the book pages, the decision whether to bring in a particular book cover in bits or whole and in what image I choose to lay over the top. A playfulness becomes possible in this process, whereby there’s a delicate balance between the aesthetic whole and how the book itself influences me and that process - a balance between happenstance and control.

The image persists: the father wing-backed armchair, the William IV chair representing the mother and the child-like Krimper chair fig. 54 all reappear, drawn and painted over and overt outlining and containing book pages and pure colour, as if the repetition of these childhood images is the driving force. Yet new images emerge, such as the domestic familiar, hot-water bottle, the exotic Chinese pots seen at the Forbidden City during my residence at the Beijing Art Academy earlier
this year, and finally the dots coloured at random over book pages or surrounded by 
white, harking back to the arguments about the importance (or otherwise) of the 
image that is central to my Oedipal position.

22,352 words
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Appendix

Note: The list is limited to shows for which there are published catalogues and includes other published material relating to exhibitions participated in during my candidature.

Solo Shows

1. Seashores and Porcupines 1998  Latrobe Street Gallery Melbourne
2. Perfect Day (with Angela Brennan) 1998  Bendigo Art Gallery
[‘Personal Spaces’ by Drusilla Modjeska ‘Review of Books’ The Australian 1998]
3. The Vocabulary of Chairs May-June 2002  Geelong Art Gallery
4. The Vocabulary of Chairs August 2002  Span Galleries Melbourne
[Review: Robert Nelson The Age Saturday, June 15, 2002]

Group Shows

1. The Australian Drawing Biennale  Drill Halt 2000  Canberra ACT
2. 16th Asian International Art Exhibition Australian Print Workshop, Guangdon Museum of Art Guangzhou, China
List of Illustrations

fig. 1. Brice Marden, Decorative Painting, oil on canvas, 1964-65, The Art Museum, Princeton University 105cmH x 44cmW

fig. 2. Brice Marden, Blue Painting, oil & wax on canvas 1972, private collection. 183cmH x 183cmW

fig. 3. Brice Marden, Grove Group, oil & wax on canvas 1976 collection Gerard S. Elliot, Chicago. 183cmH x 274cmW

fig. 4. Brice Marden, Cold Mountain 6 (Bridge), oil on linen, 1972, private collection. 274cmH x 366cmW

fig. 5. Peter Booth, Painting 1982, oil on canvas Art Gallery of South Australia. 197.7cmH x 274.9cmW

fig. 6. Katherine Hattam, In My Father’s House, gouache & charcoal on paper, 1997, collection the artist. 76cmH x 168cmW

fig. 7. Leonard French, The Grand Performance, enamel on hardboard. c. 1950s, private collection. 76cmH x 122cmW

fig. 8. Roger Kemp, Configuration, oil on hardboard, 1955; Hattam collection. 122cmH x 137cmW

fig. 9. Jan Senbergs, People above the City, enamel on hardboard, 1964, Hattam collection. 183cmH x 137cmW

fig. 10. Barnet Newman, Vir Heroicus Sublimis. oil on canvas 1950-51, Museum of Modern Art, New York. 242.2cmH x 541.7cmW


fig. 12. cover painting to the Art of Australia by Robert Hughes, Fred Williams, Landscape with a Steep Road, oil on composition board, 1957, National Gallery of Australia. ACT. 110.3cmH x 90.9cmW

left: Four Kitchen Chairs, oil on canvas, 170cm x 170cm & 3D sculpture: chairs, painted wood, 2001.
right: the artist with Kitchen Chair and its Component Parts, painted wood, 2001. 183cm x 183cm
fig. 13(a) Katherine Hattam, *Dysfunctional Chairs*, pastel on paper, 2002. collection the artist. 
132cmH x 125cmW

fig. 14. Rodchenko, design for a teapot ink on paper, 1922. 
27cmH x 37.2cmW

fig. 15. Katherine Hattam, *Two Tables & Rodchenko’s Teapot*, 2002, private collection, oil on canvas, painted wood & painted objects, 59cmH x 159cmW - 2D, 32cmH x 15cmD x 103cmW - 3D.

165cmH x 250cmW

56cmH x 76cmW

61.6cmH x 50.7cmW


120cmH x 80cmW

76cmH x 112cmW

fig. 22. Katherine Hattam, installation shot; *The Vocabulary of Chairs*, solo exhibition: Span Galleries, 48 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, August, 2002.

36cmH x 43cmW

fig. 24. Doris Salcedo, *Atrabiliarios* 
animal fibre, nazarene wood, 6 shoes, surgical thread, 1993. 
200cm x 100cm x 8cm

13cm x 34cm x 17cm

200cm X 100cm X 8cm
fig. 27. Katherine Hattam, The Hazardous Kitchen, 2002, oil & enamel on canvas 80cm x 120cm – 2D, painted wood, 32cm x 152cm x 103cm – 33D.

fig. 28. Jasper Johns, Study According To What, 1967, graphite wash, watercolour & graphite pencil on paper. 60.6cm x 50.2cm

fig. 28(a). Jasper Johns, Light Bulb, 1957, graphite wash, watercolour & graphite pencil on paper, collection the artist, 38.7cm x 11.9cm

fig. 28(b) Jasper Johns, Daffodil (Shiner), 1967, acrylic on stainless steel with metal, collection the artist, 184.8cm x 122.4cm x 16.2cm

fig. 29. Jasper Johns, Light Bulb (i) lead relief, 99cm x 43cm, 1957 LightBulb (ii) bronze, 10cm x 15cm x 11cm, 1960.

fig. 29(a) i. Jasper Johns, Watchman (i), 1964, graphite pencil, graphite wash, watercolour & pastel on paper, The Sogetsu Art Museum, Japan 52.4cm x 39.4cm

ii. Jasper Johns, Watchman (ii), 1964, graphite pencil, oil on paper, collection the artist, 57.5cm x 44.5cm

fig. 29(b) Katherine Hattam, Kitchen Chair, Light Bulb & Vent, 2000, mixed media on paper, private collection, 76cmH x 56cmW

fig. 29(c) Katherine Hattam, Kitchen Chair, Light Bulb & Vent, 2001, mixed media on paper, private collection, S.A., 125cmH x 125cmW

fig. 30. Louise Bourgeois, The Blind Leading The Blind, 1947- 49, painted wood, private collection, NY. 107.5cm x 163cm x 41cm

fig. 30(a) Louise Bourgeois, The Blind Leading The Blind, (homage to Louise Bourgeois), 2002, painted wood, collection the artist. 142cm x 60cm x 86.5cm

fig. 31. Louise Bourgeois, 1947 — mid 19 50s figures in painted wood, private collection, N.Y. each 170cmH
fig. 32. Matisse, *The Red Studio*, oil on canvas, 1911, Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. 181cmH x 219.1cmW

fig. 33. Dale Hickey, (left): *90 White Walls*, mixed media, c. 1960, 90 black & white photographs on cards with index cards in box, National Gallery of Victoria 18.5cm x 13.1cm x 9.5cm (right): *Cup*, oil on canvas, 1973, collection Daniel Thomas, 32.5cmH x 32.5cmW

fig. 34. Dale Hickey, (left): *Blue Studio*, oil & acrylic on canvas, 1983-84, National Gallery of Australia, ACT, 183.7cmH x 246cmW (right): *Night Window*, oil on canvas, 1982-83, Monash University Gallery, 183.7cmW x 246cmH

fig. 35. Dale Hickey, *Blue Table*, mixed media on paper, 1991, private collection, 21cmH x 31.2cmW

fig. 36. Ian Fairweather, *Mother and Child*, gouache & watercolour on paper, 1949, private collection, 21cmH x 17cmW

fig. 37. Brice Marden, *Cold Mountain2* oil on linen, private collection, 274cmH x 366cmW

fig. 38. Brice Marden, *Summer Table*, oil & wax on canvas, 1972-73, Whitney Museum, N.Y., 152.5cmH x 267cmW


fig. 42. Katherine Hattam, *Chair & Its Component Parts* (& artist), painted wood, 2001, 181cm x 89cm x 82.5cm

fig. 43. Simone Landwehr, *Cyberwolf*, mixed media, 2001, collection the artist, 20cm x 15cm x 8cm

fig. 44. Rosslynd Piggott, *High Bed*, wood metal, cotton, dacron, satin, Perspex & painted walls, National Gallery of Australia, ACT, 370cm x 200cm x 230cm
fig. 45. Robert Gober, *Untitled*,
beeswax, cotton, leather aluminium & human hair.
collection the artist,
17.2cm x 47cm x 9.5cm

fig. 46. Katherine Hattam, *Blue Gums at the Shoreline*,
mixed media on paper, 1998,
collection the artist,
76cmH x 112cmW

fig. 47. Katherine Hattam, *Representing The Family*,
oil & enamel on canvas, 2002.
183cmH x 183cmW

fig. 48. Katherine Hattam, *Krinper Chair & TV Aerial*, oil on canvas, 2003,
collection the artist.
76cmH x 56cmW

fig. 49. Katherine Hattam, *Representing The Family/Red*
oil & enamel on canvas, 2003,
collection the artist,
90cmH x 90cmW

fig. 50. Katherine Hattam, *Armchair, Couch & Light Bulb*,
oil on canvas, 2002,
collection the artist.
90cmH x 90cmW

fig. 51. Katherine Hattam, *My Desk Chair*,
oil & enamel on canvas, 2003,
collection the artist.
120cmH x 80cmW

fig. 52. Katherine Hattam, *My Desk Chair & TV Aerial*,
oil & enamel on canvas, 2003,
collection the artist,
25cmH x 30.5cmW

fig. 53. Katherine Hattam, *Middle Pages of a Novel*,
collection the artist,
76cmH x 56cmW

fig. 54. Katherine Hattam, *Freud & the Post Freudians*,
76cmH x 168cmW
List of Works in ‘Bright Space’ Exhibition

**Note:** Works Nos 1 - 32 are those I hope to include in this exhibition. My intention is to hang the best-looking exhibition within the space, which process normally involves not overhanging So, if any works photographed here are not in fact in the exhibition, it is because they did not enable that aim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Freud &amp; the Post-Freudians</td>
<td>mixed media on paper</td>
<td>76cm x 168cm</td>
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<td>After Beijing</td>
<td>charcoal pastel gouache on paper</td>
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<td>charcoal gouache on book pages on paper</td>
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<td>Middle Pages of a Novel</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>Bowl – Beijing</td>
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<td>Index &amp; Bowls</td>
<td>oil &amp; collage on canvas</td>
<td>24cm x 34cm</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Plastic Chair – Bundanon</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>Homage to the Hot-water Bottle</td>
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<td>Frontispiece</td>
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<td>Friends &amp; Relations</td>
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<td>The Psychology of Study</td>
<td>mixed media on paper</td>
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<td>The Spinners and the Monks</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The Psychology of Study</td>
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<td>The Honeyed Peace</td>
<td>mixed media on paper</td>
<td>56cm x 26cm</td>
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<td>Non-Fiction</td>
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<td>Beijing Pots</td>
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<td>Colour Dots</td>
<td>mixed media on paper</td>
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<td>Group Dynamics</td>
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<td>Happily Ever After</td>
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<td>Friends &amp; Relations</td>
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<td>The Honeyed Peace</td>
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<td>Group Psychotherapy</td>
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<td>Motive for a Visit</td>
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<td>It’s No Use</td>
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<td>After Beijing</td>
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<td>My Childhood</td>
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<td>Doctor Sally</td>
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<td>My Desk Chair/Pink &amp; TV Aerial</td>
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<td>Chair</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
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<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>My Desk Chair/Blue &amp; TV Aerial</td>
<td>oil on canvas</td>
<td>31cm x 26cm</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fig. 50. Katherine Hattam, *Armchair, Couch & Light Bulb*, oil on canvas, 2002. collection the artist, 90cmH x 90cmW
fig. 51. Katherine Hattam, *My Desk Chair*, oil & enamel on canvas, 2003. collection the artist, 120cmH x 80cmW
collection the artist, 
25cmH x 30.5cmW
fig. 53. Katherine Hattam, *Middle Pages of a Novel*, mixed media on paper, book pages, charcoal & gouache on paper, 2003. Collection the artist, 76cmH x 56cmW
fig. 54. Katherine Hattam, *Freud & the Post Freudians*, mixed media on paper, book pages, charcoal & gouache on paper, 2003. 76cmH x 168cmW
fig. 1.  
*Freud & the Post-Freudians*  
Mixed media on paper, 2003  
76cm x 168cm
fig. 2. *Mythical Place*
56cm x 76cm
fig. 3.  
*The ABC about Collecting*
mixed media on paper, 2003
120cm x 180cm
fig. 4.  
*After Beijing*
charcoal pastel gouache on paper, 2003
120cm x 80cm
fig. 5. *Fiction/Non-Fiction*
charcoal gouache on book pages on paper, 2003
165cm x 125cm
fig. 6.  
*Middle Pages of a Novel*
mixed media on paper, 2003
53cm x 30cm
fig. 7. \textit{Representing the Family}
oil on canvas, 2002
110cm x 110cm
fig. 8.  

*In My Father’s House/Triptych*

oil on canvas, 2003

99cm x 228cm
fig. 9. *My Desk Chair/Pink with Blue Drips*

oil on canvas, 2003

100cm x 51cm
fig. 10.  

*In My Mother’s House/Pink*

oil on canvas, 2003

30cm x 24.5cm
fig. 11. *In My Mother’s House/Pink*

oil on canvas, 2003

30cm x 24.5cm
fig. 12.  

_In My Father’s House/Pink_

oil on canvas, 2003  
24cm x 30cm
fig. 13.  

*Orange Plastic Chair*  
oil on canvas, 2003  
30cm x 24cm
fig. 14.  *Bowl – Beijing*

oil on canvas, 2003

24cm x 30cm
fig. 15.  

*Index & bowls*

oil & collage on canvas, 2003
24cm x 34cm
fig. 16.  \textit{Plastic Chair – Bundanon}  
oil on canvas, 2003  
36cm x 22cm
fig. 17.  
*Homage to the Hot-water Bottle*
mixed media on canvas, 2003
60cm x 46cm
fig. 18.  
*Cossington Smith Tea*
mixed media on paper, 2003
42.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 19.  
*Frontice Piece*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
42.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 20.  

*Friends & Relations*

mixed media on paper, 2003

14cm x 37.5cm
fig. 21.  
*The Psychology of Study*
mixed media on paper, 2003
31.5cm x 35cm
fig. 22.  
*The Spinners and the Monks*
mixed media on paper, 2003
51cm x 40cm
fig. 23. 

*The Psychology of Study*

mixed media on paper, 2003

56cm x 26cm
fig. 24.  
*The Honeyed Peace,*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
56cm x 26cm
fig. 25.  

*Non-Fiction*

mixed media on paper, 2003
76cm x 56cm
fig. 26.  
*Freud & the Post-Freudians*
mixed media on paper, 2003
40cm x 27cm
fig. 27.  *Beijing Pots*
mixed media on paper, 2003
24cm x 57cm
fig. 28.  
*Coloured Dots*
mixed media on paper, 2003
36cm x 38cm
fig. 29.  
*Group Dynamics*

mixed media on paper, 2003
32.5cm x 35cm
fig. 30.   
*Blue Dots*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
42cm x 31cm
fig. 31.  

*Happily Ever After*

mixed media on paper, 2003

76cm x 56cm
fig. 32.  
*Friends & Relations*
mixed media on paper, 2003
76cm x 56cm
fig. 33.  
*The Honeyed Peace*
mixed media on paper, 2003
120cm x 80cm
fig. 34.  
*Group Psychotherapy*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
120cm x 180cm
fig. 35.  
*Non-Fiction*
mixed media on paper, 2003
48cm x 44.5cm
fig. 36.  
*In My Father’s House*
mixed media on paper, 2003
76cm x 56cm
fig. 37.  
*Motive for a Visit*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
21.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 38.  

*It’s No use*

mixed media on paper, 2003
21.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 39.  
*The First Step*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
21.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 40.  
*Signs of Joy*  
mixed media on paper, 2003  
21.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 41.  
*Next Day*
mixed media on paper, 2003
21.5cm x 27.5cm
fig. 42.  

*After Beijing*

mixed media on paper, 2003

34.5cm x 36cm
fig. 43.

*My Childhood*

mixed media on paper, 2003

30cm x 24cm
fig. 44.  

*Doctor Sally*

mixed media on paper, 2003

32cm x 32.5cm
fig. 45.  

*My Desk Chair/Pink & TV Aerial*

oil on canvas, 2003

31cm x 26cm
fig. 46.  
*Chair*  
oil on canvas, 2003  
31cm x 31cm
fig. 47.  

*My Desk Chair/Blue & TV Aerial*  
oil on canvas, 2003  
31cm x 26cm