This is the published version:

Available from Deakin Research Online:
http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30048311

Reproduced with the kind permission of the copyright owner.

Copyright : 2003, Art Gallery of Western Australia and the author
The Paintings of John Campbell

John Campbell considered his main occupation to be ‘sign-writer’ and ‘decorator’. Though some of his paintings would undoubtedly have been paid commissions, he did not consider his artistic work to be a lucrative sideline: ‘Lucky to get ten bob for a picture’, he is said to have remarked. There is no record of him ever exhibiting or being involved with art societies. However, the watercolours and oil paintings he made at the turn of the twentieth century are characterised by an attention to architectural and human detail that imbues them with an authenticity that has resonance a hundred years later.

Very little is known about Campbell’s education, his training or his life in Scotland, where he was born in 1855. There is some suggestion he may have lived in Tasmania when he first came to Australia, though there are few clues as to exactly when this might have been. From dates on his paintings it appears he moved to Western Australia around 1900. He died in Perth in 1924.

The few anecdotes about Campbell are intriguing – he was a ‘fine pianist, though too poor to own a piano’, ‘a member of an aristocratic Scottish family’, ‘‘Pararamatta’s first socialist’[16] – but such information has eluded verification. His paintings remain as his legacy – and many of them have survived the vicissitudes of time only through great good fortune. Some were stored in damp garages and forgotten; one was rescued from a bin in a Perth hotel and another exhumed from the back garden of a house where it had been ignobly buried.

The eastern States

Campbell’s earliest located painting is dated 1889,[4] when he was transient in the eastern States of Australia. This was a time of heightened nationalism in Australia, which led to federation in 1901. Landscapes of the Australian bush and its pioneers painted in an impressionistic European style by artists like Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin reflected national sentiment and received acclaim. The iconic status accorded such paintings overlooked other work being produced in a diverse range of genres and with a variety of subject matter – portraits, still lifes, domestic interiors, urban scenes, cartoons, works with anecdotal and mythological content and architecture.

Campbell’s paintings of the 1890s, depicting churches, other substantial buildings and suburban scenes, are neither impressionist nor picturesque in style. Rather they have a naïve, quite stylised attention to small detail. In View from Petrie’s Garden 1890 he accurately depicts the lay of the land as observed from a high vantage point overlooking the suburbs of Brisbane. Monuments, major roads and newly constructed civic buildings are all discernable. This attention to detail often extraneous to the central subject is a characteristic that distinguishes his paintings from architectural or documentary studies. The equity of attention he accords the subject matter in his paintings, shows he observed his locations closely.

The precise detail in Campbell’s paintings provides valuable historical documentation of the buildings and residences depicted. Probably a paid commission, Campbell’s oil painting of the residence of Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, Merthyr, Queensland c1890, is a pictorial memorial to this house, which was demolished in 1950. Built on sixteen acres of land in New Farm, Brisbane, in 1879 by George Cowlishaw (1841–1913), ‘Merthyr’ is depicted here a decade after it was built, surrounded by well-tended gardens that have been landscaped in the European fashion with arches, paths and lawns.

Griffith probably paid Campbell a fair commission for this painting. He was a successful man who was proud of his achievements, and this picture provided a permanent record of his status in society. It is interesting to speculate on Campbell’s own position in life and his connection with property-owners who may have been of Scottish descent. Perhaps he knew them through family connections? His father, James, was a lawyer[17] and maybe the hint of aristocratic blood opened a few doors.[18] Or perhaps he worked for these men in his capacity as a sign-writer and they became aware of his artistic talent.

The Golden West

When Campbell moved to Western Australia, he came alone to find employment and accommodation before his wife and son joined him. He had married Lucy Evans (born 1862) in Tasmania in 1883, and their son John was born in 1892. A daughter, Florence, was born in 1902. Three other children – two sons and a daughter – died young.[19]

The population of Perth doubled in the decade after Campbell arrived – from 44,000 in 1901 to 87,000 in 1911. Waves of ‘other-siders’ migrated to the ‘Golden West’ to escape the economic depression in eastern Australia which was less severe in the West because of gold exploitation and expanding primary industries. Campbell’s painting St Mary’s Church, Coolgardie 1905[20], the first prize for this church’s raffle in 1905, suggests he probably visited the Western Australian goldfields early in his stay in the State.

Campbell’s naïve style of depicting architectural and human detail was unusual in Perth at the turn of the century. Most artists were influenced by British aesthetic ideas as promulgated by the Western Australian Society of

Cover image:
John Campbell St George’s Terrace, looking west 1904
watercolour and pencil, 40.0 x 65.0 cm
Private Collection

Collection John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland
Arts, the Perth Technical College and prominent artist and teacher James WR Linton (1869–1947), whose ‘interest was principally in depicting nature through light ... capturing a landscape flooded by light, in full sun or under cloud’. Campbell was more concerned with depicting the impact of human achievement on the land. His selection of subject matter and meticulous observation of houses, pubs, breweries, churches, racecourses, streets and public transport reflect a sense of community pride in the development and expansion of Perth.

Western Australia has a history of ‘boom and bust’ economic cycles related to the fluctuations of industrial and resource-development activity. During boom periods life was heady, and the Shamrock Hotel in Perth, immortalised in Campbell’s oil painting Shamrock Hotel in central Hay Street 1919, was a symbol of such times. The pub was recalled as a ‘perfect stock exchange’, with shares bought and sold, land dealings completed, syndicates formed ... Who could possibly describe the scenes viewed from the Shamrock balcony of an evening ... the wild and incredible influx of population ... people pouring into the state in thousands. No rooms; care to sleep on the billiard table ... or under the table, or on the balcony if you have a swag.

Campbell captures the charm and character of the Shamrock Hotel, carefully observing its architectural features including spindly support pillars, balcony, tiled and arched frontage, and elaborate lace fretwork. The detail extends inside the building, with a view down the central corridor into the interior. There is a large sign across the entire frontage of the pub announcing its name and that of its proprietor. There are no people, yet there are signs of activity, including an exquisitely detailed motor car and what appears to be an exhibition of paintings on the balcony. Tramlines run along the street. The composition of this painting is reminiscent of the way a stage set is constructed, with the street in the foreground representing a stage and the hotel a backdrop with its doors accessing wings from which actors might enter.

Campbell’s main income probably came from painting signage and theatre sets. There was a lively theatre scene in Perth, and he is thought to have worked at the Luxor Theatre probably as a scene painter. A characteristic of his paintings, as observed above in regard to Shamrock Hotel, is to create a horizontal division into a spacious, often empty, stage-like foreground, a band of concentrated detail, and above this a vast sky. Sometimes the sky will comprise half the picture. The ‘stage’ and ‘sky’ are relatively devoid of detail, a compositional device that focuses attention towards the complexity of the mid-ground. This is not to say these ‘empty’ areas are without interest – indeed his skies are carefully observed, particularly in the Western Australian paintings, and his foregrounds offer a sparse yet telling introduction to the central subject matter.

Sign-writing requires information to be clear and discernible, and this characteristic is apparent in his paintings. Sign-writers, also called ‘painters’ at the time, were skilled artisans and the commercial advertisers of the era. The range of their work was diverse, as indicated by Perth sign-writer E. Bockelmann: ‘I undertake all kinds of house and church decoration. Banners painted and illuminated, ornamental calicos, advertisements for land sales and festivities a specialty.’ No doubt Campbell, too, would have painted an array of signage and decoration.

He may have given private art classes, and we know that he sought painting commissions, as an advertising billboard in Perth Railway Station 1903 announces:

For pictures of residences
Commission Mr J. Campbell
Scenic Artist, Perth.

In his ‘picture of a residence’ Stranraer 1909, chimneys and gables, corrugated roof, plaster ornaments, bull-nosed verandah and fretted woodwork are meticulously observed. Above the front door of this Subiaco house is a mini turret announcing its importance. It was built for Samuel Brown of ‘Brown & Burn
Bakers', a thriving business operating in nearby Hay Street. In Subiaco Railway Station 1909 Campbell locates 'Brown and Burn Bakery' in the distance with a painted sign. By the standards of most Subiaco residents, who lived in small timber cottages, 'Stranraer' would have been a mansion. In contrast, a worker's cottage can be seen in Subiaco Railway Station 1909. Many men living in Subiaco were employed at Whittakers Timber Yard, and a sign directing people in the direction of Whittakers is prominent in this painting. Signage clearly demarcating the waiting area for first-class travellers is also prominent, a comment on the class division in Perth society at the time.

Trains, trams and telegraph lines

Everything has its place in Campbell's paintings. Perth Railway Station has the appearance of a model or toy railway. Trains, signals, lights, tracks, wires, engine-drivers and passengers are all arranged in position. Locomotive 199 fills with water from an overhanging water spout. Steam engines are freshly painted. Passengers alight from carriages or wait on the platform. Everything is observed as new, clean and orderly. Beyond the station the buildings of Wellington Street are prominent, including the Hotel Imperial and the Boan Brothers and Carter's department stores. Advertising billboards promote the Swan Brewery, Derby tobacco and Amgoorie tea as well as the sign-writing services of J. Campbell, Painter, Perth. All the necessities of life are available in this ordered, harmonious society.

The buildings and infrastructure Campbell depicts in his paintings reflect community pride in the development of the city. They are symbols of its progress. Most Perth artists were, like Linton, making landscape paintings that evoked tranquility through observation of nature. Campbell's paintings reflect harmony through progress and prosperity arising from development. From the foundation of Western Australia in 1829 as a British colony, its extreme isolation made the building of the Perth Railway, for example, the first stage in the transport of goods and people to and from the city. The development of new technology, like telegraphy and railways, was a sign of progress and growth.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.

It is notable that there are no Indigenous people depicted in Campbell's paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress and that 'Social Darwinism popularly forecasted extinction for Aboriginal people', it would not have been possible for Aboriginal people to be depicted in the city as Campbell’s paintings. This is an absence not unusual for the era. Given that a premise of his paintings is to reflect progress, it is not surprising therefore that railways, trams and telegraph lines are subject matter for Campbell. The railways were vital, supporting the agricultural and mining needs of the colony. In 1881 a Fremantle–Perth–Guildford line was opened, and in 1894 a new and impressive railway station was opened in Perth. By 1900 it was the centre of a colony-wide railway system.
contention that 'the expansion of Perth cannot but be a matter for satisfaction among all sections of the community'.

The detail in Osborne Park Hotel is fascinating in its depiction of Perth's suburban expansion. Osborne Park was advertised in 1904 as 'wonderful garden land with cheap land, a regular tramway service and a state school'. The population was encouraged to leave the old residential areas and move into the bush land that had a tram link to Perth. Campbell stayed at the Osborne Park Hotel, and perhaps the painting paid for his accommodation and expenses. He has carefully observed every detail of the location at a precise moment in time: washing hanging on a line behind the pub, its water tank and windmill, a cow, various fences and dusty tracks as well as the architecture of the pub itself and details of the tram and electric poles.

The telegraph also features in Campbell's works. It was with much acclaim that the telegraph line between Perth and Fremantle had been erected in 1869 and an overland line connecting Perth via Adelaide and Darwin to London completed in 1877. At this time the railways had not yet penetrated the hinterland, and it was the telegraph that brought contact with the world. During the 1890s it was via telegraph that accounts of new gold finds in the eastern goldfields reached Perth, and thence the newspapers in other Australian capitals and London. Telegraph poles are prominent in St George's Terrace, looking west 1904, where they had been erected in 1871. St Georges Terrace was the administrative and business centre of Western Australia, and Campbell's vista down the street depicts the Treasury and commercial buildings. People chat and read newspapers on the pavement. A young girl stands in an alcove of the Treasury building. Although alone, there is no intimation that she is unsafe. Perhaps she has been playing opposite in the Stirling Gardens – the city's botanical gardens, cleared in the early days of settlement. A dray loaded with barrels of beer is drawn by a horse along the Terrace, a sure sign that all is well in Perth.

**Beer and religion**

Favorite subjects of Campbell were Perth's two main breweries – the Stanley Brewery and the Swan Brewery – and St Mary's Cathedral and Convent. He might have found these subjects popular with his prospective patrons. The architecture of all these buildings was impressive, based as it was on the designs of imposing English castles and cathedrals.

Stanley Brewery from Mounts Bay Road 1903 shows the front and side aspects of the brewery from the corner of Spring Street and Mounts Bay Road. Yet again a horse and dray is loaded with barrels. The Stanley Brewery commenced life in 1836 as 'Albion', a limestone building at the foot of Spring Street. Later renamed the Stanley Brewery, its beer was shipped to settlements throughout the colony. In 1902 the brewery was rebuilt, its name changing in 1908 to the Emu Cooperative Brewery to acknowledge its new 'Emu' bottled beer.

The Swan Brewery began business in 1857 on river frontage in St George's Terrace before moving in 1897 to the base of Mt Eliza. The new building was designed by architect Joseph Talbott Hobbs to look like an English castle. In Swan Brewery 1904, a horse-drawn and a steam-driven dray set out to deliver beer from the yard. Clydesdales were a daily sight, with both drivers and horses wearing hats in summer, 'white canvas for the Clydesdales with holes for their ears and a red poppy on Remembrance Day'. The new Ranson steam-driven dray, a horseless carriage that carried twice the load of a horse dray, was being tested. Swan's stable of twenty-four Clydesdale horses, and the stable hands who lived at the brewery, were gradually replaced by these steam wagons. The brewery's barge is depicted in the painting steaming toward the port of Fremantle, located twelve kilometres to the south-west.

The Swan Brewery site is significant to Indigenous people, as the Wag!, the snake of the dreaming, disappeared into one of the freshwater springs at the foot of the hill after creating the chain of hills and rivers. The brewery's horse stables were built on top of the Wag!'s dreaming track. Usage of the site has caused much controversy, as Indigenous people believe the Wag! still lies sleeping there. Today the Swan Brewery building and site accommodate offices and apartments, a river-frontage restaurant and a concrete car park.

Given his interest in depicting architectural detail, Campbell probably delighted in painting St Mary's Catholic cathedral, whose European architecture set the tone for the eastern end of Perth. The cathedral was built in 1865 from plans drawn by British architect Welby Augustus Pugin, a champion of the Gothic Revival style. Cathedral and Convent 1901 was painted soon after Campbell's arrival in Perth. He often returned to the subject of the cathedral and the convent at its rear that still houses the Sisters of Mercy. He painted St Mary's Cathedral 1912 after additional features were added, including the spire. Roman Catholic Cathedral 1923 was made shortly before his death.
War

According to electoral records, John and Lucy Campbell lived in East Perth in 1914. John's occupation is listed as 'decorator' and Lucy's as 'housekeeper.' In 1915 Lucy is on the electoral role but there is no record of John. At some time during that year he moved to New South Wales, where he lived until 1918, when his name reappeared on the Perth electoral role. During 1915, prior to travelling east, he had made several paintings of the training camps for recruited soldiers that were established in Perth at the beginning of World War I. These included Military Camp at Blackboy 1915 and Military Camp, Claremont 1915.46

Military Camp, Claremont depicts a training camp set up at the Royal Agricultural Society Showground in October 1914 for two squadrons of the 10th Light Horse. The camp then went on to support the 44th Battalion.46 The subject of Military Camp at Blackboy was an army training camp that had been set up twenty-six kilometres from Perth at the outbreak of war in August 1914. By the end of the war 32,000 men had trained there. This included the infantry of the 11th Battalion, members of which became known as expert trench-diggers in France – hardly surprising, as the men of the E and F Divisions were miners recruited from the Western Australian goldfields.47

Campbell's painting of Blackboy camp is panoramic. Tents, cars, tracks, buildings and troops exercising in formation can be seen in the distance beyond a wide, sandy stretch of farmed land. The spacious foreground directs attention to the detail in the middle ground, the soldiers being too far away to assume individual identities. The viewer is voyer, hidden and observing activity from 'behind the lines'. Campbell, however, has also depicted a line of soldiers dressed in fatigues, marching parallel with a wire fence and coming toward the viewer. The fence acts as camouflage. These soldiers, too, are faceless, without identity. (The remoteness of this camp from the trenches of Europe is a poignant reminder that geographical isolation does not remove a country from the stage of war.) Campbell was too old to enlist; he would, however, have known many of those who did, and his son or sons may have been among them. This could be why he did these paintings. At some time during 1916 he also painted a training camp in New South Wales, Goulburn in wartime 1916, a work that is today in the permanent collection of the Australian War Memorial.

John Campbell died in Perth in 1924 at the age of sixty-nine. It is said that he died from lead poisoning, though whether that was the direct cause is not known. It might well have played its part: the paint of the time did contain lead. As we know so little about Campbell, anecdotes assume particular importance, though their accuracy is hard to determine. We will probably never know, for example, when – or if – he lived on Heirisson Island, in the middle of the Swan River, a place where homeless men lived in shanties.48

Details about John Campbell are scanty but his pictures of buildings and locations in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia provide a valuable architectural record of sites that have been demolished or have altered dramatically. His paintings of Perth show a town as it transforms to a city at the turn of the twentieth century. The community optimism associated with the city's development is reflected in his depictions of houses, railway stations, racetracks, hotels and breweries and the detailed pictorial information extraneous to the main subject gives his work a distinctive character.

While other Western Australian based artists like J W R Linton or George Pitt Morison were attracted to the local landscape, John Campbell chose to depict the urban environment, delighting in its outward signs of expansion and modernization. In many ways the detail and character imbuing his work provides an interesting forerunner to some of the work produced by artists such as Portia Bennett and Harold Vike in the late 1930s. However, importantly the highly individualistic paintings created by John Campbell offer an alternative to a dominant landscape tradition in Western Australia and thereby add to the richness and diversity of the history of visual art in this state.

Janice Baker

1 Occupations as stated in Western Australian electoral records, Bannister Library, Perth.
2 Oral source.
3 Copy of certificate of death, District Registrar's Office, Perth.
4 Ibid.
5 Untraced, undated note, catalogue records, Mitchell Library, New South Wales.
7 John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.
8 Collection of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. Morthy's land was subdivided in 1937, and in 1950 the house was demolished.
9 The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, email correspondence, April 2001.
10 Copy of certificate of death, op. cit.
11 Catalogue records, Mitchell Library, op. cit.
12 Copy of certificate of death, op. cit.
13 Ibid.
15 Private collection, Perth.
17 Private collection.
19 The West Australian, Fabrics and Professional Directory, July 18, 1892.
20 In a stage play performed by schoolchildren of Victoria Square. The sets were painted by Mr Joe Connolly, believed to be the pupil of John Campbell, an artist of distinction. State Museum Cremorne House: Smith, the Merceds Story. Perth: Melbourne College, 1995, p. 74.
21 Private collection.
22 Collection of Salisca Museum, Saloan.
23 Collection of Royal Western Australian Historical Society, Nedlands.
24 Frank Cawseby Big John Ferson, Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2000, p. 296.
DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The Art Gallery has a continuing commitment to acquiring, researching and displaying Western Australian art in all its varied forms both across artistic disciplines and time. This commitment has seen major exhibitions and their publications such as Colonial Eye (1979) and Western Australian Art and Artists 1900-1950 (1986) break new ground in presenting surveys of the history of the visual arts in this State. Many individual retrospective exhibitions of both historical and contemporary artists such as Guy Grey Smith, Kathleen O’Connor, Eileen Keys and Robert Juniper have ensured that new information about the contribution of Western Australian artists is continually being presented to the public. The advent in 2004 of the 175th anniversary of European settlement in the state will also be marked by the presentation of three retrospectives of the work of local artists A.B. Webb, Rover Thomas and Howard Taylor.

The initial research to locate many of the paintings that are included in the John Campbell exhibition was undertaken by Janice Baker when she was Assistant Curator at the Art Gallery of WA. Janice’s research was greatly facilitated by the work of Keith Sinclair who some years previously had gathered together substantial information on the artist. Keith’s enthusiasm and willingness to share information has been greatly appreciated. Since Janice’s departure to take up a new position at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, the project has been overseen by Janda Gooding, Curator of Historical Art. However, we are delighted that Janice has been able to contribute the substantial essay to the publication.

Over the three or more years this exhibition has been in development, many paintings have been identified but not a great deal more has become known about the artist. It is hoped that this exhibition, the first major display devoted to the work of Campbell, will perhaps turn up new information about the life and career of this fascinating Western Australian based artist.

Alan R Dodge
Director, Art Gallery of Western Australia
CHECKLIST

Psyche, Queensland 1890
watercolour, 40.5 x 55.8 cm sight
signed lower left: JOHN CAMPBELL
Collection of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland

Untitled (vignette) 1892
watercolour, 52.0 x 66.0 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1892.
The Holmes a Court Collection, Hayestbury

Cathedral and Convent 1901
watercolour, 36.0 x 55.0 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1901.
Collection of The Sisters of Mercy, Perth

Ciry of Fremantle and Gouch on board, 37.5 x 59.3 cm
watercolour, 32.5 x 51.3 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL PERTH 1901
Collection of The Sisters of Mercy, Fremantle

St Georges Terrace, looking west
in 1892
in script lower left: JOHN CAMPBELL 1901
in watercolour, 39.5 x 67.8 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1901. PERTH. W.A.
Private Collection

The Swan Brewery 1902
watercolour, 37.3 x 67.0 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1902.
The Swan Brewery Company Pty Limited

Pery Railway Station 1903
watercolour, 39.5 x 68.8 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1903. PERTH. W.A.
Private Collection

A view of Pery Railway Station 1903
watercolour, 39.5 x 68.2 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1903. PERTH W.A.
The Westfarmers Collection, Perth

Pery and Mehville Waters 1903
pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache, 39.9 x 71.0 cm
signed lower right: J. CAMPBELL 1903
The Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc)

Stanley Brewery from Mounts Bay Road 1903
pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and gouache, 39.5 x 67.8 sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL PERTH. WA 1903
The Swan Brewery Company Pty Limited

The Swan Brewery 1904
watercolour, pen and ink, 38.3 x 71.0 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL, PERTH 1904.
The University of Western Australia Art Collection.
Gift of Dr and Mrs R K Constable, 1985

St George's Terrace, looking west 1904
watercolour and pencil, 40.0 x 65.0 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1904.
Private Collection

Osborne Park Hotel 1904
watercolour, 35.0 x 67.5 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1904.
The Holmes a Court Collection, Hayestbury

Osborne Park Hotel 1904
oil on board, 33.5 x 57.9 cm sight
signed lower right: J. CAMPBELL
Private Collection

St Mary's Church, Coolgardie 1905
oil and gouache on board, 37.5 x 59.3 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1905
inscribed lower left: ST MARY'S CHURCH. COOLGARDIE.
Private Collection

Queen Victoria's Statue in King's Park, Perth 1909
watercolour, 32.5 x 51.5 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1909.
inscribed lower left: QUEEN VICTORIA'S STATUE IN KING'S PARK PERTH.
City of Perth Art Collection

Subiaco railway station 1909
oil on canvas, 50.8 x 91.5 cm
signed lower right: J. CAMPBELL 1909.
Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc)

Subiaco 1909
oil on canvas, 48.7 x 61.3 cm
signed lower left: JOHN CAMPBELL 1909
Collection of the Subiaco Museum

House, Suburban Road, South Perth 1909
oil on canvas, 48.5 x 74.2 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1909.
Collection of Arthur Spartan

Ace Racecourse, Perth 1909
watercolour, 18.5 x 49.0 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN Campbell. 1909.
Private Collection

Perth Racecourse 1909
oil on canvas, 36.5 x 93.7 cm sight
signed lower right: PERTH RACECOURSE JOHN CAMPBELL 1909 [sic]
Private Collection

Untitled (Perth and South Perth from Kings Park) 1910
oil on canvas, 44.5 x 75.0 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1910
The Holmes a Court Collection, Hayestbury

St. Mary's Cathedral 1912
oil on canvas, 49.5 x 75 cm
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL. 1912.
Collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia

Peppermint Grove 1913
oil on board, 28.5 x 90.0 cm sight
signed lower right: J. CAMPBELL.
inscribed lower left: PEPPERMIINT GROVE.
Private Collection

Parliament House 1915
oil on canvas, 45.0 x 74.5 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL, PERTH. W.A. 1915.
inscribed lower left: PARLIAMENT HOUSE PERTH. WA.
Private Collection

Military Camp, Claremont 1915
oil on canvas, 43.7 x 90.0 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1915.
inscribed lower left: MILITARY CAMP CLAREMON.
Private Collection

Military Camp at Blackboy, August 6th 1915
oil on board, 45.7 x 73.3 cm sight
signed and inscribed lower right: MILITARY CAMP AT BLACKBOY.
BY J. CAMPBELL August 6th 1915.
Private Collection

Goulburn in war time 1916
oil on canvas, 42.9 x 52.0 cm
inscribed lower left: GOULBURN IN WAR TIME No 1 CAMP
inscribed lower centre: No 2 CAMP.
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL. 1916 ... 6th
Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Harp Hotel, Wollongong 1918
oil on canvas, 39.6 x 60.5cm sight
signed lower right: J. CAMPBELL 1918
Dixon Library: State Library of New South Wales

Shamrock Hotel in central Hay Street 1919
oil on board, 45.8 cm x 75.8 cm sight
signed lower right: JOHN CAMPBELL 1919.
Private Collection

This publication accompanied the exhibition John Campbell 1855-1924,
Art Gallery of Western Australia 14 June - 14 September 2003.

Published by the Art Gallery of Western Australia
© Copyright 2003
Art Gallery of Western Australia and the authors
All rights reserved

Art Gallery of Western Australia
PO Box 8363, Perth Business Centre, WA, Perth 6849.
Perth Cultural Centre, James Street Mall, Perth, Western Australia
tel: +61 8 9492 6600 fax: +61 8 9492 6655
email: admin@argallery.wa.gov.au