

**AUSTRALIAN
LANDSCAPE
PAINTINGS**

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY - - 1967

Foreword

Owing to the limited number of paintings available for this exhibition it was thought best to select a definite era of Australian painting and send examples of a higher quality. It is interesting to realise that the first five paintings on exhibition belong to the first strong school of Australian painting. During the colonial period of the first one hundred years of Australian settlement, many individual artists had attempted to interpret and paint the Australian landscape, often with great skill and sensitivity, but essentially they saw it through European eyes. The Heidelberg School of Australian Impressionist painters, led by Tom Roberts, was the first movement to consciously attempt to paint the bright hard sunlight and the mood of the Australian landscape as they saw it. Following the example of Buvelot and the French artists, they painted outdoors and not in the studio. Their aim was to give an impression of the landscape at a particular moment, hence the sense of immediacy as though we've glimpsed a scene just as it is happening. Often the artist worked vigorously and quickly to capture an effect of light before it changed, and as their aims were similar to the French School at the time, they came to be known as the Australian Impressionist painters. Some of the artists like Bunny and Fox, lived in France and their delicate landscapes of the French countryside are far closer in feeling to the French Impressionists than the Australian School, while men such as Streeton had greater affinity with the panoramic and sun-hazed Australian landscape. Unfortunately as his work became fashionable, it became imitated and stereotyped and it was Hans Heysen who rediscovered in the South Australian landscape, the majesty of the large gums lit by sunset or rising out of the early morning mists. Another exponent of the pastoral landscape with its emphasis on a rather romantic mood and a strong design element was Elioth Gruner. In his middle age, Heysen turned again to explore the landscape, becoming the first artist to venture into the Flinders Ranges with all its bare, elemental inland mountains and sparsely treed deserts. His type of art had reached its zenith and after Heysen there was no significant school of landscape painters until the very individual interpretations of the modern school of Nolan, Drysdale, Boyd and Miller who searched again for some meaning in the vast uncompromising landscape of Australia. This vital movement of rediscovery and reinterpretation since the war has heralded another major school of Australian painting—the time between these two movements, that of the Australian Impressionists (in the 1880's to 1900) and the modern school, was by no means idle. However, the ideas brought back from overseas, in many cases, were more European and academic in tradition than those expounded by Impressionists. Although varying to some degree in aim and style, Meldrum, Ramsay and Lambert belong to this academic school with its emphasis on muted tones and studio posed subjects, with little interest in landscape other than as a backdrop. Although the modern school is international in a sense and its artists have achieved overseas renown, they have retained their identity, loosely bound and often varying as it is, with something of an integral Australian character.

CATALOGUE

PICTURE SIZES ARE GIVEN IN INCHES, HEIGHT FIRST THEN WIDTH.

Louis BUVELOT (1814-1888)

Buvelot was born in Switzerland, and after studying painting went to Paris at the age of twenty. In Paris he studied with Fler, a landscape artist of the Barbizon School. Unlike most artists of the time these painters went direct to nature for inspiration. This influence can be seen in Buvelot's Australian paintings. From Paris he went to Brazil for eighteen years; returned to Switzerland for a time; and in 1865 departed for Victoria. In Melbourne he established a photographic business, but soon gave that up in favour of full-time painting and teaching. His approach to landscape painting had a strong influence in Victorian art circles. Among his students were both Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin. Buvelot died in 1888, widely admired, revered and respected. He established a tradition on which was based a national school of Australian landscape painting.

1 AT MOUNT MACEDON

Watercolour $9\frac{7}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$
Purchased 1962

Tom ROBERTS (1856-1931)

Though born in England, Roberts became one of the most important figures in the development of Australian landscape painting. His family settled in Victoria when Roberts was thirteen and at first he became a photographic assistant, at the same time attending the Carlton School of Design, where he studied under Buvelot. In 1875 he won a prize and joined the National Gallery School, and in 1881 left for Europe to study in Paris and London. He became influenced by Bastien Lepage, who followed the realist tradition of Courbet and Millet, and by the artists Barrau and Ramon Casas, who introduced him to Impressionism. When he returned to Melbourne in 1885 Roberts established a painting camp at Box Hill with Frederick McCubbin and began to develop these ideas in painting the Australian scene. This was the beginning of the "Heidelberg School". They were joined at first by Arthur Streeton and later by Charles Conder. In 1889 Roberts, Streeton, McCubbin and Conder held the *9 x 5 Exhibition of Impressions* in Melbourne. Roberts is notable for the introduction into Australia of direct painting from nature in the open air. He made several more trips abroad, lived in England for some years, and finally settled in Victoria.

2 QUIET STREAM

Oil on canvas $10 \times 18\frac{1}{4}$
Purchased 1951

Sir Arthur STREETON (1867-1943)

Streeton was born near Geelong, was apprenticed to a Melbourne lithographer, and studied drawing at the National Gallery, Melbourne. He was associated with Roberts, Conder and McCubbin in establishing painting camps around Melbourne and was one of those who held the *9 x 5 Exhibition of Impressions* in 1889. In 1890 he went to Sydney, where he painted and exhibited for some years; in 1898 left for England, where he gained considerable success; visited Australia to exhibit in 1907; spent a further period painting in Europe; and returned to Australia in 1914. During 1915-16 he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and later as an official war artist on the Western Front. After

the war he continued painting, achieving considerable success for his portrayal of the Australian landscape. He was awarded the Wynne Prize in 1928 and knighted in 1937.

3 THE BATHERS

Oil on canvas $12\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$
Painted 1891
Purchased 1951

Charles CONDER (1868-1909)

Born in London and showed an early interest in art. To prevent him from becoming an artist his father sent him to work with an uncle in the Lands Department of New South Wales. In 1884 Conder arrived in Sydney where he worked for eight months, then spent about two years at survey camps in the country. Back in Sydney he was apprenticed to a lithographer, and quickly became an illustrator. He was active in art circles, and about 1887-88 met Tom Roberts, who was then visiting Sydney. Late in 1888 he followed Roberts to Melbourne, where with Streeton and McCubbin they organised the *9 x 5 Exhibition of Impressions* in 1889. In 1890 Conder returned to Europe, living first in Paris and later in London. He achieved a considerable reputation in Europe and died near Windsor in 1909.

4 QUIET BEACH

Oil on wood panel $6\frac{1}{4} \times 12$
Purchased 1952

Frederick McCUBBIN (1855-1917)

Born at West Melbourne, where his father was a master baker. Left school at fourteen to work in a solicitor's office, where he spent most of his time making model theatres. In consequence he was forced to join the family business, driving a bread delivery cart. He joined the drawing class at the Artisans' School of Design in Carlton, transferring to the drawing class at the National Gallery School. A little later he also joined the painting class. Because of this interest in art McCubbin's father misguidedly apprenticed him to a coach painter. This unwelcome commitment ended in 1875, and McCubbin's father died the following year. Frederick McCubbin now had to devote himself to the family business and it was almost a year before he could return to the Gallery classes. About this time the National Gallery was reorganised. The painting class was now conducted by the new director, Folingsby, in a much more businesslike and practical way. When Tom Roberts returned from Europe in 1885 McCubbin joined him in establishing the Box Hill painting camp—the beginning of the "Heidelberg School." In 1886 McCubbin was appointed drawing master at the National Gallery School. Folingsby opposed landscape painting in the open air, and this was something of a handicap to McCubbin's wholehearted participation in the new movement. Nevertheless he maintained his integrity and developed his own style in depicting landscape and subjects from daily life. Visited Europe, for the first time, 1906.

5 THE GLADE

Oil on canvas $46\frac{1}{4} \times 36\frac{1}{4}$
Painted 1913
Purchased 1952

E. Phillips FOX (1865-1915)

Emanuel Phillips Fox was born in Melbourne, where he studied at the National Gallery School. After painting and teaching for a time he won a prize for landscape painting in 1885. Two years later he left for Europe, thereby being

out of Australia when the Heidelberg School flourished. Studying in Paris he acquired first hand knowledge of Impressionism which he absorbed into his own style. He is particularly noted for his rich and subtle use of colour and tone. Back in Australia he held an exhibition in 1892 and two years later established the Melbourne School of Art. In 1902 he again left Australia settling in Paris where he painted and exhibited. As well as touring Italy and Spain he made further visits to Australia to exhibit and paint commissioned portraits.

6 APPLE BLOSSOM

Oil on canvas 18×24
Purchased in 1943

Rupert BUNNY (1864-1947)

Like Phillips Fox, Bunny was born in Melbourne and studied at the National Gallery. In 1884 he also left Australia to study in London and Paris where he was influenced by French painting. Apart from visiting Australia to exhibit he remained in Europe until his wife's death in the early 'thirties, when he settled in Melbourne.

7 OLD PEACH ORCHARD

Oil on canvas $21\frac{1}{4} \times 25\frac{5}{8}$
Presented 1939

Max MELDRUM (1875-1955)

Meldrum was born at Edinburgh, came to Australia at the age of fourteen, and studied at Melbourne's National Gallery School. In 1899 he won the Gallery's Travelling Scholarship, which took him to Europe where he made an intensive study of the Old Masters in the Louvre. On his return in 1913 he established a school in Melbourne, basing his teaching on his own theory of "The Invariable Truths of Depictive Art". According to him art is the science of recording appearances according to variations of tone. He based his ideas largely on the work of Velasquez, and attacked all manifestations of modernism, including the heightened colour of the Impressionists. Meldrum's students and followers are a recognisable school of Australian painting, but to find his real achievement one must look among his own works, particularly the paintings of his French and early Melbourne periods.

8 SELF PORTRAIT

Oil on synthetic wood panel 24×20
Purchased 1954

Hugh RAMSAY (1877-1906)

Hugh Ramsay was born in Glasgow and brought to Australia by his family, who settled in Melbourne. At the age of eighteen he joined the classes at the National Gallery. In 1899 he left for Europe, where he studied in Paris and spent much of his time copying old masters in the Louvre. Unlike the members of the Heidelberg School Ramsay was essentially an academic artist, creating some very fine works from studio posed subjects. He worked in very low tones, by contrast with the sunlight effects of Streeton and Roberts. In this he was greatly influenced by the works of Velasquez. Illness compelled his return to Australia, where he went on painting for another four years until his death at the age of twenty-nine.

9 INTERIOR

Oil on canvas $25\frac{1}{2} \times 31\frac{3}{4}$
Presented 1954

George LAMBERT (1873-1930)

George Washington Lambert was born in St. Petersburg, where his father, an American engineer, was working on railway construction. Lambert went to school in England, and was brought to Australia at the age of fourteen. After some experience on his uncle's station in New South Wales he worked as a clerk in Sydney and began submitting drawings to the *Bulletin*. In 1896 he met the artist Julian Ashton and became a student at Ashton's school. He won the first Travelling Scholarship, awarded by the Society of Artists in 1900. After some time studying in Paris he settled in London, where he exhibited regularly. Appointed Official War Artist with the A.I.F. in Palestine during World War I and returned to Australia in 1921.

10 WALK

Oil on canvas $36\frac{1}{8} \times 54\frac{3}{8}$

Presented 1920 by the Second Light Horse Field Ambulance.

The painting depicts an incident involving the unit, in the Sinai Desert during World War I.

Sir Hans HEYSEN (born 1877)

Heysen was born at Hamburg, Germany, and came to Australia six years later, when the family settled in South Australia. He studied art in Adelaide and worked in his father's business until 1899 when he left to study in Paris. Visited and painted in Italy, England and Holland, returning to Australia in 1903. He established his own school of painting and drawing, and in 1908 held his first exhibition. One of Australia's most popular landscape painters, he works in a modified Impressionist style. Has for many years lived at Hahndorf, in South Australia.

11 SUMMER AFTERNOON MT. BARKER COUNTRY

Watercolour $12\frac{7}{8} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$

Presented by Mrs. J. K. Webb, 1960

Elioth GRUNER (1882-1939)

Born in New Zealand and came to Australia at the age of one year. Gruner studied at Julian Ashton's art school in Sydney, where he spent most of his life. He painted mostly landscapes, usually in a modified Impressionist technique.

12 ROLLING HILLS NEAR YASS

Oil on canvas $20\frac{1}{4} \times 24\frac{1}{8}$

Painted 1929

Presented by the Queensland Art Fund 1931.

William DOBELL (born 1899)

Born at Newcastle, New South Wales, where he was articled to an architect in 1916. Went to Sydney in 1924 to work as an industrial designer, at the same time studying at night at Julian Ashton's School. In 1929 he won the Society of Artists' Travelling Art Scholarship and studied in London at the Slade School under Henry Tonks. In 1930 he visited Holland, spending a year at The Hague. Returned to Australia in 1939, and in 1943 was commissioned by the Allied Works Council to paint pictures of their wartime activities. In 1944 he won the Archibald Prize with his *Portrait of Joshua Smith*. This aroused considerable public interest and controversy, especially when the award was unsuccessfully challenged in the courts by two other artists who had competed. He won the Archibald Prize in 1948 with his portrait of *Margaret Olley*, and again in 1959 with a portrait of *Dr. Edward MacMahon*.

13 SKETCH FOR WANGI BOY

Oil on synthetic wood panel $11 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$

Purchased 1962

Russell DRYSDALE (born 1912)

George Russell Drysdale was born in Sussex and spent several short periods in Australia before the family settled in Melbourne permanently in 1923. Worked as a jackeroo and overseer on the family property in the Riverina. In 1935 he took up painting as a professional career, studying first with George Bell in Melbourne, then in London and Paris during 1938 and 1939. Returned to Melbourne in mid-1939, and again worked with George Bell, at the same time turning to landscape and figure compositions of Australian subjects. About 1940 he settled in Sydney, where he held his first one-man exhibition in 1942. He was several times commissioned by Sydney newspapers to depict conditions in the outback. In 1961 he received the first presentation of the Henry Lawson Award for Distinction in the Arts.

14 BUSH FIRE

Oil and black ink on canvas $24\frac{1}{8} \times 30$

Painted 1944

Presented 1955

Godfrey MILLER (1893-1964)

Miller was born in Wellington, New Zealand. After a few early lessons he studied art at the Slade School in London. Lived and painted in London and Europe, and for some time taught drawing at the East Sydney Technical College.

15 TREES IN MOONLIGHT

Oil on canvas $24\frac{5}{8} \times 33\frac{3}{4}$

Presented by the Godfrey Rivers Trust 1960

