

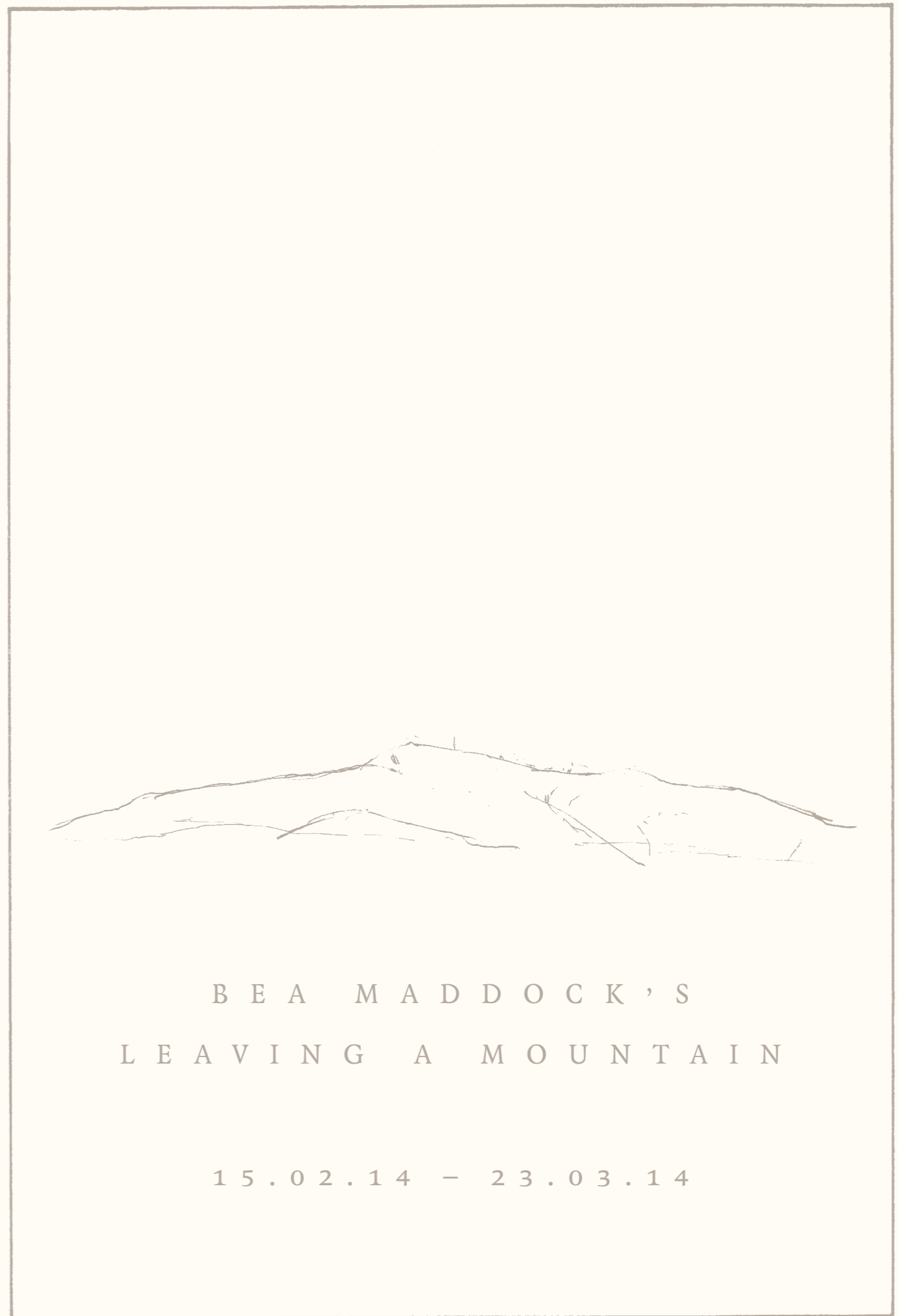
LIST OF WORKS



1. *Approach to Mount Moliagul I*, 1 March 1990
on site Arnold–Rheola Road, Victoria
graphite on sketch pad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:90
2. *Approach to Mount Moliagul II*, 1 March 1990
on site Arnold–Rheola Road, Victoria
graphite on sketch pad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:103
3. *Approach to Mount Moliagul III*, 1 March 1990
on site Arnold–Rheola Road, Victoria
graphite on sketchpad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:104
4. *Mount Moliagul I*, March 1990
on site Dunolly–Rheola Road, Victoria
pastel and graphite on textured sketchpad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:88
5. *Approach to Mount Moliagul IV*, 1 March 1990
on site Dunolly–Rheola Road, Victoria
graphite on sketch pad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:90:105
6. *Mount Moliagul III*, 1 March 1990
on site Dunolly–Rheola Road, Victoria
graphite on sketch pad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:89
7. *Mount Moliagul II*, March 1990
on site Rheola Road, Victoria
pastel and graphite on textured sketchpad paper
20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:106
8. *Mount Moliagul*, 1–4 March 1990
on site Rheola Road, Victoria
charcoal and white pastel, with traces of graphite on 8
sheets of sketchpad paper
29.7 x 21.0 each sheet
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:FD:91.1 to 91.8
9. *Mount Moliagul – text concept*, 4 June 1992
Burns Street Studio, Launceston
pen and sepia ink on cartridge paper
21.0 x 17.6 irreg.
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:Aar:103
10. *Concept drawing for leaving a mountain*, 14 June 1992
on site Mount Moliagul, Victoria
graphite on lightweight sketchpad paper
20.9 x 29.5
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:Aar:104
11. *Written idea for Leaving a Mountain*, 14 June 1992
on site Mt Moliagul, Victoria
graphite on paper 20.9 x 29.6
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:Aar:70
12. *Fifteen text stencils for Leaving a Mountain*, 1992
Burns Street Studio, Launceston
oil stick on cartridge paper
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery,
Launceston
QVM:2001:Aar:22.1 to 22.15
13. *Leaving a Mountain*, 24 December 1992 – 31 January 1993
207 Invermay Road, Launceston
pigment wash, graphite, oil stick and wax on eight canvas panels
125.5 x 72.5 each panel
128.0 x 74.4 each panel framed
Collection of the Devonport City Council
1993.024.a–h

ISBN 978-0-9872560-6-5

Bea Maddock's Leaving a Mountain will tour to the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery (QVMAG) opening on Friday 16 May and continuing until Sunday 27 July 2014.



BEA MADDOCK'S
LEAVING A MOUNTAIN

15.02.14 – 23.03.14

BEA MADDOCK'S LEAVING A MOUNTAIN

Bea Maddock has a particular interest in Tasmania – its landscape, its history and its inhabitants, both Indigenous and European. Her profound curiosity in the interrelationship between these defining elements is reflected in the works of art she has made over the latter half of her career, particularly the five multi-panelled landscape panoramas painted between 1987 and 1993.¹

Maddock was born and raised in Tasmania. She lived in Victoria from 1970 until she returned to live on the island in 1984. With a career spanning more than five decades, Maddock is respected and recognised for her innovative printmaking and her masterwork *TERA SPIRITUS ... with a lighter shade of pale* 1993–98. Maddock was also highly regarded as a teacher and mentor, known for her uncompromising commitment to her artistic practice.

Along with Tasmania, Victoria provided subject matter for Maddock's art. Maddock lived and worked in Melbourne and later Macedon, until the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires destroyed her home and studio. Maddock then purchased a property in the town of Dunolly, two hours north-west of Melbourne in the central Victorian goldfields. Later that year she was appointed to the position of Head of the School of Art, Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, Launceston. By the end of 1984 Maddock had resigned and was working fulltime as an artist. For seven years, Maddock commuted between Launceston and Dunolly, via the Bass Strait ferry, until she sold the house and studio in Dunolly in February 1990, returning permanently to Launceston. *Leaving a Mountain* 1992–93 was painted at the end of Maddock's 'Melbourne period', as a farewell to Victoria and its influence.

Leaving a Mountain is one of five paintings created by the artist between 1987 and 1993. Each painting references the depicted landscape's Aboriginal history and European settler relationships, an issue she was preoccupied with throughout this period. Three of the paintings are of Tasmanian land or seascapes, whilst two are of Victorian landscapes. The paintings incorporate text, often Aboriginal words, that explore the tension between landscape and language. Their multi-panel panoramic formats are alike, as are the media (encaustic or wax and pigment wash) used to construct them. Each of the paintings was preceded by a series of *en plein air* drawings.

Leaving a Mountain is the last of Maddock's large landscape-text paintings and is the subject of this exhibition at Devonport Regional Gallery.² Depicting a panoramic view of north-west Victoria's Mt Moliagul, the painting is six metres in length and consists of eight panels. In 1993 it was included in the *Clemenger Contemporary Art Award* established by the National Gallery of Victoria following a gift made to the Gallery by Joan and Peter Clemenger. Maddock was the recipient of the inaugural prize.

Seventeen kilometres from Dunolly, set amidst a flat, lightly wooded landscape, is the prominent peak of Mt Moliagul. Formed of hornfels and granite slopes covered with metamorphic Ordovician rock and poor quality, stony soil, it contains an underground molybdenum mine.³ The geology of the area also includes significant gold-bearing reefs.⁴ The mountain's name is of Aboriginal derivation, 'moliagulk' meaning 'wooded hill', and there is surrounding evidence of the long-term occupation of the Jaara Jaara people.⁵ With the arrival of the goldrush and subsequent clearing for dryland agriculture, principally grazing and cropping, the region underwent significant change. Today it is rolling, open country with a big sky and expansive sense of space.



Now I'm close up to the Mt I feel wrapped around by it. There's not much point in drawing it – it would only bring out the old clichés. If I want to do anything with it will have to be on the spot – observe its moods and changes over a series of days ... then it's about the Mt as a place ...⁷

From 1–4 of March and again on the 14 June 1990, Maddock spent time on the Arnold Rheola Road, drawing Mt Moliagul. Over the five-day period she produced a series of working drawings, including nine *en plein air* studies, the most resolved of which is *Mount Moliagul*, 1990, a charcoal, white pastel and pencil drawing on eight pages of A4 sketchbook paper.

The drawings are remarkably resolved works, executed after a great deal of thinking and planning. Two are pastel drawings which almost shimmer, capturing the sense of summer heat, with the textured paper contributing to this sense. The six pencil drawings depict the mountain from a distance as well as through detailed, close-up views. One drawing is annotated, recording particular features of the landscape, whilst others are minimal, elemental summations of place. Another determines how the drawing and text is to be laid out in relation to the painting's panels.

Maddock first painted *en plein air* as a student of Jack Carington Smith at Hobart Technical College in the early 1950s. Along with Lucien Dechaineux before him, there was a strong tradition in Hobart of sketching groups painting in the landscape. As a student at the Slade School in London from 1959–61, Maddock drew and painted at various locations including Hampstead Heath and later, the Italian landscape around Perugia.

In October 1990 Maddock decided to rent a shopfront at 207 Invermay Road in Launceston for three months. It became the studio space in which *Leaving a Mountain* was made. *Mount Moliagul* 1990 was photographed, creating eight photographic negatives and then eight photographic positives. Maddock was comfortable with the photographic process from her years of experimenting with these complex processes, often adopted from commercial photographic practices and applied to her photo-etching and photo-screen printing. The positive transparencies were projected onto blank canvases, the resulting image delineated by drawing with pencil and oil stick onto the canvas over the projected marks. Using artist-made word stencils Maddock transcribed the script along the bottom of

the canvas. The image was completed with a wax layer, which gives the painting its pale luminosity.

Maddock frequently incorporated text in her work. Interestingly the words sometimes came first, inspiring the subsequent imagery. Within the pages of her journals and notebooks there are examples of the artist toying with painting titles and words for incorporation within works of art. Her journal notes reveal that she considered and reconfigured the text used on *Leaving a Mountain*.

Eventually, the words '... to the erratics of abundance and disaster that even out over a long period of time' were incorporated in the painting. The text is a quotation taken from an article by Australian anthropologist Dr Rhys Jones (1941–2001) about the cause and effect of technological change on the Indigenous Tasmanian population brought about by the severance of the Bassian land-bridge.⁸ Jones had established that due to rising sea levels 10 000 years ago, after the last glaciation, Tasmanian Aborigines were isolated from their mainland counterparts. His scholarship dispelled speculation that mainland and Tasmanian Aborigines had separate origins, confirming the Tasmanians' prehistoric continuities with their mainland counterparts. Maddock encountered his work when she attended his lecture on board the *MV Icebird* on 12 January 1987⁹ en route to Heard Island on an Australian Antarctic Division voyage. Jones's lecture created an association in the artist's mind between the prehistoric landscape of Tasmania and the landscape of Heard Island.¹⁰

Jones's original sentence reads: 'Australia is a capricious continent, and men who live there have to contend with the vagaries of abundance and of disaster, which even-out over long periods of time.' After some deliberation Maddock made a change to the Rhys Jones text. She replaced the word 'vagaries' with the word 'erratics'. This was not an error of transcription or a fault of memory, it was a deliberate act.

The word 'erratic' also has geological connotations. A glacial erratic is a rock that is a different size and type to the rock common to the area in which it rests. The erratic rock, one of the indicators of the path of prehistoric glacier movement, is carried hundreds of kilometres by glacial ice. 'Erratic' thus has connotations of randomness that the word 'vagaries' does not. Where the glacial erratic is deposited is completely out of context and utterly unpredictable.

It is worth considering the significance of this alteration. With Maddock meaning is never immediately apparent or straightforward but complicated and sometimes indecipherable. As Anne Kirker has commented, "To enter her world one must accept that ambiguity is not a weakness and that silence or emptiness is in itself a potent statement".¹¹ One might surmise that the text references an episode in the artist's own life when bushfire destroyed all her works of art and worldly possessions. However, the meaning may well be more complex and layered.

Leaving a Mountain is a subtle painting, with the qualities of a drawing. Its pale, waxen surface and minimal mark making is a combination of consummate skill and memory. The landscape is unpopulated, with few signs of human habitation. It is articulated only by that which is absolutely essential. In this paring back Maddock captures the essence of the place, stating:

I have tried to express my feelings about leaving a special place, with lingering memories of the heat and the light on a distinctive landform.¹²

Bridget Sullivan Arkless
October 2013

¹ *We live in the meanings we are able to discern* 1987, pigment wash, charcoal and encaustic on canvas with cibachrome photograph within wooden framework. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Tromemanner – forgive us our trespass 1988–89, pigment wash, encaustic on canvas, wrapped tied artefacts within wooden framework. Collection of the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

TAURAI ... but in the memory of time 1989, paper, wax, ink, earth pigment, ash and oil on canvas. Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

TROUWERNER ... the white ships came from the west and the sea of darkness 1992–93, encaustic with pigment wash and chord. Collection of the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart.

Leaving a Mountain 1992–93, pigment wash, graphite, oil stick and wax. Devonport Regional Art Gallery, Devonport.

² Bea Maddock has had a long association with the Devonport Regional Gallery. She had solo exhibitions at the Little Gallery (opened in 1966 it was the forerunner to the Regional Gallery) in 1967 and 1972 and was included in group exhibitions in 1968 and 1975. The Gallery has collected five of her prints and purchased this major painting for the Permanent Collection in 1993.

³ An alloying element for stainless steel, molybdenum enhances the resistance of metals to corrosion.

⁴ The world's largest gold nugget, the Welcome Stranger, was discovered in the area in 1869.

⁵ Ian D Clark, Heydon Toby, *Database of Aboriginal placenames of Victoria*, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, Northcote, Victoria, 2002.

⁶ Ian D Clark, *Aboriginal languages and clans: an historical atlas of western and central Victoria 1800–1900*, Monash publications in geography, no. 37, Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Monash University, Melbourne, c1990 p.153.

⁷ Bea Maddock, *Written idea for Leaving a Mountain*, 14 June 1992, pencil on paper, QVM: 2001: Aar: 70

⁸ Rhys Jones, 'The Tasmanian paradox', in RVS Wright (ed.) *Stone Tools as cultural markers: change, evolution and complexity. Prehistory and Material Culture Series no. 12*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1977.

⁹ Bea Maddock, *Journal I 1987*, 9 January – 8 February.

¹⁰ Bea Maddock, 'The Makings of a Trilogy', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no. 31, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1990, p. 44.

¹¹ Anne Kirker, 'Charting Territory', in *Being and Nothingness. Bea Maddock Work from Three Decades*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1992, p. 18.

¹² *The Joan and Peter Clemenger Triennial Exhibition of Contemporary Australian Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993.

DEVONPORT REGIONAL GALLERY'S GUEST CURATOR PROGRAM

In 2013 Bridget Arkless was invited to curate an exhibition under the Devonport Regional Gallery's Guest Curator Program. I was delighted when Bridget proposed to curate an exhibition based on Bea Maddock's eight-panel painting, *Leaving a Mountain*, which is held in the Devonport City Council's Collection. The painting has been on display outside of Australia when it travelled throughout Asia as part of the exhibition *From an Island South*, curated by Jane Stewart and toured by Asialink and the Devonport Regional Gallery. Bridget's fascination with this work, and her subsequent research, demonstrates that *Leaving a Mountain* is a pivotal work in Bea Maddock's journey as a conceptual artist and philosophical being.

I am grateful to Bridget for her scrutiny of Maddock's painting and studio practice. I am also grateful to the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery for the loan of the drawings and to the staff who have assisted with the loan. My gratitude is extended to Dunja Rmandic for organising the inspection and conservation of *Leaving a Mountain* and to Mar Gomez for her meticulous conservation work.

Ellie Ray
February 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Curator would like to thank the following people for their support of the project: Amy Bartlett, Jeff Burgess and Tony Mitchell, Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston; Antoinette Smith, Museum of Victoria; Ellie Ray and Dunja Rmandic, Devonport Regional Gallery; and Chris Arkless. Special thanks to the artist, Bea Maddock, as well as Beth Parsons and Irena Zdanowicz.

Cover Image
Mount Moliagul III, 1990
graphite on sketch pad paper
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston

Inside Image
Leaving a Mountain, 1993
pigment wash, graphite, oil stick and wax on eight canvas panels
Collection of the Devonport City Council

Reverse Images
Mount Moliagul II, 1990
pastel and graphite on textured sketchpad paper
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston

Mount Moliagul I, 1990
pastel and graphite on textured sketchpad paper
Gift of Bea Maddock, 2001
Collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston