

DEVONPORT
REGIONAL
GALLERY

plot

NICOLA DE ROOY

KIT HILLER

PATRICK GRIEVE

LISA GARLAND

YVONNE VON LICHTAN

KERRY MARTIN

curated by JANE STEWART, ELLIE RAY & JOSIE HURST

August 3 - September 2, 2007 Devonport Regional Gallery

The community and natural landscape are subjects that have always interested me. Growing up in Hobart, my photo albums are filled with pictures of the wilderness taken on trips in the South, and on the West and East Coasts of Tasmania. My recent move to Devonport presented a whole new area that was waiting to be explored. I found the colours in the North West landscape a different palate and the light appeared brighter than in the South. I also quickly learnt that the North West is a region made up of many smaller communities all with their own culture, tradition and distinct way of life.

Plot celebrates these communities. In the process of selecting artworks for *Plot*, the various townships visited created a 'plotting map'. From Devonport to Penguin, Burnie and Wynyard, to the far reaches of Smithton and Cradle Mountain, this exhibition reflects a kind of mosaic journey through the North West region. Throughout this journey, a common thread soon emerged. Despite the separation of community and the unique environs, each artist shared a love for the region, valuing the strong influence it plays on their subject matter.

Each artwork selected for *Plot* joins to present the audience with what is almost an archaeological dig—images that encapsulate stories echoing not just the artists' experiences but also the lives of the people in the North West. In Kit Hiller's *Bird Watching* we see a group of people setting across a beach at low tide. These paintings tell a story of Hiller's love of bird watching. A pastime she shares with a group of friends who frequent this remote area, only accessed when the tide is low. It tells of a lifestyle that is connected to the sea, the land and the wildlife, and where real joy is taken in exploring and understanding the immediate natural surroundings.

Similar notions are evident in the beading work of Nicola De Rooy. De Rooy is a self-taught beading artist whose highly developed skills encapsulate permanence in crafted flowers inspired by those growing in the surrounding bushland near Smithton. Individually, the beaded objects imitate the fragility of nature and the intricacies of the native flora. Collectively, the work presents a showcase of natural beauty, combining an array of fascinating shapes and colours. Like Kit Hiller, De Rooy's artwork reflects her great passion for frequenting the natural surrounds to discover its inherent joys and secrets.

The study of delicate shapes and colours within the North West landscape is also prevalent in Yvonne Von Lichtan's prints. Originally from Poland, Von Lichtan moved to Devonport and developed a strong connection with the native flora. Her palate consists of warm earthy colours and a charcoal-like black which she uses to investigate the form of eucalyptus leaves in varying levels of abstraction. Fluid lines appear to dance across the page in a free and possibly spiritual-like movement, seemingly referencing an indigenous culture yet speaking of Von Lichtan's own connection to the natural landscape.

Connection with the land is a dominant feature of Patrick Grieve's paintings. Bordering on abstraction, large blocks of colour represent endless agricultural fields. The work is a response to the surrounding agricultural regions of the North West. The sparse outstretch of land and dominant sky contrast with my memories of the landscape in southern Tasmania where many areas are dominated by undulating hills and mountains. The paintings are made from roadside observations and tell of a lifestyle of long drives through a land both lived on and worked, creating a glorious scenery, a patch-work quilt that goes on for miles.

Kerry Martin's large oil paintings also draw the viewer into a landscape the artist connects closely to. Originally from Sydney, Martin moved to the Cradle Coast discovering a unique environment in which she soon became emersed. Her paintings are fluid and while they depict dense bush and strong flowing rivers, they also convey a feeling of place that envelopes the senses. Martin's paintings reveal an abundance of seemingly untouched nature; the river is central to the image, metaphorically drawing the observer 'into' the scene.

Having grown up in the North West region, Lisa Garland has developed strong relationships with many of the locals from her home town of Penguin and the surrounding regions. Garland's large-format black and white photographs represent the characters and homes of individuals she has encountered within her community. Some of these unique characters are situated within, or outside their home, while others pose with family or friends. Their environments appear humble unlike the places often encountered in cities. The subjects' 'gaze' is a dominant feature of the work and is both captivating and disturbing—it seemingly invites the viewer into a personal space where an apparent sense of pride offers comfort and

familiarity. At the same time the gaze is self-conscious, a barrier preventing the viewer from fully inhabiting the personal space of the subject.

The artists in *Plot* provide an insight into the close connections they have with their environs. Individually, the works are like single 'pin points' on a map that when connected shape a fascinating area of the North West region. In plotting this map, stories are formed revealing a place where the landscape is both wild and agricultural, a place where people engage with the flora and fauna and where local characters appear to live simple lifestyles comforted by a sense of belonging. The need to be fast-paced has been stripped away, presenting an environment which is unashamedly quiet but rich in the 'unique', an environment that is home to communities with their own personal stories to tell.

If anything, the overriding message of *Plot* transcends the North West region and can be applied universally. Perhaps it is a reminder that place is not just a location where boundaries are formalised. Rather, it is an individual's sense of place that creates connection and exposes why one area is distinct to another, plotting the real map of a region.

JOSIE HURST 2007

Exhibitions and Public Programs Officer

YVONNE VON LICHTAN

Spine A/P 2000

Photographic etching on zinc

17.5 x 7.5 cm

Images courtesy the artist



Untitled A/P 2000

Monotype and drypoint on aluminium

12 x 8.5 cm



LISA GARLAND

Hume Brothers 2006

Silver gelatin print

100 x 100 cm

Images courtesy the artist



Carl 2007
Silver gelatin print
100 x 100 cm



PATRICK GRIEVE

Farmland coastal series # 35 2007

Oil on linen

120 x 120 cm

Images Courtesy of Bett Gallery and the Artist



Farmland coastal series # 34 2007

Oil on linen

120 x 120 cm



KIT HILLER

Winter Birdcount - Montague Island 2006

Oil on canvas

145 x 175 cm

Images courtesy the artist



Birdwatchers Returning from Perkins Island 2007

Oil on canvas

145 x 175 cm



NICOLA DE ROOY

Tasmanian Wild Flower, Tasmanian Waratah 2006

Beading wire, dellica beads, garnet beads

8 x 8 cm

Images courtesy the artist



Tasmanian Wild Flower, Eastern Wall Flower Diuris 2006

Beading wire, dellica beads

8 x 3 cm



KERRY MARTIN

Looking Up Looking Down 2007

Oil on canvas

2 panels 120 x 66 cm = 120 x 132 cm

Images courtesy of Eve Breuer Art Dealer, Sydney, Catherine Asquith Gallery, Melbourne, Stanley Artworks and the artist



Crossing The Void #4 2007

Oil on canvas

120 x 175 cm



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