

# Clemente Art Gallery Visit: 8/10/2020







## NSW Art Gallery Visit Thursday October 8<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Paintings/ Artworks** -like poems, plays and stories- tell a story, bring an experience to life, touch our senses through imagery and shape or form.  
Today we want to explore the similarities and differences between paintings/ artworks and literary experience.

Questions worth thinking about as you look at a painting or art work. You don't have to answer all these questions. They are just designed to stimulate your thinking.

- 1/** Standing in front of this painting?artwork can I describe its subject matter?
- 2/** Is it telling a story?
- 3/** Is it conveying an experience?
- 4/** Is the experience private or public?
- 5/** How is it engaging the viewer?

We have spoken about TEXTURE in poetry, in drama. We have spoken about TEXTURE in some paintings, like Vincent Van Gogh's.

- 6/** What are some of the features of TEXTURE in this painting/artwork?  
Its shapes? Its brushstrokes? The feelings it evokes?

### **Follow Up- Voluntary-**

Chose any one of the artworks/ paintings that we have looked at today and **write a short paragraph describing it**. In your description answer the following questions:

- 1/ What does the painting/artwork describe?
- 2/ What are the feelings that it evokes?
- 3/ How does it evoke these feelings?
- 4/ What is your personal assessment on the value of this painting/artwork.

SEND YOUR SHORT PARAGRAPH TO ME AND I WILL BE HAPPY TO LOOK AT IT AND MAKE COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS. You can either post this into LEO or send it to me via email: Michael.griffith@acu.edu.au

*Do you know what you have just written is a textual version of the visual art you have been describing. Technically this kind of verbal description of a painting ( in prose or poetry) is called Ekphrastic which means "description of a work of art". (from Greek ékphrasis "description.")*



# Michael Parekowhai

New Zealand b1968

## The English Channel 2015

stainless steel, ed. 2/3

Purchased with funds provided by Peter Weiss AO 2016

Michael Parekowhai's *The English Channel* is an arresting new sculptural presence in the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection. The figure, with ponytail and flowing topcoat, is the British explorer Captain James Cook. But this is not Cook as he is seen in the many historical monuments that bear his name.

Resting on a sculptor's working table, with feet dangling and eyes downcast, this Cook seems to be reflecting on his legacy in the contemporary world. At the same time, his dazzling surface collects the reflection of everything around it.

This mirror-like surface lends *The English Channel* a slippery and elusive presence, as if to suggest how perceptions shift depending on where one is standing. The result is a monument of a very contemporary kind – not a full stop marking the end of a story but a question mark inviting response and reflection.

Michael Parekowhai is a New Zealand artist of Maori (Ngāti Whakarongo) and Pakeha (European) descent. His sculptures have been seen in the Sydney Biennale, The Gwangju Biennale, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Venice Biennale (where he represented New Zealand in 2011), and recently in an acclaimed survey exhibition, *The Promised Land*, at QAGoMA in Brisbane.

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This sculpture has been acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection through the generosity of one of the Gallery's longest-serving patrons, Peter Weiss AO Hon DLitt (USyd).



## Sidney Nolan

born Melbourne 1917, Europe from 1953, died London 1992

### Central Australia 1950

Ripolin enamel and oil on hardboard

Purchased with funds provided by the Nelson Meers Foundation 2004

In 1949 Nolan travelled with his wife Cynthia and daughter Jinx (Cynthia's daughter who Nolan had formally adopted) through Central Australia. His encounters with the dramatic landscapes of the Centre had a profound impact on his practice.

In *Central Australia*, Nolan paints the exhilaration of expanse. Envisaged from an aerial vantage point, Nolan painted the primeval formations and saturated pigments of land and sky with a precision that it makes it appear dream-like. In doing so, he enhanced the mystery of the interior, inscribing it with a modern sense of the sublime.

Nolan exhibited his *Central Australia* series to high acclaim at David Jones' Gallery in 1950. Critic James Gleeson referred to the exhibition as 'one of the most important events in the history of Australian art'. The seemingly infinite lunar-type formations of the land were a revelation and redefined white Australians' perceptions of the nation's landscapes.





## Sidney Nolan

born Melbourne 1917, Europe from 1953, died London 1992

### First-class marksman 1946

Ripolin enamel and alkyd on hardboard

Purchased with funds provided by the Gleeson O'Keefe Foundation 2010

*First-class marksman* formed part of the original sequence of twenty-six paintings from Nolan's first 'Kelly' series, painted between 1946–47. Unlike the other works which were produced at John and Sunday Reed's home 'Heide', *First-class marksman* was produced separately at artist Danila Vassilieff's house – it has been displayed singly and as part of the original ensemble since 1948.

Nolan's rendering of bushland entanglement and enigmatic portrayal of Kelly – armed, but not completely dangerous – results in one of his most engaging depictions of the bushranger. Kelly is depicted practicing shooting at his hideout in the Wombat Ranges, recalling Nolan's own training in the Army between 1942–44. The off-guarded encounter with the protagonist distinguishes *First-class marksman* from the other works in this series. With Kelly's iconic black armour framing our view of the countryside, the work evocatively demonstrates Nolan's merging of myth and history on our reading of place, and how human drama can augment our understanding of the landscape.



## Fred Williams

born Melbourne 1927, London 1951–56, died Melbourne 1982

### My garden 1965–67

oil on canvas

Purchased with funds provided by the  
Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1999

I repaint other people's paintings. See that there?  
That's *Bailed up*. You know, Tom Roberts. I've just  
taken the figures out and repainted the background.

Fred Williams, 1969

One of Williams's greatest works, *My garden* was painted in direct response to Tom Roberts's *Bailed up* 1895, underlining Williams's strong allegiance to the Heidelberg School and especially to Roberts, the Australian painter he loved most of all. In a singularly profound homage from one artist to another, Williams transmuted the golden glare of a relatively gentle New England landscape into his own painterly expression of the hot red heart of the continent; acting out his long-held declaration that *Bailed up* was the most important landscape painting in this country.

## John Olsen

born Newcastle, NSW 1928, England/Europe 1956–60,  
London/Portugal 1965–67, lives NSW

### Five bells 1963

oil on hardboard

Purchased with funds provided by the  
Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1999

*Five bells* was my first commission to paint in situ to cover a wall ... I didn't hesitate. I brushed a line around the core theme, the seed-burst, the life-burst, the sea-harbour, the source of life. Inside and around this core, I painted images drawn from metaphors and similes in [Kenneth] Slessor's poem of our harbour city, and from my own emotional and physical involvement with the harbour, and with my young family in Watsons Bay ...

I wanted to show the Harbour as a movement, a sea suck, and the sound of the water as though I am part of the sea ... The painting says directly what I wanted to say: 'I am in the sea-harbour, and the sea-harbour is in me.'

John Olsen, 1999





## Uta Uta Tjangala

c1926–90, Pintupi, Muyin and Walungurru (Kintore),  
Western Desert region

### Untitled (Jupiter Well to Tjukula)

1979

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased with funds provided by the  
Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 2004

Uta Uta Tjangala was a gardener at Papunya when he became one of the original group of artists who began painting in 1971. Tjangala is regarded as one of the Pintupi 'masters' who began with small-scale paintings on board, and moved on to painting canvases on a vast scale such as *Untitled (Jupiter Well to Tjukula)* 1979. It is an indication of his seniority and ability as an artist that Tjangala was commissioned to create a work of this size so early in the history of Papunya Tula painting.

Based on the Tingari cycles of ceremonies, the work depicts ancestral activities over a vast area of the Western Desert and may be seen as a longing for home at a time when Tjangala and many other Pintupi leaders were advocating for the establishment of homelands in their traditional country. This dream was realised with the establishment of Walungurru (Kintore) in 1981 and Kiwirrkura in 1983, which service numerous outstations throughout Pintupi country.

This work was purchased by the

# Dick Pantimus Tjupurrula

c1940–1983

Luritja, Papunya, Central Desert region

## Water and wallaby dreaming 1981

synthetic polymer paint on linen

Gift of the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1995



# Pablo Picasso

Spain/France, 1881–1973

## *Woman lying on a couch* (Dora Maar) 1939

oil on canvas

The Lewis Collection

This portrait is, in many respects, a traditional representation of a reclining woman: there is the couch, the glimpse of the flesh, and the hint of a world beyond the bedroom. The windows at the top right even echo the window in Titian's *Venus of Urbino* 1538. But there the resemblances stop. Trouble was brewing all over Europe when Picasso made this painting in early 1939. And trouble erupts through the very skin and physique of Picasso's model, Dora Maar. With splayed eyes, cadaverous green skin, artichoke hands and a menacing grin, she is a monstrous but strangely sympathetic retort to the myth of ideal beauty – an odalisque for the age of surrealism and the Second World War.



Self-guided tour

Highlights of the Gallery

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# Vincent van Gogh

Netherlands 1853--90

## *Head of a peasant* 1884

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation  
Purchase 1990

In 1884 Van Gogh produced a series of 'heads of the people', oil studies of simple Brabant peasant types. He intended to paint 50 of these. While he did not have any particular finished project in mind, what grew out of his observations was the great masterpiece of his early Dutch period, *The potato eaters* (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam). A seated figure in the background of the finished canvas is based on this study.



# Friedrich Kallmorgen

Germany 1856–1924

## *A spring day 1887*

oil on canvas

Purchased 1889

The picture is one of those selected by the Art Gallery of New South Wales from the *Centennial International Exhibition* held at Melbourne in 1888–89. In its early years the Gallery acquired several contemporary Austrian and German works, most of which have since been sold. The theme seems to be a class of schoolchildren rejoicing as they are accompanied home by their parents. Some would probably end their days in the trenches of the First World War.



## Ford Madox Brown

England 1821–1893

### *Chaucer at the court of Edward III* 1847–51

oil on canvas

Purchased 1876

The painting is a celebration of the English language. Chaucer, the 'father of English literature' is reading lines from the *Canterbury Tales* to the King who first championed the English language over French. The patriotic medieval subject was inspired by recent commissions for mural paintings in the Houses of Parliament. As Brown worked on the painting he became closely involved with the group of young artists who in 1848 founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.



For Ford Madox Brown, as for the other Pre-Raphaelites, the integral relationship between painting and frame was vitally important. This frame is an excellent example of the revolutionary new approach to frame design with its simplified, strictly rectilinear shape. It comprises an outer moulding which is reeded and interrupted by simple squares at the corners and roundels on the sides. The corners are not mitred but butt-joined. This is the typical reed and roundel frame, which came into use in the early 1860s.



## Luke Fildes

England 1844–1927

### *The widower* 1875–76

oil on canvas

Purchased 1883

This important picture was rapturously greeted by the press on its exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1876. Its appeal to a Victorian audience lay in the readability of its pathetic but all-too-believable subject: the toil-worn labourer despairingly nursing a dying child among the antics of an uncomprehending and newly motherless brood. Fildes had worked as an illustrator of Dickens and a parallel with the great novelist was quick to suggest itself.



# John Hoppner

England 1758–1810

## *Madame Hilligsberg* c1790–95

oil on canvas

Gift of Kenneth Reed 2014. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

Marie-Louise Hilligsberg (c1765/70?–1804) was a French dancer who captivated London audiences with the grace and energy of her moves from her stage debut in 1787 until her retirement in 1803. She is represented in Hoppner's portrait not on stage, but in role, wearing a light dress of 'white lustring' of the kind that added sparkle to her performances. The background suggests the oriental setting of a ballet such as the *Foire de Smirne* in which Hilligsberg appeared in 1792.

## Joshua Reynolds

England 1723–92

### James Maitland, 7th Earl of Lauderdale 1759–60

oil on canvas

Purchased 1976

The 41-year-old Lord Lauderdale (1718–89) had distinguished himself in the army, but was still young when he resigned and took a seat in the House of Lords (1747–61, 1782–84). He later also served as Lord of Police for Scotland and Rector of Glasgow University. Unequalled in his capacity for flattering portrayal, Reynolds shows a sophisticated young aristocrat leaning on the base of a Solomonic (twisted) column, suggestive of a trip to Italy the Scottish peer never in fact made.



This Roman neoclassical-style frame, known as a 'Carlo Maratta', is a British variant of the Italian 'Salvator Rosa' frame and was introduced to 18th-century Britain by collectors returning from the 'Grand Tour' in Europe. The Carlo Maratta became the most widely used picture frame in Britain from the mid to the end of 1700s, notably for portraits by leading painters Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. Without the complication of added corner ornaments, these frames were economical and could be bought ready-made or quickly made to measure. Here the basic format has been ornamented, notably with a band of acanthus leaves and shields.



## Nicolò dell'Abate

Italy 1509–71

### Portrait of a gentleman with a falcon c1548–50

oil on canvas

Art Gallery of New South Wales Foundation Purchase 1991

Dell'Abate is better known for the fresco decorations he completed for the French court at Fontainebleau where he moved in 1522. This painting is one of a small group of portraits dating from the period the artist was still working in his native Modena. It depicts a North Italian aristocrat whose haughty demeanour is emphasized by his averted gaze. His imposing body completely fills the canvas in a way typical of Italian Mannerist portraiture during the 1540s. The art of falconry, indicated here by the tethered bird of prey perched on the sitter's gloved hand, was a popular sport among the nobility of northern Italy.



## Frans Snyders and workshop

Netherlands 1579–1657

### The boar hunt c1650s

oil on canvas

Gift of Charles Davies-Scourfield 2005

Snyders was leading still-life and animal painter active in the Southern Netherlands in the 17th century. From the 1610s, he specialised increasingly in hunting scenes, of which *The boar hunt* is the latest known hunting picture and a fine example of his late manner, which captures the drama of the kill. The artist elaborated the scene in two large canvases of which one, signed and dated 1653, is in the British Royal Collection at Hampton Court Palace.



This remarkable object is one of the most impressive of all surviving examples of Italian renaissance maiolica. With its composition of 26 figures it possibly ranks as the most ambitious pictorial treatment of a ceramic object produced anywhere in the world to that date. It is significant that the ceramic painter has not copied the work of another artist, but has invented his own (highly topical) composition.

The sack of Rome was the world-shattering terrorist event of the renaissance period. On the reverse of this plate the artist refers to '5 May' as we might '9/11'. On the front he gives the year, 1527, in which German troops sacked and pillaged the Holy City forcing the Pope into humiliating imprisonment in his own Castel Sant'Angelo. Coming on top of the attacks of Martin Luther, the event spelt the end of an era in Christendom.



Xanto disputes with Nicola da Urbino the title of the greatest of maiolica painters. While Nicola is sometimes called the Raphael of maiolica, Xanto has been compared with Michelangelo. His vigorous, crowded composition, with its distortions of scale and space, shares something of the tortured language of Michelangelo's iconic *Last Judgement* begun just six years after this plate was painted.

This is the first of Xanto's works fully inscribed on the back with the artist's name, the date and an extended description of the subject. Although the allegory is elusive, the figures of Bacchus and Venus must refer to the drunkenness and lasciviousness of the Holy City. On the right St Peter, Christ's vicar and the first Pope, stands precariously on an orb. The stability of the Christian world is under threat.

**Large plate, *Allegory of the sack of Rome*,  
5 May 1527**

Urbino, Francesco Xanto Avelli, 1530

Purchased 2011 with generous financial assistance  
from Kenneth Reed



**Paul Bril**

Belgium, Italy c1554–1626

**A wooded landscape with a  
bridge and sportsmen at the  
edge of a river c1595**

oil on canvas

Purchased with funds provided by the  
Sinclair Gillies Deaccessioning Fund and  
Sam Hughes Memorial Fund 1998

Paul Bril was an Antwerp artist who from 1576 made his career in Rome as one of the first landscape specialists. According to a label on the back, this work still hung in the 18th century in an unidentified Roman palace in the 'second antechamber next to the gallery overlooking the courtyard'. Like most landscape paintings at this date the picture would have performed a decorative function, to which its extravagantly contrived and colourful composition was well suited.



## Jacques Blanchard

France 1600–38

### Mars and the vestal virgin c1637–38

oil on canvas

Purchased with funds resulting from a gift by James Fairfax AC and with the support of the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 2007

The vestal virgin Rhea Silvia was discovered asleep in a wood by Mars, the God of War. The consequence was the birth of the twins Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome. This painting is one of the finest surviving examples of an artist famous in his day as the 'French Titian'. The sensuousness of Blanchard's art looks forward to that of Boucher in the eighteenth century.