Heat in the eyes: new acquisitions 2010–13
The Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne
1 June 2013 to 22 September 2013

Works are listed according to their placement in the exhibition.

1. Mike Parr
born Sydney 1945, lives Sydney

‘The pool of blood V’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
etching, aquatint
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.040

In collaboration with the National Gallery of Australia and the Australian Bicentennial Authority, German curator René Block commissioned a group of eight young and mid-career contemporary artists to each produce five limited edition prints to form the Aus Australien bicentennial print portfolio. The artists, some of whom had never experimented with printmaking, shared an impressive exhibition history in Australia and internationally. The folio represents a significant international dialogue between Australian artists and Europe at a time of intense reflection on Australia’s regional history and global future. Master printer John Loane of Viridian Press coproduced the suite, which includes relief, intaglio, planographic and stencil printing techniques.

2. Vivienne Shark LeWitt
born Sale, Victoria, 1956; lives Daylesford, Victoria

‘Untitled’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
etching
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.015

3. Peter Tyndall
born Melbourne 1951, lives Hepburn Springs, Victoria

‘detail: A Person Looks At A Work of Art/someone looks at something …’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
linocut, screenprint
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.024

4. Richard Dunn
born Sydney 1944, lives Sydney

‘100 Blossoms: Five prisons’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
etching, aquatint, screenprint
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.004

5. John Lethbridge
born Wellington, New Zealand, 1948; arrived Australia 1975
6. Ken Unsworth
born Melbourne 1931, lives Sydney

‘Villa des vergessens I’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1987
lithograph
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.027

7. John Nixon
born Sydney 1949, lives Melbourne

‘Self portrait (Non-objective composition) (Purple)’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
woodcut
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.016

8. Jenny Watson
born Melbourne 1951, lives Brisbane

‘The bottled memories 5’ from the René Block folio ‘Aus Australien’ 1988
etching, aquatint
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Peter Tyndall 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0115.035

9. Geoff Lowe
born Melbourne 1952, lives Paris

Untitled 1986
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Adrian Valmorbida 2013. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2013.0025

10. Geoff Lowe
born Melbourne 1952, lives Paris

‘Buckley’s chance’ from the series ‘Ten famous feelings for men’ 1984
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
2013.0024

11. John Brack
born Melbourne 1920, died Melbourne 1999
Head of a woman c. 1955
pencil
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Helen Brack 2012
2012.0005

12.
John Brack
born Melbourne 1920, died Melbourne 1999

Study for ‘Youth’ 1984
conté crayon
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Helen Brack 2012
2012.0004

13.
John Brack
born Melbourne 1920, died Melbourne 1999

The Queen 1988
oil on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Helen Brack 2012. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0001

Artist John Brack has been described as a modern-day anthropologist. He was interested in the human condition displayed in those around him and as it was experienced in his own life. Brack’s works in the 1950s and 1960s were characterized by the study of individuals and their behaviour at a local level. His painting Collins Street, 5 p.m. (1955), is arguably his best-known work in the genre. In The Queen, painted more than three decades later, Brack maintains his concern with people and the complexities of human nature and relationships, but he has moved from the particular to the universal. The Queen is a powerful visual and technical tour de force that elucidates a treatise on the precarious nature of power.

Helen Brack, the artist’s widow, has succinctly described the profundity of the work: ‘This picture seems to be an essay on our ability for the most noble achievements and the most barbaric—and of our own sterilized present where art has lost its value’.

14–18.
Ricky Maynard
born Launceston, Tasmania, 1953; lives Cape Barren Island, Tasmania
Ben Lomond/Cape Portland peoples

‘Wik elder, Arthur’, ‘Wik elder, Joel’, ‘Wik elder, Joe’, ‘Wik elder, Bruce’ and ‘Wik elder, Gladys’ from the series ‘Returning to places that name us’ 2000
gelatin silver photographs
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2012
2012.0110.001–005

Ricky Maynard has been recording the lives of Aboriginal people since the mid-1980s. His photographs belong to the tradition of classic social documentary. Maynard, who speaks of his obligation as an Aboriginal artist to capture the reality of Australia’s collective past, relies on the veracity of photographic representation.

In 1999, Maynard spent several weeks in the community of Arukun, in Far North Queensland. Many of the local Wik people with whom he was staying had been recently engaged in intense and public negotiations for native title rights. In the face of the infamous 10-point plan—legislation which the then government enacted to restrict native title rights in response to the Wik people’s successful 1996 claim—Maynard’s photographs assert the relationship between the people and the country to which they belong. Maynard has said that this series is, in one sense, about ‘leaving proof’.

These images demonstrate the scope for subjectivity in Maynard’s form of social realist photography,
through dramatic cropping and shallow depth of field. Each of these portraits is presented in landscape format, a departure from convention and suggestive of his subjects’ connectedness to place.

19.
Trevor Nickolls
born Adelaide 1949, died Adelaide 2012
Ngarrindjeri language group

Gertrude Street, Fitzroy 1981
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Robert and Winsome Martin 2013. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program 2013.0032

Trevor Nickolls painted this work early in his career, while he was living in Melbourne. Then, Gertrude Street was known as the dark sister to neighbouring showy, bohemian Brunswick Street. Nickolls’s painting is an important social record in which there exists a sense of his need to take a snapshot of the sex, colour, culture and excitement that gave Gertrude Street its character.

In the past decade, the street has been transformed into a glamorous art, fashion and gastronomic precinct. But for many, the significance of the street that runs from Nicholson Street, Carlton, to Smith Street, Collingwood, lies in its historic association with the Aboriginal community. The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and the Fitzroy Stars Aboriginal Community Youth Club Gymnasium were established there in 1973 and 1977 respectively. The Builders Arms Hotel was an important gathering place between the 1940s and the 1980s. The Koori Club, frequented by young Aboriginal people, enforced an ‘Aboriginal only’ policy influenced by the Black Power movement of the late 1960s.

Nickolls’s contribution to the trajectory of Aboriginal art is profound. All Aboriginal artists representing themes of identity, alienation and the impact of Western culture on Aboriginal traditional life do so in the context of his legacy.

20.
A Constructed World
established Melbourne 1993, Jacqueline Riva and Geoff Lowe live Paris

Ball world I (telephone) 2012
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2013 2013.0034

21.
A Constructed World
established Melbourne 1993, Jacqueline Riva and Geoff Lowe live Paris

Ball world II (speech) 2012
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The Vizard Foundation Collection 2013. On loan to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne 3333.0002

22.
James Lynch
born Melbourne 1976, lives Melbourne

Sam’s picture 2010
oil on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2011 2011.0003

Sam’s picture was first presented in the exhibition Other people’s pictures at Uplands Gallery in 2010. In a statement accompanying that exhibition, Lynch wrote:
'I asked friends and family to give me short descriptions of their favorite artwork omitting the biographical details of artist, title and date. These short, written elaborations in turn became the basis for a new picture. Each text highlights differing features and aspects of each work and translated again through my studio practice a further lamination occurs: so that a new interpretation bearing little resemblance to the “original” transpires.'

In producing the series, Lynch combined photographs of friends and colleagues with studio detritus and images torn from magazines. He arranged these elements to form a diorama, which he then photographed. He finally painted from the photographs. Sam’s picture brings together a range of references and ideas: ‘grunge’ and celebrity culture, the model, definitions of pictorial space, the nature of memory and perceptions of reality.

23.

**Jenny Watson**
born Melbourne 1951, lives Brisbane

**New York** 1995
oil and synthetic polymer paint on Indian cotton, synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2011 2011.0263.ABC

This is a key work in the oeuvre of Melbourne-born, Brisbane-based Jenny Watson. Watson began showing with a major New York dealer in 1991 and made several extended visits to New York from that time. As subject matter for painting, New York symbolizes the artist’s aspirations to international success. In the year Watson painted New York, she held no less than six solo exhibitions overseas, in Basel and Vienna and the German cities of Cologne, Stuttgart, Aachen and Düsseldorf.

The three components of this work together depict a portrait of a woman in two places at once. The two smaller panels suggest the thoughts of the childlike figure depicted in the fabric panel: one reads like a cosmopolitan ‘to do’ list, the other is a comforting image of one of the horses on Watson’s farm at home. In the 1990s Watson was dividing her time between Australia and the international art world. New York captures a tender moment in her life at that time.

24.

**Pat Brassington**
born Hobart 1942, lives Hobart

‘October’ from the series ‘Gentle’ 2001
pigment print
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2010 2010.0003

25.

**Pat Brassington**
born Hobart 1942, lives Hobart

‘Dear hearts’ from the series ‘Gentle’ 2001
pigment print
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2010 2010.0002

Pat Brassington is a senior Australian photomedia artist whose work belongs to a tradition of surrealist image-making. The fantastic, the uncanny, sex and desire are recurrent themes in her work, which typically draw upon Brassington’s knowledge of psychoanalytic theory. This work depicts a cropped section of a small figure clothed in a long-sleeved dress. A diamond-shaped purple cloth disrupts the softness of the draped fabric, drawing attention to the tender and vulnerable body beneath.

Brassington was among the first Australian artists to adopt the digital medium. Dear hearts, like much of her work, refers to the widespread use of photography as a personal and ‘domestic’ medium used to record family relationships and intimate personal subjects. Bodies and parts of bodies frequently
appear transformed or transfigured in strange and inscrutable narrative vignettes. In *Dear hearts*, a gusset-like patch is superimposed onto an inert body, to a puzzling, sinister effect.

26. **Pat Brassington**
born Hobart 1942, lives Hobart

*The best move* 2008
pigment print
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2010 2010.0004

27. **Andrew Hurle**
born Geelong 1962, lives Sydney

*Commonwealth Bank (money box)* 2011
inkjet print on wood, gilding wax, card
The University of Melbourne Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2012 2012.0052

28–37. **John Nixon**
born Sydney 1949, lives Melbourne

*10 untitled collages and drawings* 2000
pencil, enamel paint, ink and collage of paper and found objects on paper
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 2010 2010.0009–0018

38. **Rammey Ramsey**
born Old Greenvale Station, Western Australia, c. 1935; lives Bow River community, Western Australia
Gija language group

*Tranie Gorge* 2010
pigment and synthetic binder on MDF
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2011 2011.0251

39. **Rammey Ramsey**
born Old Greenvale Station, Western Australia, c. 1935; lives Bow River community, Western Australia
Gija language group

*Main Warlawoon* 2010
pigment and synthetic binder on MDF
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2011 2011.0250

40. **Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack**
born Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1893; arrived Australia 1940, died Sydney 1965

*Untitled* 1949
watercolour and gouache
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Barrie and Ms Diana Pittock 2011. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program 2011.0178
41. Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack
born Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1893; arrived Australia 1940, died Sydney 1965

Untitled 1963
watercolour and ink
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Barrie and Ms Diana Pittock 2011. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2011.0177

42. Emily Kame Kngwarreye
born Alhalkere, Utopia, Northern Territory, c. 1910; died Alice Springs 1996
Anmatyerre language group

Untitled 1989–90
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of James Mollison AO 2012 in memory of Sir Joseph Burke KBE. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0106

Emily Kame Kngwarreye painted Untitled shortly after she ceased producing batik silks with the Utopia Women’s Batik Group but before she had developed the distinct gestural style that was the hallmark of her energetic and prolific art production over a brief eight-year career.

Untitled celebrates the women’s business of gathering food, the beginning of the desert growth cycle, and Kngwarreye’s birthplace, Ahalkere.

Kngwarreye’s artistic achievement is the capacity of her work to transcend boundaries separating Aboriginal and Western art traditions, abstraction and literal representation, tradition and innovation. Untitled describes the intimacy of Kngwarreye’s relationship with her traditional country and at the same time establishes an original visual language with which to describe it.

43. Gunter Christmann
born Berlin 1936, arrived Melbourne 1959, lives Sydney

Heat in the eyes 1973
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of James Mollison AO 2012 in memory of Sir Joseph Burke KBE. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2012.0105.AB

This painting is a substantial work from a period in which the artist established a unique response to what were possibly the two most significant challenges to painters of the late 1960s and early 1970s. These challenges were so-called ‘all over’ painting—the tendency, after Jackson Pollock, to treat the canvas as a plane to be covered uniformly with paint—and the formalist insistence on ‘opticality’ as an experience intrinsic to painting. In Heat in the eyes Christmann demonstrates his distinctive spatter technique, which has its roots in Pollock. Like Pollock, Christmann placed the canvas on the floor and moved around its full perimeter while painting. Like Pollock, his is a ‘brushless’ technique; paint is lightly spattered from a low height above the canvas. The allusion to Pollock is echoed in the title of the work: Eyes in the heat, 1946, held in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, was an important early statement of the ‘all over’ principle. The shimmering layers of paint in the Christmann suggest also a sense of pulsating waves of heat, or even a sensory overload.

44. Helen Maudsley
born Melbourne 1927, lives Melbourne

The coat 1998
oil on board
Helen Maudsley is a senior Australian artist whose disciplined, labour-intensive practice explores abstract form, colour and shape through the language of painting and drawing.

Maudsley’s painting career began six decades ago in the early 1950s. In *The coat*, a recent work, she has not sought to depict a coat in a literal sense. Instead, she gives form to her subject matter through the construction of a complex, hyper-dimensional space. It is a layered and intricately described space, in which analytical lines and shapes dominate, but leave room for a sense of lyricism, interiority and emotional affect. We are invited on the same journey through the picture plane that Maudsley undertook in her own detailed investigation.

In a 2007 exhibition catalogue published by Niagara Galleries, Maudsley writes: ‘The work I do is formal, three-dimensional and deliberately designed—not casual, gestural or impulsive. It systematizes groupings, as well as sequences of colours, tones and shapes for various intentions, implications and evocation’.

**45. Helen Maudsley**
born Melbourne 1927, lives Melbourne

‘Collaboration’ ‘Our’ 1988
watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 2012
2012.0053

**46. Helen Maudsley**
born Melbourne 1927, lives Melbourne

*Other than expected and with no completion* 1993
ink
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 2012
2012.0108

**47. Helen Maudsley**
born Melbourne 1927, lives Melbourne

*The judgement* 1957
Chinese white, pencil and watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 2012
2012.0003

**48. Janangoo Butcher Cherel**
born Jalnganjowa, Northern Territory, c. 1920; died Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia, 2009
Gija/Gooninyandi language groups

*Untitled* 2008
synthetic polymer paint on paper
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Bill Nuttall and Annette Reeves 2011. Donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program
2011.0253

While the specific cultural content of Janangoo Butcher Cherel’s paintings can been used as the foundation for their analysis and appreciation, it is rewarding to remember that, like many non-Aboriginal artists, Cherel was a person fascinated by the visual patterns of his physical environment. Cherel’s synthesis of figurative and abstract visual languages, and the vibrant key of his palette demonstrate a unique view of the Kimberley landscape.
Cherel spent most of his working life as a stockman on Fossil Downs (50 km north-east of Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia), droving cattle to places as far away as Derby and Broome. He was one of the key innovators within a group who began painting regularly in and around Fitzroy Crossing in the early 1990s.

49–51.
**Raafat Ishak**
born Cairo 1967, arrived Australia 1982, lives Melbourne

‘Untitled no. 7’, ‘Untitled no. 8’ and ‘Untitled no. 14’ from the series ‘Emergencies, accidents and congratulations’ 2009
synthetic polymer paint on MDF
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased by the Ian Potter Museum of Art 2010
2010.0070–72

Prepared 18 June 2013.