



The 1980s Works from the Port Phillip City Collection
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Deborah Walker *The Power Station* 1985
Andrew Sibley *Celebration in Port Melbourne* 1988
Cover image: Rosslynd Piggott *Ten Rimbauds Holding One Rimbaud* 1986
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Front cover image: Rosslynd Piggott *Ten Rimbauds Holding One Rimbaud* 1986
This work was purchased during the 1980s as part of the major acquisition program developed to collect works by St Kilda artists.

Back cover image: Neil Taylor *Philosopher's Chair II* 1985

the Gallery

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The 1980s Works from the Port Phillip City Collection



In 2010 the City of Port Phillip celebrates 30 years of collecting contemporary art.

A distinctly 'local' council art collection emerged from the great diversity and independence of artistic practice that evolved during the 1980s. Throughout the 1970s, a bohemian culture had been developing in St Kilda. This was not restricted to the visual arts. Artists as well as students, musicians, writers and film makers were drawn to the suburb by its cheap rents, and mix of people. The vibrant street life was also an attraction and music venues such as the Seaview Ballroom, The Venue and the Esplanade Hotel contributed to St Kilda's reputation as an entertainment destination.

By the early 1980s, the St Kilda community was feeling justifiably proud of its rich cultural diversity. Recognition by Council of the growing creative community inspired a dynamic artistic program established through activities associated with the inaugural St Kilda Festival in 1980. Council began vigorously acquiring artworks, primarily by emerging artists. Consequently, the City's first acquisition policy for contemporary art was adopted with an annual allocation of funds to commission original artwork for the Festival poster and for acquisitive prizes through exhibition programming.

Around 150 works were acquired by the City during the 1980s. With their multitude of styles, techniques and objectives, they reflect the *mélange* of experimentation and artistic individualism occurring in artistic practice at the time. They also represent the diversity of the City's residents.

These works can be appreciated in the context of trends in Australian and international art, both at the time and in the preceding decades. In the 1960s late-modernist practices such as Abstract Expressionism, Texture Painting and Symbolism were dominant while Pop Art provided a precursor of post-modernism. By the mid 60s the dominance of Expressionism, both abstract and figurative, had come to an end and Colour Painting, Optical Painting and Colour Field Painting emerged. During the 1970s new forms of art making emerged that showed a move towards conceptualisation and experimentation in a variety of non-traditional media. Much art at this time was informed by political activism and the women's movement, which motivated artists to produce community-oriented, socially engaged work. At the same time Aboriginal artists began to transfer sand and body designs onto canvas. The 1970s also saw the growth of the public gallery network (State and Regional galleries) as well as contemporary art spaces and the commercial gallery sector.

A number of local and international artistic developments are identifiable in the artworks collected by the City during the 1980s. The medium of photography, for example, became prevalent (Les Walking *To Live as To Dream* 1982-1987; Rozalind Drummond *Untitled* 1987 and Jacqueline Riva *Untitled* 1989) and popular culture and consumerism were favoured sources for imagery, practices and attitudes. There was also an increased prominence in the number of practising young female artists who explored identity (Heather Shimmen *Untitled* 1988; Deborah Walker *In a World of Only One Sex* 1985 and Vivienne Shark Le Witt *Untitled* 1988). Yet, perhaps the most significant development of the period was the reclamation of the status of painting as a major form and the renewed prominence of large scale works (for example, Stephen Bush *Rooftop Washing* 1980 and Raja Azhar Idris *Enticement* 1980).



Jenny Watson *The Simple Man (Passion)* 1982



Jenny Bannister *Myochrome Meccano Maximus Dress* 1983



Pie Rankine *The Wiley One* 1984



Peter Liiri *St Moritz* 1984

A renewed interest in narrative content through figuration took place, particularly with the onset of Neo-Expressionism. Its emphasis was on primitivism, symbolism and loaded subject matter (such as religion, the apocalypse, the human condition, politics and counter-culture) and it was characterised by a focus on the artist's inner experiences and personal mythology as well as the application of dramatically textured surfaces. It involved expressionistic, emotionally charged story-telling and often featured archetypal imagery and symbols.

Jenny Watson's autobiographical work *The Simple Man (Passion)*, 1982, is typical of this Neo-Expressionist return to figuration. The rejection of traditional drawing techniques and art conventions created a direct style that provoked a psychological response to a simple narrative (the relationship between the artist and her horses). A similar archetypal iconography and reductive analysis of subject is evident in the works of Andrew Sibley (*Celebration in Port Melbourne*, 1988) and Jon Cattapan (*St Kilda Festival Poster Study*, 1985).

The stylistic and contextual range in figurative works acquired by the City is diverse and abounds with contrasts. The figuration of Pie Rankine's *The Wiley One* 1984, for example, is characterised by thick, painterly gestures rendered in a spontaneous manner. Conversely, carefully moderated surfaces typify Vivienne Shark Le Witt's, *Untitled* 1988. The figure dominates the picture plane in works by Rosclynd Piggott (*Ten Rimbauds Holding One Rimbaud* 1986) and Peter Walsh (*Devil in the Bottle* 1989) where the deeper levels of meaning within the image are accentuated through the repetition of the figure.

A feature of postmodernism was the referencing of other periods and artistic styles in a self-conscious way as a rejection of the notion of high art. Tony Clark's *Sacro-Idyllic Landscape* 1986, for example, depicted several 'views' of serene landscapes that included classical structures such as temples and urns. Clark's work was based on the compositions, ideas and motifs, explored by 17th century European Classical artists such as Claude Lorraine, who practised their art with keen observation and a focus on precision. When applied to this genre, Clark's loosely rendered brushstrokes and the absence of a highly accomplished and refined technical approach can only be read as an exploration of 'anti-art'. This was an idea generated by the Dadaists (Duchamp in particular) who questioned the restrictions and validity of working within the traditions of 'high art'. Far removed from images of modern civilisation, Clark's work contrasted with those depicting the local environment (Geoff Lowe *Saint Kilda* 1982 and the numerous photographic images by Martin Munz), as well as portrayals of significant events such as Peter Liiri's work depicting the St Moritz fire (1984).

In the 1980s the informed contemporary art audience was often required to decode signs and symbols within an artwork. In John Nixon's *Self Portrait (Non Objective Composition)* 1985, the simple format of the cross as self portrait did not refer to specific facial features but to the path from one subjective reading of the symbol to another. In Western Culture the cross traditionally



Les Walking *To Live as to Dream (detail)* 1982-1987



Stephen Bush *Rooftop Washing* 1980



Andrew Sibley *Celebration in Port Melbourne* 1988



Caroline Eskdale *Salt is to Pepper as Pepper is to Salt* 1989

referred to Christ's crucifixion. By recycling a well known symbol and assigning it a personal reading, Nixon invited viewers to disassociate themselves from familiar readings and reassess the way artworks could be understood. The work was powerful in its commitment to a crude and simplified rendering of the symbol, elevating the idea of the importance of the work's conception over the traditional mastery of the medium.

The notion of reconstructing meaning can be viewed as one of the dominant preoccupations during the 1980s. In the work of several artists in the Collection, disparate artistic motivations are linked through the assemblage of discarded objects or manufactured materials to reconstruct new meanings.

Carolyn Eskdale's *Salt is to Pepper as Pepper is to Salt* (1989), for example, was constructed from a collection of wooden items, in this case found objects alluding to salt and pepper shakers contained within a wooden box. In spite of their familiarity, however, when referenced in a context other than the domestic environment - a traditionally feminine sphere - Eskdale's objects were accorded artistic value and invited an alternative interpretation of the still life genre.

Similarly, Neil Taylor worked with the idea of assembling non-traditional materials to create sculptural pieces. In the *Philosopher's Chair* (1985) Taylor embedded an everyday object within the geometric confines of a mass produced material (chicken wire), essentially trapping a wooden chair within a woven wire box. The work contrasted the intricate and ephemeral with the solid and substantial, and reflected the artist's preoccupation with structural geometry in nature.

This exhibition draws together works produced by artists during the 1980s, and acquired by the City between 1980 and 1989 or added to the collection retrospectively. As the result of amalgamation in 1994, the St Kilda Art Collection has been incorporated into what is now known as the Port Phillip City Collection. A clearly-articulated Collection Policy with criteria for acquisition has shaped the Collection. Its five hundred works map the important demographic, social and environmental changes that have occurred within the City.

The Port Phillip City Collection represents a strong local community that values culture and has an affinity with the avant-garde. The various artistic practices of local artists evident in the Collection demonstrate the social sensibilities that emerged alongside the artists' aesthetic concerns. The Collection includes many works by artists now accomplished and highly regarded for their innovation and contribution to Australian and International contemporary art. Despite the emphasis on the acquisition of works produced by local artists, the Port Phillip City Collection has resonance and significance beyond the perimeters of the municipality.

Louisa Scott & Richard Holt 2010



Vivienne Shark *Le Witt Untitled* 1988



Heather Shimmen *Untitled* 1988



John Nixon *Self Portrait (Non-Objective Composition)* 1985



Deborah Walker *The Power Station* 1985

1980s Acquisition Time Line



South Pacific (Courtesy of Peter Gray)



Esplanade Hotel, St Kilda (Port Phillip City Collection)



St Moritz Ice Skating Rink (Courtesy of Paul Thompson)



Carlisle Street (Port Phillip City Collection)

1980

Raja Azhar Idris *Enticement*
Raja Azhar Idris *Silence*
Greg Irvine *St Kilda Festival Poster*
Colin McKenzie *Untitled*
Martin Munz *South Pacific*
Robert Rooney *Luna Park, St Kilda*
Fifi Rosseau *Seleni*

1981

Greg Irvine *St Kilda Festival Poster*
John Marshall *Summer Gardens*
Martin Munz *South Pacific II*
Marlene O'Bree *Luna Park*

1982

Wendy Black *Carlo Catani in His Garden*
Otto Boron *Keysborough Swamp*
Bruce Cavalier *Boats (King Island)*
Greg Irvine *St Kilda Festival Poster*
Rose Lang *Shrapnel*
Geoff Lowe *Saint Kilda*
Martin Munz *Untitled (ten works)*
Elizabeth Prior *Grey Day at Pidgeon Bank*
David Salter *Early Morning Call*

1983

Tuan Anh Do *New York Street Vendor*
Mary Cox *Elwood Canal*
Robert Dickens *The Red Vase*
Mark Dober *Kerby's*
Trevor Graham *Luna Park No. 1*
Kevin Hegarty *Grass Tree*
Allana Kennedy *A Big Bird Flies To St Kilda*
Mirka Mora *St Kilda Festival Poster*
Charles Newton *Untitled*
Danila Vassilieff *Serviceman and Girl*
Danila Vassilieff *Street Parade*
Wayne Viney *Strathbogie Landscape*



Bella Capri (Port Phillip City Collection)



The George (Port Phillip City Collection)



St Kilda Festival 1986 (Port Phillip City Collection)



Linden (Port Phillip City Collection)

1984

Micky Allen *Untitled* (two works)
 Charles Blackman *The Twins*
 Charles Blackman *Luna Park*
 Charles Blackman *Judith Mustard*
 Nancy Clifton *Winter*
 Giovanni Della Bosca *Viva the Banana Split*
 Craig Gough *St Kilda*
 Gary James *Acland Street Sometimes*
 Peter Liiri *St Moritz*
 Sidney Nolan *Crucifixion*
 Sidney Nolan *Flower Pieces*
 Sidney Nolan *Hummingbird on Vine*
 Sidney Nolan *Resurrection*
 Sidney Nolan *Shakespeare's Sonnet*
 Julie Patey *Upper Esplanade*
 Stieg Persson *Triptych- Content Suppressed*
 Douglas Stubbs *Eureka Stockade*
 W Hayward Veal *Dieppe*
 Jane Walker *Panorama, St Kilda*
 Jane Walker *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 James Wigley *Houses – Milton Street*

1985

Robert Besanko *Lady in a Citroen Paris*
 Jeffrey Bren *House Mouse*
 David Brown *Untitled* (two works)
 Raymond Cangardis *Marker*
 Jon Cattapan *St Kilda Festival Poster Studies* (three works)
 Jon Cattapan *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 Cernak *Nightmare Series*
 John Dent *Interior at Rue Des Ursalines*
 John Dent *A View From The Inside*
 John Dent **Wedding Lights**
 John Dent *Displaced Objects (Paris Version)*
 John Dent *Reflections of Time Past*
 John Dent *Lavender Buddha*
 John Dent *Blue Interior*
 Phillip Le Masurier *King Protea*
 Katy Munson *Tumbling Man*
 Ted Parrit *Exploding Ship*
 Ian Parry *Devil's Tower – Bass Strait*
 Tim Ralph *Cave Painting*
 Pie Rankine *The Wiley One*
 Fran Van Riemsdyk *Studio*
 Lisa Walker *Bronwyn*
 Lisa Walker *Shrouded Protector*
 Jenny Watson *The Simple Man (Passion)*
 Judith Webb *Untitled*

1986

Chris Barry *Untitled*
 Lynne Boyd *Dark Ship*
 Dianne Clark *Untitled*
 Tony Clark *Sacro - Idyllic Landscapes* (two works)
 Shellie Conway *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 Alex Danko *Flutter*
 Joy Hester *Head of a Young Girl*
 Gunther Kopietz *1934*
 Benedict Lines *Crown*
 John Money *Sea of Bordem (sic)*
 John Nixon *Self Portrait (Non-Objective Composition)*
 Ted Parrit *Untitled*
 Roslynd Piggott *Ten Rimbauds Holding One Rimbaud*
 Gregory Pryor *Transparent Paper*
 Neil Taylor *Philosopher's Chair II*
 Terry Taylor *For P.A.M. II*
 Leanne Temme *Michael Leunig*
 Michael Vale *Witt's Revenge*

1987

Bion Balding *By Torchlight*
 John Barbour *Appropriation - The Art of War*
 Manwel Cassar *Mt Beauty*
 Peter Chiller *Group*
 Rozalind Drummond *Untitled*
 Annie Haines *Lost Heart*
 Niels Hutchison *Odalisque*
 Sandra Karpfen *Cat I*
 Ruth Maddison *Sarah's Fancy Dress Party*
 Diane Mantzaris *Mad Girl*
 Mooneyen Mc Neilage *Still Life 5*
 A R Nott *Blue Poles*
 Ann Salter *Untitled*
 Bart Sanciolo *Beatrice's Chariot*
 June Savage *Poppy*
 Deborah Walker *In a World Of Only One Sex*
 Deborah Walker *Power Station*
 Gael Walker *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 Les Walking *To Live As to Dream*



Linden Gallery (Port Phillip City Collection)



Earls Court (Courtesy of St Kilda Historical Society)



Bojangles (Port Phillip City Collection)



St Kilda Major Flood 1989 (Port Phillip City Collection)

1988

Stephen Benwell *Vase*
 Maria Bokan *Untitled*
 Peter Booth *Untitled*
 Jon Cattapan *Flash Light*
 Christopher Dyson *The Magnet*
 Pasqualina Grosso *Untitled*
 Bill Hay *Untitled*
 Georgina Hilditch *Untitled*
 Georgina Hilditch *Friday Pulling The Moon Across The Night Sky*
 Christine Johnston *Public Gardens*
 Peter Kartsounis *Sue With Stripes, Sunset and Sea*
 Marina Morgan *The Lady*
 Kent Morris *Decore (PACE)*
 Linda Morris *Oscar*
 Roderick Mc Nicol *Daughter*
 Peggy Nampijimpa Brown *Untitled*

1988 (cont)

Michael Narozny *Entry into Berlin*
 Charles Radnay *Gumleaf*
 Charles Radnay *Still Life with Butterfly*
 David Ralph *Tom Survivor*
 Shiralee Saul *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 Vivienne Shark Le Witt *Untitled*
 Heather Shimmen *Untitled*
 Sally Smart *X-Ray (Vanitas) from "The Modern Temper"*
 John H Taylor *Red Icon*
 Rob Taylor *Crimson Rosella*
 Leanne Temme *Untitled*
 Voula Therios *Mind Your Table Manners!?*
 Judith Van Heeren *Relationship – The Curtain, The Branch, The Touch, Grey Skies*

1989

Michael Florinell *Red Room*
 Nick Howson *Hotel Esplanade*
 Linda Jullyan *Untitled 1989*
 Brian Kewley *Luna Park Lover*
 Deborah Klein *Sometimes Jenny Took Long and Lonely Walks Along the Long and Lonely Beach*
 John D MacDonald *Untitled*
 Bernard Sachs (image) Ian Robertson (design) *St Kilda Festival Poster*
 Vickie Stratis *Basking on the Bottle Bend*
 Peter Walsh *Devil in the Bottle*
 Andrew Wright-Smith *Open Heart*
 Ann Weir *Botanic Blue: No 3*

List of works

FOYER

Micky Allen

Untitled 1984
pastel on paper
100 x 71 cm

Aleks Danko

Flutter 1986
ink on paper
75 x 56 cm

Raja Azhar Idris

Enticement 1980
acrylic on cotton duck
168 x 137 cm

Raja Azhar Idris

Silence 1980
acrylic on cotton duck
168 x 137 cm

Peter Kartsounis

Sue with Stripes 1987
acrylic on Linen
77 x 93 cm

Geoff Lowe

Saint Kilda 1982
acrylic on canvas
157 x 250 cm

Deborah Walker

The Power Station 1985
pastel on paper
101 X 95 cm

GALLERY

Jenny Bannister

Two Piece Mini Punk Set (from the Cosmic Collection) 1980-1981
leather and metal
Top 55 x 41 cm, skirt 43 x 55 cm

Jenny Bannister

Myochrome Meccano Maximus Dress (from the Anatomical Meccano Collection) 1983
leather & metal
96 x 50 cm

Wendy Black

Carlo Catani in his Garden 1982
screenprint
27 x 30 cm

Peter Booth

Untitled 1987
pastel on paper
24 x 34 cm

David Brown

Untitled 1985
gouache on paper
16 x 23 cm

Stephen Bush

Rooftop Washing 1980
oil on canvas
124 x 337.5 cm

Jon Cattapan

St Kilda Festival Poster Study 1985
acrylic paint, pencil on paper
56 x 65 cm

Peter Chiller

Group 1986
oil on canvas
134 x 168 cm

Tony Clark

Sacro-Idyllic Landscape 1986
oil on canvas boards x 2
118 x 89 cm

Tony Clark

Sacro-Idyllic Landscape 1986
oil on canvas board
47 x 110 cm

Caroline Eskdale

Salt is to Pepper as Pepper is to Salt 1989
oil, plywood
29 x 39 x 12 cm

Deborah Klein

Sometimes Jenny Took Long and Lonely Walks Along the Long and Lonely Beach 1988
linocut on paper
61.5 x 45 cm

Peter Liiri

St Moritz 1984
oil on cotton duck
115 x 106 cm

Benedict Lines

Crown 1986
acrylic on wood
40 x 40 cm

Diane Manzaris

Mad Girl 1986
computer print
77 x 63 cm

Mirka Mora

Untitled (Festival Poster)
Charcoal on paper
25 x 38 cm

Linda Morris

Oscar 1987
oil on canvas
66 x 50.5 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*St Kilda*) 1982
photograph
19 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*St Kilda*) 1982
photograph
27 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*St Kilda*) 1982
photograph
27 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*Fitzroy St*) 1982
photograph
19 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*St Kilda*) 1982
photograph
27 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

South Pacific II 1981
photograph
26 x 38 cm

Martin Munz

Untitled (*St Kilda*) 1982
photograph
27 x 40 cm

Martin Munz

South Pacific 1980
photograph
26 x 38 cm

Michael Narozny

Entry into Berlin 1987
pastel on paper
73 x 93 cm

John Nixon

Self Portrait (*Non-Objective Composition*) 1985
acrylic on hessian
84 x 60 cm

Stieg Persson

Triptych – Content Suppressed 1984
blackboard paint on primed cotton duck, reversed gold leaf and wood
137 x 140 cm x 2,
169 x 119 cm x 1

Rosslynd Piggott

Ten Rimbauds Holding One Rimbaud 1986
oil on cotton duck
112 x 167 cm

Gregory Prior

Transparent Paper 1985
oil on cotton duck
83 x 60 cm

Pie Rankine

The Wiley One 1984
acrylic on canvas
190 x 108 cm

Shiralee Saul

Boy oh Boy (*Truluv*) 1989
oil on board
60 x 60 cm x 9 panels

Vivienne Shark Le Witt

Untitled 1988
oil on board
34 x 35 cm

Heather Shimmen

Untitled 1988
pencil on paper
60 x 45 cm

Andrew Sibley

Celebration in Port Melbourne 1988
oil on canvas
92 x 120 cm

Sally Smart

X-Ray (*Vanitas*) *From the Modern Temper* 1987
charcoal on paper
93 x 77 cm

Neil Taylor

Philosopher's Chair II 1985
wire and wood
45 x 62 x 85 cm

Deborah Walker

In a World of Only One Sex 1985
pastel on paper
95 x 129 cm

Peter Walsh

Devil in the Bottle 1989
conte on paper
75 x 105cm

Jenny Watson

The Simple Man (*Passion*) 1982
oil on linen
300 x 290 cm

CORRIDOR

Rosalind Drummond

Untitled 1987
silver gelatin photograph on mural paper
78 x 78 cm

Linda Julyann

Untitled 1989
photographic emulsion, woven fibre paper
91 cm x 91 cm

Roderick Mc Nicol

Daughter 1987
black & white silver gelatin
37 x 25 cm

A.R. Nott

Blue Poles 1987
colour photograph on woven fuji paper
61 x 91 cm

Charles Radnay

Gumleaf 1986
photograph
20 x 20 cm

Charles Radnay

Still Life With Butterfly 1986
photograph
20 x 20 cm

Jacqueline Riva

Untitled 1989
black and white photographs
69 x 69 cm

June Savage

Poppy 1987
cibachrome
32 x 32 cm

Leanne Temme

Untitled 1987
sepia toned, silver gelatin
21 x 26 cm

Les Walking

To Live as To Dream 1982-1987
silver gelatine photographs
43 x 55 cm; 73 x 100 cm;
130 x 130cm

Judith Webb

Untitled 1984
photograph
30 x 29 cm

