

Idris Murphy

I – Thou
2009



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The Ochre House

King Street Gallery
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday

177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia

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Idris Murphy is a Sydney based painter and printmaker. Since returning from Europe in the early eighties he has produced a body of work of which the last two solo exhibitions, in both Sydney and Melbourne, have set out to reinterpret Australian landscape.

In particular the last fifteen years have concentrated on works which are based in the Australian arid zone. His paintings have received a wide exposure both in this country and overseas as one of five featured artists in the SBS documentary *Two Thirds Sky – Artists in Desert Country* in 2002. He is the founder of ILIR 'Imaging the Land International Research Institute' which provides access to desert studios in Australia for artists from both here and abroad.





Idris Murphy with Andrew Carnegie and curator London 1977
Photography: Sylvester Jacobs



Idris Murphy teaching En Plein Air Harbour Wollongong 1963

I – Thou

When looking back and considering the 'influences' on my work, several artists and writers come to mind; these may be more or less influential at any given time.

There are though, certain connections that hold and seem to be continuing.

Martin Buber has been one of these connections; often encountered in quotes by other writers. Buber's articulation of how we respond to the world has been seminal to my way of seeing and therefore how I 'see' my paintings.

The Martin Buber connection (exemplified by McMahon's painting *I-Thou*) added to my interest in the work of Colin McMahon; in particular the way in which he depicted land.

In quoting here at length from Buber's book *I and Thou*, it is hoped it will elucidate not only his approach, but also how this may be useful when considering encounters of the land and of paintings. As the difference between the truth of a painting and the truth about a painting are significant.

Buber's writings have for me been a way of continuing my assessment of western paradigms in painting and have added to my encounter with indigenous art.

Idris Murphy 2009



Idris Murphy in residence County Hanahan Ireland
Tyron Guthery Centre 1994

I consider a tree.

I can look on it as a picture;
stiff column in shock of light,
or splash of green shot with
the delicate blue and silver of
the background.

I can perceive it as
movement; flowing veins on
clinging, pressing pith, suck of
roots, breathing of the leaves,
ceaseless commerce with
earth and air-and the obscure
growth itself.

I can classify it in a species
and study it as a type in its
structure and mode of life.



Idris and children 1985

I can subdue its actual presence and form so sternly that I recognise it only as an expression of law – laws in accordance with which a constant opposition of forces is continually adjusted, or of those in accordance with which the component substances mingle and separate.

I can dissipate it and perpetuate it in number, in pure numerical relation.

In all this the tree remains my object, occupies space and time, and has its nature and constitution.

It can, however, also come about, if I have both will and grace, that in considering a tree I become bound up in relation to it. The tree is now no longer 'it.' I have been seized by the power of exclusiveness.

To affect this it is not necessary for me to give up any of the ways in which I consider the tree. There is nothing from which I would have to turn my eyes away in order to see, and no knowledge that I would have to forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and type, law and number, indivisibly united in this event.

Everything belongs to the tree is in this; its form and structure, its colours and chemical composition, its intercourse with the elements and with the stars, are all present in a single whole.

The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no value depending on my mood; but is bodied over against me and has to do with me, as I wit it –only in a different way.

Martin Buber from *I and Thou* 1934



Snowy Mountains 1991 Graphite on paper

Let no attempt be made to sap the strength
from the meaning of the relation;
relation is mutual

Martin Buber 1937



Night Drawings Menindee Lakes 1991 Graphite on paper



Faringdon Oxfordshire UK 1994



Mutawintji NSW 2006

The Paintings

Day into Night



Coeee Bay 1 2009 Acrylic on board 30 x 30cm



Coeee Bay 2 2009 Acrylic on board 30 x 30cm



Coeee Bay 3 2009 Acrylic on board 30 x 30cm



Morning Mist 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 45 x 45cm



Clearing Mist 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Pink at Midday



2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Pink Morning 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Red River Gums 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Dancing Trees 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 45 x 45cm



Silver Clouds 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Three Shadows 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



River Bed 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 45 x 45cm



Tree Portraits 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 45 x 45cm



Fallen Branch 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Holding Water 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Idris Murphy and Ken Whisson Sydney 2005



Tree Crossings 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Waterhole 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 45 x 45cm



Strange Light 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm





Idris Murphy Sydney 1972





There and Back Again, Euriowie with Willy Willy Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 216 cm



The Clay Pans 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Running Shadows 2009 Acrylic on board 45 x 45cm



Strange Light Broken Hill 2009 Acrylic on board 80 x 90cm





Driving Past the Park Broken Hill 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 120cm



Water Reflections Lake Mungo 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 60 x 60cm



Gill's View from the Tent 2009 Acrylic on board 90 x 90cm



Pink Water Euriowie 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 130cm



Late Moon Rising 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 110cm



Afternoon to Evening Fowlers Gap 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 110cm



Walk Way Dam 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 60 x 60cm



Changing Shadows 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 120 x 120cm



Raining Stars 2009 Acrylic and collage on board 106 x 120cm

Idris Murphy

Born

1949 Sydney, NSW, Australia

Studies & Work

- 1988-2007 Lecturer, College of Fine Art, University of New South Wales, Sydney
1997 Head of Drawing, National Art School, Sydney
1994 Doctorate of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, NSW
1989 Graduate Diploma (Education), SCAE, Sydney
1987 Lecturer, TAFE School of Art and Design, Sydney
1984-86 Part time lecturer, Alexander Mackie College of Fine Art & City Art Institute (now COFA)
1982 Lecturer, University of Wollongong, NSW (instrumental in establishing printmaking department of newly founded School of Creative Arts)
1980-82 Part time lecturer, Wollongong TAFE
1976-77 Post Graduate (painting & printmaking), Winchester College of Art, UK
1966-71 Diploma (painting), National Art School, Sydney

Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 *I – Thou*, King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
I & Thou, Survey Exhibition, Hazelhurst Regional Art Gallery, NSW
2007 *new paintings*, King Street Gallery on William
2005 *equilibrium of contradictions*, king street gallery on burton, sydney
Axia Gallery, Melbourne
2004 *desert paintings*, king street gallery on burton
contemporary australian prints: from the collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales
John Gordon Gallery (in assoc. with king street gallery on burton), Coffs Harbour, NSW
2003 *flags of convenience*, king street gallery on burton
2002 *Desert Country*, Axia Modern Art, Melbourne
2001 *petrichor*, king street gallery on burton
Recent Work, Bonython Meadmore Gallery, Adelaide
1999 *works on paper*, king street gallery
landskips, king street gallery on burton
Recent Work, Axia Modern Art
1997 *real presence*, king street gallery on burton
1995 *constant revision*, king street gallery on burton
1993 *other roads*, king street gallery on burton
1990 *New Work*, Editions Southbank Galleries, Melbourne
1989 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
New Work, Editions Southbank Galleries
1987 *Selected Prints* – Sydney Theatre Company, Wharf Theatre, Sydney
1986 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries
1984 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries
1983 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries
Orange Festival, Orange, NSW
1982 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries
1978 Upstream Galleries, London
1974 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries
1972 *Recent Work*, Macquarie Galleries

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2008 *Stations of the Cross 2008*, St Ives Uniting Church, Sydney
Plein Air Painting Prize, NSW Parliament House, Sydney
- 2007 *Five x Five*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, COFA University of NSW, Sydney
- 2006 *Going Out There*, Alliance Francaise, Paris, France
Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls, NSW
king street gallery at doggett street studios (cumplings, elliott, murphy, penrose hart, sages), Brisbane, Qld
Painting 2006, John Gordon Gallery, Coffs Harbour, NSW
- 2005 *Kedumba Drawing Prize*, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls
Kings School Art Prize, Parramatta, NSW
(Going) Out There - Responses to the Remote lands around Fowlers Gap Arid Zone
Research Station North of Broken Hill, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney
- 2004 *Spectrum 2004*, [FONAS], Parliament House, Sydney
Fleurieu Prize for Landscape, South Australia
- 2003 *64 years*, king street gallery on burton
An Approachable Landscape, Axia Modern Art
- 2002 *Two Thirds Sky- artists in desert country*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, Sydney
A Silver Lining & A New Beginning, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, COFA, UNSW
common ground, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
- 2001 *floating*, king street gallery on burton
Our Place: Images of Coffs Harbour & Region, Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NSW
Views, king street gallery, sydney
Landscapes, Artists Ties Gallery, Canberra
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
- 2000 *Southern Sydney Artists*, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
MelbourneArtFair2000, king street gallery, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 1999 *Schools & Universities Invitational Millennium Art Prize*, Schools & Universities Club, Sydney
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
- 1998 *Staff Exhibition*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
- 1996 *In Process*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery
first night, king street gallery
The Outback Art Prize, Broken Hill City Art Gallery, NSW
gallery artists, king street gallery
- 1995 *Ironsides*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
The French Embrace, Alliance Francaise, Sydney
- 1993-94 *Common Ground*, University of New South Wales; Broken Hill City Art Gallery, NSW
- 1994 *gallery artists*, king street gallery on burton
Australian Contemporary Art Fair4, Royal Exhibition Building
- 1993 *Editions*, Southbank Galleries
Virtu, Ivan Dougherty Gallery
- 1992 *The Book and Print Show*, University of Wollongong
Manu et Mente, Ivan Dougherty Gallery
Australian Exhibition- Contemporary Binding, National Library of Australia, Canberra
Critic's Choice, Macquarie Galleries
Blake Prize for Religious Art, Blaxland Gallery, Sydney & touring Australia
- 1991 *The Artist- The Printmaker*, Editions Southbank Galleries
The Book and Print Show, University of Wollongong; Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, NSW;
Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, NSW

- 1990 *Editions* Southbank Galleries
 1988 *Art Collegium*, University of Technology, Sydney
Heretic, National Library of Australia, Canberra
 1987 *Bushweek*, Queensland Arts Council, Brisbane and Queensland Regional Art Centre
Tribute to Lloyd Rees, Macquarie Galleries
Rainforest Show, Macquarie Galleries
 1986 *Wynne Prize Exhibition*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
 1984 *Orange Festival*, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane
Wynne Prize Exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1983 *Bushweek*, Macquarie Galleries
 1982 *Wynne Prize Exhibition*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1981 *Sulman Prize Exhibition*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1980 *Sulman Prize Exhibition*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1978 *Red Show*, Thumb Gallery, London

Residencies & Awards

- 2002 Launch screening of *Two Thirds Sky- artists in desert country* Art Gallery of New South Wales
 (with Gloria Petyarre, Jenny Sages, Peter Sharpe, Judy Watson); additional screenings on SBS
 2001-02 *Filming of Two Thirds Sky – artists in desert country*, produced by Sophie Jackson, directed by Sean O'Brien
 1994 Irish Arts Council Studio, Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Ireland
 1987 French Government Studio, Paris
 Moya Doring Memorial Residence, Paris
 1983 Lithographer in Residence, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 French Government Studio
 1978 Moya Doring Memorial Residence
 1977-79 Dyason Bequests Fund for Australian Artist's Overseas
 1976 Australian Arts Council Special travel scholarship: Europe and America
 Rockhampton Art Prize, Rockhampton Regional Art Gallery, Qld
 Studio residency, London
 Moya Doring Memorial Residence
 1975 Keith and Elizabeth Murdoch Travel Fellowship
 1974 Artist in Residence, Prahran College of Art, Melbourne
 1972 Hunters Hill Art Award, Hunters Hill Municipal Council, Sydney

Commissions

- 1987 *The Heretic* – limited edition book in collaboration with author Morris West
 1983 *Print Series*, Art Gallery Society, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Collections

- | | |
|---|--|
| Allens Arthur Robinson | Art Gallery of New South Wales |
| Parliament House, Canberra | Artbank, Australia |
| Rockhampton Regional Art Gallery | Australian Graduate School of Management |
| State Library of New South Wales | Bendigo Regional Art Gallery, NSW |
| Telecom Collection, Melbourne | Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris |
| Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Ireland | Brisbane Grammar School, Qld |
| University of New South Wales | Clot/Bramsen et Georges Studio, Paris |
| UBS Warburg, Sydney | Macquarie Bank, Australia |
| Westpac Collection, Australia | National Gallery of Australia, Canberra |
| University of Wollongong, NSW | Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education, NSW |
| National Library of Australia, Canberra | Kedumba Drawing Collection, NSW |
| Australian Library of Art, State Library of Queensland, Qld | |

Selected Bibliography

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- Lander, Janis: *A Public of Individuals – Interview with Idris Murphy*, The College Voice,
COFA online Arts Magazine, Nov p1-6
- 2005 McDonald, John: *The Australian Landscape Revisited*, Spectrum-Sydney Morning Herald, Sept 10-11, pp 28-29
- Johnston, Jay: *the wild RED YONDER*, COFA/UNSW, Spring, Issue 14, Dec-Feb, p2
- Li Jingzhe: *Australian Contemporary Painting*, Shanghai Peoples Fine Arts Publishing House pp 70 - 72
- 2003 McCulloch, Susan: *Paths Across the Great Divide*, Weekend Australian, Sept 27-28
- 2002 *Two Thirds Sky- A Must See Documentary*, COFA/UNSW, Winter, Issue 5, Aug-Nov, p6
- Masterpiece*, Sydney Morning Herald, Sept 20, p7
- M.K.: *Journey into the artist's interior*, The View-The Australian, Sept 19, p11
- Frost, Andrew: *Two Thirds Sky: Artists in Desert Country*, Australian Art Collector, July- Sept, Issue 21, p48
- Hallett, Bryce: *The truth is out there, all right-in the Aboriginal landscape*, Sydney Morning Herald, Sept 18, p3
- Anderson, Doug: *Two Thirds Sky*, Sydney Morning Herald, Sept 20
- McDonald, John: *Sand and Sun – Interpreting the desert on canvas*, Australian Financial Review, June 13
- 2001 Grishin, Sasha: *Little Gems within a Diverse Group*, The Canberra Times, May 9
- 2000 Reid, Michael: *Treasure on boardroom walls*, The Australian, Sept 2-3
- 1999 James, Bruce: *Thoroughly Modern Clarice*, Spectrum - Sydney Morning Herald, May 1, p12s
- James, Bruce: *Making an Exhibition of Themselves*, Spectrum-Sydney Morning Herald, April 17, p10
- 1998 Drury, Nevill: *Images 3 in Contemporary Australian Painting*, Craftsman House Press, p 154
- 1997 McDonald, John: *The Best Game in Town*, Spectrum- Sydney Morning Herald, April 12
- Taylor, James (editor): *Box kite – A Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, pp157-166
- 1994 EREMOS Magazine, Eremos Institute, Volume No 46
- 1993 Mendelssohn, Joanna: *Country Visions Need The City*, The Bulletin, Jan 26-Feb 2, pp74-77
- Connor, Kevin: *Common Ground*, catalogue introduction, COFA, UNSW
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- 1990 Drury, Nevill: *Contemporary Australian Painting*, Craftsman House Press
- 1988 West, Morris: *The Heretic*, Isotome Press
- Drury, Nevill: *New Art Two*, Craftsman House Press
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