



Quintessential Australia



Amanda Penrose Hart

Dawn, 2011, oil on canvas
Getting out into the vast space of central Australia is made all the more exciting if you can drag a mobile home containing all your creature comforts.
Courtesy of King Street Gallery on William

Elisabeth Cummings

Sunrise, The Kimberly, 2012, oil on canvas
This painting is the result of a recent trip to the Kimberly. A majestic, but fragile piece of country ... a truly beautiful place.
Courtesy of King Street Gallery on William



Chris O'Doherty (aka Reg Mombassa)

Stars and Gums by Firelight, 2013, coloured pencil on paper
The animals are relieved to have survived the Mayan apocalypse to celebrate another Australia Day with a stars and gums night party.
Courtesy of Watters Gallery

■ A signed fine art digital reproduction of this artwork can be purchased from smhshop.com.au/australiaday

Richard Morecroft

Tannin Lake, 2008, pigment inks on photographic paper
Australian landscape is often stark, as well as richly coloured with blues, reds and eucalyptus grey-greens. From detail to distance, these silhouetted trees, tannin-stained water and sun-washed scrub speak of Australia.
Courtesy of NG Art Gallery



Joanna Braithwaite

Top Tip, oil on canvas, 2012
There's nothing like a bit of inside knowledge ... straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak.
Courtesy of Darren Knight Gallery



Rachel Fairfax

Cockatoo's Coogee, 2013, oil on canvas
When I wake up to the sounds of the cockatoos screeching through the skies over the Coogee valley, I know I am home.
Courtesy of NG Art Gallery, Sydney



The Strutt Sisters

Forrest Home, 2012, mixed media assemblage, paint, aluminium, wood, paper, fabric, resin
Forest Home symbolises a day in the remote bushland of Tasmania and an evening in the safety of 1950s suburbia when all is well in quintessential Australia.

Angelina George

Hiding Places, 2009, acrylic on linen
Dry creek beds, burnt trees, sandy river systems, swollen billabongs, sweeping birds, veins of fresh flora on the rocks, walking tracks and camp sites give evidence to the intimate relationship Angelina George enjoys with her past and her land.
Courtesy of Cooe Aboriginal Art, Sydney

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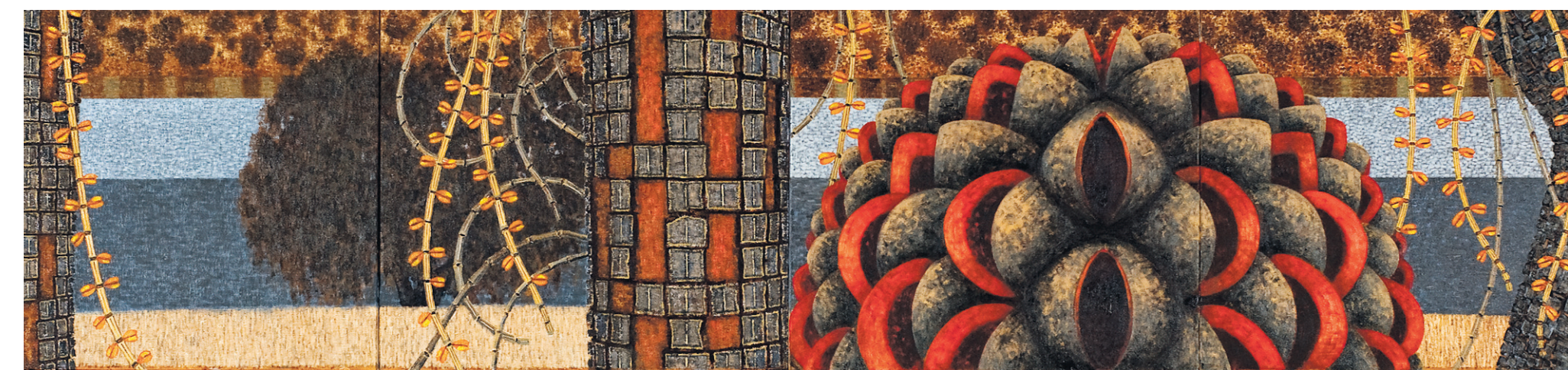
Kevin Miller

Mud line near Lake Woolpoolool (South Australia), 2011, pigment print on rag
When in the Australian landscape I feel like I am looking back in time. In the disturbed areas it may be only 50 years or more, but in some places it can be thousands of years. This is beyond what I can imagine. Therefore I make an ephemeral mark knowing that it will only last a day or maybe two.
Courtesy of the artist



Richard Wastell

Sheoak and River Patterns, 2011, oil and pumie on linen
I've loved walking along the banks of the Derwent River since childhood, where sheoak forest has grown since time immemorial. Like walking into a dream.
Courtesy of King Street Gallery on William



Canvassing a nation's different views

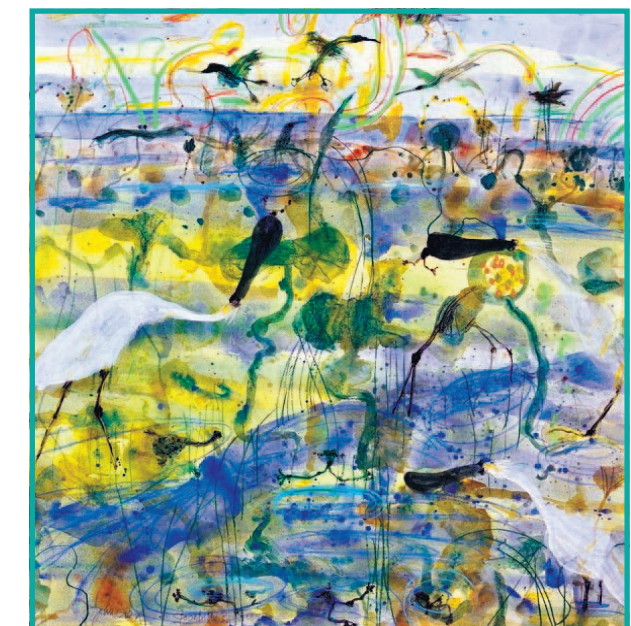
Towards the end of last year, as Australia Day loomed, I began casting around for a theme that would give the 11 artists represented on these pages scope to explore what it meant to be Australian. It seemed important to choose a word or phrase that would encapsulate the spirit of this nation but could also remain somewhat open-ended, allowing artists to express their individual, very personal response to this country's astonishing diversity of landscapes and cultures. Thus was born Quintessential Australia, a collection of artists' very distinct visions of how they understand and picture our national character.

The Canberra Times is delighted to be able to feature John Olsen OBE, AO, regarded by many as this country's greatest living artist, on its front page this Australia Day. For more than six decades, Olsen has produced multi-layered works that not only depict the vast expanse of the Australian landscape but also capture the intimacy and fragility of our native flora and fauna. At 84, he maintains his deep engagement with the landscape and a passionate love for life, qualities that shine through our cover image, *Spoonbill and Frogs*, 2013.

This year we feature another of Australia's finest artists, Chris O'Doherty (aka Reg Mombassa), whose typically irreverent take, *Stars and Gums by Firelight*, depicts a one-eyed koala clinging to a eucalypt as he wearily stands sentinel over the night forest. In the centre of the picture, a kiwi-roo stands ready to drop-punt the footy through the uplights.

Stylistically and temperamentally, these two paintings may be poles apart, but they – and the rest of the works shown here – represent merely two facets of the kaleidoscope of views that make up artists' visions of Australia. I hope you find something here that mirrors your unique way of seeing things.

Leo Robba, artist and curator



Spoonbill and Frogs, 2013

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