

Jan King

Correlation

Recent sculpture

March 9 – April 3 2010

King Street Gallery
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday

177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia

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Directors: Robert Linnegar and Randi Linnegar



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Published by King Street Studios P/L 2010 ISBN: 978-0-9805041-9-4

Mevlana 2009 Slate and steel (painted) 160 x 116 x 62cm

Jan King in 2010

by Terence Maloon

One of the captivating things about Jan King's sculptures is that they present themselves to us as drawings – drawings in three dimensions. Her largest sculptures, in particular, seem to be executed with effortless ease and accuracy – they are just about as beautiful as drawing in our time can decently aspire to be. Yet the impression we receive of physical verve, spontaneity, suppleness and susceptibility to nuance is due to an illusion she contrives.

In fact these graphic configurations have come about in the most arduous way – by lugging around, hoisting up and propping, bending and twisting, cutting and tacking and welding together steel rods and bars, steel sheets, steel ribbons and rigid objets trouvés which have been selected for their ready-made bends, twists and torn edges, prized for the interest of their shapes ...

The struggle with heavy, intractable materials goes along in parallel with a saga of critical scrutiny, of rearranging and



editing, modifying and fine-tuning. Yet ultimately the sculptures belie the physical nature of their materials and the labour-intensiveness of their technique, appearing light and fluent. In the final analysis they are seen, willed and felt in much the same way that drawings are.

All works in this exhibition are united by a theme – by the meeting of two materials: steel and slate. Generally speaking, the slate parts are unalterable when they are incorporated into the sculptures, whereas the steel elements represent the accommodating, adaptable side of

the partnership. However Jan King's goal is to create a maximum of integration and dialectic, so the partnership looks equal – as if the slate had the equivalent capacity to interact and adapt, its shapes and edges seeming no less pliant, no less meticulously 'drawn' than the steel.

These works create quite varied characters, from wall-reliefs to works in the round, from basically pictorial conceptions to fully volumetric and architectonic conceptions. In *Mevlana* (page 19), the smooth, lissom surfaces of the silver-painted steel elements complement the dark sheen and chunkiness of the large shards of slate. These materials are involved in a pas de deux which King carries through with stunning elegance and intelligence. The principal 'views' of the sculpture are from the front, back and sides. From the sides, the sculpture compresses and draws itself up, tall and slender. Moving from this position towards the front or back, the shapes de-compress and open out expansively. Steel rods seem to essay sweeping gestures in the air, forming arcs and arabesques. The spirit of Degas' dancers lives on in this marvellous piece, down

to the twist of steel ribbon at the base, which looks as if it has been discarded with superb nonchalance.

Abyssinia has a more austere and 'masculine' character, and it is an equally remarkable tour de force. Here the steel is painted maroon and the shards of slate are like giant flint tools. The configuration rises and sways aloft, as if miming a gesture of someone lifting a large object. It is basically a four-sided conception, like *Mevlana*, with expansive views at the front and back.

Jan King's smaller sculptures don't usually imply or connote the body, but are often analogous to landscapes and still-lives. The meetings they effect between the steel and the slate tend to be less harmonious and more contrastive than in the large sculptures. However, in every instance the physical peculiarities of each shard of slate are respected and valued for the way they throw-off King's aesthetic proclivities and know-how, making integration difficult and helping stave off any predictable outcome.

Terence Maloon
Senior Curator of Special Exhibitions
Art Gallery of New South Wales



Toolin 2009 Steel and slate (waxed) 77 x 55 x 10cm



Foucault 2009 Steel and slate (waxed) 29 x 39 x 27cm



Abyssinia 2009 Steel and slate 189 x 104 x 73cm

The sculptures in this exhibition are largely a combination of slate and steel. It is this correlation of materials and of thoughts – the duality and relationships and the contrasting qualities of the two materials that I like. For me, it is also the resistance of materials which creates a challenge.

Steel is an industrial product from iron.
It is strong and easily shaped, durable, malleable
and has a tensile strength that enables me to work
on all scales and with structures which can be both
light and strong – drawings in space.



Nishapur 2009 Steel 43 x 42 x 37cm



Slate is a naturally occurring rock that cleaves into flat planes. It is rigid, hard but brittle and when it fractures it breaks into all sorts of irregular shapes and edges.



Songshan Landscape 2009 Steel and slate 51 x 61 x 23cm

When making these sculptures I have to work with the existing forms of the slate and this creates situations which are unpredictable and for which I have to find new solutions.



Rudaki 2009 Steel and slate 41 x 35 x 46cm



Khorasan 2009 Steel and slate 31 x 39 x 27cm



Zagros 2009 Steel and slate 22 x 29 x 42cm



Making art is about communication, both with the potential audience and with the work itself. I have to develop the sculpture to a point where I can start to see its personality. Then I can respond to what the sculpture needs, and from that point it is really a two-way interaction. Most of my sculpture is abstract and guided by the formal values of aesthetics, using the elements of line, volume, space, rhythm, structure, plane etc.



Sabalan 2005 Slate and steel (painted) 100 x 70 x 15cm



Mevlana 2009 Slate and steel (painted) 160 x 116 x 62cm

Jan King

Born

1945 Cunnamulla, Queensland, Australia

Studies

1994 Art Omi, New York, USA
1985 B.A. Visual Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney
1979 New York Studio School, New York
1971-75 National Art School, Sydney
Alexander Mackie CAE, Sydney
1970 Accademia di Belle Arti, Perugia, Italy

Travel

2008 Italy, Germany, Poland, France
2006 Uzbekistan, Kurdistan
2005 Germany, Romania, Turkey, Greece
2000 Austria, Czech Republic, Russia
1994 USA, France
1984 USA
1979 USA, Europe
1973 UK, France, Italy
1967 - 71 India, The Middle East, Europe

Solo Exhibitions

2010 *Correlation – New Sculpture*, King Street Gallery on William
2007 *Recent Sculpture*, King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
2005 *new sculpture*, king street gallery on burton, sydney
2003 *recent sculpture*, king street gallery on burton
2001 *mythological meanderings*, king street gallery on burton
1999 *mountains and sea* king street gallery on burton
1997 *recent sculpture*, king street gallery on burton
1995 *sculpture*, king street gallery on burton
1993 *sculpture*, king street gallery on burton
1989 Irving Sculpture Gallery, Sydney
1987 Michael Milburn Gallery, Brisbane
1984 Irving Sculpture Gallery, Sydney
1982 Irving Sculpture Gallery, Sydney
1979 Art of Man Gallery, Sydney

Thanks to:
Michael Bradfield Photography

Terence Maloon
Senior Curator of Special Exhibitions Art Gallery NSW

Sam Woods Graphic Design

Art Month
King Street Gallery on William

Published by King Street Studios P/L 2009
ISBN: 978-0-9805041-7-0

Selected group exhibitions

2009 *You Little Beauty*, Miniature Sculptures, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi – Distinguished Invited Artist
Personal Journeys - 40 Years Of Australian Women's Abstract Art, Shoalhaven City Arts Centre, Nowra
West Via East – A Homage to Ian Fairweather, Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney

2008 *Sculpture 2008 – In The Elements*, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney
It's The Small Things That Count, Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2007 *Jellyfish – nature inspires art*, Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney
One Small Step for Mankind, Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2006 *thirteen sculptors – two views*, Chase Contemporary & Tribal Arts, Sydney
 Blake Prize for Religious Art, NAS Gallery, Sydney
How Much Art Thou Shrunk!, Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2005 Art Omi Australia, Cell Block Theatre, National Art School, Sydney
2005 The Year In Art, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney
The 10th Annual Miniature 6x6x6, Defiance Gallery

2004 *Sculpture by the Sea*, [sponsored by Sydney Water], Tamarrama Walk, Bondi Beach, Sydney
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
Sculpture in the MLC, MLC Centre [in conjunction with Sculpture by the Sea]
 UWS Sculpture Prize, Uni of Western Sydney, Campbelltown, NSW
Sculpture in the MLC, SxS, Sydney
Sculpture in The Vines, Hunter Valley Arts Project, NSW
Sculpture 2004, Campbelltown Bicentennial City Art Gallery, Campbelltown, NSW
The March of the Miniatures, Defiance Gallery

2003 *2003 – The Year in Art*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Sculpture in the Vines, Hunter Valley Arts Project
Sculpture 2003, Campbelltown Bicentennial City Art Gallery, Campbelltown, NSW

2002 *Sculpture by the Sea*, [sponsored by Sydney Water], Tamarrama Walk
 The Lady Nock Sculpture Collection, presented by Defiance Gallery, Sydney
 Woollahra Sculpture Prize, Woollahra Municipal Council, Sydney
Sculpture, Michel Sourgnès Gallery, Brisbane
 king street gallery at Span Galleries, Melbourne
Sculpture 2002, Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery

2001 Woollahra Sculpture Prize, Woollahra Council
The Studio Tradition – National Art School, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, NSW
Sculpture 2001, Access Contemporary Art Gallery & king street gallery, Sydney
Small Wonders, king street gallery & Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2000 *The Importance of Being Small*, king street gallery & Defiance Gallery, Sydney
last show of the year, king street gallery on burton
Half Metre Square, staff show, National Art School, Sydney
Tribal Echo, Oceanic Arts Australia, Sydney; Campbelltown Bicentennial City Art Gallery
Sculpture 2000, Access Contemporary Art Gallery

1999 *last show of the year*, king street gallery on burton
On the Tiles, Sir Hermann Black Gallery, University of Sydney
Big Thoughts, Small Works, Defiance Gallery
Five Easy Pieces, Defiance Gallery

1998 *last show of the year*, king street gallery on burton
The Defiant 6", Defiance Gallery
Figure in the Landscape, king street gallery & Defiance Gallery
Inside / Outside, Sir Herman Black Gallery, University of Sydney
Pas D'Accrochage en Publique, Cell Block National Art School, Sydney
 Bryan Niland Collection, Lewers Bequest & Penrith Regional Art Gallery, Penrith
Rossmore Steel, (Jan King & Paul Hopmeier), Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Casula, NSW

1997 *It's a Box (ii)*, Defiance Gallery
The Biggest Little Sculpture Show in Town, Defiance Gallery
gallery artists, king street gallery on burton

1996 *gallery artists*, king street gallery on burton
A Box by any other Name, Defiance Gallery
Size is not Important, Defiance Gallery
first night, king street gallery

1995 *It's About Time*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, COFA, University of NSW, Sydney

1994 *gallery artists*, king street gallery on burton
 Australian Contemporary Art Fair 4, king street gallery, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne

1991 Graeme Sturgeon Memorial Exhibition, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
Agape, king street gallery on burton
Into Space, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (& touring)

1990 *Common Sense*, king street gallery on burton; University of South Australia Art Museum, Adelaide

1989 *Sculptors at the Table*, The Craft Centre Gallery, Sydney

1988 *Sculpture Park '88*, Gallery 460, Gosford, NSW

1987 *Painters and Sculptures- Diversity in Contemporary Australian Art*, Queensland Art Gallery;
 The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan
 Third Australian Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne
Ten Years On, The Works Gallery, Sydney
Site Specific, University of Technology, Sydney

1986 *Spirit of Place*, First Draft Gallery, Sydney

1985 Ninth Mildura Sculpture Triennial, Mildura, Victoria
 Michael Milburn Gallery, Brisbane

1984 Second Australian Sculpture Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

1982 *Table Sculpture*, Irving Sculpture Gallery, Sydney
 Eighth Mildura Sculpture Triennial, Mildura, Victoria
Abstract Australian Sculpture from 1970, Irving Sculpture Gallery
Objects, Lewers Bequest & Penrith Regional Art Gallery, Penrith, NSW
Women Sculptors, Irving Sculpture Gallery

1979 Sculpture Show, New York Studio School, New York
 Survey Show, East Sydney Technical College, Sydney

1976 *Young Sydney Sculptors*, Sculpture Centre, Sydney
 Selected Exhibition VAB/SSC, Martin Place, Sydney

Awards

2002 Winner, Woollahra Sculpture Prize

1994 Art Omi Creative Grant, New York, USA

1983 Australia Council – Visual Arts Board Travel Grant, USA

1982 Australia Council – Visual Arts Board Studio Equipment Grant

1979 Australia Council – Visual Arts Board Studio Grant, New York

Collections

Art Bank, Australia
Brisbane Girls' Grammar School
Liverpool City Council
Woollahra Council, Sydney
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre & Regional Gallery, Casula

Clayton Utz Collection
Macquarie University, Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney

Bibliography

- 2009 McDonald, John: *Good Intentions Lost at Sea*, Spectrum – SMH, Nov 14-15, pp 18-19
Anderson, Patricia: *Editor's Choice*, Australian Art Review, Aug-Oct 2009, p76
- 2005 McDonald, John: *The guiding lights*, Spectrum – SMH, Dec 23-25, pp18-19
McDonald, John: *Out of art's boiler room*, Spectrum – SMH, Oct 8-9, pp28-29
- 2003 Craft Arts International No 57
Eccles, Jeremy: *Off the Wall*, Australian Art Collector, Issue 24, April-June, p74
- 2001 McDonald, John: *Marvels in Miniature*, The Australian Financial Review, Oct 31
Harris, Peter: *Between Intention and Realization*, World Sculpture News, Spring, Vol 7, No 2, p38
Watson, Bronwyn: *It's a small world after all*, Metro – SMH, Oct 27
- 2000 Harris, Peter: *Sculpture 2000 at Access Contemporary Art Gallery*, World Sculpture News, Winter, Vol 6, No 1, pp69-71
Smee, Sebastian: *Pick the primitives*, Spectrum – SMH, April 22, p12s
Reed Burns, Jenna: *A new tribe*, Domain – SMH, Apr 6-12, p 14
- 1999 Smee, Sebastian: *All Touchy-Feely*, The Galleries – SMH, Aug 3, p11
James, Bruce: *Remembrance of things Past*, Spectrum – SMH, Aug 21, p12s
Auty, Giles: *Marx on the carpet*, Weekend Review – The Australian, April 10
- 1998 Auty, Giles: *More power to their elbows*, Weekend Review – The Australian, May 30, p23
McDonald, John: *King hit at Casual*, Spectrum – SMH, June 6, p16s
France, Christine: *Landscape and the human spirit*, Art & Australia, Vol 35, No 4, p508
Kerr Forsyth, Holly: *Shaping Nature*, Weekend Review – The Australian, Apr 4, p13
- 1997 McDonald, John: *From palette to roulette wheel*, Spectrum – SMH, Sept 6
Fortescue, Elisabeth: *Artful Women*, Arts – Daily Telegraph, Aug 30
- 1995 McDonald, John: *Artistic Feeder Stations*, Arts-SMH, Aug 19
- 1994 Lynn, Elwyn: *Curtain-raiser for an excellent year*, Galleries – The Australian
- 1993 Lynn, Elwyn: *Loners in warm climes*, Galleries – The Australian, Sept 25, p16
Watson, Bronwyn: *Images of shared ancestories*, Arts-SMH, Oct 1, p20
- 1989 Waldren, Murray: *Food for thought – a visual smorgasbord*, Galleries – The Australian, Sept 12
- 1987 Woolcock, Phyllis: *King size show for Brisbane and Japan*, Brisbane Courier Mail, June 20
McDonald, John: *Even art ripens in the sun*, Arts – SMH, July 8
Woolcock, Phyllis: Arts Review, Brisbane Courier Mail, July 9
- 1985 Winter-Irving, Celia: *A Tradition of Abstraction*, Australian Business, pp60-64
- 1984 Lynn, Elwyn: *Women in the ascendant*, Weekend Review – The Australian, Dec 8
Maloon, Terence: *Sculptures turn a gallery into a dance floor*, Arts – SMH, Nov 24
Sturgeon, Graeme: *Australia Sculpture NOW – Second Australian Sculpture Triennial*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1982 Maloon, Terence: *Jan King's sculptures seem to thrive in silence*, Arts – SMH, Sept 11
- 1979 Borlase, Nancy: *New Exhibitions*, Sydney Morning Herald, Nov 10