

Idris Murphy

In the outback silence,
I sometimes hear God breathing.

Idris Murphy

Idris Murphy
Re-Cognising the land
2007

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 ten 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 ILIRI 'Imaging the Land International Research Institute' which provides access to desert studios in Australia for artists from both here and abroad.

Idris Murphy's paintings, inspired so often by his native land, are effective because they impart the experience of an artist who has truly entered that terrain. During frequent inland and coastal visits, generally with students, to places such as Fowlers Gap, the Myall Lakes, Seal Rocks and Kakadu, Murphy works in situ immersing himself in his surroundings. The major resulting studio paintings bring to the surface the power and poetry of the memory through the actual process of creation.

Nick Waterlow 2007
Curator



Desert Road To Olive Downs 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 122x122cm



Hacking River Night 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 60x63cm



Light Rain At Mutawintji 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 120x120cm



View From The Jumpups 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 110x120cm

Top Left: *Dam View Evening* 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm

Top Right: *Evening Reflections* 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 57x55cm

Lower Left: *Walcha Morning Light* 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 122x110cm

Lower Right: *Wepia Wharf Low Tide* 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm





Drought Hillside 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 30x30cm



Desert Night Sky 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm



Falling Star 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm



Desert Night Sky Series 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm



Reflection Night Sky 2007 Acrylic and collage on board 60x60cm



Weipa Harbour Storm 2005 Acrylic and collage on board 120x120cm



Sturt National Park Series 1, 2, 3 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 30x30cm



Mud Tracks Fowlers Gap 2007 30x30cm



The Jump Ups Two Views 1 2007 30x30cm



The Jump Ups Two Views 2 2007 30x30cm



Three Views 2007 30x30cm



Ocher House 2007 30x30cm



Fowlers Gap 2007 57x55cm



Driving Past Desert Hills 2007 30x30cm
Acrylic and collage on board



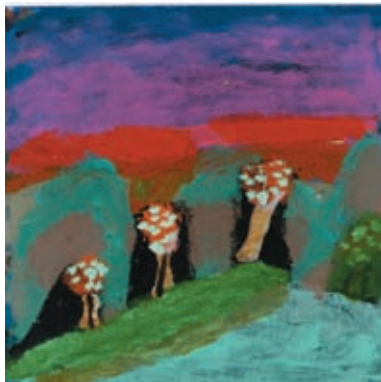
Night Series 2007 30x30cm



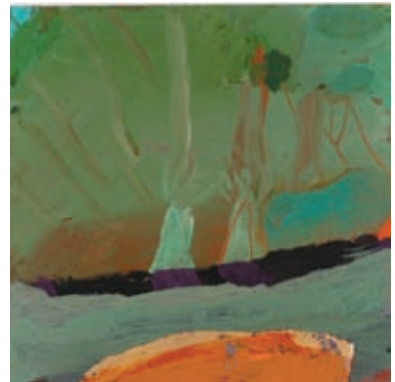
Evening Water Reflection 2007 57x55cm



Flooded Casuarinas Durras Lake 2007 30x30cm



Red Sands Manindi Lakes 2007 30x30cm



Fowlers Gap Last Waterhole 2007 30x30cm



Night Series 3 2007 30x30cm



Night Series 4 2007 30x30cm



Late In The Day Mutawintji 2007 30x30cm



Idris Murphy
Photograph by John Elliott for
Thousand Mile Stare
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Why do you make art?

My first response to this written question is to say that it is not any easy question, and in a slightly belligerent way I should answer 'I don't know, I just do!' although maybe that is too easy. On reflection, I am at once flattered that I seem to be the first to be asked to respond to these questions in *A Public of Individuals*, and at the same time apprehensive that what one says is often misconstrued (a.k.a. making a fool of oneself).

However, in the spirit of the project I will give it a go. It seems to me that art needs no justification; it is what people have done for thousands of years. Personally, it may be that it was the only thing that I was any good at.

Why do I continue to make art?

Because it sustains me, and in the definition of sustainable as 'exploiting natural resources without destroying the natural ecological balance of an area,' this may be a useful definition.

The process of and in making, allows insight into the creative process and hence what it is to be human. An insight into myself and the view I hold of the world, without destroying either. Art persuades me to rethink these views and continually re-assess reality.

JOE FROST
A Public of Individuals
2006



Desert View Fowlers Gap 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 106x120cm



Last Water Reflections 2006 Acrylic and collage on board 120x120cm



Desert View With Curtains 2005 Acrylic and collage on board 110x120cm



Moonlight Trees, Smith's Lake 2005 Acrylic and collage on board 110x120cm



Desert Road 2007 30x30cm
Acrylic and collage on board



Tree Shadows 2007 30x30cm



Red Jump Ups 2007 30x30cm

A work of art is not the same thing as a scientific model. But it stands in an equivalent relationship to reality. Once it was useful to think of art as a mirror. It no longer is- because our view of nature has changed. Today to hold a mirror up to nature is only to diminish the world.

JOHN BERGER

You do not have to sit outside in the dark. If, however, you want to look at the stars, you will find that darkness is necessary. But the stars neither require nor demand it.

ANNIE DIALLED

Attention consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object; it means holding in our minds, within reach of this thought, but on a lower level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of. Our thought should be in relation to all particular and already formulated thoughts, as a man on a mountain who, as he looks forward, sees also below him, without actually looking at them, a great many forests and plains. Above all our thoughts should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that is to penetrate it.

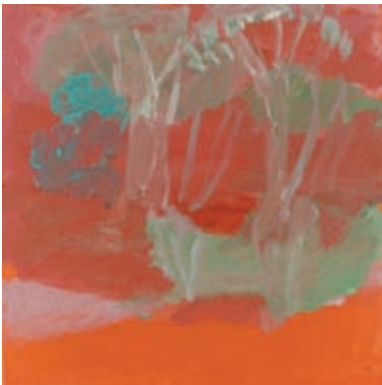
SIMONE WEIL

It's not the colour of your skin that makes you aboriginal,
it's the way you see the land.

BURNUM BURNUM



Hillside After Burning Off 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 91x90cm



Sturt National Park 4, 5, 6 2006/07 Acrylic and collage on board 30x30cm



View From Boat Weipa 2005 Acrylic and collage on board 110x120cm

Idris Murphy

born

1949 Sydney, NSW, Australia

studies & work

1988-pres 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
1987 Lecturer, TAFE School of Art and Design, Sydney
1982 Lecturer, University of Wollongong, NSW (instrumental in establishing printmaking department of newly founded School of Creative Arts)
1976-77 Post Graduate (painting & printmaking), Winchester College of Art, UK
1966-71 Diploma (painting), National Art School, Sydney

solo exhibitions (selected)

2007 *Re-Cognising The Landscape* King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
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), 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

selected group exhibitions (selected)

- 2006 *Going Out There* Alliance Francaise, Paris, France
king street gallery at Doggett Street Studio (cummings, elliot, murphy, penrose hart, sages),
Brisbane, Qld
Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery, Blue Mountains Grammera, Wentworth Falls, NSW
- 2005 Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery
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, COFA, Uni of NSW, 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
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
- 2000 *Southern Sydney Artists* Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
MelbourneArtFair2000, king street gallery, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 1996 *In Process* Ivan Dougherty Gallery
The Outback Art Prize, Broken Hill City Art Gallery, NSW
- 1995 *Ironsides* Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
- 1993-94 *Common Ground* Ivan Dougherty Gallery, COFA; Broken Hill City Art Gallery

bibliography

- 2006 Ducos, Solenne: *Idris Murphry*, COFA-UNSW, Summer Issue 15, p19
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 p70 - 72
- 2003 McCulloch, Susan: *'Paths Across the Great Divide*, The 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: *Two Thirds Sky*, 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, p154
- 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
Watson, Bronwyn: *No mere window dressing*, Arts-Sydney Morning Herald, Sept 10, p17
Delaruelle, Jacques: *In the game*, The Sydney Review, Sept

(full c.v. available on www.kingstreetgallery.com.au)

Photography by Michael Bradfield



“Idris Murphy has honed his vision of the landscape over many years of toil and experiment. His style is utterly distinctive, but never looks formulaic... his brushwork looks like it was executed with a broom. But they hold you, these ugly-beautiful, beautiful-ugly paintings... Murphy’s paintings are not photographic records of place, they are imaginative reconstructions imbued with the artist’s own moods and preoccupations.”

John McDonald the Sydney Morning Herald 2005

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Director: Robert Linnegar

Director: Randi Linnegar



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