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Going Solo: a report on survey exhibitions in Australian public museums in the 1970s

Abstract
Solo survey exhibitions have been an important way in which the work of Australian artists has been critically reviewed and assessed. In the 1970s and early 1980s a flurry of survey exhibitions were mounted by the State Galleries, allowing the oeuvre of a large number of artists to be examined. Later in the 1980s and in the 1990s, the number of survey exhibitions being mounted by the State Galleries seemed to diminish quite dramatically as curatorial staff began to focus on other forms of exhibition.

Jonathan Holmes, Jeff Malpas, Paul Zika, Maria Kunda and David Hansen have been investigating the part played by solo survey exhibitions in the history of Australian art since the mid-1970s. This paper will present the first findings of the research team – a survey of solo exhibitions in the 1970s - and will offer an early assessment of their significance in the broader context of contemporary Australian art and its critical discourse during that period.

Biography
Associate Professor Jonathan Holmes took up a teaching position at the Tasmanian School of Art in 1974, tutoring in Art History and Theory. He was appointed lecturer when the Tasmanian School of Art became a faculty of the University of Tasmania in 1981.

His most recent exhibitions have been *Figure It*, a show that was developed, with Maria Kunda, to coincide with a National Portrait Gallery of Australia symposium on portraiture held in Hobart in 2001 and *The Barcelona Studio: fragments of a brief history* which is currently being shown in the Plimsoll Gallery. This latter exhibition came about as a result of an ARC Discovery grant awarded in 1998. The research project investigated the impact of the Australia Council studio residencies on the work and careers of Australian artists in the past twenty-five years and is the subject of three further exhibitions planned for 2004, 2005 and 2006. The research project was developed out of an earlier exhibition, *Rediscovery, Australian Artists in Europe, 1980-1990* which was commissioned by the Australia Council for *Expo 92* in Sevilla, Spain. Colleagues, Paul Zika and Edward Colless assisted with the development of this exhibition.

Since 1980, one of his primary roles in the Tasmanian School of Art has been the development of the School's postgraduate program which he currently co-ordinates. The School now has around fifty postgraduate candidates enrolled in research degrees.

Going Solo: a report on survey exhibitions in Australian public museums in the 1970s[1]
In May, 1975, the National Gallery of Victoria [NGV] mounted the touring exhibition, *Modern masters: Manet to Matisse*, curated by William Lieberman, one of the senior curators at the Museum of Modern Art, New York [MOMA]. The exhibition was one of several international exhibitions emanating from New York over the preceding decade. The first was Waldo Rasmussen's *Two Decades of American Painting* – one of the last exhibitions to be shown in the old National Gallery of Victoria buildings that had formed part of the Library and Museums complex bounded by Latrobe and Little Lonsdale Streets on Swanston Street. This exhibition brought a major collection of works from MOMA, ranging from paintings by Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, Barnet Newman and Mark Rothko, to Warhol and Lichtenstein.[2]

It had been over twenty years since an exhibition of this quality had been exhibited in Australia although, a little less that a year later, this would change with the opening of the NGV's new buildings on St Kilda Road when a string of international exhibitions began to be mounted on a regular basis.[3]

In 1972, *Surrealism* toured to the Art Gallery of New South Wales [AGNSW], the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV] and the Art Gallery of South Australia under the auspices of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Then, in 1973, another challenging exhibition from MOMA – this time of minimal and conceptual art, curated by Jennifer Licht - was shown at the NGV. *Some recent American Art* included works by Eva Hesse, Don Judd, Mel Bochner, Sol Lewitt, Robert Morris and Dan Flavin.[4] Daniel Thomas described the exhibition as an 'immaculate minimalist show'[5] and it was clear that the NGV was establishing itself as a major exhibitor of contemporary art.[6] Its intentions were heralded on

14th August, 1968 when Brian Finemore's and John Stringer's exhibition, *The Field*, was mounted as the inaugural temporary exhibition in the new building on St Kilda Road. The exhibition included the work of forty younger Australian artists (many of whom were only just out of Art School) and focused on Australian colour-field painting and other forms of contemporary abstraction. Despite the criticism that many of the artists were untried at the time, it is a tribute to the curators' perspicacity that, thirty-five years later, well in excess of sixty per cent of the artists in *The Field* continue to exhibit or to pursue other forms of art practice.

This commitment to contemporary art was consolidated in the following year, 1969, when Christo's wool works were shown at the AGNSW and the NGV[7] and in 1971, a major exhibition of the paintings of Morris Louis was mounted at the gallery.[8]

The NGV, along with the AGNSW, continued this promotion of contemporary art exhibitions in the 1970s with the inclusion of the John Kaldor *Project No 3*, Gilbert & George's *The Singing Sculpture* [1973] – an engaging performance piece in which the two artists, in business suits and gold-painted faces and hands, moved on a narrow table in a tightly choreographed 'dance' to the sounds of the 1931 song 'by Bud Flanagan, 'Underneath the Arches'.[9] This occurred in the same year as Jennifer Licht's exhibition *Some recent American art* and along with a raft of other contemporary art exhibitions that were shown in major public institutions that year. They included:

- The NGV show, *Object & idea : new work by Australian artists, Armstrong, Coleing, Danko, Lendon, Parks, Tillers*[10]
- The AGNSW exhibition, *Recent Australian art*, curated by Daniel Thomas and Frances McCarthy (Frances Lindsay)[11]
- The Sydney Opera House *Biennale of Sydney* [Foundation Co-ordinator, Franco Belgiorno-Nettis], Sydney: 1973[12]

In the space of a little over five years, then, the major State Galleries had begun to consider and exhibit the works of an emerging generation of visual artists whose careers had generally begun from the mid-1960s and during the 1970s and were informed by recent trends in international art, including Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Environmental art, Feminism, Installation, and Performance. In the case of the AGNSW show, *Recent Australian Art*, for instance, the work of almost sixty artists was surveyed and the exhibition provided a neat counterpoint to the international concerns exhibited in the first Sydney Biennale at the Sydney Opera House. Bruce Adams noted, for instance, that although there was a considerable amount of post-painterly abstraction included in the AGNSW exhibition, a very substantial number of the sixty or so artists were more preoccupied with issues emerging in the wake of post-object art. He went on to make the telling observation that:

> [T]he Art Gallery of New South Wales gave recognition to a viable area of activity which, to date, had found public focus only in small, 'radical' galleries in Sydney and Melbourne. It is creditable that public art museums – too often monuments to established aspirations – are endeavouring to accommodate art that is still contentious and experimental.[13]

This engagement with contemporary Australian art in the public sphere was very much the result of the vision and persistence of a number of highly motivated curators in this period including Daniel Thomas, Frances Lindsay (neé McCarthy), Robert Lindsay and Bernice Murphy at the AGNSW, Brian Finemore (tragically murdered in 1975), John Stringer, Jennifer Phipps and Graeme Sturgeon at the NGV and Ian North at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Other curators committed to Australian art and its international context in the early 1970s included Tom McCullough and Elwyn Lynn. McCullough radicalised the Mildura Sculpture Triennial in 1973 with his emphasis on environmental art before going on to be the 1976 Sydney Biennale director. He would continue to create challenging engagements with contemporary sculpture through into the 1980s.[14] Elwyn Lynn, who had been curator of the Power Collection of Fine Arts at Sydney University since 1969, developed an important collection of contemporary international art under the auspices of the Power

bequest and exhibitions of recent purchases were shown in 1972, 1974, 1975 and 1977 at the AGNSW and other venues.

When Patrick McCaughey reviewed *The Field* exhibition for *Art and Australia* in December, 1968, he argued persuasively that one of its real achievements was to align Australian art with the modernist tradition and he went on to say:

> Each work becomes an experiment, an attempt to solve a particular pictorial or sculptural problem or to reveal a particularly pictorial or sculptural experience. This 'problem-solving' attitude has caused the widest dismay and the deepest misunderstanding in response to *The Field*. The shift from the referential qualities of a work to its conceptual properties comes particularly hard in Australia where the references to the figure and landscape have played so notable a part in the founding patterns of contemporary Australian art.[15]

This view has its roots in Greenbergian formalism which, to a significant extent, was to be discredited in the 1970s, but there is no question that McCaughey was wanting to confront the persisting problem that 'good art' in Australia – the canonical art, so to speak – was perceived to be in the figure-landscape tradition. On the other hand here was a vibrant and up-beat body of work by a new generation of painters and sculptors that seemed to have direct links to International Modernism. As McCaughey went on to say:

> The new convention, the alignment of Australian art with the modernist tradition, however, has been mistaken for a surrender to the gods of fashion and the vicissitudes of an anonymous internationalism. *The Field* has done us all a service by bringing to a head the phoney debate between the conflicting allegiances of regionalism and internationalism. It is high time these two myths were laid to rest.[16]

McCaughey's point was that if one were to take the work of Albert Tucker and to ignore the influences of the German Expressionists or Dubuffet on his art, or Fred Williams and the influence of Cézanne and Matisse, then one would be missing important critical and visual connections that allow for a far richer understanding of their art. Yet here were two artists whose work, by the late sixties, was reaching canonical status as the quintessential Australian art. McCaughey wanted to stress that *The Field* had a fascinating alternative Australian lineage that might include Margaret Preston, Grace Cossington Smith, Roy de Maistre, and Ralph Balson just as much as it had strong connections to international modernism. Tony McGillick's shaped canvases, for instance, were seen as intractable by their Australian audience and yet one might reasonably argue that they should be considered in the context of post-war Australian abstraction just as much as they were influenced by McGillick's visit to New York in 1965 where he discovered the work of Jaspar Johns and Ellsworth Kelly.[17]

McCaughey's view that Australia had to see its cultural context as both a regional and an international one was greatly assisted with the establishment of the Australia Council in 1972. From the old Commonwealth Art Advisory Board that had around $30 000 available for grants in the visual arts, the Visual Arts Board [VAB] had at its disposal just over three quarters of a million dollars that could be used for individual and infrastructure grants. This had climbed to nearly $1 million in 1978. By 1974 dozens of Australian artists, curators, critics and art historians were being supported with travel grants to go overseas. At the same time the Australia Council began to assist the Australian Gallery Directors Council [the AGDC] which, during the 1970s and until its bankruptcy in 1982, co-ordinated a large number of touring exhibitions across Australia, many of which were international exhibitions. Other exhibitions, such as the Sydney Biennale and the Mildura Sculpture Triennial were supported by the Australia Council and Daniel Thomas notes that when the National Gallery of Victoria mounted *Some recent American Art* in 1973, the VAB brought Keith Sonnier, William Wegman and Mel Bochner to Melbourne and who, Thomas wrote, 'had to make polite remarks about the subtle beauties of the Australian Bush.'[18] The VAB was also very active in promoting the exhibition and acquisition of contemporary Australian art and the major public art museums were encouraged to support this through a series of grant schemes that Patrick McCaughey, an early board member, described as a 'pump-priming' process.

When one reflected on the period from *The Field* through to May,1975 when *Modern Masters: Manet to Matisse* was shown at the NGV, there appeared to be a relatively easy inclusion of Australian contemporary art into the art museums of Australia although it really was a 1970s phenomenon. For example, in 1974, Ian North, who had been curator of contemporary painting at the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) since 1971, began a series of exhibitions called the *Link* shows. Intended to present small exhibitions by Australian and other artists who may otherwise have not been exhibited in Adelaide, the first was a small survey exhibition of the work of Imants Tillers. This was followed in 1975 by exhibitions of works by Noel Sheridan, Bert Flugelman, Paul Partos, Ti Parks, Tim Burns and Jenny Barwell.[19] All were low-budget affairs but their impact remained considerable.

A similar series was developed in 1975 at the AGNSW where Frances McCarthy (Lindsay), Robert Lindsay, Daniel Thomas and Bernice Murphy began to develop exhibitions in the *Project* series. In all, the AGNSW library lists sixty-one exhibitions in the *Project* exhibitions and, in an extraordinarily productive period between 1974 and 1977, around twenty *Project* exhibitions were mounted. Among the early shows were exhibitions of the work of Robert Rooney, Ti Parks, Grace Crowley, Dusan Marek, Peter Booth, Dale Hickey, Carl Plate, Arthur Murch, and Paul Partos together with an early exhibition of video art, curated by Frances McCarthy and an installation-based exhibition of the work of John Armstrong, Tom Arthur, Aleks Danko, curated by Robert Lindsay.[20] The project catalogues were small (usually four to eight pages) but informative and one really got the sense that a serious critical discourse on contemporary art was emerging from the Gallery very much as a result of the inspired leadership of Daniel Thomas.

Later, Thomas would opine that the MOMA show seemed like a watershed moment insofar as the NGV and, increasingly, the other State Galleries, began to abandon art for 'Chinese, Columbian or Pompeiian archeology'.[21] The 'blockbuster' imperative began to preoccupy the State Galleries in the latter part of the 1970s as they struggled for income and this would be a dominant feature of temporary exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s.

For a number of reasons, 1975 proved to be a troublesome year in terms of exhibitions at the NGV. The art historian, Terry Smith, for instance, mounted a sustained critique of the blockbuster in 1975, accusing the organisers and the sponsors of the *Modern Masters* exhibition of cultural imperialism,[22] while an enlightened program of temporary solo installations begun that year by Graeme Sturgeon at the NGV faltered in the months after *Modern Masters*. Although these installations were less ambitious than the exhibitions being developed by the AGNSW and AGSA, they were clearly meant to sustain a dialogue on contemporary art in Melbourne. In March, 1975, Domenico de Clario was invited to install a work at the NGV and he began to create it in early August. De Clario chose to exhibit his *Elemental Landscape* in the Australian galleries that, at the time, retained their deadening timber panels and their celebratory tribute to the tradition of landscape painting. De Clario's work consisted of a collection of personal artefacts – cane chair, dilapidated folding table, a pot plant, a bundle of clothes, an upturned table, radiators and a large number of documents, books and other printed publications from his private collection - that were assembled in separate scatter pieces. So, this detritus was installed in the space in front of the paintings on display and it was done in such a way that the viewers were forced to confront his sculpture as they tried to contemplate the works on permanent display.

In an unpublished letter to the *Age* on 12th August, 1975, de Clario gave a vivid account of the events leading up to the unauthorised removal of his work by gallery staff.[23] According to the artist, he had close consultations with Graeme Sturgeon and assistant curator, Jennifer Phipps, about the placement of the installation, with Jennifer Phipps expressing concern about the inclusion of two open bar radiators. A compromise was struck and it was agreed that the radiators would remain off. De Clario, who overheard the Director of the Gallery, Gordon Thomson in conversation with advisors, believed that the installed pieces, in two of the painting bays, were acceptable to the gallery administration.

On Monday, 11th August, however, de Clario went into the Gallery to finish off the installation only to find that the installation had been removed from the painting bays and was lying disassembled in the Gallery store. At no time had the artist been consulted about the work's removal and, at the time of writing the letter, no one from the Gallery had discussed the removal with him, although a letter from Gordon Thomson, dated the 7th August, 1975, arrived later in the week. What was particularly interesting about

Thomson's letter was the reason proffered for the censorship. According to Thomson, '[the] change is necessitated by the unfortunate relationship they set up with the historical works of art around them which I think it is unfair to ask the public to accept.'[24] Thomson went on to say:

> [The] effect of the juxtaposition on many important works of art in the collection and on a part of it which there is a specifically dedicated public is such that I had to decide that they cannot be placed there.[25]

What is remarkable about this challenge is that it almost precisely echoes the plaint uttered by Patrick McCaughey in 'The Significance of *The Field*', when he discussed the conceptual approach being utilised by many of this generation of artists when compared to the 'look and put' landscape painters of the earlier period.[26] Of course, de Clario's aim was precisely to force a confrontation between the two processes of art-making in order to expose the institutional practices of the art museum and its inability to cope with particular forms of art-making. De Clario would claim that his 'urban' and 'domestic' landscape was every bit as valid and meaningful as, say, that of Tom Roberts' or Fred McCubbin's heroic vision of landscape, but it remained deeply threatening to the museum itself and to what it believed to be its charter.

This kind of confrontation that exposes the institutional practices of the art museum and public exhibitions was not new. As Brian Dunlop's great study of key exhibitions in the twentieth century, *The Shock of the New*, so persuasively exemplifies, these confrontations between the 'new' and the established paradigms of art demonstrate just how fragile the relationship can be between contemporary art and the art museum which must at some stage decide whether or not to acquire and exhibit the art objects created at the time.[27]

An interesting parallel case to the de Clario installation occurred four years later when Joseph Beuys's *Ausfegan* was installed at the AGNSW in the Biennale of Sydney, *European Dialogue*. The work consisted of a stiff outdoor broom with its bristles painted red, a pile of rubbish swept up by Beuys in the aftermath of a May Day march in Berlin in 1972, and a tape-recording of the marchers during their demonstration. Regardless of how one sees this work – as a commentary on art's social ineffectiveness or as a critique of political demonstrations – there was no doubt that this installation, sat uncomfortably in the art museum context. And yet, in 1990, the very same work reappears in the catalogue of the Biennale of Sydney, *The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in Twentieth Century Art*, but this time the rubbish and broom have been 'museumified' and placed in a secure, formal museum case as a privileged artefact.

In the case of the NGV, the de Clario challenge was simply too hard to take and the administrators drew the line in the sand. The upshot of this decision (which followed an earlier decision to remove an Art & Language installation and to place it in the Art School Gallery) was that a meeting was called a week later at the Ewing and George Paton Gallery, Melbourne University, to discuss the de Clario issue. As Ken Scarlett noted, the discussion soon expanded to include a raft of complaints about the NGV and the ensuing resolutions included a demand for the same respect to be given to contemporary Australian art as to the art of the past, a demand for a review of the departments of Australian art and Exhibitions at the NGV, a demand for 'a continuous, responsive program representing Australian art', and a demand for the gallery to be 're-structured physically, financially and administratively to make it responsive to the needs and interests of artists and the public in an expansively democratic way.'[28]

At the subsequent meeting, chaired by Terry Smith, that was held at the National Gallery of Victoria on Thursday, 21st August, 1975, over two hundred protestors turned up and, in the ensuing months the administration of the Gallery embarked on a review of its policies. Maureen Gilchrist reported in *The Age* in May, 1976, that the new Director, Eric Rowlinson, had agreed to make temporary space available in the NGV for contemporary exhibitions of Australian art and that the gallery was considering the appointment of two curators of Australian art, one of whom would be in charge of contemporary art. Consideration was given to the idea of an off-site gallery for contemporary Australian art, although it would be over twenty years before something like this would actually become a reality.[29]

Despite the encouraging signs, the only contemporary exhibition to be shown in 1976 emanated from the Department of Photography and a similar desperate situation occurred in 1977 with the NGV focussing on blockbuster exhibitions.

The episode marked a difficult period in the NGV's administrative history but it also exposed a more fundamental problem that has continued to plague the State art museums in the ensuing years. In many ways, the major public institutions prefer to keep contemporary, experimental art at arm's length – permanent exhibitions of the institutions' standing collections are planned months, if not years, ahead and unless the institution has substantial temporary exhibition space, then the opportunity to exhibit contemporary solo or group shows becomes an extremely arduous and time-consuming process. As the Sydney Biennale grew in scale, for instance, so it became all but impossible for the AGNSWto mount the exhibition on its own and, after 1982, a range of alternative venues were found. It is not insignificant, too, that the more 'manageable' of contemporary art's manifestations are usually the ones to find their way into the AGNSW's temporary galleries!

In the case of the NGV, however, its approach to the exhibition of contemporary Australian art changed dramatically later in 1977 when partners, Robert and Frances Lindsay moved to Melbourne from Sydney – Frances Lindsay to take up the position of Director of the School of Art Gallery at the Victorian College of the Arts, and Robert Lindsay, to the position of Assistant Curator of Australian art at the NGV. By April 1978 he had developed the first of a series of exhibitions, the *Survey* shows, that would make an immediate impact in Melbourne. The first exhibition was a survey of the work of John Davis in March and April, shortly before Davis's work was to be shown at the Venice Biennale.[30] Over the next four years, in what was to be a staggering output, Robert Lindsay and the departments of Australian art and Exhibitions, mounted no less than fifteen exhibitions, thirteen of which were mid-career solo survey exhibitions.

In the case of the *Link*, *Project*, and *Survey* exhibitions of the 1970s, they all had significant outcomes. On the one hand, they gave the curators the opportunity to investigate the oeuvre of the artists selected over a period of time and also to review their institutions' collections in the light of the surveys. It is interesting to note, too, that a very significant number of the artists selected for these survey shows, crop up in the larger survey exhibitions such as the Sydney Biennale in 1979 and the AGNSW *Perspecta* exhibitions of the 1980s. While none of these exhibitions provided extensive critiques of the work and careers of the artists, there was, nevertheless, a critical engagement with the art surveyed and the catalogues have remained important historical documents twenty or more years later. In the case of the NGV surveys, the video recordings of Ewa Pachucka, John Davis, Rosalie Gascoigne, Robert Rooney, Tom Arthur, Imants Tillers, John Lethbridge, Robert Boynes, Ivan Durrant, Martin Sharp and Tony McGillick also remain extremely important archival documents.[31]

This level of scholarly curatorial attention to individual Australian artists would be, however, short-lived. As the audiences for exhibitions of visual arts boomed in the 1980s and 1990s, so the State Galleries began to focus on the big national and international survey exhibitions and on block-buster touring shows. These included: *Australian Perspecta* (AGNSW); the *Adelaide Biennial of Art* (AGSA); the *Australian Sculpture Triennial* (NGV and allied galleries); together with the huge international surveys such as the *Sydney Biennale* (AGNSW) and, in the 1990s, the *Asia-Pacific Triennial* (Queensland Art Gallery). These provided Australian artists with significant opportunities to exhibit their work, often at the international level but it also meant, however, that many curators who might otherwise have been developing individual survey exhibitions for State Galleries were, instead, committed to these new thematic forms and were thus restricted in their capacity to develop scholarly individual survey shows.

The second type of exhibition that came into its own in the 1980s and 1990s was the 'block-buster' exhibition, which included major exhibitions from European and North American museum collections.[32] These exhibitions have become central to the State and National Gallery exhibitions' programs – all of which are heavily committed to these shows because of their capacity to generate large amounts of revenue. The prevalence of 'block-busters' and the often complex large-scale exhibitions of Australian art partly explains why, during the latter part of the 1980s and in the 1990s, fewer of the scholarly surveys of the work of living Australian artists have been produced by the State galleries, although there have been some significant exceptions to this general trend.[33]

If the shift in exhibition programming has restricted the capacity of museums to develop monographic exhibitions, another important factor was embedded in the very discourse of art theory itself. One of the

great debates in Australian art theory in the early 1980s concerned the challenge to the authority of the artist as the locus of the meaning of the work of art; a challenge to the then widely held view that if one could discover the intentions of the artist, so one could unravel the meaning of the work of art the artist created. This debate was at the very centre of the editorial project that Paul Taylor set himself as editor of the fledgling art journal, *Art & Text*, in Autumn, 1981.[34] In his first editorial, Taylor drew upon the writings of Benjamin, Cage, Barthes and Venturi to challenge the view that the artist was the 'creator' of the meaning of a work, and to suggest that he or she was only one of the 'producers' of a work's meaning. He used Venturi's idea of the architect as 'selector' of ideas to develop a view of art that gave a significant role to the viewer or audience in the creation of the meaning of the work of art.

This challenge to artistic authority was flagged in Taylor's first major articles in *Art & Text*, 'Australian "New Wave" and the "Second Degree"' (a celebration of popular culture and its liberating possibilities for the visual arts) in the first issue,[35] and 'Angst In My Pants' (a searing critique of neo-expressionism and the cult of the hero) in the seventh issue.[36] Taylor's thesis was also demonstrated in two exhibitions he curated in the early 1980s, *Tall Poppies*[37] for the University Gallery, Melbourne University and *Popism*,[38] commissioned by the NGV.

The critique of the 'authorial' voice of the artist has held considerable sway through the past two decades. For instance, an example can be found in the early work of the noted curator and photographic historian, Professor Geoffrey Batchen, who developed an exhibition, *Borderlines*, in 1987.[39] With this exhibition he deliberately placed the 'curator-producer' on a par with the artists he had selected, making the point that the new meanings that were generated by the bringing together of the particular grouping of artists were a direct consequence of the choices the curator had made.

This 'productive' role for the curator has led to a challenging and extremely diverse program of thematic exhibitions of contemporary art for over two decades now, a program that has existed across state, regional and university galleries, as well as the state-funded contemporary art spaces. Furthermore, there is no doubt that this curatorial tendency had an immensely important part to play in the vibrant and developing discourse on contemporary art in Australia.

Despite this, there remains much to be said in favour of the solo survey exhibition which brings together a range of work and allows for a more sustained investigation of the work under review. This is exemplified if one looks at the case of the artists accorded survey exhibitions in the 1970s.

In the three *Perspecta* exhibitions held in the first half of the 1980s, the work of over two hundred artists was shown. Almost twenty years later, only a fraction of those artists have been the subject of a survey exhibition although galleries such as the Ian Potter Gallery, Monash Gallery, Heide, the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, and the Ivan Dougherty Gallery have made extremely important contributions to this field. A concerted effort needs to be made to begin to put this period into perspective.

1   This paper has been written by Jonathan Holmes but would not have been possible without the involvement and input of fellow researchers, Paul Zika, Maria Kunda, Jeff Malpas, David Hansen and, above all, by Brigita Ozolins, our skilled and dedicated research assistant.

2   Rasmussen, Waldo *Two Decades of American Painting* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1967; Licht, Jennifer *Some recent American Art* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria with permission of Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1973.

3   Thomas, Daniel, 'The Artists and the Australian Context' in *An Australian Accent: Three Artists, Mike Parr, Imants Tillers, Ken Unsworth* [Curator: John Caldor], New York, John Kaldor Art Project 7, PS1, 1984, p.12. Daniel Thomas notes that the exhibition, *French Painting Today*, which was brought to Australia in 1953, was the only other truly substantial international exhibition to have been shown in Australia in the post-war period.

4   Licht, Jennifer *Some recent American Art* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria with permission of Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1973.

5   Thomas [1984], p.12.

[6] Sturgeon, Graeme 'Some Recent American Art', *Art and Australia*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1967, pp. 336-337

[7] National Gallery of Victoria *Christo – The Wool Works* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1969

[8] Honolulu Academy of Arts, *Morris Louis* [an exhibition organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery], Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1971.

[9] For a more extended commentary on this work see Daniel Thomas's 'Gilbert and George – The Living Sculpture', *Art and Australia*, vol 11, no. 2, pp.134-135.

[10] National Gallery of Victoria, *Object & idea : new work by Australian artists, Armstrong, Coleing, Danko, Lendon, Parks, Tillers* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria 1973.

[11] Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Recent Australian art*, Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1973; see also Bruce Adams's 'Recent Australian Art: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 18 October – 18 November, 1973', *Art and Australia* vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 236c-236d.

[12] Biennale of Sydney *Biennale of Sydney* [Foundation Co-ordinator, Franco Belgiorno-Nettis], Sydney: Biennale of Sydney, 1973; see also Elwyn Lynn's 'Biennale of Sydney' in *Art and Australia* vol.11, no 3, pp. 270-277.

[13] Adams [1973], p.236c.

[14] McCullough, Thomas, *Sculpturscape '73 : the Mildura Sculpture Triennial* Mildura: Arts Centre, 1973; McCullough, Thomas *Recent Forms of International Art*, Sydney: Biennale of Sydney, 1976.

[15] McCaughey, Patrick 'The Significance of *The Field*', *Art and Australia*, vol.6, no.3, December 1968, p.35.

[16] McCaughey [1968], p.35.

[17] Otton, Ken and Lindsay, Robert *Tony McGillick* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria and Open Channel, 1978, videorecording, 26 minutes.

[18] Thomas [1984], p.12.

[19] At the time of writing, the details of the *Link* exhibitions had not been verified. They are not catalogued in any of the on-line Library catalogues that the author has been able to access.

[20] See the AGNSW on-line catalogue @ http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/library/catalog. The exhibitions included the following: AGNSW, *Ti Parkes* [exhibition and catalogue by Frances McCarthy] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; Project 1; AGNSW, *Objects* [exhibition and catalogue by Robert Lindsay; work by Tom Arthur, John Armstrong and Aleks Danko] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; Project 3; AGNSW, *Grace Crowley* [exhibition and catalogue by Daniel Thomas] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; Project 4; AGNSW, *Robert Rooney* [exhibition and catalogue by Robert Lindsay], Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; Project 8; AGNSW, *Dusan Marek* exhibition and catalogue by Bernice Murphy], Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; Project 10; AGNSW, *Peter Booth* [exhibition and catalogue by Frances McCarthy], Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1976; Project 12; AGNSW, *Dale Hickey* [exhibition and catalogue by Robert Lindsay] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1976; Project 14; AGNSW, *Paul Partos* [exhibition and catalogue by Robert Lindsay] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1977; Project 16; AGNSW, *Some recent art in Adelaide* [exhibition and catalogue by Bernice Murphy] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1977; Project 18; AGNSW, Arthur Murch [exhibition and catalogue by Daniel Thomas] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1977; Project 19; AGNSW, *Carl Plate* [exhibition and catalogue by Frank Hinder and Anne Watson] Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1977; Project 22.

[21] Thomas[1984], p.12.

[22] Smith, Terry, Tasmanian School of Art *Art Forum* program, 1975.

[23] de Clario, Domenico to the Editor of *The Age*, 12th August, 1975, unpublished ms. cited in Scarlett, Ken *Australian Sculptors* West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1980, pp.167-168.

[24] Thomson , Gordon to Domenico de Clario, ms. cited in Scarlett [1980], p.169.

[25] Scarlett [1980], p.1980.

[26] McCaughey [1968], p.235.

[27] Dunlop, Ian *The Shock of the New* New York: American Heritage Press, 1972

28   Handbill for a Protest Meeting at the NGV, Thursday, 21st August, 1975 reprinted in Scarlett [1980], p.169

29   Gilchrist, Maureen, *The Age* 29 May, 1976, p.19 reprinted in Scarlett [1980], p.169.

30   *Ewa Pachucka*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm. [9 September 1978 to 15 October 1978]; *John Lethbridge*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978, 1 folded sheet [6] p.: ill. ; 30 cm. [21 July 1978 to 27 August 1978]; *Robert Rooney*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm. [10 June 1978 to 16 July 1978]; *Rosalie Gascoigne*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978 , 1 folded sheet [6] p: ill., 1 port. ; 30 cm. [29 April 1978 to 4 June 1978]; *John Davis*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978, 1 folded sheet [4] p.[18 Mar. 1978 to 23 Apr. 1978, AGNSW, 13 May, 1978 to 18 June, 1978];.*Tony McGillick*, Melbourne: NGV, 1978 , 1 folded sheet [6] p : ill., 1 port. ; 30 cm .[21 October to 26 November 1978]; *Janet Dawson*, Melbourne: NGV, 1979, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill., port. ; 30 cm.[6 July to 19 August 1979]; *Robert Boynes*, Melbourne: NGV, 1979, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm.[16 February to 25 March 1979]; *Ivan Durrant*, Melbourne: NGV, 1979, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm. [12 May to 17 June 1979]; *Tom Arthur*, Melbourne: NGV, 1979, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm. [8 September to 4 November 1979]; *Bea Maddock*, Melbourne: NGV, 1980, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill., port. ; 30 cm.[26 April -8 June 1980]; *On paper : Micky Allan, Mandy Martin, Sally Robinson, Jenny Watson*, Melbourne: NGV, 1980, [7] p. : ill., ports. ; 30 cm. [21 June -20 July 1980]; .*Imants Tillers*, Melbourne: NGV, 1980, 1 folded sheet [5] p. : ill. ; 30 cm. [26th July to 24 August 1980]; *Martin Sharp*, Melbourne: NGV, 1981, [6] p. : ill., port. ; 30 cm. [15 May -4 July 1981]; *Relics and rituals : Tom Arthur, Warren Breninger, Peter Cole, Peter Cripps, John Davis, Kevin Mortensen, Jill Orr, Ewa Pachucka, Mike Parr, David Ryan, Stelarc, Peter Taylor, Stephen Turpie, Ken Unsworth, Hossein Valamanesh*, Melbourne: NGV, 1981, [7] p. : ill. ; 30 cm [17 July - 13 September 1981]; *John Firth-Smit*h, Melbourne: NGV, 1981, [7] p. : ill., port. ; 30 cm. [30 October - 13 December 1981].

31   The video recordings were joint ventures between the National Gallery of Victorio and Open Channel and were produced at the same time as the respective exhibitions.

32   Examples of this type include: Metropolitan Museum of Art and American Federation of Arts, *The Heritage of American Art: Paintings from the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* [intro essay by John Howat and Natalie Spassky], New York, American Federation of Arts, 1975 (toured 1977); Australian Gallery Directors Council and the National Gallery of Victoria, *USSR Old Master Paintings: West-European paintings from the State Hermitage, Leningrad, and A.S.Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts*, Moscow Sydney, Australian Gallery Directors Council, 1979 (toured 1979-80); Australian National Gallery and Courtauld Institute Galleries, *The Great Impressionsists: Masterpieces from the Courtauld Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings and Drawings*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1984 (toured 1984); Guggenheim Museum, *Masterpieces from the Guggenheim* [selected by Thomas Krens with Lisa Dennison], New York, Guggenheim, 1992 (toured 1992).

33   For instance: *Ken Unsworth*, AGNSW, 1998; *Ann Newmarch : the personal is political*, AGSA, 1997; *Hossein Valamanesh*, AGSA, 2001; *Robert MacPherson,* Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2001; *William Robinson*, Queensland Art Gallery, 2001.

34   Taylor, Paul ,'Editorial: On Criticism', *Art & Text* 1, Autumn, 1981, 5-11

35   Taylor, Paul, 'Australian "New Wave" and the "Second Degree"' *Art and Text* 1, Autumn, 1981, 23-32

36   Taylor, Paul, 'Angst In My Pants' *Art & Text* 7, Spring 1982, 48-60

37   University Gallery *Tall Poppies : John Dunkley-Smith, Dale Frank, John Nixon, Mike Parr, Imants Tillers : an exhibition of five pictures* [curated by Paul Taylor] Melbourne, University of Melbourne, University Art Gallery, 1983

38   National Gallery of Victoria *Popism* [curated by Paul Taylor], Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 1982

39   Batchen, Geoffrey *Borderlines : recent Sydney photographs : Suzi Coyle, Anne Ferran, Martyn Jolly, Jacky Redgate, Dina Tourvas* [curator Geoffrey Batchen] ; co-initiating galleries: Albury, N.S.W., Albury Regional Art Centre and New England Regional Art Museum, 1987