



PLATE 164

Elaine Wreford, 1913-
Robert on Rice Paper, Mounted as a Scroll, 1981
 Gouache, 150.0x92.0 cm
 PRIVATE COLLECTION

continuation of past memories into the present.”¹⁶

A comparatively late visit to Italy in 1967 confirmed her adherence to the fundamentals of classical art. In her unusual treatment of portraiture she surrounds her subject with material reflecting her sitter’s personality. Two such portraits are those of her husband, [Pl.164] an active supporter of her work; *X-Ray—Substance and Shadow*, painted in 1972, was purchased by the City of Hamilton Art Gallery in Victoria, following an exhibition there a year earlier.

The extreme individuality apparent in her work has been described by Sir Joseph Burke: “Genuine lyricism is so rarely supported by form, and both your clarity of form ... and sense of colour, show a distinction of the mind ... imagination and sensibility ...”¹⁷

Sir Daryl Lindsay discerned in her work: “... a very refreshing unusual talent, which owes nothing to anyone else.”¹⁸ [Pl.167]

In April 1986 Elaine Wreford held an exhibition at Greenhill Galleries entitled *The Following Image*, opened by Jeffrey Smart. Always responsive to fresh ideas she had been inspired by an exhibition of nineteenth and twentieth century screens at the National Gallery, Washington D.C., in 1984. Among them were screens painted by Klee, Vuillard, Bonnard, Picasso and Man Ray. Aware of their traditional function in society she had already held a show of her own screens in 1971, firmly convinced that they have a decorative and useful place in contemporary life. [Pl. 165] Her most impressive screen in 1986 was a magnolia tree: “... a shaped canvas with the magnificent buds bursting luxuriantly out of their rectangle to colonise the surrounding space with a hot-house ferocity.” Screens depicting plants and animals were “... delicately painted [with] elegance and decorative presence.”¹⁹

It is an interesting comment on times past, that in preparing for one of her early exhibitions, Wreford was advised not to identify herself as a woman by signing her full name, lest critics (of the male order) should dismiss her work as negligible. Under those conditions what price art and women! Margaret Worth is well aware of similar discrimination.

Christine Lawrence states her credo in clear terms: ²⁰

I aim to present aspects of my environment that I find particularly beautiful, as stunningly as possible. I am interested in the interplay of light and colour relationship. I try to create striking compositions which have impact through the treatment of detail, use of colour and scale.

Lawrence studied concurrently at the South Australian School of Art and the Torrens College of Advanced Education from 1969 to 1972, mainly under Ann Newmarch, Geoff Wilson, Ron Hawke and David Dallwitz. Her early work, mostly acrylic on ‘canvas’ (cotton duck), was concerned with portraiture, still life, plant forms and landscapes.

After completing her Advanced Diploma with an additional fourth year under Geoff Wilson, she continued to gain experience from painting excursions with him and David Dallwitz. Both artists strongly influenced her work, the former with finely-controlled paint surfaces, use of colour and unusual compositions, the latter with broad areas of colour and economy of line. At the end of each excursion they made brutal but constructive assessments of the day’s work. Another influence



PLATE 165

Elaine Wreford, 1913-

Screen: *Florida, Fauna and Flora*, 1987

Gouache on heavy rice paper, 107.0x238.0 cm

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was that of Graeme Sturgeon of Artbank who encouraged her to paint full-time.

Although photography is an integral part of Lawrence's work, she challenges the view that she paints in the photo-realist manner. Foremost is her selection of subject: the camera records the image while her response to the subject at the time is expressed in the painting. In this way she creates her "... own reality which goes beyond the photograph; detail is enhanced, colour relationships are heightened and compositions carefully planned."²¹

Whether based on local scenes or on various travels throughout Australia, her compositions express "... fascination with the ever-changing effects of reflected light, colour and shape in water, [Pl.170] the elusive colours of distance and patterns of the landscape."²²

Among paintings incorporating these elements is *Lily Pond*, shown at the Contemporary Art Society exhibition *The Real Thing* (1980), now held by the Australian Embassy, The Hague. Two other paintings also distributed by Artbank, are *Hothouse Colours*, in the Australian Embassy, Beijing, and *Strelitzia*, in

Parliament House, Canberra. Another was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, through the Michell Endowment.

A predominant interest lies in her immediate environment, particularly that relating to the River Torrens and plant forms in the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Her subsequent works—large evocations of greenery and country landscape—were part of the 1986 Jubilee 150 Exhibition at Greenhill Galleries, and a prelude to a further exhibition there during the Adelaide Festival of Arts in the Bicentennial Year, 1988.

Of the two artists who appear to hold the strongest views on the role of women in society—Annette Bezor and Ann Newmarch—the former has been classed as one of the most eminent contemporary Australian feminist painters.

Bezor's²³ philosophy of feminism began to develop in her fourth and final year (1977) at the South Australian School of Art, where, as a latecomer at the age of twenty-three, she derived her most formative influences from fellow students. Her feminist view, expressed with subtlety and wit, challenges the viewer to search for, and interpret,

of St. John. On joining her husband as a display designer and director Campbell had the responsibility of constructing a huge moose backdrop, strictly authentic to the last detail.

After periodic visits to Mexico Campbell and her husband decided to settle there. In Mexico City, where her work is now represented, she has held several exhibitions, the earlier ones dominated by large acrylic paintings. Her watercolours, for which she is generally known, have been shown at the Bellas Artes. One entitled *Mythic Sunflower*, [Pl.187] depicts a huge, shrivelled sunflower head resembling the sun poised above the twisted heads of other sunflowers bowed low in worship, symbolising *Gira Sol*—Spanish for turning towards the sun. Always imaginative, her themes are patterned with brilliant and subtle colours, as in

Carnival, which transforms driftwood into dancing harlequins. [Pl.180]

On her visit to Adelaide in 1986 she said that her artistic development had been influenced by living within reasonable distance of the numerous art collections of the New World, some so large that she is sometimes surprised that European galleries still survive to tell the tale. In the last few years she has taken on a new lease of life thanks to successful eye implants which enable her to experiment with coloured etching techniques. Living in Mexico is vital to her work which draws its inspiration from the pervasive intensity of light and colour around her. [Pl.169]

In a similar way Dee Jones³⁴ finds stimulus from the Greek landscape with its rugged and austere architecture. A colourist whose dominating

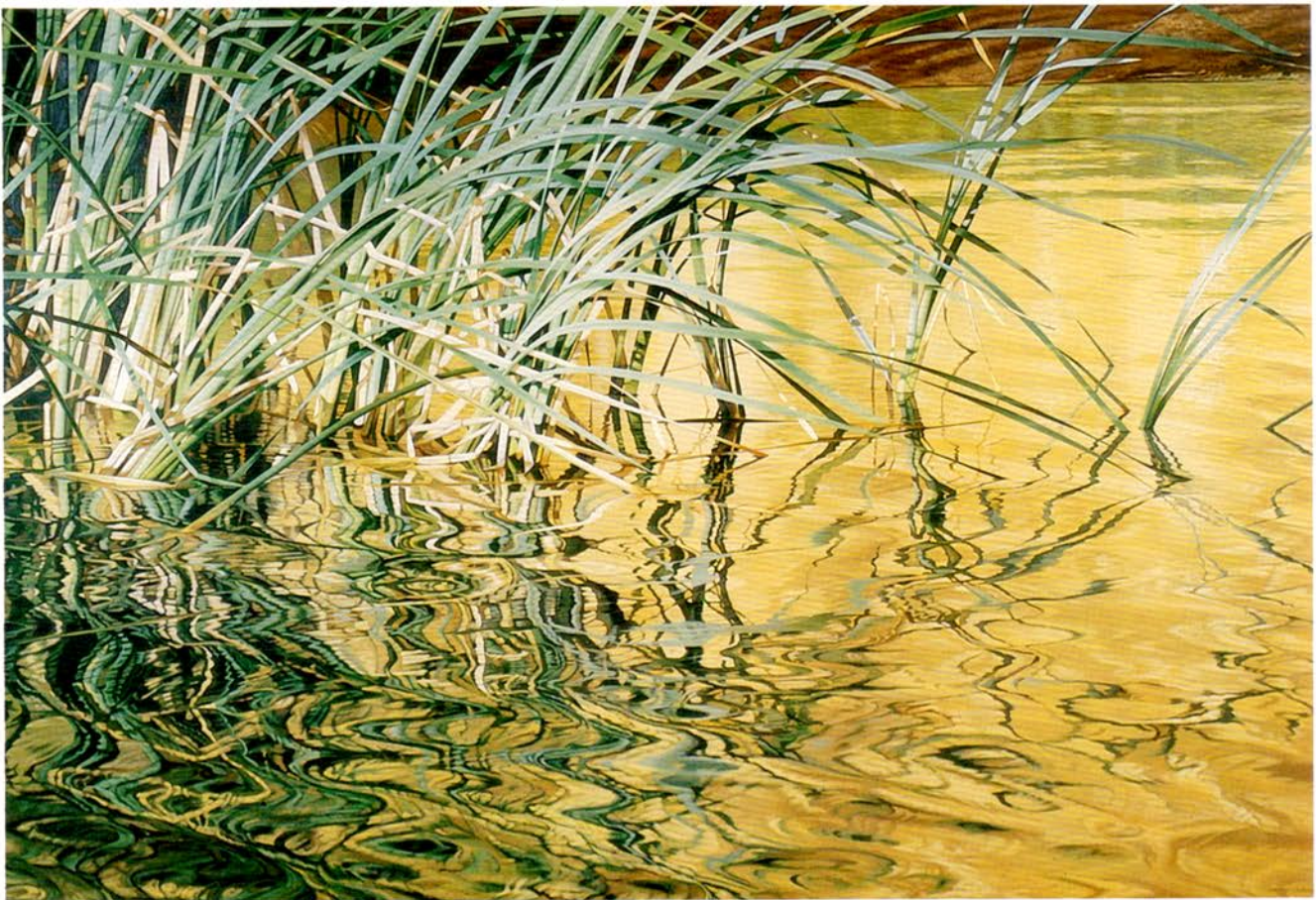


PLATE 170

Christine Lawrence, 1951-
Under the Railway Bridge, River Torrens, 1988
 Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 176.0x264.0 cm
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