

Luke Sciberras
Out There



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28 March – 22 April 2017

The thrill of a welcome, to be traversing country that it's custodians have opened to you is a delight all its own. When the farmers, indigenous owners or key holders give a painter carte blanche to run in any direction and respond to any old place they please, the sense of embrace is most keenly felt. To find an affection for and an intimacy with a landscape is to learn it and to observe closely it's most particular nuances and I realise more and more that the making of picture postcards gleaned on the side of the road just doesn't cut it. There has to be time spent in places and usually repeat visits over varying seasons to truly be able to wrest an image that is about a place rather than just of it.

To see a place through the eyes of the people who know it best and to then make an attempt at painting it is leavened by the information and permission given by its occupants who more often than not hold a particular fondness for and pride of the subject.

This exhibition is dedicated to those friends.

Luke Sciberras
Alice Springs, 2016



Luke on the Paroo river







Darling flood study, 2017, gouache on paper, 56 x 76 cm



Darling flood Wilcannia, 2016, oil on board, 160 x 240 cm

Eureka Man

There are two kinds of painters. One feels constant beckoning of the so-called destination or eureka painting; that which summarises everything which came before. Such paintings, usually sought by museums, impart a certain grace to even the most disappointing, previously unresolved works, suddenly imbued with an unexpected evolutionary significance.

Jeffrey Smart, the least prolific of Australian artists, constantly sat in front of his easel wondering if this was it, the one he always dreamed would define his vision emphatically and make sense of everything he had done. Each composition was subject to a slow process of rational construction, and the prospect maybe of a little death at the search because the search was over.

Russell Drysdale, Smart's most revered Australian artist, may have felt the same finality of deliberation about so many of his masterpieces – for example *Sofala* – which could explain his prevailing reluctance to break the eternal stillness of the next blank canvas.

The other kind of painter rarely entertains such thoughts. Individuals of the alternative persuasion move ahead less sedately, driven by a more fluid instinct from one creation to the next. They stay on the move at varying pace pending the scale and complexity of their conceptions, dancing as best as they can to manage any self-doubt. Luke Sciberras belongs to this category.

Ever since his ambition to be a painter found fruition studying at the National Art School in Sydney during the mid-1990s, haunting the studios of various artists with especial admiration for Elisabeth Cummings at Wedderburn, he has built up a consistent body of work suffused with gloriously sensual, open-minded ambiguity. Brush in hand scooping colour from the tiny pillars of his Turner-like palette he has pushed and dragged his pigment at the behest of his talent and amazingly diverse experiences of the Australia-wide *spiritus locus* and beyond.

It must be said however, Sciberras' exciting method of layering does flirt with an element of danger, where the shapes, not quite allowed to settle comfortably on the picture plane, are vulnerable to becoming destabilised and lost in uncertain textures and coefficients of deeper space. For he eschews – is maybe even afraid of – stasis, and any form of classical discipline. Thus any effort to define a destination picture, one that calmly holds the fort and pulls the rest into line, is difficult. In any case, Sciberras himself declares, and rightly so, this is not really his business, but clearly the role of the curator and critic.

Yet, when we look at paintings here such as *Portsea*, with its dizzy slab of rocks and trees looking out and down across a splendid expanse of sky and sea; the burning red of *Rembrandt Hill, Northern Territory*, its jagged dark contours colliding with shimmering hills of biblical fire against a pale sky almost leached of colour; and *Behind the stars* when the conflagration of a desert day has been quelled by the cool blue-black of Goya and a brilliant night sky; and above all *Midday sun, Wilcannia*, with its brave, ravishing slabs of pink; we can feel evidence of Sciberras' respect for earlier generations including Streeton, Nolan and Olsen, to whom he has added his own special inflection of poetic energy. There is no doubt he is aware how in the end reputations of painters settle on certain iconic moments; and to make those moments happen takes more reflection and hard work than may appear at first glance.

In the silent centre of his studio at Hill End, a deconsecrated Methodist church, it is reassuring to be aware that Sciberras paints with his easel in a precise position next to a window where daylight rakes left to right across the surface, picking out ridges and lumps like visual braille, and defining the tones with impeccable reliability. He may be submitting himself through unlikely elisions of awkwardness and elegance to an autonomous flux of nature, and even try to emulate nature itself, but under the watch of a mysterious order – daylight – which before the invention of electricity, has been a commandant of painters and their evolution for time immemorial.

And so, although unwilling perhaps to contemplate the idea of a eureka painting, Sciberras, in spite of himself, is unconsciously allowing us to glimpse it in the shards, shadows, accidents and luminous flashes of his instinctive language. He might not be interested to consciously seek such a phenomenon at this stage of his life, but through his deep love of painting and the landscape and peoples – including indigenous inhabitants – of his world, he doesn't need to. It will surely come and, at its own convenience, reveal itself to him its arrival. Maybe it is already here.

Barry Pearce

Emeritus Curator of Australian Art
Art Gallery of New South Wales
February 2017



Napperby, 2017, gouache on paper, 56 x 76 cm



Behind the stars Napperby, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Study for Cormorant country, 2016, gouache on paper, 31 x 42 cm



Cormorant country, Wilcannia, 2016, oil on board, 160 x 240 cm



Wilcannia country, 2017, gouache on paper, 56 x 76 cm



High spring, Wilcannia, 2017, oil on board 120 x 160 cm



Raven III, 2016, ink on paper, 60 x 60 cm



Lake George, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Fish Hole Creek NT, 2016, oil on board, 180 x 120 cm



Midday sun, Wilcannia, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Over Portsea, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 80 cm



Squall, Sorrento, 2017, oil on board, 160 x 240 cm



The Ram Paddock Wilcannia, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Stella Creek NT, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Raven I, 2016, ink on paper, 60 x 60 cm



Morning Fish Hole Creek NT, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Katherine NT, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 80 cm



Juka Juka Yuendumu, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



above
MacCullochs Range, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm

right
Rembrandt Hill, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 60 cm





Scrub Bull NT, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



Napperby Station, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 180 cm



Napperby Creek, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



above left

Larapinta, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

above right

Mt Sonder, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm



River Gums Wilcannia, 2016, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



above left

Afterglow NT, 2016, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

above right

Hamilton Downs, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm



Rembrandt Hill Napperby, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



above left

East of Wilcannia, 2016, oil on board, 60 x 60 cm

above right

Hill End and Summer, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 60 cm



top

Broken Hill, 2016, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

above

Larapinta Drive, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 80 cm



Buckley's Chance Portsea, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm



top
Moonee study II, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

above
Moonee study IV, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

top
Moonee study V, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm

above
Moonee study VII, 2017, oil on board, 30 x 40 cm



above
The Jump-up Tanami, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 80 cm



right
Tanami Road, 2017, oil on board, 60 x 60 cm



Towards the Tanami, 2017, oil on board, 120 x 160 cm

Luke Sciberras

Born

1975 Sydney, NSW Australia

Studies & Employment

1995-97 Fine Arts, National Art School

1995-98 Studio Assistant to several artists



Solo Exhibitions

- 2017 *Out There*, King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
- 2016 *West of the Darling*, King Street Gallery on William, Sydney
About Place, Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne
- 2015 *Flying Goose Hill*, with Elisabeth Cummings, Nock Art Foundation, Hong Kong
Human Condition, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney
Human Condition, Port Macquarie Regional Gallery
- 2014 *On Country*, Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne
From My Travels, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney
- 2013 *Tu-Whit! Tu-Whoo!*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Tu-Whit! Tu-Whoo!, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
- 2012 *Signs of Life*, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne
Road Show (with Guy Maestri), Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2011 *Highways and Other Recipes*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2010 *Under a High Desert Wind*, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne
- 2009 *More the Desert Reveals*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Fugues and Furrows, Moree Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2008 *Flipside*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Plum Blossom Time, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne
- 2007 *Persimmon Season*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Windswept and Picked Clean, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne
- 2006 *When the Sun Comes Out*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Art Sydney06, Royal Hall of Industries, Sydney
Plucked and Gutted, Port Jackson Press, Melbourne
Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 2005 *A Painter's Progress*, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Bathurst, NSW
Dogdays and Deluges, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
Windswept and Picked Clean, Port Jackson Press, Melbourne
Art Sydney05, Royal Hall of Industries, Sydney
- 2003 *Luke Sciberras & Tristan Lanceley*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2002 *Monaro Country*, Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
- 2001 *Back up the Monkey*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2000 *An Uncertain Something*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
Exhibited as finalist in *Brett Whiteley Scholarship*, Surry Hills
Exhibited as finalist in *Kings School Art Prize*, Parramatta
Meet 2x2, Tim Olsen Gallery
- 1999 Solo Exhibition at ABC Centre, Ultimo, Sydney
Exhibited as finalist, *Brett Whiteley Scholarship*, Surry Hills

top left: Paroo River

above left: Plein Air Painting Wilcannia

left: Mount Murchison

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2017 The Hill End Table, Art Food Fire, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Bathurst
Nine Lives – A Cat's Tale, Heiser Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
- 2016 *Paint my Place* Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NSW
Wynne Prize, Exhibition, Art Gallery of NSW
Animals, Gallery 81, Sydney
Phantom Exhibition Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Qld
- 2015 *Wynne Prize*, Art Gallery of NSW
Your Friend the Enemy, Gallipoli Exhibitions, S H Ervin gallery Sydney, Drill Hall Gallery, ANU Canberra, Goulburn Regional Gallery & Bathurst Regional Gallery
The Tattersall's Landscape Art Prize, Tattersall's Club Brisbane
The Art of Shakespeare, Sydney Opera House, Commissioned by Bell Shakespeare
Outback Art Prize, Broken Hill Regional Gallery, Broken Hill
This is the End... with Guy Maestri and Ben Quilty, Bathurst Regional Gallery, Bathurst NSW
- 2014 *Blow Ins*, Broken Hill Regional Gallery, Broken Hill, NSW
- 2012 *Australia Day Exhibition*, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2006 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
Kedumba Drawing Prize, Sydney
- 2005 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
- 2000 *Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship*, Surry Hills
Kings School Art Prize, Parramatta, Sydney
- 1999 *Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship*, Surry Hills

Residency Program & Prizes

- 2017 Tweed River Regional Art Gallery Artist in Residence
- 2016 Nock Art Foundation Artist in Residence, Hong Kong
Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery, Moonee Beach
- 2014 Bruny Island Bull Bay
Broken Hill Regional Gallery
- 2013 Xucun 1 Month Residency China

Collections

Artbank	Pat Corrigan Collection
Macquarie Bank	Neil Balnaves Collection
Port Macquarie Regional Gallery	Parliament House ACT
The Kings School Parramatta	Alberts Music
Broken Hill Regional Gallery	APRA
Orange Regional Gallery	Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery
Bathurst Regional Gallery	

Selected Bibliography

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Alvarez, L: Hill End Table, Art food fire, Brandl & Schlesinger p8–9 18–19
Russo N: Art of Gold , Australian Geographic Magazine
- 2016 Sciberras, L. 'On Country' Artist Profile Magazine, Issue 37 p128–131
Margo, J: How heart flu changed the way Luke Sciberras paints, AFR Magazine, Australian Financial Review, August
Country Style Magazine, Art Issue, March p77
- 2015 Fortescue, E. 'Going Bush', Artist Profile, Issue 31, 28 July (Cover Story)
Human Condition, Catalogue, Port Macquarie Regional Gallery and Olsen Irwin Gallery
Your Friend the Enemy, Gallipoli, Artist Profile, Special edition
In Style Magazine, Art House, November
Rosenlund, K. Shelter, Murdoch Books
McDonald, J. Flying Goose Hill, catalogue essay, Nock Art Foundation, Hong Kong
- 2013 Moorhouse, F. (Catalogue essay) Tu-Whit! Tu-Whoo!, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
- 2012 Robba, L. Australia Day: The Nation in Landscape, SMH Australia Day edition.
Fulton, A: Painters Renew Brush with Bush, Sydney Morning Herald, July 10
- 2011 Meacham, S. A Brush with Greatness, SMH Spectrum, 20 August
Albert, J, Art Throbs, Harper's Bazaar, May
- 2010 Buchanan, T, The Luxe Factor, Belle Magazine, June/July
- 2008 The Artist's Lunch, Sarah Rhodes and Alice McCormick, Murdoch Books
Lopez, A. Boxoffice-Art, Sydney Magazine September
- 2007 Studio: Australian Painters on the Nature of Creativity, John McDonald and Ian Lloyd
Lopez, A. Masters and Apprentices, Sydney Magazine
- 2006 Huxley, J. Places of the Heart, Sydney Morning Herald, December
- 2005 Westwood, S. Cool Hand Luke, Vogue Australia, August
McDonald, J. Exhibition Review, SMH Spectrum
- 2003 Fortescue, E. Cool and Handy Luke, The Daily Telegraph, July
- 2002 Hynes, V. Seasonal Work, Sydney Morning Herald, August
- 2001 Hynes, V. Critic's Picks, The Metro, SMH, August
- 2000 Brennan, B. Living Art, Vogue Living, July

full CV available on www.kingstreetgallery.com.au

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