

EUAN HENG - Born Scotland and 1945

- 1960-1969 Merchant Seaman and various other occupations.
1970-1975 Diploma and Post Graduate study, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.
1977 Emigrated to Australia.

Solo Exhibitions:

- 1974-1976 Stirling Gallery, Stirling, Scotland.
1979 The Art Council of Australia Gallery, Canberra A.C.T.
1980 Editions Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria.

Shared Exhibitions:

- 1980 Works on paper (with Arthur Wicks), Uberumberka Gallery, Armidale, Armidale C.A.E., Orange Civic Centre Gallery, Orange and Mitchell C.A.E., Bathurst, N.S.W.
1981 Works on paper (with Arthur Wicks), Tamworth Regional Gallery, Tamworth, N.S.W.
1983 Paintings, Prints (with Peter Whitting), The Brewery Gallery, Wagga, N.S.W.

Group Exhibitions (Selected):

- 1973 International Print Exchange, Compass Gallery, Glasgow. (Montpellier) Ecole Des Beaux Arts, Illinois State University and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art.
1974 Scottish Young Contemporaries, McLellan Galleries, Glasgow.
1975 'Trees' Stirling Gallery, Stirling, Scottish Society of Artists, Royal Academy Galleries, Edinburgh.
1976 Pernod Scottish Art, Centre Edinburgh.
1977 Royal Scottish Academy, Royal Academy Galleries, Edinburgh.
1983 Seven Painters Different View Points, University Art Gallery, University of Melbourne.
International Print Exhibit: 1983, Republic of China Taipei City Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.
1983/84 Contemporary Australian Printmakers, Harbourfront Gallery, Toronto, Canada, Pratt Graphic Centre, New York, U.S.A.
1984 Seven Painter Printmakers, Gallery Huntly, Canberra, A.C.T.

AWARDS, PRIZES, SCHOLARSHIPS, COMMISSIONS:

- 1971 Pat Homes Memorial Prize.
1973 B.M.K. Travelling Award (Paris).
1974 Post Graduate Scholarship.
1974 G.T.V. Prize (Printmaking).
1976 A Pernod Prize (Painting).
Scottish Arts Council short term Bursary for study at Kirktower House Print Workshop, Montrose.
1984 Commissioned Member Print, Print Council of Australia.

COLLECTIONS:

Mornington Peninsula Art Centre; Wagga Wagga Regional Gallery; Print Council of Australia; Latrobe Valley Schools Art Foundation; Riverina College of Advanced Education; Aquinas College Melbourne; Education Department of Victoria, (Hamilton Collection); Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education:
Other activities include teaching in Scotland and Australia, currently Lecturer in charge of Printmaking, School of Visual Art, Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, Victoria.

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES PTY. LTD.
35-37 DERBY STREET, COLLINGWOOD, 3066
417 4303 - 417 4382



EUAN HENG

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES



Ever since Henry Tonks denounced Cezanne's painting and encouraged his students at the Slade to devote themselves to the tasks of observation and the honing of draughtsman's skills as the basis of figuration, there has been in Britain a lineage of painters whose success as artists has lain in their ability to engender in their painting an existential power that only detached observation can create. It has established a way of painting that includes both the 'hot' and 'cool' extremities of artistic means. Cool in its detachment and analytic observation, hot in its ability to transform that observation, through the artist's imagination and intensity of vision, into painting of potent expressivity.

The work of Euan Heng has its beginnings in such an approach and encompasses influences that stem both from his training at Dundee College of Art, where a rigorous Tonksian approach to drawing was taught, and his exposure to such painters as Beckmann and Balthus. The links that exist between the Slade and the major art schools in Scotland have provided an environment within which such concerns have been pursued over the years, untainted by the more diverse interests of artists in the South, in England. In Scotland, too, the characteristics of a Northern gaelic people provide a sympathetic cultural link with other Northern cultures.

It is arguable that the success of British painting since Tonks has lain almost entirely in the work of those who have been able to combine intense observation with expressive force, either through narrative or the imaginative manipulation of paint; diosyncratic British painting operating, to a great extent, outside the European and American modernist mainstream. In Europe, Beckmann's reaction to German Expressionism whereby he situated existential pain in society rather than in the individual, fuses the values of expressionism and objectivity and transcends them both. The obsessive imagery of Balthus' painting in which anti-social ideas are clad in a cloak of conventional academicism and his dictum that we should 'make surrealism after life' combines in Heng's painting with Beckmann's approach to the individual and society to make works that are now moving away from the world of myth and fable which typifies "The Ferryman" into a dour world of aggravation and alienation in which Heng's Glasgow past and Gippsland present merge into a bleak world of repression, anger and resignation. This world of dark skies and chapel like factories, of alienated people with grimy skins, conjures a mood of desperation, but not despair; rather anger directed at the environment Heng finds himself working within and at the society that has firstly created it and finally been forced to live within its shadow.

Heng's career as a painter and printmaker has developed mainly in Australia and his work deals increasingly with his Australian experience, not in the sense that he uses imagery to establish a unique Australian identity for, indeed, his landscapes could as easily be located in Pittsburg or Warsaw as in Victoria, but his experience as an immigrant in a new land accentuates a sense of isolation and illuminates an underlying human plight in industrial and post-industrial society.

Although formal concern is an important element within Heng's paintings they contain nothing of Matisse's desire to create comfortable armchairs. These paintings are comfortless. But just as Heng's paintings contain no comfort they contain none of the ineptness that has become the hallmark of so much new figuration, where an active surface can hide an inability to draw or where intellectual rigour and aesthetic sensibility get lost in the rush for novelty and renown.

The tense mood apparent in many of Heng's works is enhanced by the manner in which they are executed. There is no respite from the painstaking standards he sets himself. Decoration and painterly sensuality are eschewed in favour of grotesquely distorted academicism, a high finish redrawn and repainted until, even in their most contorted passages, the images are still able to be read as 'real'. In his most recent painting Heng aligns himself to a British tradition that includes Spencer, Roberts and Burra, ignoring the rawness of execution in Germanic painting while maintaining the combination of stringent observation and intensity of psychological and emotional response to the subject. Heng's subject and treatment are closely aligned, the sense of tension in his work is inseparable from the tight conventions within which he works.

It is appropriate that this, Heng's first show in Melbourne should occur at a time when his concerns are becoming clearly defined. The best of these works, because of their adherence to pre-modernist painting conventions and their unremitting pursuance of a particular aspect of the human condition, are difficult to appreciate, these are not primarily works to be 'enjoyed'. For many, these are still hard times, the work of Euan Heng is a reminder to us of that.

DAVID THORP
MAY 1984

AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND PRINTS BY

EUAN HENG

AT

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES

35 DERBY STREET, COLLINGWOOD, 3066 MELBOURNE

MONDAY, 25th JUNE, 1984. 5.30 to 7 PM

CURRENT UNTIL 7th JULY. MONDAY TO FRIDAY 10 AM to 5.30 PM
SATURDAY 10 AM to 4.30 PM

COVER: No. 6. CHAR MAN

PAINTINGS. OIL ON CANVAS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. GLASS FACTORY | 152.5 x 152.5 |
| 2. FERRYMAN | 122 x 122 |
| 3. FISH | 152.5 x 91.5 |
| 4. PEARS | 152.5 x 91.5 |
| 5. ERIC'S GIRL | 122 x 122 |
| 6. CHAR MAN | 122 x 122 |
| 7. PRELUDE TO THE DANCE | 183 x 122 |

PRINTS. LINO CUTS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| 8. FACTORY COWS | 40 x 40 |
| 9. ERIC'S GIRL | 30 x 30 |
| 10. CHAR COUPLE | 37 x 37.5 |
| 11. PRELUDE TO THE DANCE | 61 x 44.5 |
| 12. ISIS | 38 x 28 |
| 13. LOVERS | 41 x 41 |
| 14. HEAD | 30 x 30 |