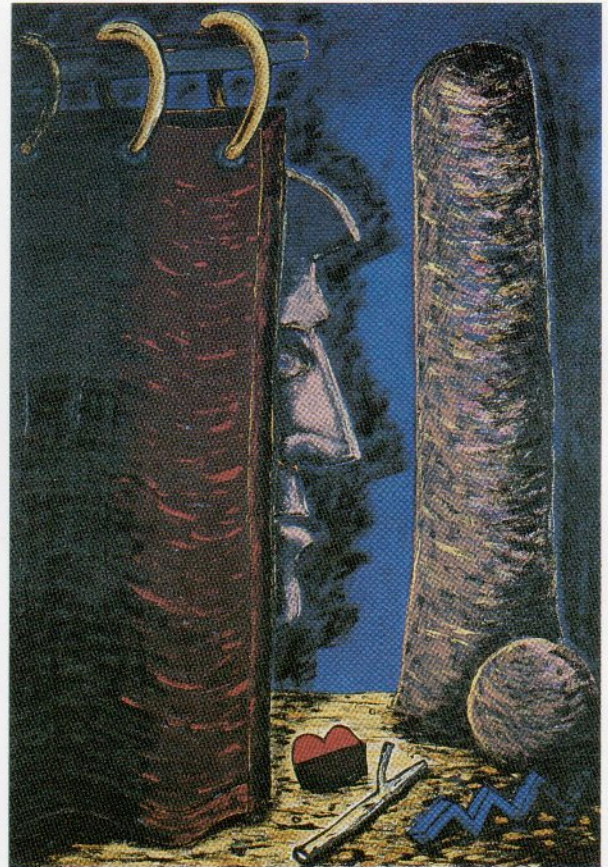




Francis Dennis
Last Light Kalgoorlie 1, 1991
oil on canvas
120.5 x 94 cm
Visual Arts Graduate, Edith Cowan University
Purchased 1991



Theo Koning
Solitude, 1985
acrylic on canvas
145 x 100 cm
Purchased 1992

GENESIS OF A COLLECTION

A personal reminiscence by Bryant McDiven

The following is an amalgamation of a this personal interview with Bryant McDiven and his wife Tedye at their home at "Tipperary Church" a few kilometres outside of York W.A. Together with a set of notes prepared by Bryant in 1986 on the History of the Collection . This article covers the years 1951 to 1969 when Bryant McDiven was Art lecturer at Claremont Teachers' College (1951- 59) and Head of Art and Craft at Graylands Teachers' College (1959-69).

Claremont Teachers' College, 1951-1969

During the seven years I was a member of the Claremont Teachers' College staff, I assumed a minor role in what we now know to have been the beginning of the present Edith Cowan University Art Collection. We were very fortunate to have Tom Sten as Principal in those days.

Tom Sten was disturbed by the lack of "Cultural Tone" in the college environment so he introduced a most active campaign to enrich the walls with paintings, drawings and original prints.

As well as spending his own money on modest works, he encouraged artists to donate works and he allocated part of the administrative budget for art purchases. Some of the earliest purchases were by Ernest Philpot, Frank Mills, Ivor Hunt and Henri van Raalte. I think from memory "Perth" by Henri van Raalte was the first work to be acquired.

I suspect that the enthusiasm of Tom Sten was a major factor in stimulating Mr (later Sir) Claude Hotchin to begin the practice of making gifts of art works to the collection. Included in the first gifts sometime in 1949 was Elizabeth Durack's "Way of the Whirlwind" and as I recall a watercolour by Albert Namatjira. *(Unfortunately both of these works have disappeared and have been deaccessioned: Ed Note)*

You must remember that the Hotchin Gallery in Hay street was the only professionally run gallery in Perth at the time. At the Hotchin Gallery the artist received every assistance from its Director Margaret MacPherson, Claude's daughter, whose contribution to the Perth art scene should not be overlooked.

To Claude's credit he brought over artists' work from the eastern States; names like Hans Heysen, Thomas Garrett, Lionel Lindsay, Elioth Gruner and Max Ragless. Certainly they were very representational and traditional but it was good art and most regional centres in Western Australia benefited from the generous gifts that were given by Sir Claude Hotchin. Both Bunbury and Albany have substantial collections which were fostered and developed in the early days by Claude's gifts. We did not see the Boyds, Nolans and Tuckers; those came later when Rose Skinner opened her Gallery in Malcolm Street.

My own contribution to the collection at that time, apart from the gift of two watercolours and numerous caricatures, was encouraging fellow members of the Perth Society of artists to support a scheme by Marge Tarling (Mrs Hetherington) to provide paintings on extended loan to the College. Most of these were subsequently given to the College. My impression is that following Tom Sten's retirement in 1958 the collection process slowed greatly during the next decade.

Graylands Teachers' College 1959 -1969

I left Claremont in 1959 when I was appointed Head of Art and Craft at Graylands College which had been established in 1955. This was the second teachers' college to be established in Western Australia. The campus was a collection of old army buildings, very hot in summer and freezing cold in winter, and not exactly the best environment for works of art. However, I set about the challenging task of creating an Art and Craft Collection. Unlike Claremont at the beginning of the decade there was no Tom Sten and no money for Art when all departments were chasing money for equipment and projects. They failed to understand my claim that works of art were a necessary part of my subject teaching requirements, as well as for the cultural enrichment of the campus.

I have always maintained that most of the students we taught in those years came from homes or environments where original works of art were rare. A college collection was one way of exposing these young people to worthwhile works of art and hopefully they would carry this example into the schools as teachers. I also felt that this was equally important to the theory and techniques of art. The teaching of these is greatly assisted by ready application to good works of art in the college environment.

I wanted to acquire as many works of art as quickly as possible but it was very difficult when I was vying with all the other departments. As we were still part of the Education Department we restocked each year by the time honoured system of requisition, but there were never any extra funds for such luxuries as paintings. I managed to work all kinds of rackets disguising art purchases as official requisitions. At different times I acquired some

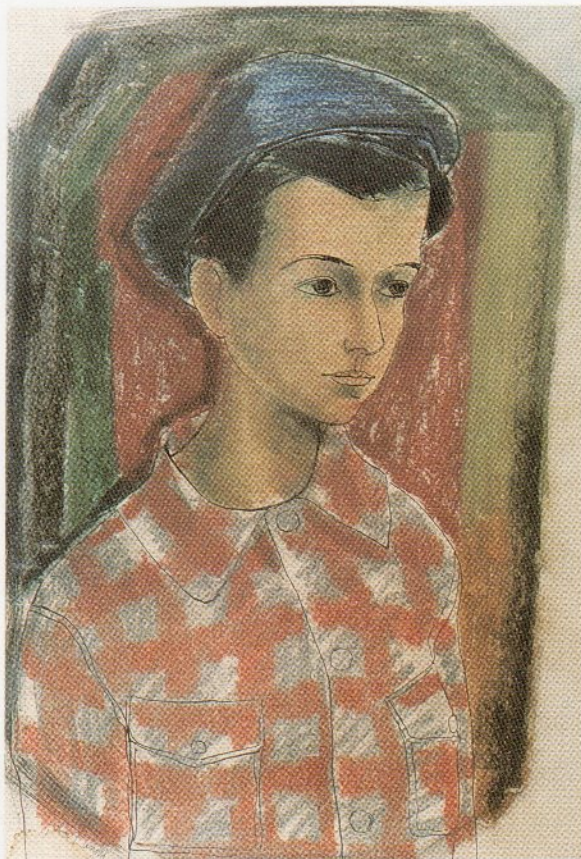


Figure 1
John Lunghi
Portrait of a Boy, 1959
pastel on paper
93 x 63 cm
Gift of Graylands Collection 1982



Figure 2
Bryant McDiven
Quarry Dust, 1952
watercolour on paper
36 x 47 cm
Gift of Graylands Collection 1982

reproductions, limited edition prints, ceramic and glass objects and various woven and hand printed fabrics as part of the annual requisition. These first art works were identified as teaching aids. I often bought works with my personal funds and worried about a refund later which I usually got, but not always.

When I arrived at the College there were two good paintings in the administration area - "A Portrait of a Young Man" (Fig 1) by John Lunghi and "A Study of Aloes" by Marge Tarling (Mrs Hetherington). I believe that both of these were presented to the College by Mrs Hetherington.

At this time I was President of the Perth Society of Artists and the members were pretty malleable and sympathetic to the college collection. So a number of artists lent works to the college on a semi permanent basis. I can recall gifts from Cyril Lander, Allon Cook, Allan Baker, Ernie Philpot, Portia Bennett and Alan Stubbs. I'm pleased to say that most of these works stayed in the collection. I gave two works myself "Quarry Dust" (Fig 2) and "Narrows Bridge".

Although I never received approval for a regular annual sum for art purchases, individual purchases became accepted. The type of art bought was not always popular, particularly with the staff, but in time they learned to live with it. Student appreciation and acceptance was much better.

Early in the piece we bought a very fine Arthur Russell oil painting for 5 pounds from the 1960 Festival of Perth Exhibition at the South Perth Zoo. This was the first work to be hung in student territory - the refectory. Due to the poor security of the Army hut lecture

rooms. early purchases were hung in the staff room thus isolating them from student participation. One had to take the students in groups to view and discuss the works.

By the time of my departure from Graylands at the end of 1969, a respectable foundation for a college collection had been established, but more importantly the general college community had begun to approve of the principle of art acquisition. Acquisitions included "Hills" a small painting by Robert Juniper, "Emu in the Wire" by Tom Gleghorn, one of the "Sungazer Series" by Lawrence Daws and "The Fisherman" by Allan Baker. Other early works were by Guy Grey - Smith, Ivor Hunt, Howard Taylor, Baynard Werner, Brian McKay and Margot Lewers.

My position at the college was taken over by Fred Stewart who continued the task of building the Graylands Collection with enormous enthusiasm, energy and great wisdom.

The acquisitions programme was greatly accelerated in the early '70s when the principal Dr. Clarrie Makin made funds directly available for the purchase of art works. This was also facilitated by an expert advisory committee with community members; Dr. Salec Minc, Miss Margaret Fielman, Dr. Roy Constable, and Bert Whittle and from the Art Department at Graylands Tony Monk and Keith Rutherford.

This formidable committee under Fred's chairmanship made some important purchases including works by Lloyd Rees, Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, John Olsen, Fred Williams and Howard Taylor. When Graylands College was closed in 1979 its collection was entrusted to Mount Lawley College and in 1982 entrusted to Western Australian College of Advanced Education. These works are still identified in the University collection as "Gift of the Graylands Collection 1982". In all, there are over 130 works.



Jill Kempson
Pathway Home, 1990
oil on board
60 x 69 cm
Purchased 1991



Frank Hinder
Figure Study, 1975
oil on board
22 x 17 cm
Gift - Dr. Ian Bernadt 1992

GENESIS OF A COLLECTION - PART TWO

The following is an amalgamation of a personal interview with Bryant McDiven and his wife Tedye at their home at "Tipperary Church" a few kilometres outside of York WA together with a set of notes prepared in 1986 by Bryant McDiven. This article covers the years that Bryant was Head of the Art Department at Mount Lawley Teachers' College 1970 - 1983.

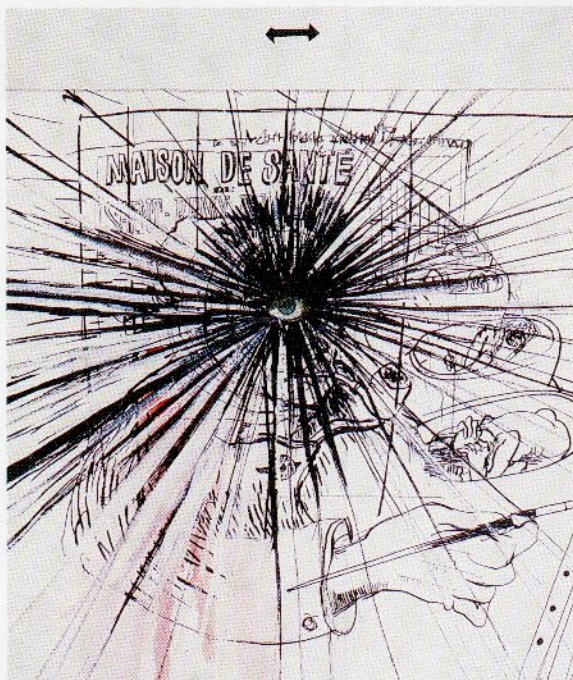
Mount Lawley College 1970 - 1983.

In 1970 I was appointed Senior Lecturer at the newly completed purpose built Mount Lawley Teachers' College. I accepted the rather daunting task of establishing a brand new art collection worthy of this new facility but with the familiar situation for me of little money available. The Principal, Dr. Robert Peter, was sympathetic to our needs but could only allocate small amounts of money.

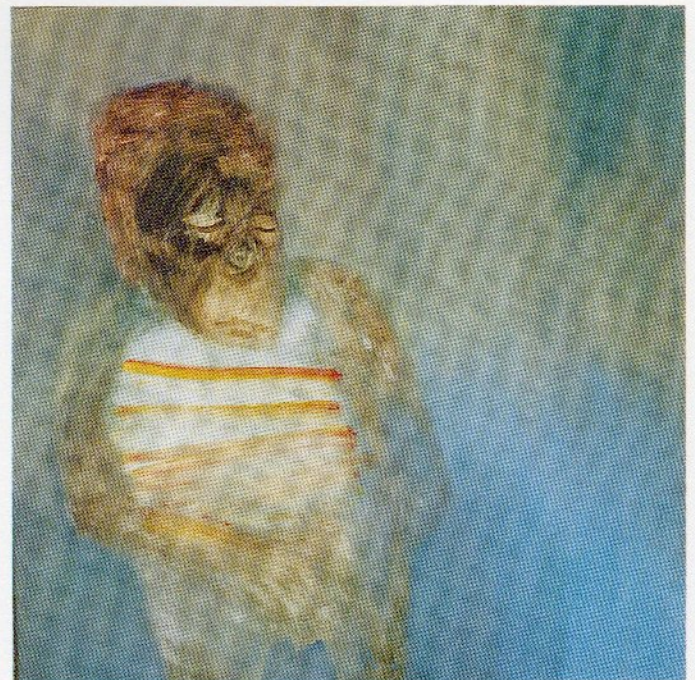
Again as at Graylands I adopted the scheme of promising to donate one of my paintings in return for a regular commitment to an established art purchase fund. In this instance the Student Council eventually agreed to set aside a percentage of student fees on the understanding that it would be matched by the College Administration. I had noticed when visiting Eastern State Colleges how this scheme had worked successfully and over the years major collections had been gathered together.

An Art Committee was set up in 1970 under my Chairmanship. It consisted of three elected staff representatives and three Student representatives elected by the general student body. This committee was later amended to include a community member and a representative of the college support staff. Dr Salec Minc a prominent art patron was the community representative for many years giving of his time and expertise including gifts from his own collection.

Brett Whiteley
Maison De Sante
ink and gouache on paper
52 x 42 cm
Gild Bequest 1973



Sidney Nolan
M Ape, 1963
oil on board
121.7 x 122cm
Purchased 1975



The process of acquisition became a steady commitment with much of the initiative for locating and securing the works resting with me. In those days Tedye and I were very involved with the art community in Perth. We were in close contact with all the commercial galleries and many artists. I was indeed in a fortunate position to find works and negotiate directly with the artists and gallery owners. It also helped being the convener of the Festival of Perth Art Committee for many years as I could keep my finger on the artistic pulse of Perth.

At the time as an artist I was still closely bound to the Skinner Galleries 'Stable' and in a position to secure some remarkable bargains thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Rose Skinner. For example the very large Robert Juniper, "*East Wind*" was purchased at nearly half price. This major work, a diptych, hung for many years in the stairwell of the main entrance foyer at Mount Lawley. It is now in the new staff room on Mount Lawley Campus. At a later stage two notable paintings, Sidney Nolan's "*M Ape*" and Arthur Boyd's "*Potter's Wife*" were sold to the college for the price of one by Rose Skinner. Such generosity greatly helped enhance the importance of the collection.

I was also fortunate in having access to people and institutions who were extremely generous to the college. David Fischer of the R and I Bank arranged a donation which enabled us to buy the John Lunghi "*Summer and Winter*".

By far the biggest donation was by the family of Mr. John Gild. John had been a significant person in the local art scene and after his untimely death the college was given many prints and drawings, among them a Brett Whiteley, a small etching by Renoir and an engraving by Albrecht Durer.

Over the years we had many visiting Artists-in-Residents all of whom contributed to the art department programmes and from them several works were donated or purchased. Paul Greenaway, a respected South Australian sculptor gave several large works, one of which "*Male Chauvinist Pig*", was damaged beyond repair by a group of outraged male students.

I was particularly pleased with the commissioned portrait of Neil Stewart, who was a principal of the college. This very striking and highly original portrait was done by Nigel Hewitt.

Tom Gibbon's "*Stanley's Magical Moment*", a portrait study of Laurel and Hardy, is worth a mention as it became a sort of icon for the students. Every time we had fire drill and had to evacuate the buildings and grab the most valuable things, some how Laurel and Hardy were rescued first.

I still have the paint brush that Sidney used to sign the commemorative plaque in the Art School Nolan Studio. When he noticed his painting "*M Ape*" he said "oh so you got that - that was one of my better pictures."

During the decade [1970 - 1980] the Mount Lawley Acquisition Committee accumulated in excess of 200 works of art ranging from paintings and sculpture to ceramics, glassware and wall hangings. It was indeed a satisfying achievement when funds had been scarce.

Before concluding my comments I wish to pay a particular compliment to the foundation Principal Robert Peter. His support and encouragement was never in doubt and the collection prospered as a result of his interest.

Although there were times when application for funds was refused, these times were rare.

When his support was really needed, for example when we needed urgent and fairly large amounts to buy Juniper's "*East Wind*" or Howard Taylor's "*Tree and Sky*" or a painting by Lawrence Daws, he or his Deputy Len McKenna found the money. All of the people I have noted have played an important part in creating the Mount Lawley collection. I trust their contribution will be recognised and appropriately recorded for future consideration.