

ON THIS ISLAND, MEETING AND PARTING
Hazelhurst Regional Gallery
27 March – 9 May 2010

Education Kit, Years 7 to 12

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About this exhibition

In March 2009, Artist Profile magazine in collaboration with art material producers Winsor & Newton, led eleven prominent artists on a painting tour of New Zealand's Northern Island. This exhibition is the culmination of each artist's unique approach to the unfamiliar landscape, following their *plein air* experiences in the landscape back into the studio. Exhibiting artists include Lucy Culliton, Julie Harris, Judith Van Heeren, David Keeling, Steve Lopes, Euan MacLeod, Idris Murphy, Ann Thomson, Shonah Trescott, Jan Senbergs and Peter Simpson.

The diversity in approach and style is indicative of the three generations this exhibition spans and the personal approaches of each artist. Paul Flynn's introduction to *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile* Magazine, Issue 09, 2009, refers to this difference in concept and methodology of approach to landscape. Both Australia and New Zealand artists initially grappled with unfamiliar environments as colonies but, through isolation, have now developed unique perspectives, informed by indigenous populations.

The expectation was to give at least ten of these eleven artists a new vision and new material to create a body of work (Euan MacLeod being a native New Zealander). Flynn details the experiences of the artists on tour in New Zealand, from the east Wairarapa coast to the island's volcanic centre, Mount Ruapehu, working en plein air. Insights include culinary experiences, interactions with the locals, and some of the artists' reactions to their new environment.

On This island curator, Owen Craven, speaks of the process of creating the exhibition, from plein air to studio, in his catalogue essay.

"A vast difference in terrain, climate and topography meant everyday was an opportunity for the artists to see something new. An unfamiliar landscape brings to the surface the fundamental elements of looking and observing. As the days progressed, the artists sketched and painted en plein air – at times by themselves but often in little groups. The new and unfamiliar landscape sparked curiosity and conversations. Questions were asked and ideas were shared. Their responses to the landscape, while unique in their artistic output of style and form, were a shared experience."¹

¹ Owen Craven, *On This Island* catalogue, Artist Profile magazine

Exhibiting Artists

LUCY CULLITON (b. Sydney, 1966)

Culliton graduated from The National Art School, Sydney in 1996, majoring in painting. Since 1996 she has been represented by Ray Hughes Gallery. Culliton was awarded the Portia Geech Prize 2006 and the Mosman Art Prize in 2004.

Intense scrutiny of a single subject is characteristic of Culliton's work. She surveys single subjects ranging from cakes on plates, landscapes, to dozens of roosters. As the Sydney Morning Herald describes, Lucy's works "are deliciously pretty, obsessive in a way that dazzles rather than disturbs".

Artist Statement:

"Landscape painting is hard. There's the wind, heat, cold, wet, sticky insects and the light is constantly changing. Every now and then the challenge of being in the landscape is necessary as opposed to the comforts of the studio."²

JULIE HARRIS (b. Sydney, 1953)

Julie Harris graduated from the national art School, Sydney in 1975. In Julie's own words, her "art is a reflection of my love of color and bold images". She paints on large canvases using acrylic paint, exotic papers and mixed medium – copper, gold and bronze – to capture light and her vision of the landscape. Julie spent her formative years in Saudi Arabia. The region's exotic culture made a deep impression on her and from this Julie draws much inspiration for her art making.

Harris has been an exhibitor in various art awards, and was awarded the Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing in 2008. Julie Harris is represented by Richard Martin Australian Art, Sydney.

Artist Statement:

"To work en plein air is to reinvigorate the palette, it keeps you in touch and it fuels the imagination, it makes one look more closely and it helps with the repository of signs and marks. It helps to open up my practice."³

DAVID KEELING (b. Launceston, Australia, 1951)

Keeling graduated from the Tasmanian School of Art in 1973, followed by the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney. Keeling's key subject matter is the landscape. He uses this as a vehicle for discussing environmental and social concerns. A garage sale or a glimpse of a new housing estate are subtle intersections into the classical or romantic notions of the genre. His canvases are beautiful objects and they present his concern for the things around him.

Keeling has been a finalist in the Wynne Prize, AGNSW in 2008 and 2009. He was awarded the Tasmanian Glover Prize in 2006 and exhibited in *Four Tasmanian Painters – Burns, Keeling, Wastell & Wolfhagen* at Holmes á Court Gallery, Perth. His work is included in the National Gallery of Australia and National Gallery of Victoria. David Keeling is represented by Niagra Gallery, Melbourne and Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney.

Artist Statement:

"Living in Tasmania the landscape is never far from your consciousness – every window affords you a view to landscape...I'm interested in the fluid aspect of landscape, the way light changes, the drama and the detail."⁴

² *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 59

³ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 68

STEVE LOPES (b. Sydney, 1971)

Steve Lopes graduated from University of NSW with a Bachelor in Fine Arts in 1991. Lopes has also studied at the London Print Studio and The New York Art Students League. A figurative painter, Lopes is inspired by Australia's landforms, placing his contemporary figures in an alien landscape where the inhabitants come filled with hope, often in the process of regenerative cathartic actions or some symbolic meditative state. Though they may appear to be overawed by their surroundings, they exhibit a quiet charm. These distinctive works are imbued with a large investment of labour and skill.

Since 1966 Lopes has exhibited in over fifteen solo exhibitions in Australia and in London. He has exhibited in numerous group exhibitions including The AGNSW Brett Whiteley Travelling Art scholarship and the Doug Moran Portrait Prize. His work is held in major collections including The National Gallery of Australia.

Artist Statement:

"I try to deal with the figure and landscape together. For me, it's about the relationship we have with our surrounds. The tension between the two, both visually and metaphorically, is what makes it interesting to tackle the subject." ⁵

IDRIS MURPHY (b. Sydney, 1949)

Idris Murphy is a Sydney artist who focuses on the Australian landscape. Recognised as one of Australia's foremost landscape painters, Murphy's career spans over 35 years. His unique approach to the landscape exemplifies an adherence to the history of Western landscape painting, while taking on board the traditions, customs and references of indigenous painters. Murphy's approach to painting is a study in the psychology of visualising the land and transforming the immediate image to an emotive distillation of form, colour and content. Murphy has traversed the Australian bush numerous times and spent 30 years painting 'en plein air.' Fifteen years ago he founded the Imaging the Land International Research Institute (ILIRI), which today brings artists from all over the world to live and work in the Australian desert.

Idris Murphy has studied and taught extensively in Australia at some of the most prestigious art schools including COFA, the National Art School, Sydney and the University of Wollongong. In 1994 he received his Doctorate in Creative Arts from the University of Wollongong. Represented by King Street Gallery on William in Sydney, Murphy has exhibited extensively in both private and public gallery spaces over the past 30 years. His work is held in the National Gallery of Australia, the National Library of Australia and the Art Gallery of NSW.

Artist Statement:

"These are the things that originally enticed me to go to New Zealand: Colin McCahon, to see the land and to see what he has made of it, and from it, first hand. To somehow use it as a contrast to the desert country that I am most at home with." ⁶

EUAN MACLEOD (b. Christchurch, New Zealand, 1956)

Euan MacLeod was born in New Zealand and after Studying a Diploma of Fine Arts (Painting) at Canterbury University, New Zealand in 1979 he moved to Sydney in 1981. He now lives and works in Sydney. MacLeod was the winner of the prestigious Archibald Prize for portraiture in 1999 and the Sulman Prize in 2001. His paintings and drawings feature in prominent public and private collections throughout Australia and overseas including the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Australia, Parliament House Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Chartwell Collection, New Zealand. Macleod's work can be seen as part of an international return to figurative expressionism.

⁴ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009. p 73

⁵ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 65

⁶ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 60

Artist Statement:

"My works involves landscape to such a large extent so working directly in the landscape keeps me fresh. I'm forced to look." ⁷

JAN SENBERGS (b. Latvia, 1939)

Born in Latvia in 1939, Jan Senbergs arrived in Australia in 1950. Senbergs completed an apprenticeship in silk-screen printing and began exhibiting in the early 1960s. In 1973 he represented Australia at the Sao Paulo Biennale in Brazil, the first of many honours in an illustrious career. Major surveys of Senberg's work have included: *Imagined Sites - Imagined Realities*, held at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne in 1993; *Jan Senbergs: From Screenprinter to Painter*, exhibited at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2008.

His work is represented at the National Gallery of Australia and in all state galleries in Australia. Internationally his work is included in the collections of the National Gallery, Washington D.C; Wadsworth-Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. The book *Voyage and Landfall* by Patrick McCaughey was published by Melbourne University Press under the Miegunyah imprint.

Artist Statement:

"Personally I don't gain anything from working in the landscape - as I don't do it. Usually what happens with me is when a particular site intrigues me then I like to spend some time there to get to know it – observing, taking photos for reference, and try to get a sense of the place. Then I try to work on it, re-invent it, persisting in what you know is there rather than what you see in front of you." ⁸

PETER SIMPSON (b. NSW)

Peter Simpson grew up in the Hunter Valley in NSW before moving to Melbourne to attend art school, graduating with a diploma in painting from the Victorian College of the Arts. Simpson has been painting for more than twenty years. As a contemporary artist whose subject is the Australian landscape, his work shows us the quintessential Australian terrain providing us with a framework though which we can read a great deal about life on this continent.

Simpson's work is included in several prestigious collections, including BHP Billiton, The Australian Club and Artbank. Peter Simpson is represented by the Mossgreen Gallery in Melbourne and Arthouse Gallery in Sydney.

Artist Statement:

"The more time you spend in a landscape the more elusive its essence becomes but if you take back even a small amount of what it offers up you are very sustained back in the studio." ⁹

ANN THOMPSON (b. Brisbane 1933)

Ann studied in Brisbane with Australian Modernist artists. Moving to Sydney, she graduated from the National Art School in 1962. Her first solo exhibition was at Watters Gallery, Sydney in the 1960s. She has since exhibited both in Australia and internationally, including Art Gallery of NSW, Musee de l'Art Walloon, Belgium and Lui Hat-su National Art Museum, Shanghai. In 1998 Thompson was awarded the Wynne Prize at AGNSW and in 2002 the Geelong Contemporary Art Prize. Major surveys of Thompson's work have been exhibited at the Institute of Modern Art Brisbane and Monash University Art Gallery, Melbourne.

Terrence Maloon, curator at the AGNSW describes Ann's work as "glamorously Rembrandtesque in the way her forms loom out of a fathomlessly dark background, like a precipitate of fire and phosphorescence". Her works are widely collected amongst public and private galleries, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Queensland Art Gallery and the Thyssen-Bornemisza

⁷ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 66

⁸ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 60

⁹ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 76

Collection in Madrid. Ann is represented by Charles Nodrum Gallery in Melbourne and Australian Gallery in Sydney.

Artist Statement:

"There is always so much to see - what I absorb somehow finds its way into more abstract painting. To tell you the truth, when I was faced with the New Zealand landscape, I was at a bit of a loss because it's not my usual way of working." ¹⁰

SHONAH TRECSCOTT (b. Australia, 1982)

Shonah Trescott graduated from the National Art School, Sydney in 2004. Having grown up in regional Australia, Shonah Trescott reacts naturally to the landscape. Trescott's compositions are a considered moment in time, exploring the genre of landscape and the human figure, caught between abstraction and figurativeness. Of particular importance to her work is the representation of light and form, and observation is one of her strengths and passions.

In the short time since graduating, Trescott's career has made rapid progress. In 2005, the recipient of La Cite International des Arts Paris studio residency, Trescott travelled to France where she based herself and travelled extensively. Winning the 2008 Fleurieu Water Prize emphasized the meteoric rise of her career and strength of her work. In 2009, with a bank of successful solo exhibitions behind her, Trescott relocated to Germany. Her work is being exhibited at the prestigious EIGEN + ART gallery throughout 2010. Most recently, her work was featured in a group exhibition for emerging artists living and working in Leipzig at the Rostock Kunsthalle in North Germany. Trescott lives and works in Berlin, Germany. She is represented by Damien Minton Gallery in Sydney.

Artist Statement:

"Working plein air, you have to be efficient and economical in recording the changing atmosphere. I start by repeating a single passage, trying to understand a set of rules of nature. In this way, speed and repetition gives me the freedom to react subconsciously – feeling the place rather than just looking. In the studio, I find my working process slower and in a sense more deliberate and self-aware." ¹¹

JUDITH VAN HEERAN

Judith Van Heeren has quietly built a respected career over decades of art practice devoted to the study of the natural world, in line with her fascination with natural history specimens. Born in the Netherlands, she moved to Australia at a young age. Judith's works are often richly coloured and fanciful, utopic and detailed landscapes. Van Heeren studied at the Victorian College of the Arts after which time she began exhibiting her unique style widely across Australia. Her work is concerned with and inspired by taxidermy, museum specimens and endangered species, consistently exploring the notions of conservation of the natural world.

Van Heeren has held many successful solo exhibitions while also forming part of many group exhibitions such as *In Nature we Trust* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Her work is held in the National Gallery of Victoria's collection. She is artist in residence at the Moya Dyring studio of les Cite International des Arts, Paris, 2010. Van Heeren lives and works with her partner by the coast in Victoria. Judith is represented by the Murray Whiteroom Gallery, Melbourne.

Artist Statement:

"The environment now is so vulnerable that I think contemporary artists have a responsibility to inform as well as to represent. We can no longer separate the landscape from the environment that it is part of."

"When I'm outside I want to absorb the landscape and when I'm in the studio I want to be absorbed in the painting. Therefore landscapes in my paintings are about a mood, an emotion, a feeling or an

¹⁰ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 54

¹¹ *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile Magazine*, Issue 09, 2009, p 71

atmosphere rather than a specific place.”¹²

Links to the Curriculum

The exhibition *On This Island, Meeting & Parting*, is a survey of contemporary artists making paintings in response to a new and strange landscape.

On This Island, Meeting & Parting Education Kit contains background information on the exhibition, artist biographical information, artist's quotes, a Vocabulary List of art terms, and questions relating to the Visual Arts Syllabus.

This Education Kit makes links to the Visual arts Syllabus Years 7 to 12, by providing information about the artist's practice, questions regarding the frames, agencies of the artworld, and the scope of art practice in landscape painting. Suggestions for artmaking activities are also included.

***On This Island, Meeting & Parting* Art Study**

Please use these questions, looking at the exhibition or images from the catalogue.

Looking at the Artworks

1 Are there any colours which recur in this exhibition more than others?

2 Make a List of the media used by these artists.

3 What elements in the landscape are the same?

4 Link the artists and stylistic descriptors with a line:

Evocative of place	Judith Van Heeren
Expressionistic	Lucy Culliton
Abstract	Peter Simpson
Stylised	Jan Senbergs
Idealistic	Steve Lopes
Landscape with figures	Idris Murphy
Landscape with birds (flora & fauna)	Shonah Trescott
Idealised	Euan Macleod
Calligraphic	David Keeling
Surreal	Ann Thompson
Pastural	Julie Harris

5 Find 2 works which look very different to each other. Give their titles and artist's names. List the differences (Think about colour, line, shape, tone, texture, size, direction). Explain how the artists' intentions are different.

Subjective Frame

1 Look at Lucy Culliton's *Plein Air Study*, 2009. Comment on the subject matter and Culliton's use of colour. How does it make you feel?

2 Look at Peter Simpson's *Mt Ruapehu study I-IV*, 2009. Comment on how, through a limited colour scheme, size and shape, Simpson has created a feeling of coldness and isolation.

Structural Frame

¹² *On This Island, Meeting & Parting* in "Feature_New Zealand", *Artist Profile* Magazine, Issue 09, 2009, p 74

3 Look at Keeling's *Castlepoint Night* and *Castlepoint*. How different are these works? How are signs and symbols used to show evidence of people in each painting?

4 How does the landscape appear, compared to the person in Euan Macleod's *Castlepoint Surfer*. Explain how the treatment of media, including paint application with impasto, direction and size, over shadows the lone figure. What is the artist saying?

5 Explain what visual conventions are important to Jan Senbergs.

Cultural Frame

6 Judith Van Heeran uses flora and fauna to signify time and place in an idealised way.

What do you see, how is it depicted, and what is the political significance of presenting now extinct wildlife in this manner?

7 Examine the paintings of Anne Thompson and explain how her signs and symbols are specific to a particular culture and time. (What style and period in art is her work typical of?)

Postmodern Frame

8 How does Idris Murphy challenge historical and modernist codes of practice? Look at his use of colour, shape, direction and pattern. Consider the influence of other mediated styles.

9 Discuss the possible meanings of the paintings of Steve Lopes. Look at the depiction of people and their interaction with the environment.

Conceptual Framework

10 Look at the work of Julie Harris. How does the artist convey her ideas through signs and symbols, exploring her media and developing or changing aesthetic conventions? Consider the artist's statement. (artwork/structural frame/ artist)

11 Read Shonah Trescott's artist statement. How does this inform us about her artmaking process? (artist/ audience/ structural frame)

12 What evidence can you find of different cultural styles for portraying the landscape in this exhibition? (artwork/ cultural frame)

13 How do these works by eleven different artists reflect the spirit of their time? (artwork/world)

Art Making Activity

Exercise 1

1 Immerse yourself in an environment, perhaps one you have not visited before. Through photos and drawings or quick water colour and gouache paintings, record what you see.

2 Back in the class room: develop these works into large scale paintings from the sketches and photos, using mixed media. Students then overwork each others' paintings and display as one large, continuous work.

Exercise 2

1 Go for a walk and record what you see, through quick sketches and mark making.

2 Back in the class room develop this journey through an environment by working on a large scale. First develop a line drawing from memory, recorded either as a snap shot of what you saw, or as an aerial view. Use the quick sketches and mark making to develop this drawing with texture and detail. Work over the drawing with oil pastels and complete with applications of paint washes.

3 Display and critique, noting differences in recall, style and paint application.

Vocabulary

abstract – reduction or simplification of forms to one of non-representation

body of work – a collection of artworks by an artist,

en plein air – French term meaning “in the open air”, painting outdoors

evocative – tending to inspire memories

expressionistic - a style of art drawing on the artist's feelings

calligraphy – pleasing hand writing, literally ‘beautiful brush marks’

fauna – the animal life of a region

flora – the plants of a region

idealised –to represent something in perfect form as imagined

impasto – paint applied thickly

media - materials used

pastoral – associated with, or containing shepherds or flocks and herds of animals

texture – the look or feel of a surface. This can be real or created by pattern.

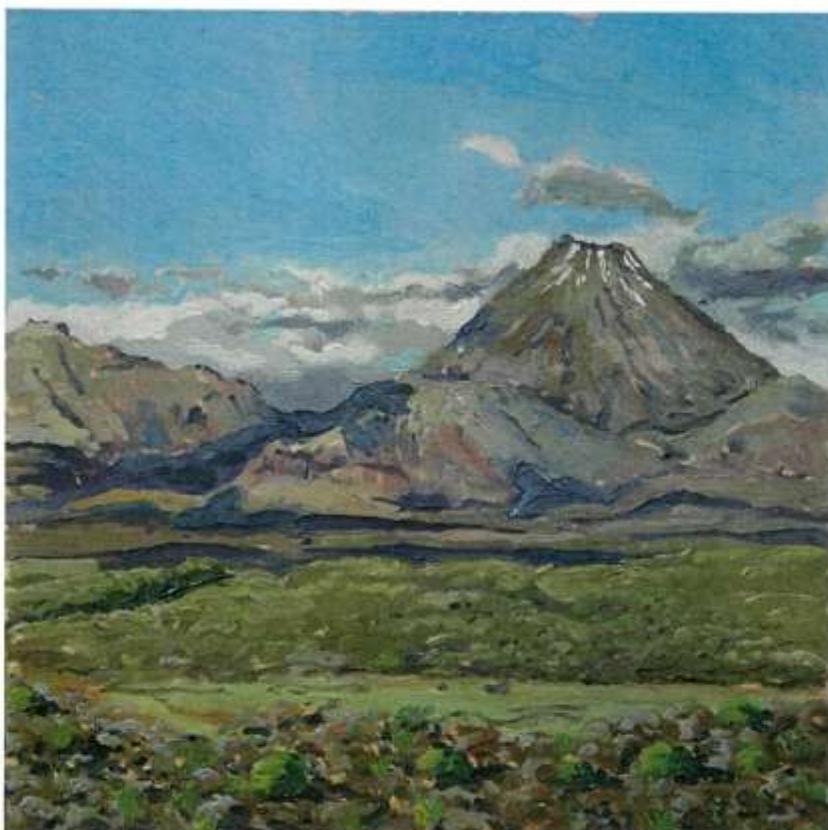
stylised – made according to a set of rules, between abstraction and realism

surreal – beyond the real, artwork which creates an illusion of reality, but in a dream-like way

survey – a selection of artworks, taking in the full range of the artist's output

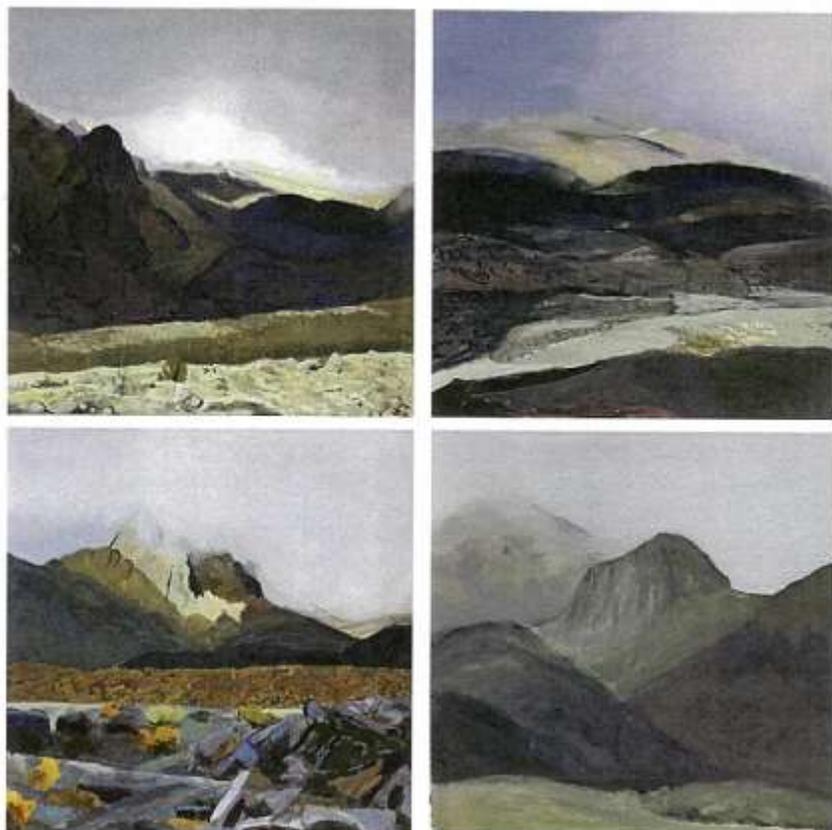
Images:

Lucy Culliton *Plein Air Study*, 2009



Plein Air Study, 2009, oil on canvas, 60 x 80cm

Peter Simpson *Mt Ruapehu study I – IV*, 2009



Mt Ruapehu study I-IV, 2009, gouache on paper, 39 x 39cm (each)

David Keeling *Castlepoint night*, 2009; *Castlepoint*, 2009



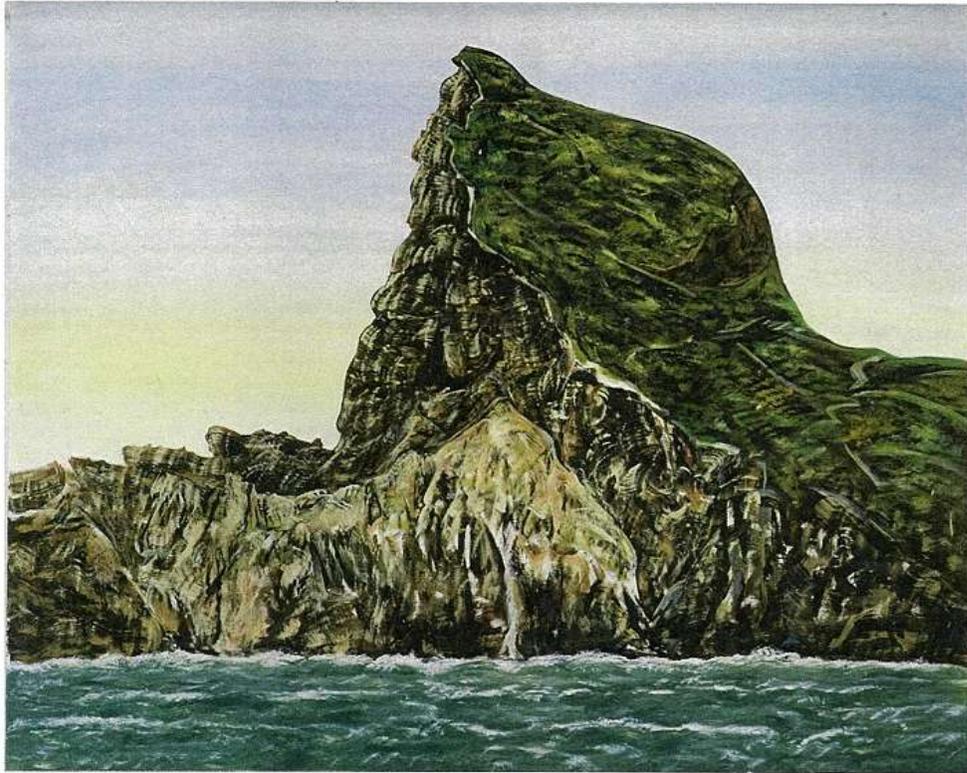
Castlepoint night, 2009, oil on linen, 46 x 51cm
Castlepoint, 2009, oil on linen, 137 x 122cm

Euan Macleod *Castlepoint surfer*, 2009



Castlepoint surfer, 2009, oil on canvas, 137 x 190cm

Jan Senbergs *Rock face – Castlepoint*, 2009



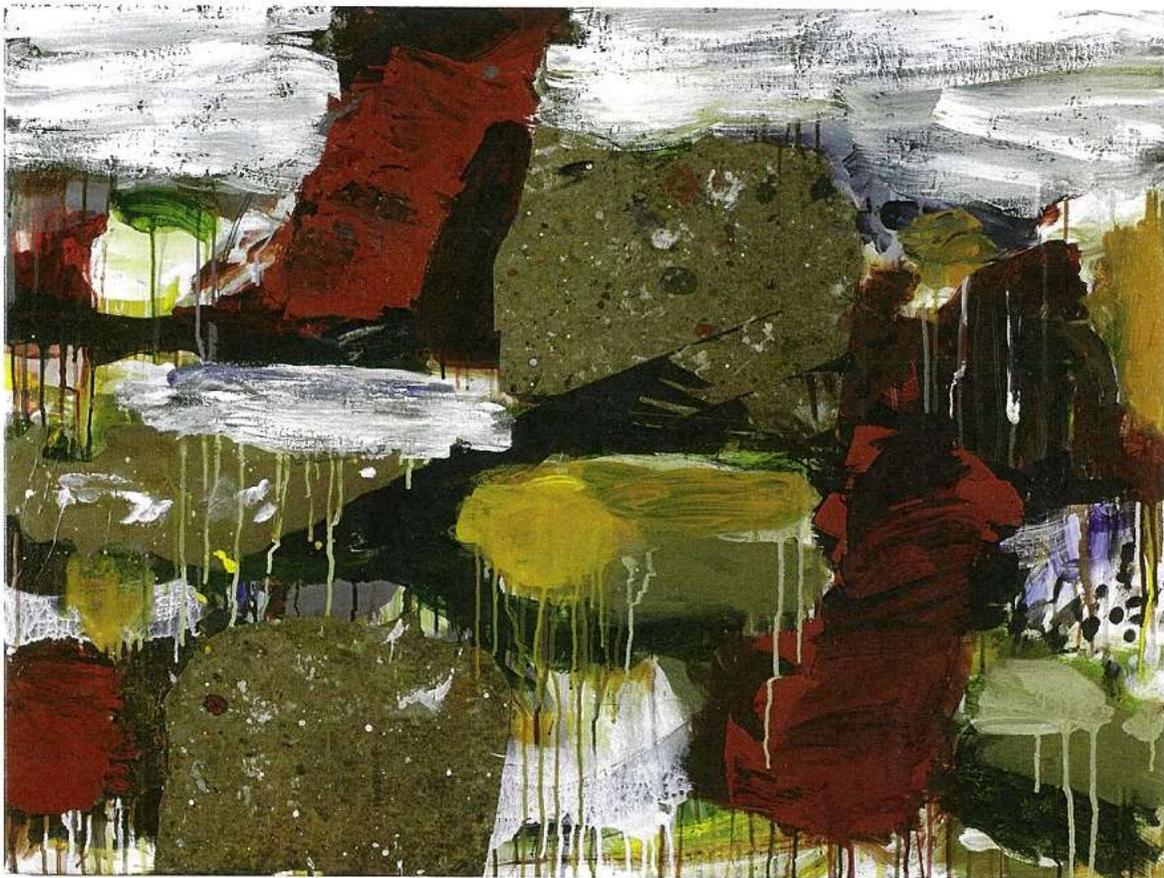
Rock-face – Castlepoint, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 152cm

Judith Van Heeren *Landscape with Kaka parrots and thermal pool*, 2009 – 10



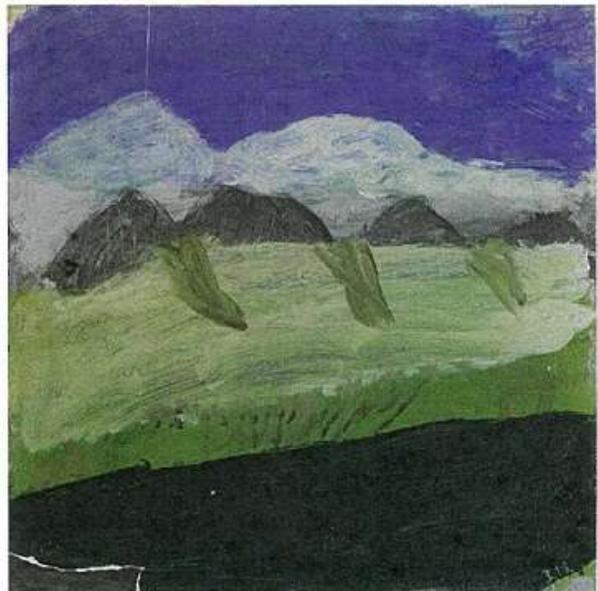
Landscape with kaka parrots and thermal pool, 2009-10, oil on linen, 50 x 100cm

Anne Thompson *Stone Images II*, 2010



Stone Images II, 2010, acrylic and collage on canvas, 76 x 102cm

Idris Murphy *Reflections Castlepoint*, 2009; *Changing Clouds, Mt Ruapehu*, 2009



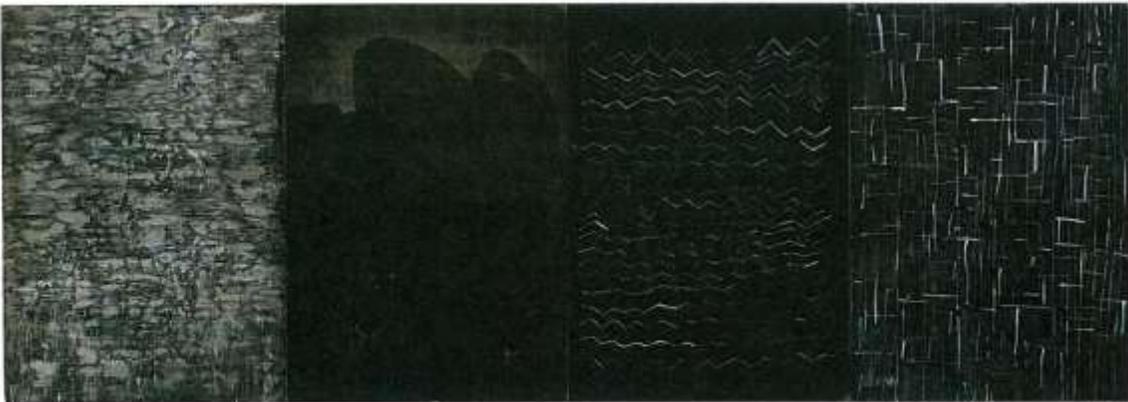
Reflections, Castlepoint, 2009, acrylic on board, 145 x 145cm
Changing Clouds, Mt Ruapehu, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 145 x 145cm

Steve Lopes *Untitled Figures, My Ruapehu*, 2009

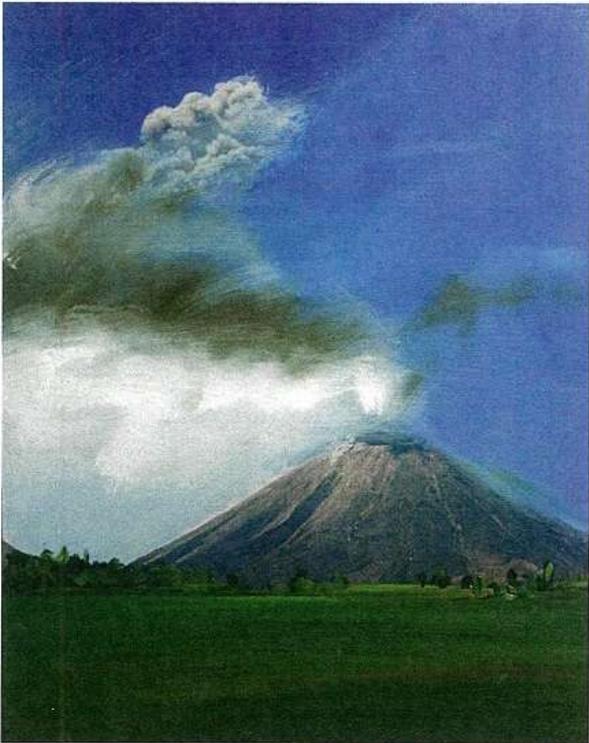


Untitled figures, Mt Ruapehu, 2009, oil on canvas, 140 x 180cm

Julie Harris *Red Tussock*, 2009; *Moon over Castlepoint*, 2009; *NZ Walkthrough, thinking of Colin McCahon*, 2009



Red Tussock, 2009, gouache on paper, 37 x 50cm
Moon over Castlepoint, 2009, gouache on paper, 37 x 50cm
NZ Walkthrough, thinking of Colin McCahon, 2009, ink and gouache on paper on canvas, 190 x 280cm



Nguaruhoe II, 2010, oil on sealed paper on board, 30 x 24cm
Nguaruhoe III, 2010, oil on sealed paper on board, 30 x 24cm