

ELISABETH CUMMINGS



interior landscapes

Curated by Sioux Garside

26 May – 23 July 2017

Born in 1934, in Brisbane Elisabeth Cummings was raised in a home filled with paintings and sculpture. Her parents regularly held an 'open house' for on Sunday evenings for American soldiers headquartered in Brisbane and also welcomed many Australian artists including David Strachan, Donald Friend, Margaret Olley & Roy Dalgarno. Her father, an architect and academic, was also a trustee at the Queensland Art Gallery. As a child she and her brother would attend Vida Lahey's art classes held on Fridays. The family holidayed at Currumbin on the Gold Coast and in her final year of high school after tuition from Margaret Cilento she became determined to study art and, with her encouragement, decided to attend the National Art School in Sydney.

She moved to Sydney and studied under Dorothy Thornhill, Godfrey Miller, Jimmy Cook and Ralph Balson between 1953-57. In 1958 she was awarded the New South Wales Travelling Art Scholarship which enabled her to travel to Europe where she lived in Italy, France and England where she was inspired by the work of Cézanne, Matisse and Vuillard. She also travelled to Salzburg and studied under Oskar Kokoschka at his School of Vision.

After a decade of living in Europe, Elisabeth Cummings returned to Australia and settled in Sydney. She had missed the Australian bush and land and this now provided the stimulation for her work. She commenced teaching at the National Art School in 1969, instructing countless students there during her thirty year tenure as a lecturer and exhibiting regularly in Brisbane and Sydney. Her early paintings show an undeniable debt to Bonnard, particularly in a series of still lives and interiors created during the 1960s and 70s, distinctive in their use of mauves and yellows favoured by the French intimist.

On her return initially Cummings based herself in Sydney's inner-west, but the lure of the bush proved too strong. In 1970 she started camping on a property at Wedderburn on city's south-western outskirts, owned by her friends fellow artist Barbara and husband Nick Romalis. They later generously gifted for the purpose of allowing their artist friends to establish permanent art studios. Later she built a studio residence and has been primarily based there since, along with other artists including original owner tenants John Peart, Roy Jackson, Joan Brassil, and Fred Braat. The bush that surrounded her studio residence became the inspiration for her landscape paintings although she works mainly from memory rather than observation. Her wood and mud-brick house overlooks a gully filled with gums and grass trees; their muted tones of grey, green and brown often finding their way into many of the landscapes of the 1970s and 80s.

In 1994 devastating bushfires destroyed a small studio store which was subsequently re-built. Her studio residence sits on the edge of a gully surrounded by trees and rocky outcrops. Elisabeth Cummings' work has not only been inspired by this picturesque environment, but also from her extensive travels throughout Australia from the coast to the desert. An intuitive painter, Cummings work shifts between abstraction and figuration, and the surfaces of her paintings are built up layers of paint revealing colour and form.

Elisabeth Cummings was the subject of a major survey in 1996 by Campbelltown Art Centre (which toured to the Gold Coast City Gallery), and in 2012 a survey focusing on her landscape paintings was held at Sydney's S.H. Ervin Gallery. This exhibition will tour to Armidale, Orange & Newcastle.

List of Works

Listed in chronological order. Measurement indicated height x width x depth

Duomo Florence c. 1960s

pen & ink sketch
Collection of the artist
ex collection Margaret Olley

Sculpture Florence c. 1960s

pen & ink sketch
Collection of the artist
ex collection Margaret Olley

Interior 1974

oil on canvas, 113.0 x 94.0cm
Collection of the artist

Pandava IV 1978

oil on canvas 139.0 x 191.0cm
Collection of Newcastle Art Gallery, gift of the artist
through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Program

Dog and bush Studio 1982

ink on paper
Private Collection

Studio interior III 1984

ink, charcoal, gouache & collage, 72 x 73.5cm
Collection of Campbelltown Art Centre

Blue moonlight 1991-92

oil on canvas, 122.0 x 91.0cm
Private Collection

The golden swamp (South Stradbroke) 1992

oil on canvas 70.8 x 83.5cm
Private collection

Shimmering light on the swamp 1992

gouache on paper, 56.0 x 77.0cm
Collection of Gold Coast Art Gallery

Wedderburn Spring 1993

oil on canvas, 173.0 x 196.0cm
Collection of Campbelltown Art Centre

Light day 1994-95

oil on canvas, 91.5 x 84.0cm
Collection of Julian & Anne Beaumont

Crossing open ground 1994

oil on canvas, 168.5 x 183.8cm
Collection of Malcolm Young

Red I 1994

oil on canvas 120.0 x 128.0cm
Private Collection

Bird over Stradbroke 1995

oil on canvas, 173.0 x 196.0cm
Private Collection

Bird in the bush 1995

oil on canvas, 183.0 x 244.0cm
The Macquarie Group Collection

The music room 1996

oil on canvas, 112.0 x 112.0cm
Mosman Art Collection

Termite mound 1996

oil on canvas, 157.4 x 190.6cm
Collection of Campbelltown Art Centre

Untitled 1999

earthenware and gaze, 39cm diameter
Private Collection

Studio 2000

oil on canvas, 110.0 x 135.0cm
City of Brisbane, Museum of Brisbane
Gift of Mr. Peter Jackson, 2008

Ant-hill Landscape 2000

oil on canvas, 195.0 x 220.0cm
Private Collection

Interior 2001

oil on canvas 120.0 x 200.0cm
Collection of Phil and Regina Law

Early morning, Currumbin 2002

oil on canvas, 175.0 x 150.0 cm
Private Collection

Currumbin interior with mango 2002

oil on canvas, 175.0 x 150.0cm
Collection of the Robertson Family

Grey day Currumbin 2002

oil on canvas, 122.0 x 142.0cm

Private Collection

White Billabong (diptych) 2002

oil on canvas, 150.0x 300.0cm

Private Collection

Moonlight at Currumbin 2002

oil on canvas, 165.0 x 200.0cm

Private Collection

Pilbara landscape 2003

oil on canvas, 165.0 x 200.0cm

The Arthur Roe Collection, Melbourne

Sally, Tony, Ana & David, March 2003

Moleskin pocket album, pencil on coloured paper

Collection of the artist

Hawkesbury River at night March 2003

Moleskin pocket album, pencil on coloured paper

Collection of the artist

Arkaroola landscape 2004

oil on canvas, 165.2 x 199.7cm

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Journey through the studio (diptych) 2004

oil on canvas, 175.0 x 300.0cm

The Arthur Roe Collection, Melbourne

Night studio 2004

oil on canvas, 175.0 x 150.0cm

Collection of the Wiggs family

Crossing the Harbour in moonlight (diptych) 2005

oil on canvas 170.0 x 20.0cm

Private Collection

Arkaroola landscape 2005, edition 25

hard ground etching and aquatint,

50 x 68cm (image) 70 x 91cm (sheet)

Collection of the artist

Studio in the bush 2006

oil on canvas 115.0 x 130.0cm

Collection of Les and Sue Myer

Red room at the Green Mango 2006

oil on canvas, 115.0 x 130.0cm

Private Collection

Yellow interior with sculpture 2006

oil on canvas, 100.0 x 115.0cm

Private Collection

Breakfast still life 2006

oil on canvas 130.0 x 115.0cm

Collection of Dean Batten and Paul Ryan

Salt lakes 2008

oil on canvas, 85.0 x 100.0cm

Private collection

Riverbend (diptych) 2008

oil on canvas, 150.0 x 300.0cm

The Arthur Roe Collection, Melbourne

Desert Study 2008

oil on lithograph mounted on canvas, 50.0 x 70.0cm

Private Collection

360 degree view from Oliphant Observatory Hill overlooking Akaroola village, the Griselda hill and surrounding landscape 30th September 2008

pencil, ink pen, watercolour on coloured paper

collection of the artist

Stairway to the Moon, 2009

painted earthenware, 50.0 x 42.0 x 42.0cm

Collection of Robert and Kelly Hirschman

Seated Woman in Kitchen 2009

painted earthenware, 21.0 x 38.0 x 16.0 cm

Collection of the artist

Man with Angel 2009

painted earthenware, 42.0 x 68.0 x 50.0cm

Collection of the Artist

Evening termite mounds 2011, edition 20

soft ground etching, aquatint and open bite

49.5 x 69.0cm (image), 60.0 x 80.0cm (sheet)

Collection of the artist

Edge of the Simpson 2011

oil on canvas, 150.0 x 130.0cm

Collection of Liza & John Feeney

Magnetic termite mounds 2011

oil on canvas, 65.0 x 80.0cm

Collection of Randal Arce-Villalobos & Bernard Walz

Iron Ore Country 2011

oil on canvas 80.0 x 65.0cm

Collection of Lisa Rees

The shearer's kitchen, Mt Murchison 2011
oil on canvas, 166.0 x 200.0cm
Collection of Pauline Hunter

Paris June 2011
Moleskin pocket album, ink pen and pencil on
coloured paper
Collection of the artist

From the two tanks (Fowlers gap) 2012
oil on canvas, 115.0 x 130.0cm
Collection of R Benedict & R Weinstein

Mornington, Kimberley 2012
oil on canvas, 115.0 x 130.0cm
Private Collection

From the car on the way to Fowler's Gap & Euriowie
2012 Collection of the artist

Kimberley Red Earth (with termite mounds) 2013
oil on canvas 100.0 x 126.0cm
Collection of R Benedict & R Weinstein

Granite Country 2015
oil on canvas, 115.0 x 130.0cm

Private Collection
Moleskin pocket album, pencil on coloured paper
Collection of the artist

The golden mountain 2015
oil on board, 45 x 45cm
Collection of Louisa Wu

Monaro shadow and light 2016
Oil on Canvas
Collection of the artist

Exhibition organised by
Elisabeth Cummings represented by



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Sydney
Gallery Front Desk Ph: (02) 9258 0173
Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Sunday 11am-5pm