

OUR
COMMUNITY
VICTORY

DREAM REALISED



COOKING FISH AND CHIPS IN PARADISE

28 June – 1 November
Penrith Regional Gallery
Home of The Lewers Bequest
86 River Rd, Emu Plains NSW 2750
penrithregionalgallery.com.au

Paul Worstead
Cooking fish and chips in paradise
1976
Screenprint and photo-screenprint on paper
92.5 x 92.3cm
Purchased 1993. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art
Photographs: Ray Fulton, QAGOMA
Copyright courtesy of the artist

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INTRODUCTION

Australia in the seventies and eighties was a time characterised by social change. The profound social revolutions of the 1970s heralded significant manifestations of change in the 1980s. Luritja man, Harold Thomas (whose mother lived for a time in Mulgoa Mission) designed the Aboriginal Flag in 1971. In 1984 Australia's National Anthem was changed from God Save the Queen to Advance Australia Fair. The inspired but radical acquisition of *Blue Poles* (1952) for the National Collection was completed and toured to four states in 1974. The National Gallery of Australia was opened in 1982.

It is not possible to truly understand contemporary Australia without acknowledging how the community activism of the 1970s overturned post World War II conventions. Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest was the first public art institution in Greater Western Sydney, but it involved a struggle to establish. The offer of the gift of The Lewers bequest was originally initiated by Margo Lewers but not accepted. After Margo's death in 1978, her daughters, Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers, generously pursued the objective to have the bequest accepted in 1979. The sisters were supported by members of the local community who formed the Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest. The Friends shared their vision to fight for a gallery with key figures in the art world and politics at the time.

The backdrop to the “fight” included assumptions that Western Sydney was too “blue collar” for a cultural institution: as if art was the exclusive preserve of certain sections of the citizenry. Clearly, this is now shown to be a nonsense assumption about Western Sydney and art. At this forty-year milestone of the decision to establish a regional gallery with The Lewers Bequest, generations have grown up and matured engaging with their local gallery. School

children dropped into the Gallery after soccer practice or as part of a school excursion and discovered art as a career path. Visitors who have spent their formative years engaging with the Gallery, now bring their children and grandchildren back to explore and enjoy the creative offerings of the site.

Warwick Fuller, whose solo exhibition is proudly presented in our *Dream Realised* suite, was the first President of the Friends. It was around the time of his involvement with the Friends fighting for the regional gallery that he decided to become a full-time professional artist. Our public gallery at Emu Plains generates an invaluable change in people's lives.

It has been a gift and a community victory that keeps giving. Each year tens of thousands of local, intercity and interstate visitors engage with the Gallery's dynamic exhibitions, collection, events, education programs, splendid heritage gardens and café.

We now live in a rapidly-shifting world that requires us to think and behave differently. We depend on new ideas and innovation to take us forward (personally, socially, economically and environmentally). Creativity is a fundamental human capacity and need. We drastically reduce human potential and well-being if we limit the opportunity for creative expression and creative thinking. Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest situates creative opportunities in visual arts within the region and contributes to the fabric of Australian cultural life.

Sheona White
Director

DREAM REALISED: OUR COMMUNITY VICTORY

by Dr Roslyn Russell

A dream of a gallery

Modernist painter and multidisciplinary artist Margo Lewers had a dream for the future of the home and garden she had shared with her sculptor husband Gerald Lewers and their daughters Darani and Tanya on River Road, Emu Plains. Her vision for the property that had housed their productive artistic lives and incorporated their creations – Gerald's sculptures and Margo's paintings, garden and mosaics – was that it should become public property and accessible to all. This dream, which aimed to bring art to the people of Western Sydney, was finally realised in 1981, several years after Margo's death in 1978 – but not without a fight.

The Lewers property at 86 River Road, perched beside the Nepean River, had been a site of modernist artistic creativity since sculptor Gerald Lewers began to work there during the week from 1942. Margo Lewers and their daughters joined him there in 1950, and Margo worked in collaboration with Modernist architect Sydney Ancher to augment the property in 1955 with a building to house a lounge room and kitchen, followed in 1964 with the addition of Ancher House. The property became a focus for Sydney's artistic and literary community.

The *Daily Telegraph's* visual arts writer, Elizabeth Fortescue, described the ambience the couple created there in an article reporting an exhibition by the extended Lewers family in 2016. The physical elements of this ambience can still be appreciated in the Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest today:

Energetic and enterprising, the Lewers had transformed the former pig farm into a family home, a working studio and a meeting place

for Australia's leading lights of literature and the arts.

Gerald's sculptures peeped out from the beautiful gardens that the couple had designed and planted themselves. And inside the old farmhouse, Margo's avant garde paintings splashed bright colour on all the walls. Tables groaned with art books and magazines, bringing fresh ideas from Europe and the US.

Sydney's culturati regularly trooped out to Emu Plains for the stimulating conversation, the dishes for which Margo plundered her vegetable patch, and the wine that Gerald kept flowing.

Close friends included leading artists Frank and Margel Hinder, Lyndon Dadswell, Judy Cassab, Robert Klippel, Grace Crowley and Ralph Balson. Author Patrick White was also a visitor.¹

Gerald died on 9 August 1962 as a result of a fall from a horse whilst he was on holiday in Chillagoe, Queensland. A grief-stricken Margo worked to complete a commission that Gerald had begun for a copper relief sculpture for the Reserve Bank in Canberra. Afterwards she continued her artistic production, filling the property with mosaics on floors and walls, continuing to create a garden that integrated artworks with plantings, as well as painting and experimenting with Perspex.

In 1973 Margo Lewers first offered the property as a bequest to the NSW National Trust and Penrith City Council, both of whom refused the offer. She offered it again in 1976 and 1977. Peter Anderson AM – formerly Labor Member for Nepean in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1978 to 1981, Penrith

¹ Elizabeth Fortescue, 'Gerald and Margo Lewers, Sydney's artistic dynasty, continues to flourish today', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 2016.



Image: Adam Hollingworth

between 1981 and 1988, and Liverpool between 1989 and 1995 – visited her when he was Deputy Mayor of Penrith in 1977 to discuss the bequest. Anderson later said that Council ‘knocked it back – it didn’t want a bar of it’.²

Margo died of cancer on 20 February 1978. Following her death, daughters Darani and Tanya again offered Council the property on River Road, the collection of sculptures and paintings, and other artworks. Again, it was rejected. This rejection prompted an outpouring of views for and against the acceptance of the bequest.

Those who knew Margo and her daughters valued the artistic legacy the property represented and believed that the western suburbs of Sydney deserved the cultural facility of which the Lewers bequest could be the catalyst. They decided to band together as the Friends of The Lewers Bequest to change public opinion on this issue, and to persuade Penrith City Council to accept the Lewers daughters’ generous offer.

Fight for the gallery

‘The real struggle for the Friends began on March 15 1979, several interested people met to launch a campaign to convince Penrith City Council to accept the gift of the Lewers property and collection,’³ wrote Jan Lewis in her 2008 book, *A Bequest, the Friends, the Blossoming of a Gallery*.

Peter Anderson AM said later that access and equity were the predominant drivers of the desire for an art gallery in the Western Sydney region, to give it a ‘visual arts foothold’. The Lewers property, he said, was ‘a great cultural oasis’, but if all that the Friends had advocated for was ‘the Lewers Gallery, it would

² Peter Anderson AM, interview with Sheona White, Penrith Regional Gallery Director, August 2019.

³ Jan Lewis, *A Bequest, the Friends, the Blossoming of a Gallery, The Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest*, Penrith, NSW, 2008, p. 1.

never have got up'. He recalled, 'It was a tough fight, over a year, until it got up.'⁴

The Friends mobilised support for accepting the Lewers bequest through petitions and personal letters advocating the establishment of the Gallery. Support also came from one local newspaper, the *Penrith Press*. However, the other local paper, the *Penrith District Star*, tended to favour the opposition to accepting the bequest and the establishment of a regional gallery on the site. Sydney newspapers also featured articles and letters of support. Jan Lewis noted that 'Generally, it was felt that the two houses, the gardens and artworks would form the basis of a much-needed resource for the people of the Western Metropolitan Region of Sydney and that a new gallery would become an important educational facility'.⁵

Petite Dallimore - who acted, with husband 'Dal', as caretaker at the Emu Plains property for 18 months following Margo's death - collected articles and letters documenting the story of the fight, including letters to the editors of the two local papers. She made a scrapbook that constitutes an invaluable record, including a letter to the *Penrith District Star* of 23 March 1979 by Necia Merrells of Emu Plains castigating Council for its short-sightedness in rejecting the bequest. She had recently toured the property and had appreciated its potential as a cultural venue:

Inside the home and studio, the creative artistry of both Margo Lewers and her husband lives on in many floor mosaics, the wall panels and in countless other features of design. The acre of grounds offers itself to an ideal setting for visiting art exhibitions, musical afternoons and generally a rare chance for Penrith youth to experience the work of a famous local artist.

⁴ Anderson/White interview, op.cit.

⁵ Lewis, op.cit., p. 7.

*Only a council without vision could allow such a generous offer to lapse.*⁶

Opposition to the proposal continued. Marian O'Neill of Penrith, who described herself as 'a woman with little education in the Arts', wrote to the *Penrith District Star* on 9 May 1979:

I cannot imagine that the majority of people who live on this side of the harbour and as far out as the western suburbs, can pretend to be interested in statues and pictures of this kind. The residents of Penrith, I am sure, would not spend any time on art when they can be entertained with the junk provided by the square box.

*I am sure that there are many more important projects the City Council can spend the ratepayers' money on.*⁷

While simple opposition to Council prioritising art in its spending was an important factor in the controversy, other voices opposed spending on this specific artistic project and argued for alternative options. Councillor Eileen Cammack OBE, who was Mayor of Penrith from 1975 to 1978, and a collector of more traditional decorative arts, supported the idea of a regional gallery but wanted to see it built in a more central location. She was also patron of the Nepean District Historical Society (NDHS) and favoured Council funding for the local museum run by the NDHS, the Arms of Australia Inn museum.⁸

⁶ Necia Merrell, letter to the Editor of the *Penrith District Star*, 23 March 1979, quoted in Lewis op.cit., p.7

⁷ Marian O'Neill, *Penrith District Star*, 9 May 1979, quoted in ibid., p.8
⁸ Cammack, Eileen, (OBE) (1914-2000), entry in Australian Women's Register, Australian Women's Archive Project, www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE1391b.htm

Hostility to the proposal to accept the Lewers bequest also focused around more traditional local government concerns: the initial capital expenditure and running costs that Council would incur; locating the Gallery in a suburban area rather than a commercial district; and potential parking problems.

The Friends maintained the pressure on Penrith City Council and with Peter Anderson's assistance they advocated their cause to state government. In Jan Lewis' words, they 'helped to keep the whole concept alive'.⁹ Evan Williams, who in 1977 became director of cultural activities in Neville Wran's Labor Government in New South Wales, was enlisted as an ally.

The catalyst for victory was the personal intervention of then Premier Neville Wran. In discussions with Peter Anderson over the continued battle for the gallery he said, "we will fix this and make an offer they can't refuse". True to his word he offered to contribute \$1 million dollars of NSW State Government funds, on a dollar-for-dollar basis with Penrith City Council, toward the construction of a regional gallery.¹⁰

Council decided to accept the offer of the bequest but opposition to the proposal continued.

The *Penrith Press* described the 'long and strenuous debate' in Council in early June 1979, during which 'interjections flew thick and fast', and the public gallery 'was seething with emotion over the issue' of whether Council would 'seize this last opportunity to accept the gift offered by the Lewers family'. Alderman Peter Anderson, then State Member for Nepean, made the clinching argument, claiming that 'future citizens of Penrith would claim Penrith aldermen of today lacked vision if the gallery offer was not accepted'. The *Penrith Press* declared that 'It was his motion that won the day –

⁹ Lewis, op.cit., p.10

¹⁰ Anderson/White interview op.cit

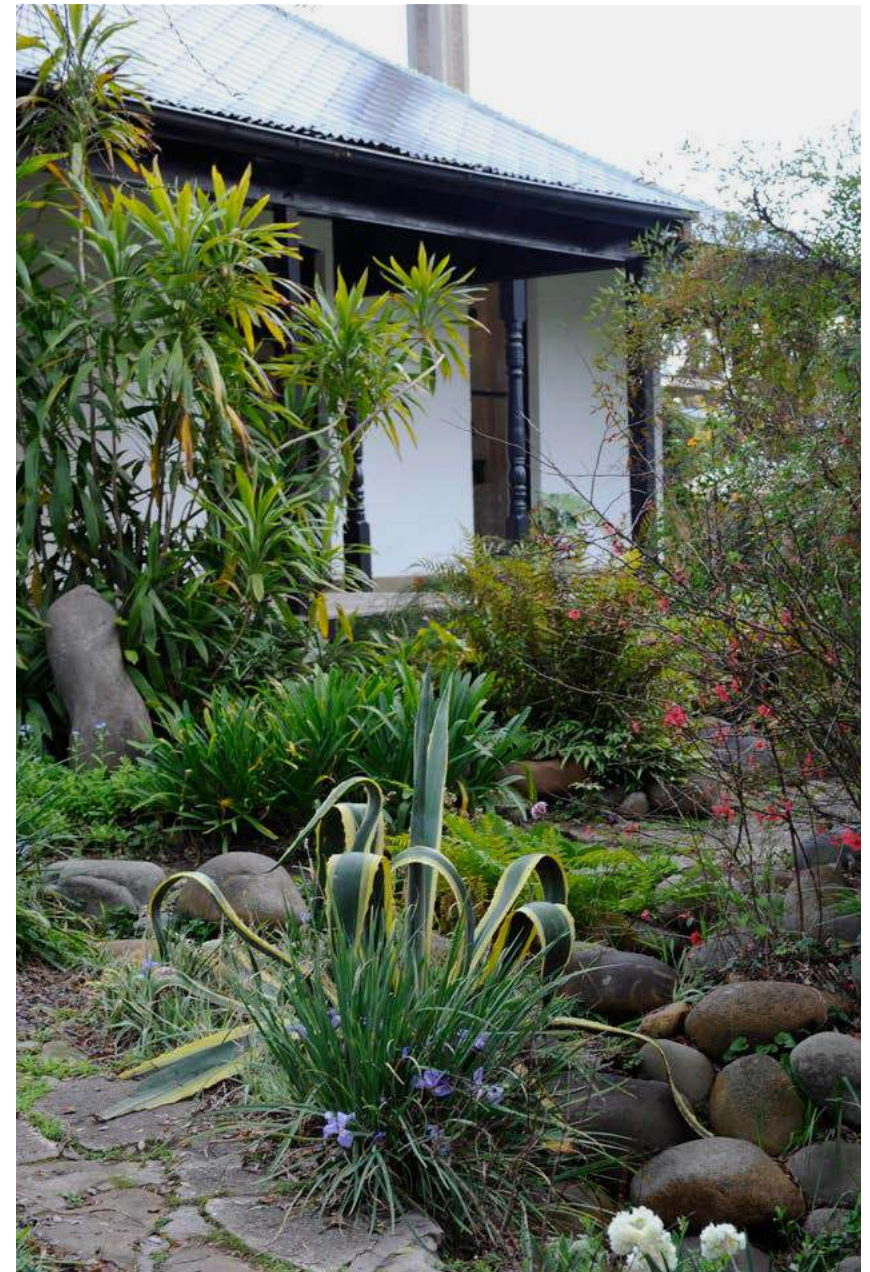


Image: Adam Hollingworth

and gave Penrith a regional gallery provided the Division of Cultural Affairs of the Premier's Department comes to the party'. The debate, like the Battle of Waterloo, was a 'close run thing': the Mayor, Alderman Brian King, 'used his vote to clinch Council's commitment to pay half cost of a regional art gallery at River Rd, Emu Plains'. The 'packed public gallery' erupted in applause when the result of the vote was announced.¹¹

In October 1979 Council agreed to accept the Lewers bequest in principle, with the proviso that financial assistance would be provided by the New South Wales Department of Public Works, and a new regional gallery would be part of the funded project.¹²

Realising the dream

Even though Penrith City Council had agreed to proceed with the Gallery project and had established an interim Management Committee in early 1980, the Friends continued to provide unwavering support. They took a crucial role in organising the fund-raising exhibition for the new gallery when a Mayoral Appeal was launched at David Jones Gallery in Sydney in August 1980. Over \$10,000 was raised by the sale of artworks donated by well-known artists.

The following month, September 1980, saw the formal handover by Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers of the two River Road properties and artworks to Penrith City Council, for the payment of \$1. Construction of the new regional gallery building began immediately, and less than a year later New South Wales Premier, the Honourable Neville Wran QC, officially opened Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest on 21 August 1981. He paid tribute to Margo and Gerald Lewers as trailblazers in twentieth-century Australian art: 'Gerald and Margo Lewers' contribution to Australian art was significant. Their energies, and

those of their contemporaries, set new directions for the visual arts in our country.'¹³

The new Gallery's opening exhibition was drawn exclusively from the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection and included work rarely allowed on loan. AGNSW Director Edmund Capon, was an active supporter of the campaign to establish Penrith Regional Gallery and former staff member, Campbell Gray, become its first Director.

Peter Anderson AM sums up the story of this exhibition, *Dream Realised: our community victory*, as

*a celebration of the defeat of the opposition to the Gallery. The win for the people of Western Sydney and their right to be able to access culture. It is a victory for access and equity driven by the Friends of the Gallery.*¹⁴

It is also an affirmation that Margo Lewers' dream has become a reality.

¹¹ 'Art Gallery to go ahead', *Penrith Press*, 6 June 1979.

¹² Lewis, op.cit., p. 10; Anderson/White interview op.cit.

¹³ Neville Wran quoted in Fortescue, op.cit.

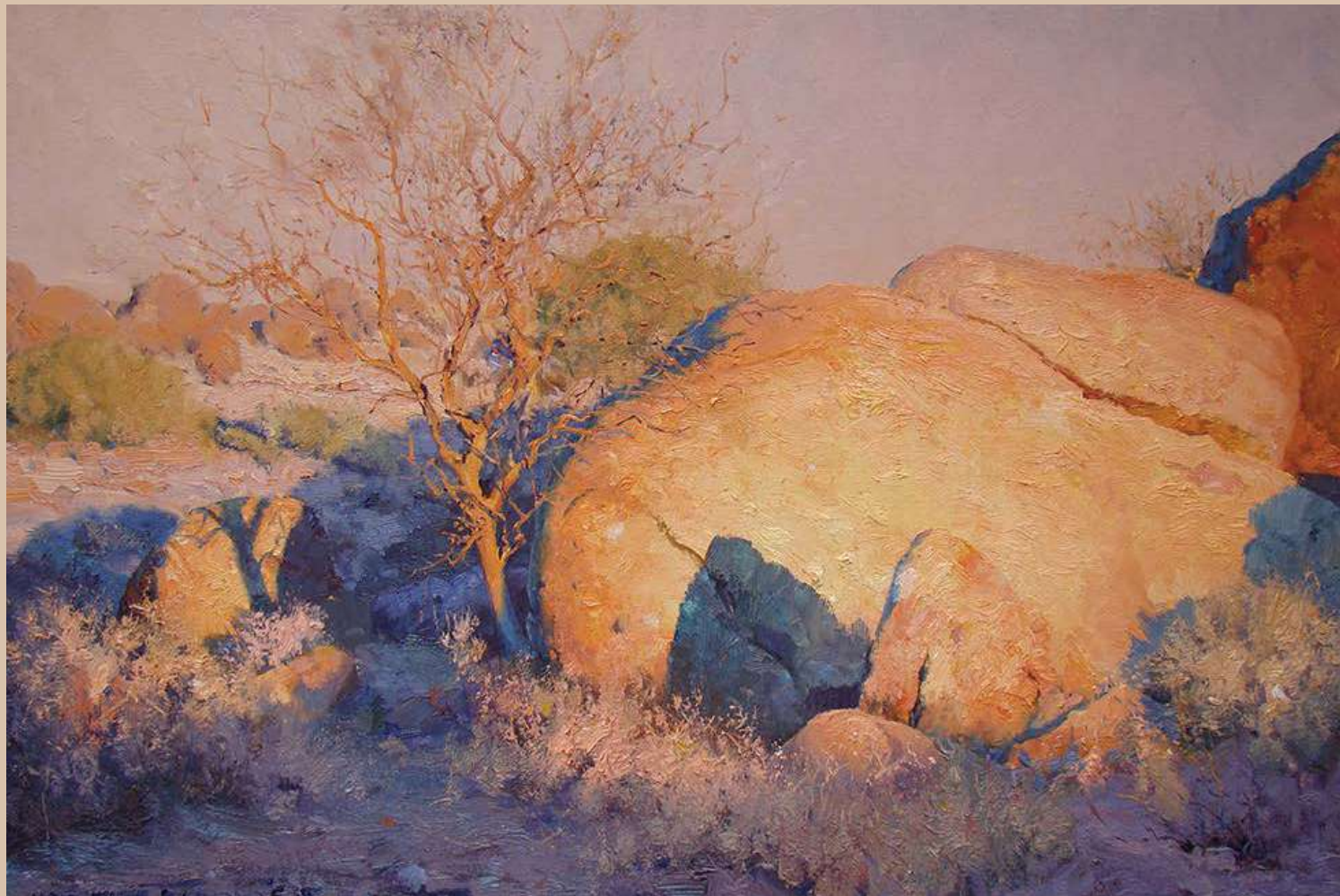
¹⁴ Cited in an email to the author from Sheona White, 31 January 2020.

WARWICK
FULLER

CHASING
THE LIGHT

Sunset, Cameron Corner
2011
oil on canvas
60 x 90cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Photography by silversalt



WARWICK FULLER – CHASING THE LIGHT

Like a sailor compelled to follow the *sirens' song* – Warwick Fuller follows the rhythm and caress of light on the landscape, acting quickly when the landscape tugs at his emotions compelling him to pull out his artist's kit and lay down a painterly response before the muse disappears. Aiming to capture the particular qualities of the landscape as it is momentarily touched by the light has driven Fuller's practice for over forty years. Largely self-taught, Fuller has forged his formidable skill in the blast furnace and misty chill of the Australian landscape across the seasons. Throughout this time, he constantly re-invigorates his relationship to painting by experimenting with techniques and turning his gaze ever more clearly and directly on to his subject. Fuller strives to make the relationship between his head, his heart and his hand so seamless that it is unfettered by art history or fashion or interrupted by technical challenges. In retrospect he's realised that it is, and always has been, chasing the light that compels him to paint.

Spending time with one of Fuller's paintings is an opportunity to encounter the Australian bush enlivened by the aesthetic sensibility and supple energy of a man whose early years were spent adventuring in the bushland of south west Sydney. He speaks fondly of camping out and cooking spuds (potatoes) in the coals of camp fires, making wooden boats with his mates and rowing them from Canley Vale to Botany Bay. A childhood that speaks of a different era with a different relationship to the environment, to play and to risk. During that childhood, inspired by his grandfather's amateur landscape paintings, Fuller always took his drawing book with him on family outings or holidays. He recalls his mum trying to keep his siblings happy, waiting in the car during one family holiday to the Snowy Mountains, while he sat on a rock drawing glorious serpentine Snow Gums. Developing his skills independently by returning again and again to painting outdoors, Fuller decided at twenty-nine, to try his hand



Into the Mystic, Kanimbla Valley

2015

oil on canvas

150 x 220cm

Courtesy of the Mary Casey Collection

Photography by silversalt



Desert Epilogue, Silverton
 2019
 oil on canvas
 30 x 30cm
 Courtesy of Private Collection

Photography by silversalt

at being a professional artist. A brave decision for a man who at the time had a young family to support. This opened a pathway that has seen him create an extensive and impressive body of work with paintings in public and private collections across Australia and the world, including fourteen paintings in the private collection of Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

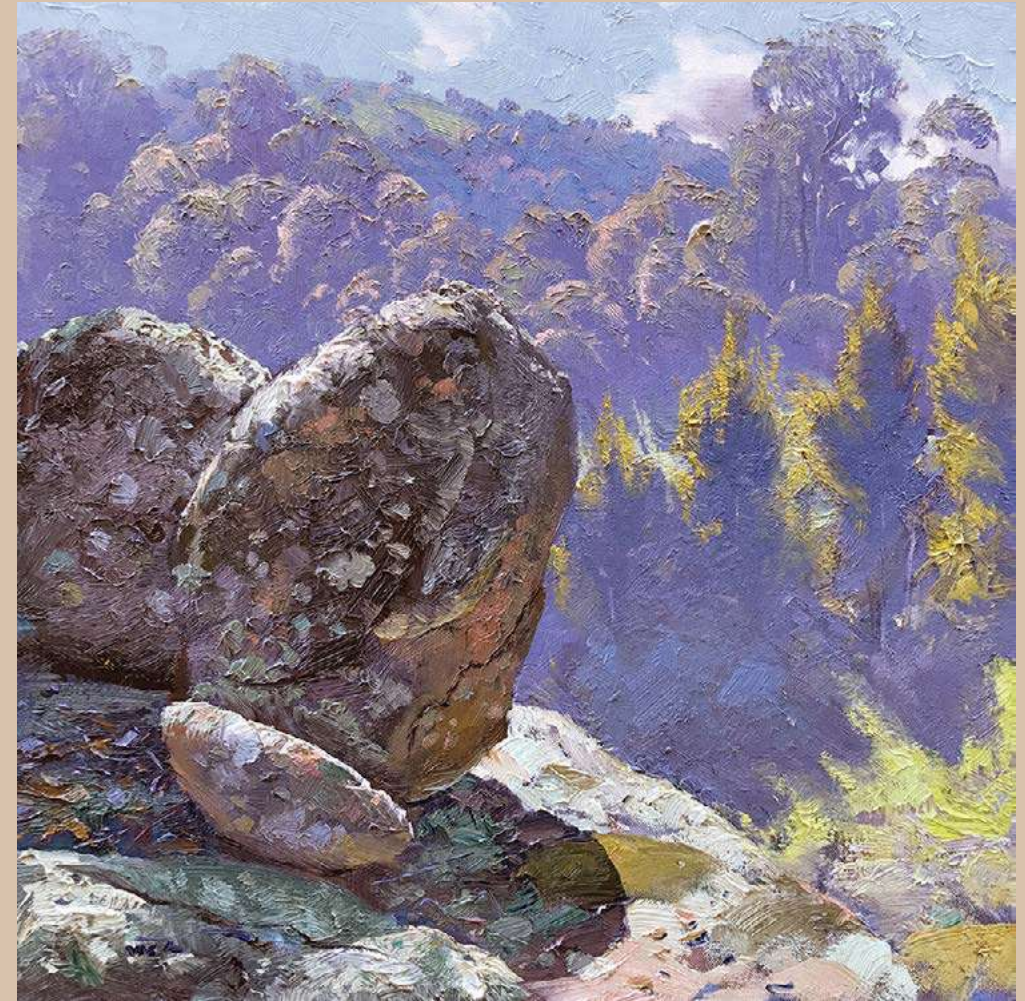
Fuller's relationship to his subject has been forged in the crucible of the Australian landscape, working outdoors with all its concomitant challenges of heat, wind, insects and changing atmospheric conditions. In his outdoor studies Fuller seeks to capture the particularity of the effects of light and, in so doing, creates painterly traces that resonate with the life force of his focus landscape. Gesturally, Fuller's energetic mark making evokes the texture and vibrant colour use of the Post Impressionism of Vincent Van Gogh. In *Melody in Mauve, Kanimbla*, 2016, one can't escape the textural weight and viscosity of the paint with which Fuller renders a view from his studio of distant cliffs and nearby rolling hill. Fuller's gestural expressive style, particularly visible in small-scale oil sketches, also situates him within the embrace and tradition of the Expressionists – where emotion and feelings are expressed through the combination of the marks made by the artist's handling of paint and choice of colours. For example, *The Sun Fell in the Creek*, 2019, *Patonga Sunrise*, 2011, and *Desert Epilogue*, Silverton, 2019, with their diverse and evocative colour palettes, are clearly representational whilst also displaying a strong abstract, expressive quality. This is demonstrated in the fluid marks made with a fully loaded brush and a confident rhythmic movement of the artist's hand across the canvas.

Fuller often paints in the Blue Mountains, so named because of the blue haze created by over sixty species of oil bearing and vapour emitting Eucalyptus trees which are found in the area. The Eucalyptus oil in the trees heats up and then releases into the air, combining with dust particles and water vapour to create the

blue haze after which the mountains are named. In *A Balancing Act, Kanimbla*, 2017, Fuller's familiarity with the underlying geometry of his local region's natural landscape and his intuitive rendering of the perspectival atmospheric effects of the mountains, allows this work to be both loose and gestural as well as representational. In this compelling, intimate study, Fuller represents large granite boulders balanced on a rocky outcrop in wooded, hilly terrain and uses loose, lively brush strokes to reveal the colourful lichens and mosses scattered across their surface. Fuller captures the nuance of light play within the shadows and applies high-keyed purples and greens where the sun burnishes the edges of the rocks and to the outer branches of the trees. The atmospheric effects in this work evoke the sensation of summer heat rolling in to fill the contours of the land between the trees.

The curvilinear line of the pink road in *Blustery Morning near Yass*, 2012, acts as a compositional device drawing the viewer deeper into the landscape. Three bands of colour mark out a composition balanced in thirds with warm yellow ochre fields touched by pink hues, and a dynamic oblique line rolling between the white, and grey cumulonimbus clouds. In *Afternoon Sun, Glen Davis*, 2011, Fuller again exquisitely captures the afternoon sunlight warming sandstone cliffs, brushing over tree tops and pooling into shimmering puddles in the foreground. In *White Sands of Callala Bay*, 2017, Fuller captures the absolute interdependence of a stand of coastal casuarina trees to their environment, the beach, the coastal grasses, distant headland, the sky and permeating it all – the light.

The practice of painting small studies outdoors has been part of the Western tradition of landscape painting for centuries, whether that be painting near the frigid chill of the Baltic sea, where German Romantic landscape artist Caspar Fredrich (1774 – 1840) grew up or painting the English countryside like John Constable (1776 - 1837). Indeed, Constable so evocatively captured the landscapes of his home



A Balancing Act, Kanimbla

2017

oil on canvas

45 x 45cm

Courtesy of Ron Fuller and Susan Templeman

Photography by silversalt



White Sands of Callala Bay

2017

oil on canvas

30 x 30cm

Courtesy of Mary Bergin and Alan Amos

Photography by silversalt



Blustery Morning near Yass

2012

oil on canvas

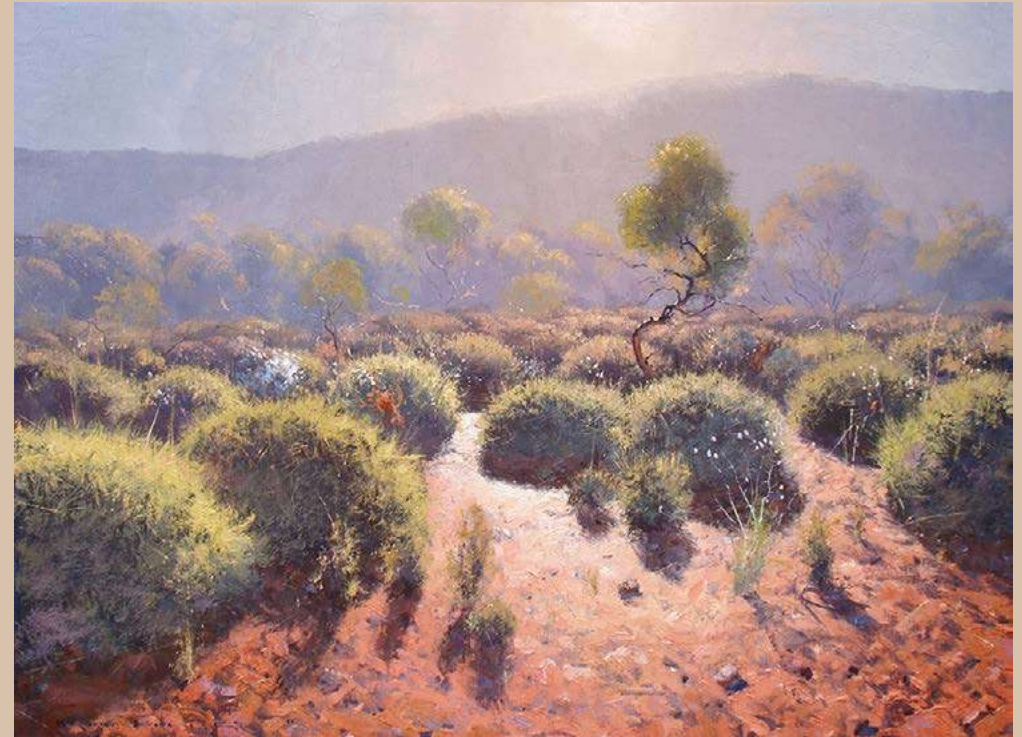
30 x 30cm

Courtesy of the Artist and Lost Bear Gallery

Photography by silversalt

region in Dedham Valley, Suffolk that the region became known as *Constable Country*. Spending time in the environment can be viewed romantically and is part of the great tradition of Romantic landscape painters such as Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775 – 1851), who explored nature as evidence of the sublime and did pioneering work with light, colour and atmosphere that anticipated the work of the French Impressionists. The French phrase *en Plein Air* (in the open air) was popularised through the practice of the French Impressionists who painted outdoors for the dual purposes of capturing the atmospheric and fleeting effect of light on colour and to wrestle painting from the clutches of academic and history painting. The Impressionists elevated scenes from daily life, such as landscape for its own sake, as worthy subjects for painters. Fuller describes himself as an outdoor painter, preferring the grounded vernacular of this Australian descriptor rather than the imported French phrase. The heat and dry shimmer of an Australian summer in Melbourne was understood and captured by artists and friends Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Charles Conder, Fred McCubbin and Jane Sutherland. This group became known as the Heidelberg School and are credited with bringing the actuality of the Australian landscape into the popular national consciousness of early twentieth century Australia. Warwick Fuller's journey as a landscape painter is part of a long lineage of painters who choose to return again and again to working within the landscape with all of its visual complexity, elemental challenges, sensory richness, physiological impacts and spiritual resonances.

In *(Sketch for) Spinifex in Morning Light, Tom Price, 2011*, we enter the landscape with red dirt and small scattered rocks at our feet, so evocatively painted we wouldn't be surprised to look down and see red dirt dusting our toes. Then, as we lift our gaze, our eyes move through the landscape: across mounds of spinifex grass which is perfectly adapted to thriving in hot, arid conditions; onto gnarly, stunted trees hunkering in the mid-ground; with distant mountains rendered



(Sketch for) Spinifex in Morning Light, Tom Price
2011
oil on canvas
90 x 120cm
Courtesy of the Rosemary and Andrew Penman Collection

Photography by silversalt



Afternoon Sun, Glen Davis

2011

oil on canvas

150 x 150cm

Courtesy of the Michael and Marilyn Reardon-Small Collection

Photography by silversalt

in soft greys that emulate the atmospheric conditions created by the low-slung, morning light. In this work we are teetering between being both outside and within the landscape. The red dirt in the foreground is seen from a slightly tilted, aerial perspective and yet the trees in the distance are framed by an ocular, Eurocentric relationship to viewing and framing the landscape. Whilst Fuller is clearly part of a European tradition of landscape painting, initially inspired by his grandfather's amateur paintings and his early years playing in the Australian bush near his home, his sensibility, sensitivity and respect for the land has translated into a deep and sustained respect for Aboriginal culture and traditions. Traditional Indigenous artistic responses to the landscape rarely have a horizon line, rather the marks are made on the land itself. For example, in sand drawing, or in contemporary traditional painting, Aboriginal signs, symbols and ways of mapping are presented from an aerial perspective, congruent with a culture that walks the landscape into being and the being into the landscape.

Within each of us exists a memory of the land, the places we grew up, holidays we went on, and places we played. Many of us would have spent at least some time in a national park, a grassy paddock or in the bush, feeling the warmth of the rocks, the roughness of spiky Australian grasses, and inhaling the aromatic smell of gum trees. Fuller is an artist who looks deeply at the landscape on our behalf and in so doing helps us to see our environment with refreshed eyes. Van Gough, in a letter to his brother Theo in 1874 said, 'Painters understand nature and love it, and teach us to see.' When we look at Fuller's work painted from within the landscape it is a wonderful chance to refresh our connection to this vast, ancient and spectacular land and be reminded of what we need to treasure and protect: both because of our interdependence with it and also for its ability to be a source of joy, pleasure and light-filled renewal.

Naomi McCarthy
Education Manager

ARTIST STATEMENT

I blindly plunged into my painting career about a year before that Lewers thing started. What turned out to be a fateful phone call from Petite Dallimore, started with 'would you like to call down to River Road for a chat about a 'local' artist's bequest to Penrith Council'. After forty years, the serendipity of that innocuous phone call, ranks with a handful of events that have highlighted my life.

Penrith nurtured me as I made my way through the 80's, the tough years. Looking back, I see ever more clearly the many good people who kept me going. Council funded a reciprocal exhibition to Fujieda Japan, Community fund raising to help me visit the great galleries of Europe, positive newspaper articles, Invitations to judge local shows, talks to service groups / societies etc, and a myriad of small kindnesses, all helped to sustain my spirits in the struggle to paint a good picture.

Oh, how naïve I was when I embarked on this journey. I'd hardly heard of Tom Roberts or Lloyd Rees, let alone Margo Lewers. What a wonderful shock when I walked into Margo's house in 1979! The emotional sensation that I felt from her work was powerful, immediate and hitherto unknown to me. That was the first time ever a painting really spoke to me.

My Grandfather's landscape paintings were a constant during my childhood and Mum's unnoticed, quiet encouragement of every little scribble, overlaid with a dearth of art education at school, led me unconsciously in the only direction I knew. Cementing my love for the landscape both to paint and to experience was a spirit of adventure fostered by annual driving and camping holidays as well as living in the outer suburbs near creek and bush. And parents with a very, very long leash. My chosen genre had me before I was old enough to weigh options.

About a year after the Lewers merry-go-round started, I went to a weekly night class that Kevin Oxley had just commenced at Windsor. I thought it would be a bit of a light diversion (as I did already know everything). Kevin helped me to formalise a lot of thoughts, techniques and theories that I had read about and developed instinctively and intuitively. Most importantly though, he taught me to question more critically what and why I was painting. Asking questions of myself I found some answers in recalling Margo's magnificent 'Green on Green' (and others) and its unfathomable effect on me. I started trying to see past the physical object as the object appeared not to play a part in Margo's paintings. Extrapolating that, I tried to work out what really drew me to select a subject worthy of painting. And so my real quest began.

I don't recall a time when I first understood that light was the constant in what enticed me to a subject for painting. By way of example though, I do recall trying to grasp the thrill of glancing out of the side window while driving down a steep forest road. The light in the valley viewed through the dark trunks flashing past blew me away even though what I saw was hardly a 'landscape'. It seems I was often taken by the light before the object, the glint on the water rather than the puddle.

That light regularly takes me by surprise. It beguiles and confounds me. Technically I can find ways and means to paint it but what I strive for is an expression of what I 'feel' for that subject, that light. I don't know if I'm getting any closer to that elusive goal, but my emotional response to the chosen subject which was awakened in me at Margo's house, forty years ago thrills and drives me still today.

– Warwick Fuller, 2020

WARWICK FULLER – CHASING THE LIGHT LIST OF WORKS

(All measurements are in
h x w x d in cm)

*(Sketch for) Afternoon
Sea Mists*
1986
oil on canvas
36 x 44cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

(Sketch for) Autumn Sunset
2011
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*(Sketch for) Enduring
Gum, Silverton*
2019
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

*(Sketch for) Full Moon
Morning, Tom Price*
2011
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*(Sketch for) Late Break,
Little Hartley*
2005
oil on canvas
22 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

(Sketch for) Petrichor
2016
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*(Sketch for) Saint
Mary of Heath*
2016
oil on canvas
60 x 35cm
Courtesy of Mary Casey

*(Sketch for) Spinifex and
Snappy Gum, Tom Price*
2011
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Skinner Family
Private Collection

*(Sketch for) Surrender the
Day, Capertee Valley*
2010
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist

(Sketch for) Wet Sails
2016
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

*(Study for) Afternoon Sun,
Glen Davis*
2011
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Lost
Bear Gallery

*(Study for) Grampians
Grazing Country*
2002
oil on canvas
44 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

A Balancing Act, Kanimbla
2017
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of Ron Fuller and
Susan Templeman

A Gentle Sunset, Kanimbla
2018
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

A Western Sunset, Silverton
2016
oil on canvas
60 x 90cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Afternoon Sun, Glen Davis
2011
oil on canvas
150 x 150cm
Courtesy of the Michael
and Marilyn Reardon-Small
Collection

Alpine Stream near Talbingo
2011
oil on canvas
60 x 45cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*Approaching Storm,
Sorell, Tasmania*
2013
oil on canvas
90 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Michael
and Marilyn Reardon-Small
Collection

*Atmospheric Morning
near Wee Jasper*
1997
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

*Autumn Afternoon,
Tumut River*
2007
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Ray Annsen
Collection

Blustery Morning near Yass
2012
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

*Boats in Morning Light,
Devon, UK*
2008
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Breaking Wave, Tasmania
2013
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*Bridge over Micalong Creek,
Wee Jasper*
2016
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Forster Family
Collection

Butes of Monument Valley
2012
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Lost
Bear Gallery

By the Campfire, Glen Alice
2018
oil on canvas
60 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Camden Landscape
1976
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Tom and Sheree
Tumanik Collection

Capertee Sunrise
1998
oil on canvas
45 x 90cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Cool Shadows Creeping In
2009
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

*Copper and Gold Sunset,
North Head*
2014
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Creekline, Stuart Town
2015
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Debra and Greg
Morgan Collection

Cristie's Lilies
2002
oil on canvas
90 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Daffodils at Dumfries House
2018
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Brendan Smith
Collection

Dance of Light, Lake Lyell
2015
oil on canvas
90 x 120cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Dance of Light, Little Hartley
2014
oil on canvas
60 x 90cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Dancing Dinghy, Eden
2011
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Dawn's Grey Harmony, Cairns
2018
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Laurie and Rita
Spiteri Collection

Desert Epilogue, Silverton
2019
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Dry Valley Floor, Glen Alice
2018
oil on canvas
60 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Alan and Lois
Little Collection

WARWICK FULLER – CHASING THE LIGHT

LIST OF WORKS

(All measurements are in
h x w x d in cm)

Enduring Gum, Silverton
2019
oil on canvas
100 x 120cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Ephemeral Light, Burraga
2019
oil on canvas
92 x 122cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Fishing at Stockton Beach
2017
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

**Foissac Farm After Rain,
France**
2003
oil on canvas
23 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and Lost
Bear Gallery

Forest Intersection, Barmah
2014
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

**Into the Mystic,
Kanimbla Valley**
2015
oil on canvas
150 x 220cm
Courtesy of Mary Casey

Japonica
1989
oil on canvas
90 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Cristie Fuller
Collection

Kurrajong Panorama
1985
37 x 52cm
Courtesy of the Ray Annsen
Collection

Lagoon and Surf, Narooma
1994
oil on canvas
40 x 50cm
Courtesy of the Albert
Woodroffe Collection

Last Sun in the Gilmore Valley
2015
oil on canvas
26 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Melody in Mauve, Kanimbla
2016
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Ginny Gould
Collection

Melting Frost, Gundagai
2015
oil on canvas
80 x 120cm
Courtesy of Lynette and Daniel
Beltran

Moondance, Windemere Dam
2003
oil on canvas
23 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Morning Light on the Thames
2003
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Laurie and Rita
Spiteri Collection

Murray Flow
2014
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of the Ray Annsen
Collection

Oh Darling, near Bourke
2006
oil on canvas
110 x 150cm
Courtesy of the Ray Annsen
Collection

Old Chevy
1977
oil on canvas
38 x 50cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Overgrown Track
1986
oil on canvas
61 x 76cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Patonga Sunrise
2011
oil on canvas
30 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Chris and
Susan Bonsall Collection

Phegans Bay Boatshed
2009
oil on canvas
60 x 75cm
Courtesy of Judy Dickins

Pink Azaleas
1996
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Quietude at Day's End
2018
oil on canvas
170 x 200cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Red Hill Sunset
2013
oil on canvas
45 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

**Rugged Ramparts, Flinders
Ranges**
1984
oil on canvas
90 x 120cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

**Sheep in the Stubble,
Bannockburn**
2012
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

**Shimmering Light on Gilmore
Creek**
2017
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Robert Mitchell
Collection

Sky Study
1983
30 x 38cm
Courtesy of the Robert Simpson
Collection

Songs of Praise
2017
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Spell of a Summer's Afternoon
c. 2007
oil on canvas
150 x 180cm
Courtesy of the Michael
and Marilyn Reardon-Small
Collection

**Spinifex in Morning Light,
Tom Price**
2011
oil on canvas
90 x 120cm
Courtesy of the Rosemary and
Andrew Penman Collection

**Stark Morning Light,
Mossy Point**
2008
oil on canvas
90 x 120cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

Sun on Tinkers Hill
2003
oil on canvas
25 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Martin Campbell
Collection

**Sun through Light on Cloud,
Little Hartley**
2014
oil on canvas
60 x 90cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

**Sun, Smoke & Stubble,
near Young**
2017
oil on canvas
120 x 150cm
Courtesy of the SteelReid
Collection

Sunrise Glow. White Cliffs
1997
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Sunset, Cameron Corner
2011
oil on canvas
60 x 90cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

The Cutting, Hartley Vale
2014
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

The Sun Fell in the Creek
2019
oil on canvas
30 x 40cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

The Wave
1985
oil on canvas
60 x 76cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

WARWICK FULLER – CHASING THE LIGHT

LIST OF WORKS

(All measurements are in
h x w x d in cm)

***Tower of Stone,
Capertee Valley***
2016
oil on canvas
45 x 45cm
Courtesy of the Benjamin
Rich Collection

***Track through the Heath
(Sussex Inlet)***
1998
oil on canvas
45 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Trees in Filtered Light, Forbes
2009
oil on canvas
90 x 100cm
Courtesy of Private Collection,
Wentworth Falls

Untitled (My first oil)
1964
oil on canvas
25 x 30cm
Courtesy of the Artist

Verdant Harmony
2009
oil on canvas
45 x 30cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Waterhole
2013
oil on canvas
100 x 75cm
Courtesy of the Artist and
Lost Bear Gallery

White Sands of Callala Bay
2017
oil on canvas
30 x 30cm
Courtesy of Mary Bergin and
Allan Amos

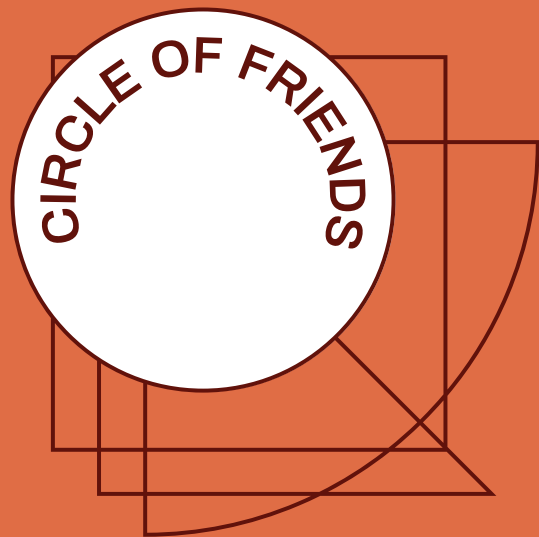
Wolgan Valley Morning
1985
59 x 74cm
Courtesy of the Ray Annson
Collection

Wongarbon Sunset
2015
oil on canvas
30 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection



Wongarbon Sunset
2015
oil on canvas
30 x 60cm
Courtesy of Private Collection

Photography by silversalt



Stanislaus Rapotec

Untitled

1968

synthetic polymer paint on masonite

137 x 182.5cm

Purchased with the assistance of the Australian
Art Research Fund, 1990. Penrith Regional
Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest Collection.
Copyright courtesy of the Estate of the Artist

Photography by Michael Waite



CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Circle of Friends celebrates the generous, sustained and ongoing support that the Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest have given to the Gallery and its collection. Beginning in 1979, before there was even a gallery to support, the Friends was formed by a small visionary group of locals who collectively recognised the wonderful opportunity the Lewers bequest represented for the people of Penrith and beyond. The advocacy of the Friends ensured that Council accepted the bequest and committed to developing the site, that was originally the Lewers family home, as a public gallery. The Friends group quickly grew in number to become, at the opening of the Gallery in August 1981, a group of 185 individuals/local residents - united by a shared vision of what the first regional gallery in Western Sydney could become.

For over forty years the Friends have been instrumental in developing both the Gallery and its Collection. In the early days it was the Friends who formed the Gallery Changeover Committee, volunteering their time to install exhibitions, fundraise and generally support the care and growth of the Gallery's historic collection. With assistance from the Friends, successive Directors were able to secure significant acquisitions, increasing the Gallery's holding of artworks by artists such as Elwyn Lynn and Leonard Hessing, who alongside a significant holding of artworks by Margo and Gerald Lewers, were represented in the original bequest.

Friendships amongst the painters, sculptors, writers and architects who were known to have travelled from the city to visit the Lewers at the Emu Plains property throughout the 50s and 60s are also reflected in the Penrith Regional Gallery Collection. These relationships, be they familial, scholarly, or friendships grown out of shared interest in the Modernist cause,

were strengthened through the free expression of ideas and robust respect for criticism and debate that characterised their gatherings. The artist friends of Margo and Gerald shared influences and joined forces with a larger circle of friends, whose works are included in this exhibition, and who, with the passing of time, have come to be recognised for the important contribution they made to our understanding of Modernism in Australia.

It could be said that the loyalty and commitment to their artistic ideals which sustained these artists in friendship, still echoes through the site today, through the dedication and commitment of the Friends. A volunteer group whose unwavering support will continue to benefit current and future generations of visitors by ensuring the survival of a thriving and robust regional gallery that welcomes all, excites and delights many, and remains a unique and thriving part of the cultural landscape of the region. Our region owes much more to the Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery than we will likely ever realise.

FRIENDS FOR 40 YEARS

by Dr Roslyn Russell

Just over forty years ago, a group of people in western Sydney met at Ancher House on the Lewers family property on River Road, Emu Plains, to launch a public campaign. Often such groups coalesce around opposition to proposals, often by governments, to ban something, or knock something down, or to allow something detrimental to community health to proceed. This time it was different: the people who met on 15 March 1979 wanted Penrith City Council to *accept* something – a generous gift offered by the Lewers family of modernist artists to the people of western Sydney. This gift was the offer of the family's River Road property, and a large collection of artworks created by Margo and Gerald Lewers and their circle of artist friends.¹

The group of seven who met at River Road on that March day in 1979 included 'Dal' Dallimore and his wife Petite (who had been acting as caretakers of the Lewers property after Margo's death in early 1978), and Erica Burton, Margaret Joss, Meg Stever, Sharon Waters and Shirley Young. The organisation they created would be named the 'Friends of the Lewers Bequest'.² At a second meeting held on 26 March, landscape artist Warwick Fuller, an exhibition of whose works is running concurrently with *Dream Realised*, was elected as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Friends, with Jean McSweeney as Vice-Chair.³

1 Jan Lewis, *A Bequest, the Friends, the Blossoming of a Gallery, The Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest*, Penrith, NSW, 2008, p. 1. Close friends of the Lewers included leading artists Frank and Margel Hinder, Lyndon Dadswell, Judy Cassab, Robert Klippel, Grace Crowley and Ralph Balson. Author Patrick White was also a visitor.

2 Ibid., p. 13.

3 Ibid., p. 15.

Some of those who campaigned to persuade Penrith City Council to accept the Lewers family gift had been personal friends of Gerard and Margo Lewers and strongly believed that it was worthwhile to preserve the property as Margo Lewers had left it on her death from cancer on 20 February 1978.⁴ They valued the mosaics that Margo had created in several areas on the property, such as the kitchen and bathroom, and, especially, the garden that she had planned and nurtured, and that provided the setting for sculptures by Gerard Lewers and other artist friends such as Margel Hinder. Warwick Fuller recalled that 'We met weekly, for a while, and worked frenetically to find ways and means of having the [...] decision overturned.'⁵

Other supporters of the proposed gallery knew of the Lewers' art (and of the 'pretty wild parties' that echoed across the Nepean River as artists and writers gathered there from the early 50s onwards).⁶ Kay Anderson later reflected on her impressions of the 'unusual, feisty, charismatic' Lewers family, remembering how she used to wonder what went on in their house, that 'looked different to other houses in the street'.⁷ Kay's husband, Peter Anderson MLA, was a persuasive advocate for the acceptance of the Lewers Bequest. The story of how this was achieved is told in a companion essay in this catalogue.⁸

4 Michael Crayford, 'Lewers, Hettie Margaret (Margo) (1908–1978)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lewers-hettie-margaret-margo-11402/text19197>, published first in hardcopy 2000, accessed online 20 April 2020.

5 Lewis, op.cit., p. 15.

6 Mireille Viviani, interview with Sheona White, 10 July 2019.

7 Kay Anderson, interview with Sheona White, 19 July 2019.

8 See essay on this site, 'Dream Realised – Our Community Victory'.

Once the Penrith Regional Gallery was officially opened on 21 August 1981, the Friends switched their focus from advocacy to financial and practical support, a transition organised by Jean McSweeney to assist staff in the running of the Gallery. The Friends also changed their name to 'Friends of The Lewers Bequest & Penrith Regional Gallery'.⁹ For over twenty years they supplied a range of services – fundraising, catering, assisting with garden maintenance, working in the bookshop, taking visitors on guided tours, mailing out information and exhibition opening invitations, and hanging exhibitions. These activities were critical to the Gallery's success in building its reputation in the community of Western Sydney and the wider art world in Australia.

The Friends' first major foray into fundraising occurred in early 1980, when an interim Management Committee was established, and assisted in the organisation of a Mayoral Appeal for the new Gallery, with an exhibition held at David Jones' Gallery in its Elizabeth Street store in Sydney, for which well-known Australian artists donated works for sale. The exhibition, held in August 1980, was a great success, raising over \$10,000 for the Gallery. The Friends' crucial role in this early fund- and awareness-raising exercise for the Gallery was acknowledged by Penrith City Council Mayor, Brian King, in a Mayoral minute in September 1980:

*Without the help of these people it would have been difficult – if not impossible – to organise the Appeal, let alone stage the exhibition and sale ... I would like to publicly express our appreciation for the efforts of its members to the president, Mrs Jean McSweeney.*¹⁰

⁹ Lewis, op.cit., p. 16. The name was changed in 1997 to Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest (p. 35).

¹⁰ Lewis, op.cit., p. 10.

The Friends continue to raise funds for the Gallery and by this means have enabled the purchase of a number of significant artworks for its collection, including works by John Olsen, Robert Klippel, Carl Plate (Margo Lewers' brother), Margo Lewers, Frank Hinder and Lyndon Dadswell. Funds raised by the Friends also paid for items for young visitors to the Gallery, printing exhibition brochures, indoor and outdoor furniture, and competition prizes.¹¹

Some of the Friends brought their formidable catering skills to exhibition openings and other events at the Gallery. The offerings of particular individuals became legendary and were fondly remembered years afterwards by those who had attended these events. Jan Lewis in 2008 described the centrality of the kitchen in the Friends' involvement with the Gallery:

*From the beginning of the Friends' formation the kitchen has been the centre of activity and the catering team has always been well-known for the quality of its food – willingly taking bookings for morning and afternoon teas, luncheons, weddings, birthday parties and everything else requested. When Jan Cannon put on her apron, she never failed to deliver a gourmet treat, the tables of food being works of art in their own right.*¹²

Judy Burrett, the Office Manager at the Gallery from 1985 to 1989, said she would 'never forget my first taste of Audrey Watson's three-tiered, chicken-and-walnut, crust-less sandwiches, enjoyed with a glass of champagne'.¹³ Lynda Henderson recalled the 'superb punch' made by Elizabeth Miller.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹² Ibid., p. 45.

¹³ Ibid., p. 53

¹⁴ Lynda Henderson, interview with Sheona White, 10 July 2019.

Dominique Anderson remembered being taken as a four-year-old to Friends events by her mother, Kay Anderson, who ‘tirelessly worked to help out the Friends whenever she could’: ‘The fashion parades, the morning teas, the police functions and weddings are all a part of the history of the Gallery now,’ said Dominique, as she recalled Audrey Watson’s ‘absolutely perfect’ meringues, Jan Cannon’s ‘secret’ chicken sandwich filling and Jan Lewis’s *petit four* cakes that she would try to steal, ‘even though they were for a wedding function’.¹⁵

Dominique’s grandmother, Kath Anderson, was a redoubtable figure in the Labor Party in New South Wales, holding a number of leadership positions on Labor’s Women’s Committee in NSW, and as the Federal president of Labor Women from 1965-1971.¹⁶ She continued to exercise her administrative skills as Treasurer and President of the Friends, and as Chair of the Gallery’s Management Committee. Her contacts in the NSW Parliament meant that she was able to organise a luncheon at Parliament House in 1993 for 100 people from the Friends and the Q Theatre. Kath Anderson’s skill at baking chocolate cakes was renowned (to the extent that Jan Lewis included a photo of one of Kath’s chocolate cakes in her book on the 30th anniversary of the Gallery and the Friends).

The Friends’ contribution to catering was scaled back after 2002 in line with changes to the Gallery’s operations.¹⁷

An aspect of the operations of Penrith Regional Gallery with which the Friends have been closely involved from its earliest days is the garden that Margo Lewers created and over which she reigned in her lifetime.

¹⁵ Lewis, op.cit., ps. 24, 48.

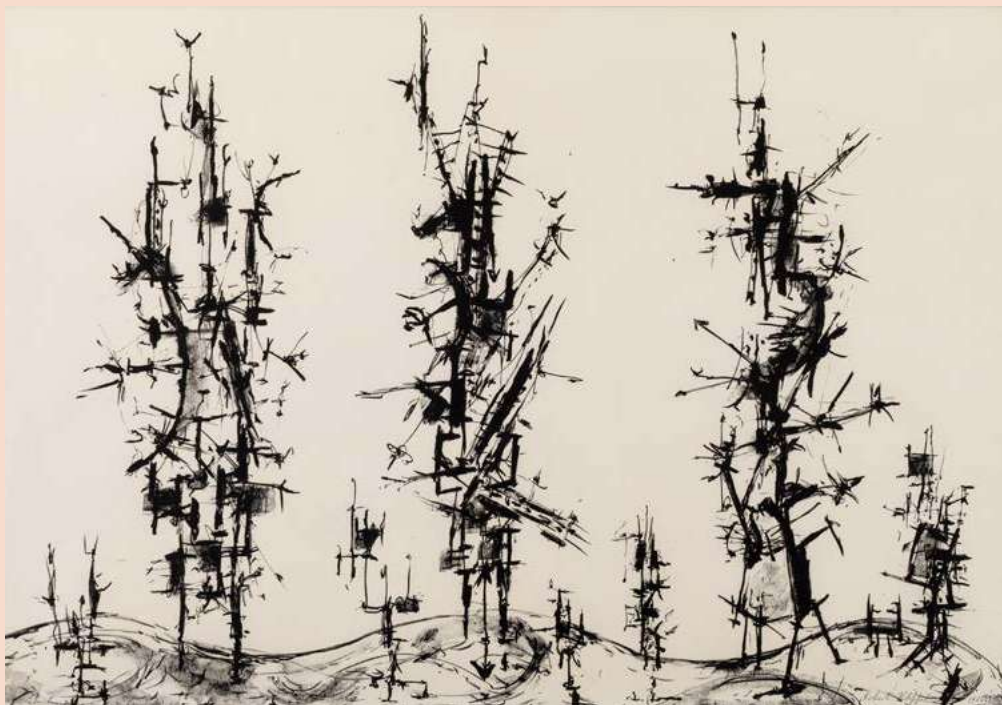
¹⁶ ‘Mrs Kathleen Harris Anderson (1921-1996), Parliament of New South Wales, <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=1806>

¹⁷ Lewis, op.cit., p. 44.



Eva Kubbos
Shifting from Dark to Light
 1962
 coloured linocut
 37.5 x 49cm
 Penrith Regional Gallery Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Copyright courtesy of the Artist



Robert Klippel
Structures in a Landscape
 1965
 lithograph
 54 x 78 cm (image)
 Penrith Regional Gallery Acquisitions Fund, 1991

© Andrew Klippel, Courtesy of The Robert Klippel Estate,
 represented by Annette Larkin Fine Art, Sydney and Galerie
 Gmurzynska, Zurich

Petite Dallimore who with her husband 'Dal' lived on the property as caretakers after Margo Lewers' death, had also accompanied Dal to the house where Margo gave him painting lessons. She was able to explore the Lewers' garden and the works of art situated around it, and discuss it with Margo. This knowledge, and her memories of Margo in her garden, meant that she was an excellent guide to the site, and 'provided the continuity and corporate understanding so necessary to the success of small institutions like the Gallery'.¹⁸

Other Friends with an intimate knowledge of the garden and what it meant to the Lewers family were Brenda Niccol and her son Bruce Niccol. Bruce was contracted by the Lewers' daughters, Darani and Tanya, to look after the garden on a part-time basis after Margo's death. Brenda worked with him as a volunteer helper. Brenda had visited the house when Gerald and Margo were alive and was familiar with their design philosophy for the garden and rationale for plant selection, which she maintained as the first Chair of the Garden Sub-Committee. Petite Dallimore also continued to maintain Margo's legacy in the garden as Deputy and later Chair of the Garden Sub-Committee.¹⁹ The Lewers' daughters, Darani and Tanya, expressed their appreciation of the work of the Garden Sub-Committee, and the fact that its members were 'keen to retain our parents' design intentions': 'Their commitment took the form of advice, weeding, working bees in the garden and other practical assistance, while the Friends as a whole often came to the rescue with extra funds to pay for equipment and plants.'²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁹ Petite Dallimore, interview with Julie Medana, 9 January 2003, Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest, The Gardens Oral History Project.

²⁰ Lewis, op.cit., p. 69.

The Garden Sub-Committee, sadly for many Friends, was obliged to disband in 2004, but the Gallery's superb gardens, now cared for by heritage gardeners, continue to attract visitors who come to see them and the sculptural works by Gerald Lewers, Margel Hinder, Lyndon Dadswell and Bert Flugelman.²¹

The Friends also took on the responsibility of setting up and dismantling exhibitions. The group known as the 'Hanging Crew' wore aprons decorated with a stylised noose, and used a gantry made by Ray Hood to hoist heavy artworks onto the Gallery walls. The introduction of new hanging techniques and Occupational Health and Safety laws later led to the disbanding of the Hanging Crew.

A change in the Friends' relationship with the Gallery came in 2002, when the Director, John Kirkman, informed them that the Gallery was to become an independent incorporated body separate from Council, with its own Board. Jan Lewis reported how the Director framed this new approach, and signalled a changed role for the Friends:

*He recognised that the role of the Friends was critical to the Gallery and that change could be difficult, and sometimes tough and fast, with pressure from Government, Council and the community. He favoured a collaborative approach in which the Friends could come up with new ideas and work together with staff. The Hanging Crew had already been helped with extra staff. Catering for exhibitions had moved from modest to large, now providing refreshments for 250 to 700 people. He believed it was important for Friends to be guests on some occasions.*²²

21 Ibid., p. 32; 'The Gardens', current Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery brochure.

22 Lewis, op.cit., p. 44.

Areas of Friends' expertise that continued to be utilised after the change in the relationship with the Gallery included community engagement and exhibition development. John Kirkman later wrote that 'It seemed to me that it was only fair, given the Friends' commitment and expertise, that they should be given the chance to curate exhibitions'.²³

The Friends curated two exhibitions between 2002 and 2004: *Ceramic Connections*, curated by Jan Lewis and Jan Needham, on display from April to June 2002; and *Time & Love: The Handcrafted Bedroom Exhibition*, curated by a team working with project coordinator Cheryle Yin-Lo and consisting of Kay Anderson, Jean Cleary, Lynda Henderson, Jan Lewis, Elizabeth Miller, Reena Mitra, Jan Needham, and Mireille Viviani. *Time & Love* was on display from December 2003 to February 2004.

Ceramic Connections was a comprehensive display of ceramics by potters from the region, showcased within an installation of furniture and artworks from the Gallery's collection. John Kirkman described the exhibition as '*a tour de force*'.²⁴ *Time & Love* exhibited handcrafted textile artworks, with over 200 works by 90 professional artists, guilds, hobbyists and community groups, and involved intensive community interaction by the curatorial team. For Director John Kirkman, 'Both projects clearly proved that, as well as providing logistical support and financial resources, the Friends could also deliver exhibitions of aesthetic excellence, curatorial rigour and innovation – not to mention style, *panache* and beauty'.²⁵

23 Foreword by John Kirkham in ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

The expansion of the Gallery and the changed relationship with the Friends nevertheless over time led inevitably to a reduced role for Friends in the operations of the Gallery, to the extent that fund raising has become their principal form of assistance. Mireille Viviani has also regretted changes due to the advent of digital delivery – she misses the mailed-out invitations and information about the Friends that used to arrive in her letterbox, and the glamorous exhibition opening nights and concerts that seem to belong to another era.²⁶

Judy Burrett paid tribute to the Friends of the Gallery in 2008, linking their generosity to that of the Lewers family whose gift began it all:

The Friends of the Lewers are the salt of the earth. They worked in the bookshop, a very busy place in the '80s. They served tea and scones and friendship and knowledge. Their pride in the gallery was personal, and they shone with proprietorial satisfaction in the work that they loved to do ...

I like to think that the spirits of Margo and Gerald are still there, too. If they are, I hope they are happy. I know they would embrace the Friends who, although guests at their home, continue to cultivate the enormous generosity of the Lewers family, Margo, Gerald, Darani and Tanya, in the bequest to us all.²⁷

²⁶ Viviani interview, op.cit.

²⁷ Lewis, op.cit., p. 53.



Eva Kubbos

Untitled

1962

gouache, watercolour and chalk on paper

74 x 97.5cm

Penrith Regional Gallery

Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Copyright courtesy of the Artist

YVONNE AUDETTE

Born Sydney, NSW, 1930

Yvonne Audette, at the age of seventeen, while still at high school, enrolled in weekend classes at the Julian Ashton Art School, before also studying at the East Sydney Technical College, and at the evening classes of Desiderius Orban. At the age of twenty-two, Audette travelled to New York and studied at the Art Student's League of New York and the New York Academy of Design. She became friends with key figures in the New York avant-garde art scene such as Clement Greenberg and Willem de Kooning, at a pivotal stage in the development of American Abstract Expressionism. This, and her later experiences of living in Italy, (where she became friends with and was considerably influenced by Cy Twombly) and travelling extensively throughout Europe, deeply informed her signature abstract style.

Audette returned to live in Sydney in 1966. In 1968, she had her first Australian show with Robert Klippel at the Bonython Gallery in Sydney. Included in the Australian abstraction survey *New Directions: 1952-1962*, held at Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest, in 1998. In 1999-2000 Audette was included in the group exhibition *The Antipodeans: Challenge and Response in Australian Art, 1955-1965* at the National Gallery of Australia. In 2008, her artistic contribution was further recognized through a major solo exhibition of paintings and drawings from her expatriate years, titled *Different Directions: 1954-1966*, at the National Gallery of Victoria. Since 1969, Audette has lived and worked in the Dandenong Ranges in Melbourne, where she continues to paint daily.

ROBERT KLIPPEL

Born Potts Point, Sydney 1920

Died 2001

Robert Klippel began making miniature model ships from the age of six, becoming significantly skilled in this craft practice. Leaving school at the age of sixteen, Klippel trained and worked as a wool classer. In 1939, he was called into serve in the Navy, his roles included building model aircraft for recognition training at the Gunnery Instructional Centre at Woolloomooloo. Post his years of military service during the second world war he began studying at East Sydney Technical College eventually becoming a fulltime student in 1946. Lyndon Dadswell, one of Klippel's tutors was also a friend and frequent visitor to the Emu Plains property when it was the home of Margo and Gerald Lewers.

Klippel lived in London from 1947 – 1950 and further developed his preoccupation with the relationship between machinery and nature. By the early fifties he had returned to Sydney and built friendships with Sydney abstractionists such as John Olsen, William Rose, Yvonne Audette, John Passmore and Peter Upward. In 1956 Klippel exhibited in the highly influential exhibition *Direction 1*, moved to New York soon after, and took up a teaching position at the Minneapolis School of Art. Klippel returned to Australia in 1963, and began teaching at the National Art School and in the Architecture department at the University of New South Wales. Klippel became arguably one of the most influential Sydney based abstract sculptors specialising in assemblage sculptures made from recycled mechanical parts.

BIM HILDER

Born Parramatta, NSW, 1909

Died Sydney, NSW, 1990

Bim Hilder was a sculptor, painter and printmaker. His father was artist JJ Hilder who painted in the style of Australian Impressionism. Bim developed an interest in architecture and furniture design when he began working with Walter Burley Griffin at Castlecrag, Sydney during the 1920s. He also worked on theatre sets, opera and film and during World War Two worked designing camouflage and new construction methods. After the war Hilder became involved with the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), as were founding members Margo and Gerald Lewers.

Hilder wrote in the first issue of *Artviews* the journal of the Artists' Guild of Australia, in 1962, "Winning the Reserve Bank Prize for a Wall Enrichment in their new Martin Place Building brought me other commissions, and from there on, I seemed to be an established sculptor. 'All natural phenomena fascinates me, the flight of birds, wave formation, patterns of erosion, characteristics of plant growth, marine life, crystal structure...I have two main approaches to sculpture – one is to allow the shape and grain of the wood to influence me in the form that develops; the other, for larger works, is to use copper beating, welding, cutting away and adding, like a three-dimensional drawing in space. I don't have any great aims or direction – just do the best I can with the ability I have."

The ten years following the Reserve Bank project saw many public sculpture commissions around Australia, but the Reserve Bank wall-enrichment and the Burley Griffin Memorial Fountain in Castlecrag (1965) are, arguably, his best known public art works. In 1962 Hilder began teaching art part-time at the East Sydney Technical College and from 1973 he also gave classes in sculpture at the University of New South Wales for their Student Union. In 1978 Hilder was awarded an MBE for his services to art.

LYNDON DADSWELL

Born Stanmore, NSW, 1908

Died Elizabeth Bay, NSW, 1986

Lyndon Dadswell's significant contribution to Australian sculpture encompassed his own substantial and varied body of studio work and his innovative activities as Head of Fine Arts at East Sydney Technical College. He was a promoter of major civic commissions as the founding Vice-President of The Sculptors Society. Dadswell's work attracted critical acclaim, being awarded the International Co-operation Art Award and the Britannica Australia award for art in 1967, and an Australia Council for the Arts Award in 1973. His work is represented in the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia and most State galleries.

As with Margo and Gerald Lewers, Dadswell was particularly inspired by the work of British sculptors Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, and the modernist ideal: 'truth to materials'. Dadswell socialised with the Lewers, often visiting their home at Emu Plains, along with other artists, writers and architects, including artists Frank and Margel Hinder. Throughout his career he engaged with formalist aesthetics such as shape, proportion, scale, structure, texture, colour and context, his work capturing a sense of happening, rather than of being made. After four decades of teaching, Margel Hinder noted: there is hardly a sculptor in Sydney who is not indebted to Dadswell in some measure. His teaching contributed to the development of notable sculptors: Marea Gazzard, Robert Klippel, Ian McKay, Paul Selwood and Ron Robertson-Swann.



Lyndon Dadswell

Untitled [Bird]

Circa 1965

brown gummed paper on metal support and wooden base
137 x 110 x 95cm

Gift of Tanya Crothers and Darani Lewers, 1979

Copyright courtesy of the Artist's Estate

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LIST OF WORKS

All artwork dimensions are in
cm (h x w x d)

All artworks are from Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest Collection

Yvonne Audette

Dream of an Ancient Tablet

Circa 1960s
oil on composition board
98.5 x 83.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1991

Light Waves

1961
mixed media: gouache and ink
on paper
31 x 22.5cm
Gift of Jan Martin, 1991

Tan

1961
watercolour and white on paper
30.5 x 24.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Nancy Borlase

Blue Centre

1960
oil and mixed media on canvas
laid on board
90.7 x 55.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1995

Joan Brassil

Untitled [Bird's Nest]

Unknown
carved wood sculpture with
twigs and carved eggs
13 x 24 x 24cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

John Coburn

Untitled

1963
oil on board
121 x 60.1 cm (image),
141 x 80 x 6 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Lyndon Dadswell

Construction

Circa 1975
stainless steel sculpture, raised
on a concrete plinth
76 x 138 x 24cm
Plinth: 58 x 32 x 22cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1984

Sketch for Sculpture

1966
ink and wash on paper
15.2 x 10.2 cm (image),
32 x 26 x 5 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 2000

Untitled

1968
brown paper gummed and wire
sculpture on chipboard
160 x 86 x 18 cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1984

Untitled [Bird]

Circa 1965
brown gummed paper on metal
support and wooden base
137 x 110 x 95cm
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Bert Flugelman

Cartoon for Sculpture with Cactus

1984
mixed media: charcoal, pastel
and pencil and paper
112 x 77cm (image),
136 x 100 x 4cm (frame)
Purchased by the Penrith
Regional Gallery Acquisitions
Fund with the assistance of the
Visual Arts Board, 1985

Untitled [Sculpture with Cactus]

1984
stainless steel sculpture
148.5cm x 107 x 77cm
Purchased by the Penrith
Regional Gallery Acquisitions
Fund with the assistance of the
Visual Arts Board, 1985

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LIST OF WORKS

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Lewers Bequest Collection

Thomas Gleghorn

Devastated Landscape

1960
oil on board
53 x 63.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

The Sacrifice - The Firebird

1959
oil on composition board
120.5 x 90.5cm,
125 x 94 x 7 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Spanish Drawing

1962
mixed media: watercolour and
gouache on paper
31 x 26.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Leonard Hessing

Harbour Mask II

1963
mixed media: wash and collage
on paper
61.5 x 49.6cm (image),
84.3 x 68.5 x 2.5 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

The Indifferent Mechanism

1960
oil on canvas
83.5 x 129.5cm (image),
85.5 x 131 x 4 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1994

The Night is a Long Snake

1964
coloured lithograph
54.5 x 78cm (image),
77.5 x 105.5 x 2 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Bim Hilder

Female Torso with Child

Unknown
carved wood
23.5 x 14 x 12.8cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Mother & Child

Unknown
carved mahogany
20 x 12.7 x 12.2cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

One of [2] Kidney Shaped Ashtrays

Unknown
brass
6.2 x 9 x 2.8cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

One of [2] Kidney Shaped Ashtrays

Unknown
6.2 x 9 x 2.8cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Reclining Nude

Unknown
carved cedar
13.2 x 26.5 x 9cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Untitled

Unknown
copper
4 x 4 x 9cm (2 pieces),
4 x 4 x 12cm and 4 x 2 x 12cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Untitled [seated figure]

Unknown
cedar
13.5 x 10.2 x 8.5cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Untitled [Set of interlocking pyramids]

Unknown
copper
various dimensions
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

Robert Klippel

Opus 298

1970-1974
bronze, steel and found objects
48.2 x 17.5 x 15cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1991

Structures in a Landscape

1965
lithograph
54 x 78 cm (image),
71.5 x 95 x 4 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1991

Eva Kubbos

Coast

1968
synthetic polymer PVA on board
50 x 70cm
Gift of Leo G. Christie, 1990

Shifting from Dark to Light

1962
coloured linocut
37.5 x 49cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Untitled

1962
coloured linocut on paper
35 x 45cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Untitled

1962
gouache, watercolour and
chalk on paper
74 x 97.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1990

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LIST OF WORKS

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cm (h x w x d)

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Lewers Bequest Collection

Ron Lambert

EGM

1968
oil on board
122 x 137.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1996

Peter Laverty

Wet Night City

1959
oil on masonite
91.3 x 71cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1989

Gerald Lewers

Dancing Forms

1951
aluminium and swamp wood
34.7 x 17 x 17cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1984

Margo Lewers

Anew

Circa 1964
PVA on board
50 x 68.8cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Red Circle

1969
acrylic and oil on canvas
136 x 161cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1985

Under Consideration

1966
acrylic and oil on masonite
91.5 x 183cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1985

Elwyn Lynn

The Ancient Mariner

1958
oil on board
31.5 x 24.3cm (image),
49 x 41.5 x 3 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1985

Cliffs at Fall

Circa 1961
mixed media on canvas
76.5 x 101.5cm (image),
78 x 102.5 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1990

Herculaneum

1961
mixed media on canvas
101 x 136cm
Gift of Victoria Lynn, 1998

Ian McKay

Marionette IV

Unknown
steel sculpture
148.5 x 107 x 77cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1984

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS LIST OF WORKS

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cm (h x w x d)

All artworks are from Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest Collection

John Olsen

Child's Fifth Birthday

1957
oil on canvas
72 x 90.5cm (image),
74 x 94 x 5 cm (frame)
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1989

Portrait of the Dog who Lives Near the Sea

1963
mixed media: gouache with
pastel on paper
55 x 75.5cm (image),
84 x 101.3 x 6.5 (frame)
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1990

Stanislaus Rapotec

Black Phte

1960
PVA on board
56.4 x 76.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1987

Untitled

1968
synthetic polymer on masonite
137 x 182.5cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Australian Art Research
Fund, 1990

Henry Salkauskas

Autumn Landscape

1961
linocut
56.6 x 35.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Untitled

1961
linocut
51.5 x 36.2cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988

Guy Warren

The Clearing III

1965
watercolour on paper
54.5 x 74.5cm
Penrith Regional Gallery
Acquisitions Fund, 1988



Robert Klippel

Opus 298

1970-1974
bronze, steel and found objects
48.2 x 17.5 x 15cm
Purchased with the assistance of
The Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of
the Lewers Bequest, 1991

Courtesy of The Robert Klippel Estate, represented by Annette
Larkin Fine Art, Sydney and Galerie Gmurzynska, Zurich



Frank Hinder
Darani & Tanya
 1945
 Pencil and coloured wash on paper
 Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of
 The Lewers Bequest Collection
 Copyright courtesy of the Artist's Estate



ART LIVES HERE

Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest, was the private home of two artists - Gerald and Margo Lewers - and their daughters, Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers (nee Lewers). Gerald purchased the property in 1942 as a base from which to reside during the week while working nearby at the Farley and Lewers Quarry. During their time living here – from 1950 when the family moved to live permanently to Emu Plains through to 1978 when Margo passed away – the property became a site of great creative energy and artistic exchange. Margo and Gerald used the entire property as their studio by creating their public commissions and works on site in the house and yard. Their domestic lives were lived as an extension of their creative practice. Margo and Gerald's garden, and later the design and construction of Ancher House, remains a testament to their commitment to maintaining a Modernist lifestyle.

As with Gerald, Margo was highly sought after for public art commissions: her mosaic work, as seen on site in the Gallery kitchen and courtyard, form the precursor for two major commissions which were completed for the Rex Hotel, Canberra (1960) and for the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Western Australia (1961). After Gerald's death in 1962, Margo completed Gerald's outstanding Reserve Bank of Australia, Canberra commission. The yard behind Ancher House was used to create a full-scale structure of chicken wire and paper, to fabricate and complete Gerald's sculpture.

Margo and Gerald's home was also the site of large gatherings of artists who travelled to Emu Plains for parties and weekends away. Here, their guests were encouraged to work in the garden and many created artworks in the area – sketching the local landscape and scenes at the house. The property at Emu Plains was known as a lively hub of debate and creativity for

a wide circle of family and friends such as Margo's brother Carl Plate and his family. Two artists, who were frequent guests of Margo and Gerald and whose work shows the influence of their time spent here, are Frank Hinder and Sonia Farley.

The Penrith Regional Gallery Collection holds a substantial number of works on paper by Frank Hinder, gifted by the artist in the 1980s, that were created on site during his stays with the Lewers family. Hinder took great interest in sketching Gerald, evidenced in the many drawings that not only depict the close friendship between the two men but also demonstrates the deep admiration and respect Hinder had towards Gerald. When compiled, the works offer an insight into the techniques, skill, energy and concentration Gerald employed when carving his sculptures in wood and stone, as well as domestic ware such as bowls.

Being related to the Lewers family, Gerald's niece, Sonia Farley was a frequent visitor to the site when it was the family home. Working extensively as a sculptor, Farley was attracted by the modernist pursuit of remaining honest to both material and form. Her commitment to nature, organic shapes and modern sculptural form morphed abstraction with functionality. The influence of her uncle, Gerald Lewers, is keenly evident in the objects on display in this exhibition.

Lauren Parker
Registrar, Exhibitions and Collection

SONIA FARLEY

Born Sydney, NSW, 1927

Died, 1997

Sonia Farley was raised with an appreciation for environmental issues and developed a keen interest in nature. An inherent respect and appreciation of nature and the qualities of natural materials became a foundation principle of her work.

Farley began her career as a carver during the 1950s at a time when woodworking, as an art-form, attracted little interest. Wood workers were traditionally male and orientated towards the business of trade, which relied on working with a lathe. For carving, it was difficult to attain good quality tools, supplies and information. It was, therefore, particularly unusual for a woman to take up creative woodwork. Farley, worked extensively as a sculptor, and was influenced both by her uncle, Gerald Lewers, with whom she would carve, and by her own interest in the textures and colours of native timbers and the desire to carve natural forms. Farley was also attracted by the modernist pursuit of remaining honest to both material and form. Her commitment to nature, organic shapes and modern sculptural form morphed abstraction with functionality; resulting in the creation of hand carved works, a small representation of which are on display here.

Sonia was a frequent visitor to the site when it was the family home. Her enthusiasm for supporting Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest was demonstrated through a financial donation that resulted in the construction of workshop studios. The studios located on the Gallery grounds are named in her honour.

GERALD LEWERS

Born Hobart, Tasmania, 1905

Died Cairns, 1962, lived and worked in
Sydney and Penrith

Gerald Lewers began studying art in 1924 and in the late 1920s, while attending evening classes at the studio of Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo, Gerald met and later married Margo Lewers (nee Plate). In 1928 Gerald joined his brother-in-law Mervyn Farley in a quarry and construction firm, called Farley and Lewers, only to depart for Europe shortly after. In 1934 both Margo and Gerald attended the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, where Gerald studied under the tutelage of John Skeaping (1901 – 1980). Skeaping's interest in the natural world greatly influenced Lewers, whose work from this time aimed to capture the essence of movement within the static object. Spending his youth exploring the bush greatly influenced Gerald's appreciation of natural materials, and his craftsmanship developed out of a keen understanding of the qualities inherent within the wood and stone with which he chose to work. Upon returning to Australia Gerald again began work at Farley and Lewers, eventually taking over management of the quarry at Castlereagh, near Emu Plains in 1942, before retiring in 1950 to work full time as an artist.

A member of the Society of Artists, Sydney, and of the Contemporary Art Society, Gerald took part in many group exhibitions. He helped to establish the Society of Sculptors and Associates in 1951 and was its founding treasurer. From 1953 until his death Gerald received over fifteen major commissions, among them *Relaxation*, a reclining 'sandstone figure of heroic size' (University House, Australian National University, Canberra, 1953), and the sandstone relief on the York Street front of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Sydney (1954). He and Margo were jointly commissioned to create a garden of pebbles, cacti and sandstone shapes for the MLC Building, North Sydney (1957). Gerald worked with swiftness and certainty, and later began to use metal, especially for public fountains such as those at ICI House, East Melbourne (1959) the John Christie Wright Memorial Fountain in Macquarie Park Place, Sydney (1960).

At the time of Gerald's sudden death in 1962, following a horse-riding accident, he had been working on a commission for a public sculpture for the Reserve Bank of Australia's Canberra office. Using the maquette created by Gerald and her intimate understanding of Gerald's work, Margo completed the commission in 1964.

Quote abridged from Michael Crayford, *Lewers, Gerald Francis (1905–1962)*, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 15, Melbourne University Press, 2000, pp 89–90.

MARGO LEWERS

Born Sydney, NSW, 1908

**Died Emu Plains, NSW, 1978, lived and worked
in Sydney and Emu Plains**

Margo Lewers was raised by her mother, following the early death of her father - German writer, artist and adventurer Adolph Plate. Margo spent her 20s working as a designer in a small craft workshop and then later established her own studio business, designing pottery, interior furnishings and hand printed materials. As a cadet artist for the Daily Telegraph, Margo met Gerald in Sydney when she enrolled in evening drawing classes being taught by Dattilo Rubbo. In 1934, a year after they married, both Gerald and Margo travelled to Britain to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, where Margo studied painting and drawing.

Margo returned to Sydney in 1945 and began studying painting with Desiderius Orban. Margo remained true to the Modernist ethos within her paintings and in all her creative pursuits - including developing the family home and garden here in Emu Plains. Margo spent the next two decades exploring the limits of various media and became recognised as one of Australia's leading abstract painters.

A founding member of the NSW Contemporary Art Society, Margo held 24 major exhibitions during her lifetime which saw her work exhibited throughout Australia and internationally. Margo won 14 art prizes, with her paintings now held by all State Galleries. Margo was sought after for public art commissions: her mosaic work as seen in the Gallery kitchen and courtyard form the precursor for two major commissions which were completed for the Rex Hotel, Canberra (1960) and for the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Western Australia (1961). After Gerald's death in 1962, Margo completed Gerald's outstanding commission for the Reserve Bank of Australia, Canberra.

The property at Emu Plains was known as a lively hub of debate and creativity for a wide circle of family and friends. In the final years of her life, Margo expressed her wish for the house and garden to remain an active centre for art following her death, which resulted in the establishment of Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest in 1980, and opened the following year with a new gallery building in 1981.

FRANK HINDER
Born Summer Hill, NSW, 1906
Died, 1992

Frank Hinder began studying art at Royal Art Society School, Sydney in 1924, continuing his studies at East Sydney Technical College from 1925-27. During 1927 Hinder travelled to America, where he began studying at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, and then at the School of Fine Arts, New York, in 1929. From 1930 to 1931 Hinder studied at the Master Institute of the Roerich Museum, New York, before returning to Australia in 1934 with his wife, Margel Hinder, and their daughter, Enid. During his time in America, Hinder embraced the idea of 'Dynamic Symmetry' which held that the universe, and everything within that universe, was ordered and mathematical. The ideas of rhythm within nature, mathematic repetition and abstraction became the foundation of Hinder's practice. In 1939 Hinder worked on *Exhibition 1*, a group show headlining the works of Sydney's modernist artists. For the duration of World War Two, Hinder was assigned to the Royal Australian Engineer's Camouflage Wing where he used his knowledge of abstract shapes, colour, and repetition to create the Hinder Spider camouflage design.

After the war, Hinder began teaching at East Sydney Technical College. Frank along with his wife Margel were frequent visitors to the home of fellow artists Margo and Gerald Lewers, in Emu Plains. While there, Hinder sketched the Lewers family, especially Gerald at work on sculptures, resting and socialising. Hinder depicted people with a focus on the shapes within each body but also the shapes and rhythms created between people and between people and their surroundings. Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest has a significant holding of these drawings which form a wonderful archive of life at the property while it was the Lewers' family home.



Frank Hinder
Untitled (Jerry, Noel, Margo)
1946
Pencil on paper
Penrith Regional Gallery,
Home of The Lewers
Bequest Collection
Copyright courtesy of the
Artist's Estate

ART LIVES HERE LIST OF WORKS

All artwork dimensions are in
cm (h x w x d)

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Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest Collection

Max Dupain

Sonia Farley works on exhibition at Macquarie Galleries

1964
archival photographs
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Sonia Farley

Bowl - small dark wood

(date unknown)
wood
3 x 12.5 x 7cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Egg

(date unknown)
wood
3.5 x 6 x 4cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Guinea Fowl Bowl Salt Shaker

Unknown {Not recorded}
coconut, feather
15.5 x 8.5 x 9cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Salad Servers

Circa 1986
pecan nut
fork: 5.7 x 32 x 5.5cm
spoon: 4 x 32 x 5.5cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Salt Shaker

Unknown (date unknown)
wood
2.5 x 8.5 x 6cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Spice bowls - pair

(date unknown)
woody pear, bees wax estapol
Piece 1: 7 x 11.5 x 4cm
Piece 2: 7.5 x 12 x 4cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Terminalia Seed

1993
Conkerberry
5 x 6.5 x 8cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

'Slipper' bowl

(date unknown)
wood
9 x 31.3 x 8.5cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

'Spoon' bowl

(date unknown)
wood
8.6 x 43 x 16cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts
Program by David Farley, 2010

Frank Hinder

The Dinghy, Nepean, Emu Plains

1944
watercolour and pencil on paper
12.4 x 20.5 cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1988

Emu Plains

1945
watercolour and pencil on paper
24.5 x 29cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Emu Plains

1946
watercolour and pencil on paper
22 x 29.8cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Emu Plains

Unknown
watercolour on paper
25.2 x 33.4cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1988

Emu Plains

Unknown
watercolour and pencil on paper
23.4 x 30.2cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1988

Farley and Lewers - Emu Plains

1944
watercolour and pencil on paper
12.9 x 20.7 cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1988

Lewers Crusher in Emu Plains

Circa 1945
watercolour and pencil on paper
17.5 x 25.5cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Nepean, Emu Plains

Circa 1944
watercolour on paper
13 x 21cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Nepean, Emu Plains

Circa 1944
watercolour on paper
18.5 x 21cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Untitled

Circa 1946
watercolour on paper
24 x 30.7cm
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981

Untitled

1945
watercolour on paper
24.5 x 33 cm
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Selected works from the collection

circa 1945
various dimensions
Gift of Frank Hinder, 1981, 1983
and 1988

Gerald Lewers

Four legged wooden bowl

Unknown
wood
10 x 20 x 39.5 cm
Donated through the Australian
Government's Cultural
Gifts Program by Kathryn J
Robertson, 2016

Model for Fountain No. 2

Circa 1960
green patinated copper
sculpture
6 x 26.2 x 10cm
Overall size: 46.5 x 24 x 10.5cm
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Model for Section of Wall Sculpture in Reserve Bank, Canberra

Circa 1962
copper
80 x 70cm
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Seated Figure

Circa 1950
silky oak
20.5 x 77 x 19
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Untitled

Unknown
wood
23.4 x 8.4cm
Purchased with the assistance
of the Friends of Penrith
Regional Gallery, Home of The
Lewers Bequest, 1993

ART LIVES HERE LIST OF WORKS

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Margo Lewers

Interior (Centre) (diptych)

Circa 1965
synthetic polymer paint on
composition board
188 x 250 cm each panel
Donated by The Women's
College within the University of
Sydney, 2014

Quarry Face

1956
oil on composition board
49.5 x 44.5 cm
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Ephemera

Full-scale model of Gerald Lewers' 1964 commission for the Reserve Bank, Canberra as erected by Margo Lewers behind Ancher House

photographer and date
unknown
archival photograph
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Farley and Lewers quarry

photographer and date
unknown
archival photographs
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Various ephemera

circa 1950-1960
ceramic tiles and handtools
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979

Work Lives On After Artist, Sydney Morning Herald

30 July 1964
newspaper clipping annotated
by Margo Lewers
Gift of Tanya Crothers and
Darani Lewers, 1979



Frank Hinder
Nepean, Emu Plains
Circa 1944
Gift of Frank Hinder 1981
Copyright courtesy of the
Artist's Estate

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest would like to thank the following participating artists, organisations and individuals for their participation and assistance:

Artists

Yvonne Audette
Warwick Fuller
Thomas Gleghorn
Eva Kubbos
John Olsen
Guy Warren

Artist's Estates

The Estate of Lyndon Dadswell
The Estate of Sonia Farley
The Estate of Frank Hinder
The Estate of Peter Kaiser
Andrew Klippel and The Estate of Robert Klippel
The Estate of Ian McKay
The Estate of Stanislaus Rapotec
The Estate of Henry Salkauskas
The Estate of Peter Upward

Collections and Lenders

Ray Anns Collection
Martin Campbell Collection
Mary Casey Collection
Chris and Susan Bonsall Collection
Lynette and Daniel Beltran
Mary Bergin and Alan Amos
Cristie Fuller Collection
Forster Family Collection
Ginny Gould Collection
Robert Mitchell Collection
Debra and Greg Morgan Collection
Michael and Marilyn Reardon-Small Collection
Rosemary and Andrew Penman Collection
Robert Simpson Collection
Brendan Smith Collection
Laurie and Rita Spiteri Collection
SteelReid Collection
Ron Fuller and Susan Templeman
Tom and Sheree Tumanik Collection
and Private Collections and Lenders

Galleries

Annette Larkin Fine Art
Defiance Gallery
Charles Nodrum Gallery
Galerie Gmurzynska, Zurich
Lost Bear Gallery
Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art

Opening Event

Hon Peter Anderson AM, Chair of the Board of PP&VA
Cr Ross Fowler OAM, Mayor of Penrith
Warwick Fuller

Exhibition Partner:

Lost Bear Gallery, Director Geoff White

PRG Exhibition Team:

Director, Sheona White
Exhibition Manager, Marian Simpson (to May 2020)
Curatorial Coordinator, Toby Chapman (from June 2020)
Lead Technician, Mary-Anne Cornford
Exhibitions Assistant, Camille Gillyboeuf

PRG Collection Team:

Collection Manager, Dr Shirley Daborn
Registrar, Exhibitions and Collection, Lauren Parker

PRG Venue Services Team:

Venue Manager, Gallery, Fiona Knoke
Gallery Assistant – Retail, Dale Reid
Gallery Assistant – Events, Kristin English

PRG Education Team:

Education Manager, Naomi McCarthy
Education Coordinator, Christine Ghali

PP&VA Marketing Team:

Marketing Director, Krissie Scudds
Marketing Manager, Malvina Tan
Marketing Coordinator, Fleur Wells
PR Coordinator, Jaala Hallett

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Dream Realised Catalogue Essay

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Participant, Joel Beerden, Artist and Previous Work Experience Student

Participant, Warwick Fuller, Artist and First President of the Friends of Penrith Regional

Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest

Participant, Carolyn Gartside, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Penrith City Council

Participant, Lynda Henderson, President of the Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery,

Home of The Lewers Bequest

Participant, Renay Xuereb, UNSW Art and Design Undergraduate Student and

Previous Night Garden Event Crew and Opening Speaker

The Friends of Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest

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