THE OTHER ANTIPODEANS:

ROBERT DICKERSON AND DAVID BOYD

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CHAPTER 5: DAVID BOYD: THE ‘PAINTER’ AS PAINTER
1960-1962

5.1 David Boyd: the potter after the Antipodeans 64
5.2 David Boyd: the painter after the Antipodeans 66
5.3 David Boyd in London 71
5.4 David Boyd the Antipodean 72

CHAPTER 6: ROBERT DICKERSON: IN THE RING
1960-1962

6.1 Robert Dickerson: in the ring 77
6.2 The Rudy Komon Gallery: exhibiting Melbourne painters in Sydney 78
6.3 Rudy Komon: Dickerson’s trainer 82
6.4 Robert Dickerson: outside on the inside 85

CONCLUSION 88

EPILOGUE 89

Appendix: The Antipodean Manifesto 93

Notes 96

List of Plates 114

Plates 117

Bibliography 141
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INTRODUCTION

The effect of the Antipodean exhibition was, I believe beneficial. Australian art has not been completely overwhelmed by the passionate devotees of non-figurative painting. ...Today, the creative artist in Australia retains a freedom of choice to work in the mode he prefers, a freedom that was heavily challenged by powerful critical pressure only a few years ago.¹

Bernard Smith thus reflected on the conflict between the figurative Antipodeans in Melbourne, and the 'tachistes, action painters, geometric abstractionists, abstract expressionists and their innumerable band of camp followers', who had apparently dominated the Sydney scene of the late 1950s.²

This paper seeks to address some of the circumstances and myths that surround the Antipodeans and the infamous Antipodean Manifesto. It re-examines the pivotal role that the group played in the critical construct, that located the Antipodeans' defence of the figurative 'image' in Melbourne, in opposition to the dominance of abstract painting in Sydney. Within this construct, the stand made by the Antipodeans provided a crucial reference point that retrospectively validated specific events in the build-up to 1959, as well as, provided the impetus for future incidents later interwoven into the narrative.

This paper does not attempt to prove or disprove the validity of this construct, nor does it attempt to provide an alternative model for the interpretation of Australian art during the period from 1956 to 1962.
What it does attempt, is to detail where and how the construct was employed, whilst highlighting the contradictions and anomalies within the framework which undermine its authority as defining the history of Australian art at this time.³

In addressing these issues, three specific features will be dealt with in detail. While these do not present a comprehensive description of the 'art world', they do provide a foundation from which issues can be illuminated. These are firstly, the history of Australian art as presented in the books published in the early 1960s, secondly, the organisation and promotion of Australian art internationally, most specifically in London. Lastly, certain discontinuities and contradictions within construct are identified by discussing the focus of newspaper reviews over the same period.

The inclusion of Robert Dickerson and David Boyd in the Antipodeans is addressed in detail. Of the seven painters who were signatories on The Antipodean Manifesto,⁴ these two had the least established individual reputations as painters in the years up to 1959. The critical reception of Robert Dickerson and David Boyd as individuals, in contrast to their reception as Antipodeans, thus highlights the exclusions, marginalised features, and contradictions, of the narrative constructed around the Antipodeans and the apparent divide between painting in Sydney and Melbourne.
CHAPTER 1: THE POTTER AS PAINTER:
DAVID BOYD 1956–1958

David and Hermia Boyd returned to Australia in 1955, and almost immediately, began to exhibit their pottery with critical success in both Sydney and Melbourne. The unqualified praise for both David and Hermia Boyd as potters was later replaced by outspoken criticism directed at David Boyd after he turned to painting in the late 1950s. The same critics who willingly praised his work in ceramics dismissed his abilities and output as a painter.

A combination of circumstances set the foundations for the positive reception accorded David Boyd’s pottery, while precipitating the criticism directed at his work as a painter. These included, the status of pottery within the perceived hierarchy of art, the collaborative nature of the David and Hermia Boyd’s practice, the legacy of his father, the potter Merric Boyd, and the conflict between David Boyd’s ethical concerns and the apparent practical limitations within his paintings.

David Boyd was both perceived and actively promoted as a successful potter. Yet, when he transgressed the critical boundaries established for him, he met with almost universal hostility.
1.1 THE STATUS OF POTTERY IN AUSTRALIA IN THE 1950s

In the 1950s studio pottery in Australia was a fledgling field. However, Merric Boyd’s pioneering decorated earthenware vessels of the 1920s and 1930s had established his reputation as the first ‘artist-potter’ to develop a distinctive ‘Australian’ aesthetic. Third earthenware practice had reached its most forceful expression with the potters working in and around Melbourne in the 1940s and 1950s.

While Harold Hughan’s first exhibition may have heralded a ‘new’ aesthetic as early as 1950, it was not until the 1960s that Australian pottery became primarily reliant on the more refined and controlled stoneware aesthetic advocated by the English potter Bernard Leach. By the mid-1960s, stoneware pots, derived from the Japanese folk-craft tradition, became the dominant practice. As a consequence the critical discourse tied to this ‘new’ aesthetic effectively eclipsed the interest in the more decorative earthenware pottery of the earlier studio potters.

The dominance of this stoneware aesthetic was reinforced through the establishment of new ceramic courses run by practitioners, such as by Peter Rushforth at East Sydney Technical College. Peter Rushforth, Ivan Englund, Mollie Douglas, and Ivan McMeekin were also founding members of the Potters’ Society of New South Wales formed in 1956,
providing a supportive network for those potters interested in pursuing the 'Leach' philosophy. The Society published *Pottery in Australia* from 1962 as a means of further disseminating the doctrine.

In the 1950s, department stores, such as *David Jones* in Sydney and *Georges* in Melbourne, played an important role in showing crafts. These two stores in particular provided the venues at which David and Hermia Boyd first exhibited their pottery after returning to Australia in 1955. The emergence of the new commercial gallery circuit in the early 1960s provided crafts practitioners with a possible alternative. The new dealers were predominantly interested in paintings and prints, however in the early years some did support the crafts, and particularly pottery.

Exhibitions of pottery generally received only a limited coverage by the main critics, such as, Alan McCulloch for the Melbourne *Herald*, or Paul Haefliger in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In reviews, most critics applied a blend of current art language, with an insistence on utility and the celebration of 'craftsmanship'. In the case of the David & Hermia Boyd, the eclectic decoration of their pottery was usually commended. But, pottery was not considered 'art', and most critics were ill-equipped to deliver informed criticism on ceramic practice beyond merely anecdotal descriptive comments. Until the mid 1970s crafts practice was only sporadically covered in art review columns, and more often,
included in the social pages, with discussion normally articulated in those terms.⁹

In the 1950s and 1960s there was not a strong institutional framework to endorse the 'crafts'. The Arts Festival associated with the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games provides a pertinent example. Whilst paintings, watercolours and drawings were show-cased at the National Gallery of Victoria, and architecture and sculpture at the University of Melbourne. Pottery was combined with industrial design and commercial art, at the Royal Melbourne Technical College, valued more for its practical usefulness than its aesthetic claims.¹⁰

It was only after the appointment of Kenneth Hood to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1961, with his personal interest in contemporary Australian ceramics, that the Gallery began any serious collecting in this area. Kenneth Hood also played an early role in defining the history of Australian pottery and contemporary ceramic practice, with the publication Pottery in 1961, as part of the Longmans Arts in Australia series. Kenneth Hood also organised the first touring show, entitled Australian & New Zealand Pottery, during 1963-1964, as an affirmative attempt to raise the status of pottery in Australia.¹¹
1.2 MERRIC, ARTHUR, AND MURRUMBEENA POTTERY

As has already been mentioned, Merric Boyd is credited with having been the first ‘artist potter’ working in Australia to develop a distinctive ‘local’ style.\textsuperscript{12} He also holds a central place in Australia’s most accomplished and renowned artistic family.\textsuperscript{13} Merric Boyd’s best work was undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s, while later pieces appear to have been produced to an established formula, a mere reflection of outstanding earlier examples. Merric Boyd’s pottery did much to arouse public attention, yet his direct stylistic influence was limited. However, critics have maintained that his practice did provide the impetus for the methods later adopted by Arthur Merric Boyd pottery and David and Hermia Boyd with their interest in decoration and the expressive use of clay.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1957 the National Gallery of Victoria held an exhibition entitled \textit{Pattern and Shape}, conceived as a tribute to Merric Boyd’s pottery. With an emphasis on ‘utility, decoration, and sculpture’, Alan McCulloch in a review for the \textit{Herald}, observed that:

\begin{quote}
Last, but by no means least, of these artist potters is Merric Boyd from whose attractive exhibit one can discern in embryo those influences which have spread throughout the whole prolific Boyd family.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Arthur Merric Boyd pottery was established in 1944 by Arthur Boyd, John Perceval and Peter Herbst. The partnership was formed in
compliance with Government regulations to produce utilitarian items to supply the domestic market seriously depleted by wartime shortages. As with Merric Boyd's own work, it has been suggested, that Arthur Merric Boyd pottery was not part of mainstream trends but rather a removed and distinct mode of practice.\textsuperscript{16}

The ceramics produced by Arthur Boyd, at Arthur Merric Boyd pottery have a range of imagery that parallel and compliment his paintings and drawings of the same period. What is an important and distinguishing feature of Arthur Boyd's work, is that he treated the surface of the ceramic vessel as a canvas with the images composed from a specified viewing angle. His decorations were those of a painter use to working on a flat surface. As with the \textit{Coffee set} (1948) \textbf{Plate 2}, Arthur Boyd has used the surface of the coffee pot, cups and jug, to 'paint' images of angels on, almost completely ignoring the three dimensional form of the vessels. His work in ceramics has thus always been deemed subservient to his vision as a painter.\textsuperscript{17} Arthur Boyd's 'painter as potter' construct provides an interesting counter-point to the reception of David Boyd's dual practice in the late 1950s.
1.3 THE POTTERY AND CERAMICS OF DAVID & HERMIA BOYD

Only a month after their return to Australia, David and Hermia Boyd held a critically successful exhibition of pottery at David Jones’ Little Gallery in Sydney. In the following November, the Boyd’s held a second show at Georges department store in Melbourne. Alan McCulloch reported in the Herald that the pottery was:

...quite exquisite in design, shape and finish, and in fact much superior to anything of the kind that has so far been shown here.

For their first Brisbane exhibition, held at the Johnstone Gallery in 1956, the David and Hermia Boyd exhibited 280 pieces previously fired at Murrumbeena. 'It was an unqualified success', declared Gertrude Langer, critic for the Courier Mail:

Those who believe pottery to be a ‘minor’ art must revise their opinion when seeing these pieces. Coffee sets, bowls, jugs, hors d’oeuvre dishes, etc., they are, but they are also fine works of art...

A defining aspect of David and Hermia Boyd’s practice was its collaborative nature, both in the production of their pottery, as well as, the public persona projected by them. Their public profile was one of a ‘creative couple’ Plate 1. They exhibited their work together and more importantly were critically received as a partnership.

The work produced by David and Hermia Boyd covered a diverse range of earthenware practice, from simple utilitarian domestic items,
to more elaborately decorated vessels Plate 3, and in David Boyd's case, large-scale ceramic sculptures.\textsuperscript{23} Pieces produced by the couple were inscribed \textit{David \& Hermia Boyd} reflecting the joint nature of their practice. Bowls or vessels may have been thrown by David Boyd and decorated by Hermia Boyd. Especially characteristic of their pottery is Hermia's medieval imagery executed in tight sgraffito line drawings. \textit{Bowl} (1959) Plate 4 is an excellent example of Hermia's decorative skill applied to a bowl thrown by David Boyd. Her refined technique so impressed Paul Haefliger to comment in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}:

\begin{quote}
Decoration formerly so ill-digested has flowered into a delicate and witty medievalism which yet insists on its 20\textsuperscript{th} century origin – fine white lines cast like a spider web over the dark green or black ceramic.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

David's mythological 'Boydian' imagery presents an interesting contrast to the meticulously inscribed decoration of Hermia.\textsuperscript{26} Plate 4 \& Plate 5 David Boyd's images on \textit{Wine pot and goblets} (1956) are more freely executed in what could be described as a 'sgraffito sketch' style, a method that echoes his work on paper and later ceramic tiles.

\subsection*{1.4 DAVID BOYD: THE POTTER}

After his return to Australia David Boyd was critically accepted as a practicing contemporary potter. As 'craft', David and Hermia Boyd's pottery was admired for its utility, appropriation of historical forms, and
eclectic use of decorative techniques. In reviewing an exhibition of the
Boyd’s work, Alan McCulloch in the *Herald* commended the diversity of
their work:

They show real feeling for the various primitive pottery styles,
and their surfaces, with their incised, symbolic decorations, have
undeniable charm. Apart from this they reveal a command of
pottery techniques second to none in this country.

Yet he stressed:

Mainly it is in the nature of the material – pottery – which saves
these works from the category of the clever pastiche.26

This criticism would later be harshly applied in relation to David Boyd’s
attempted transition from potter to painter.27

1.5 DAVID BOYD: THE POTTER AS ‘PAINTER’

As David Boyd later observed:

Most people except my immediate family objected enormously
to the idea of “David pretending to be a painter” while Arthur
was the painter of the family! 28

What appears to have been generally ignored after David Boyd’s
return to Australia in 1955, was that he had previously studied painting
at the *National Gallery School* in 1945, and had held two joint
exhibitions with John Yule in 1945 and 1946. The first held at the
*Rowden White Library* at the University of Melbourne, the second in
the *Assembly Hall Gallery* on Collins Street.
Again as David Boyd has reflected:

I think McCulloch has been one of those who saw me as a kind of dilettante musician. Obviously he has always been generous in reviews of Hermia’s and my pottery but whenever I have attempted to go beyond the decorative art or functional craft into imagery, whether in ceramic sculpture or painting, Alan McCulloch has consistently dammed such attempts. In fairness I should add that he has not been alone so far as most Australian critics are concerned, yet I am suspicious that he has given the lead to others.²⁹

David Boyd had experimented with ceramic tiles whilst abroad and had planned to execute a series of ceramic tiles based on Australian explorers. It was only after his return to Murrumbeena that he managed to produce more tiles. However, the amount of time and labour required to produce each individual tile hindered their visual effectiveness. Returning to painting appeared to provide David Boyd with the ideal solution.³⁰

Later commentators have located David Boyd’s paintings within the post-war reassessment of national identity by Australian artists, writers and intellectuals. Others have argued that David Boyd, while depicting Australian explorers and actual historical events, was addressing timeless human aspirations and follies.³¹ Whatever the case, David Boyd’s first solo exhibition of paintings in 1958 was harshly rebuffed by critics in both Sydney and Melbourne.³²
David Boyd’s exhibition of paintings followed shortly after Arthur Boyd’s *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste* series had been seen in both Melbourne and Sydney. The *Explorers* were shown in Melbourne at the *Australian Galleries*, in October, and in November, at the *Terry Clune Galleries* in Sydney. The work developed themes concerning Burke and Wills, Bass and Flinders and other pioneering episodes.

Critics in both cities responded scathingly. Alan McCulloch considered them, under the title ‘Ideas in art—or are they gimmicks?’ in the *Herald*, as nothing more than a:

...clever pastiche of effects gathered from White, Nolan, Drysdale, Arthur Boyd and others concerned with transforming the raw material of Australiana.  

Critics suggested that in *The Explorers* David Boyd had merely plagiarized the work of his brother. Viewing both Arthur Boyd’s *Reflected bride I (Bride reflected in a creek)* (1958) *Plate 6* and David Boyd’s *King Found* (1957/58) *Plate 7*, one is not surprised that with both brothers confronting sensitive local issues and working within a ‘figurative’ mode these criticisms were almost inevitable.

Laurie Thomas, commenting on the exhibition at the *Terry Clune Galleries* caustically remarked that:

They are so clearly derived from, even if not exactly like, his brother Arthur’s work that they come as near as dammit to being either parodies or plagiarisms.
Wallace Thornton, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in a short review cynically headed 'A Potter Paints', joined the condemnation:

Leaning heavily on already established symbols and mythology of his brother Arthur's painting, David Boyd, the potter, shows a highly derivative collection of fourteen paintings at the Terry Clunes Galleries.

It is remarkable that such an obvious procedure should be exhibited, for it goes far beyond any mere "belonging to the school of -" but merely reforms an indigestible melange of Arthur Boyd with a dash of Perceval and Nolan.  

Yet the strongest criticisms were voiced by John Brack, who in less than a year would be exhibiting alongside David Boyd in the *Antipodeans*. John Brack's comments ignited a public confrontation in *The Observer* between Brack, and Ursula Hoff and Eric Westbrook, who responded to the criticisms in David Boyd's defence. However, rather than directly confronting Brack's criticisms, they drew a comparison between the Bruegels and the Boyds as a means of legitimizing David Boyd's work within the boundaries of a apparent family tradition.  

John Brack, writing for *The Observer*, on the 15 November 1958, under the title 'Leave the Epic Alone!' remarked upon the romantic preoccupation in Australian art with the 'frontier'. David Boyd's *Explorers* provided but one example. Brack's most incisive criticisms were rather directed at David Boyd's proficiency as a painter and he took the time to articulate his poin::
...It may be a very good thing for painters to deal with Australian history, but they get marks for the merits of their paintings as such, not for virtuous intentions. Unfortunately, David Boyd has nothing like the equipment necessary for such tasks. He relies heavily on his brother and on Nolan for his images, but has curiously managed to borrow only their faults. The sky is blue and the ground is red. It is meant to be a scene of implacability, but somehow it's just paint. Since colour is never considered as tone, nor in fact as anything else except local colour, it has no emotional expressiveness whatever.

*King Found* (1957/58) **Plate 7** provides a target to which these criticisms could clearly have been directed. Brack then concluded:

...It would seem that with a talent for decorative art, David Boyd might be well advised to leave the epic alone.  

This last comment highlights another factor that no doubt hindered David Boyd's claim for legitimacy as a painter. During the late 1950s David and Hermia Boyd continued to exhibit their pottery and ceramics. It is probable, that the continued critical success of their partnership impaired his attempts to forge an individual identity as a 'painter', to be seen as an 'artist' rather than merely a 'craftsman'.

In the period after his return to Australia, a combination of factors ensured that, while David Boyd was widely applauded as a potter, his work as a painter was readily dismissed. By the end of 1958, David Boyd had been wholly unsuccessful in his attempt to be critically recognized as a painter. This remained the case until David Boyd's involvement in the *Antipodeans* the following year.
CHAPTER 2: THE OUTSIDER: ROBERT DICKERSON
1956–1958

In the decade following the Second World War, Robert Dickerson, as a painter in Sydney, was somewhat of an ‘outsider’. Dickerson was divorced from the principal artistic and social networks of the Sydney ‘art scene’. More importantly, however, Dickerson’s work was excluded from the critical discourse surrounding artistic practice in Sydney during the late 1940s and 1950s.

As a consequence, it is not surprising that Robert Dickerson forged closer ties with John Reed and a number of Melbourne based artists. Melbourne provided a more receptive critical environment for his work. John Reed published the first article on Robert Dickerson, in an issue of Ern Malley’s Journal. Robert Dickerson also held his first solo show in Melbourne, at the Gallery of Contemporary Art, long before he was able to secure the same from a Sydney gallery. ¹

2.1 THE SYDNEY SCENE OF THE 1940s AND 1950s

It is not within the scope of this paper to scrutinize the constructs applied posthumously to the loose social and artistic circles of the Sydney ‘art scene’ of the late 1940s and 1950s.² What is more
interesting is the role Paul Haefliger played as the art critic for the Sydney Morning Herald from the 1940s until he left Australia in 1957.

Richard Haese has highlighted the importance of Paul Haefliger's criticism, in the Sydney Morning Herald, for the reception of work exhibited in Sydney.³ Haefliger was able to provide a congenial and receptive critical environment for those artists he was associated with.

Paul Haefliger's sentimental and emotive literary style provided a critical parallel to the work produced by Justin O'Brien, David Strachan and Donald Friend. His fascination with the tradition of French Symbolism and symbolist art criticism fused into his own 'neo-romantic' criticism. Haefliger was particularly attracted to the writing of the French art critic Elie Faure and attempted to emulate Faure's embellished literary style.⁴ Haese has suggested that it offered an approach to 'art criticism' that avoided both, radicalism, or the need to adhere to rigid formalistic criteria. Haefliger had little sympathy for expressive styles of painting and favoured painters like Strachan and O'Brien whose work was perfectly tailored to his own criticism.⁵

For Haefliger, Australia's parochial values were of little importance. Europe was 'civilized' and Australian art was to be judged on European terms.⁶ As a consequence, the values promoted by Haefliger in his reviews were essentially cosmopolitan and Eurocentric.⁷
Bernard Smith argued,⁸ that while the pre-war avant-garde painters had been concerned with the fundamentals of structure and design, painting in the late 1940s represented a regressive return to the ‘romantic overtones of life’.⁹ The close attention to the structure of painting was being sacrificed in the pursuit of literary sentiments.¹⁰

In an article than strongly alluded to Haefliger’s own writings, Smith alleged that the main danger for the future development of painting in Sydney lay with the accompanying criticism, whereby:

Those qualities of the current style which emphasize romantic values have been praised for their evocation of such vague literary sentiments as ‘reticence’, ‘melancholy’, ‘nostalgia’, ‘mystery’, and ‘spiritual values’. Such qualities have been by implication identified with artistic goodness…The danger which has arisen is that paintings appealing to a different set of critical values may be unduly discredited.¹¹

As Smith concluded:

Painting in Sydney is becoming increasingly romantic, and the tendency is being aided by ‘romantic’ criticism. Whether or not this movement toward romanticism will produce finer paintings we do not yet know. But it is certain that in the present situation some other valid forms of artistic conception …are likely to be discredited because of the power of fashion.¹²

Robert Dickerson lived in the inner west working class suburbs of Newtown and Annadale, and for a time out at Moorebank on the Georges River, while holding down factory and labouring jobs. He had previously fought in the tough professional boxing circuit. This later became a highlighted biographical feature.¹³ Dickerson had begun
painting in the mid 1940s and had joined the *Contemporary Art Society of NSW* in 1949. By his own admission, he remained on the fringe of CAS activities and didn’t mix with the other Sydney painters except his ‘mate’ Billy Sewell.\textsuperscript{14} It was Billy Sewell, who introduced Barrett Reid to Dickerson, a meeting that later lead to his invaluable connection with John Reed.\textsuperscript{15}

Robert Dickerson’s paintings fell ‘outside’ the critical boundaries that delineated ‘acceptable’ taste in Sydney. Dickerson never met Paul Haefliger socially, but recollects that he didn’t like his paintings.\textsuperscript{16} The ‘grittiness’ of Dickerson’s work did not find favour with Haefliger ‘romantic’ criticism in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Robert Dickerson’s *The Boy in the Street (The Man in the Street)* (1949) *Plate 8* and *The Low White Wall* (1952) *Plate 9* do not display refined draftsmanship, are executed in standard house paints, and have no romantic, sentimental or literary connotations. In *The Boy in the Street*, the young male looks unemotionally out of the picture at the viewer. In *The Low White Wall* (1952), all extra details have been stripped away so that the viewer is confronted with the stark, crudely painted figures. Neither catches the gaze of the viewer. Both figures are detached and alienated from each other, their activities are solitary ones, reading and resting. Both are trapped in their own psychological
worlds. The physical distance between them is minimal, the psychological barriers insurmountable.

2.2 AVANT GARDE PAINTING IN SYDNEY

From the mid 1950s, one of Sydney’s most important arts communities grew up around Victoria Street, in Kings Cross. By the beginning of the 1960s, Stanislaus Rapotec, John Olsen, Peter Upward, Clement Meadmore, William Rose, and Leonard Hessing were resident in this area. Elwyn Lynn, with somewhat misplaced simplicity, went so far as to label them the *Victoria Street Group*. The dilettante painter, later esteemed critic, Robert Hughes also rented a studio in Victoria Street.

By 1961, when Elwyn Lynn published, 'Avant Garde Painting in Sydney', in *Meanjin*, there appears a conscious attempt by critics to construct a coherent account of the development of abstract painting in Sydney. The chronicle of events was traced to the *Pacific Loan Exhibition of Contemporary Australian Painting* shown on board the Orient Line SS *Orcades*, and the staging of *Direction 1*, held at the *Macquarie Galleries* in December 1956, by William Rose, John Olsen, Robert Klippel, John Passmore, and Eric Smith. For Bernard Smith, in *Australian Painting Today*, *Direction 1* provided the stimulus for 'abstract expressionism' to displace the 'neo-romantic' and 'neo-
Byzantine' taste which had dominated the Sydney scene for the previous decade. Sydney art 'had become fashionable, genteel, and mannered, and a change was needed'. Robert Hughes later suggested that Direction 1 had rather 'cleared the air' than established the roots from which abstraction in Sydney had grown.

As Geoffrey Dutton has perceptively observed, Direction 1:

...was a minor show, both in the quality of the works and the volume of the pieces sold, but it has become a symbolic milestone in the haphazardly constructed road of Australian art.

What is obvious, is that by continuing to paint in a figurative mode in Sydney, Robert Dickerson was, by default, excluded from the emerging historical construct of the rise of abstract painting in Sydney. His alienation from this critical narrative, was satirized in a review in the Sydney Morning Herald, of a 1957 group show with Robert Dickerson, and two abstract painters, Tom Gleghorn and John Coburn:

The firm of Dickerson, Coburn and Gleghorn offering its wares at David Jones' Art Gallery is not so beautifully integrated that one would care for its continuity. Obviously the board of directors are at loggerheads. Mr Gleghorn can scarcely tolerate Mr Coburn, his chairman, while both must look askance at Mr Dickerson: "How," they must ask, "did he get here?"
2.3 JOHN REED AND THE SANCTUARY OF MELBOURNE

Robert Dickerson made his first visit to *Heide* in 1953. For Dickerson, this first visit initiated him with the Reed’s collection of ‘incredible paintings’ by John Perceval, Arthur Boyd, Albert Tucker, and Sidney Nolan. Dickerson also began to develop friendships with Melbourne artists, Len French, John Brack, Fred Williams, John Perceval, Clifton Pugh, and David Boyd. Robert Dickerson would send works to Melbourne for John Reed to look at, although they only ever bought one painting, *The Clown (Pierrots)* (1952).

However, John Reed did publish the first article on Robert Dickerson, entitled, ‘A Statement on Bob Dickerson: Painter’, for *Em Malley’s Journal* in 1955. Reed also encouraged Dickerson by offering him his first solo exhibition at the *Museum of Contemporary Art* in Melbourne the following year.

It was John Reed’s article that laid the foundations for Robert Dickerson’s public image and introduced his work into the public arena from which it had been previously excluded. Reed suggested, that Dickerson’s ‘unsophisticated’ past as a professional boxer provided him with the unique personal vision that gave his paintings creative strength. For the viewer, one's 'immediate intuitive response' was the only way to respond and judge Dickerson’s work.
Reed enthusiastically claimed that:

...Dickerson, like almost all our creative artists...is carving out his own tradition and exposing immediately the very soul of his own creative being. It is because of this that one is justified in speaking in extreme terms, which in other circumstances might be reserved for artists with many years of work behind them, and it is because of this that I feel able to use the word 'great' when referring to his art.\textsuperscript{33}

And continued:

The names of Tucker, Nolan and Boyd will be familiar to you all, and it is with these men that Dickerson can justly claim kinship, though the responsibility still rests with him to fully vindicate this claim.\textsuperscript{34}

Lastly, Reed identified the real qualities of the paintings:

I find two things in Dickerson's paintings which account for their great power. The most immediate is the revelation and realisation of what I would call an immensely powerful creative vision. By this I mean a vision which in his case penetrates the roots of the most unassuming of our everyday acts and presents them in all their elemental truth. ...The other thing is the amazing psychological import which so many of his paintings carry. From the barest canvas, with the merest outline of forms, projects the most disturbing sense of the portrayal of human feelings.\textsuperscript{35}

What John Reed effectively articulated in this article, and used as the criteria for judging Dickerson's paintings, were views that had defined and fixed the meaning for modern art in Melbourne since the 1940s.\textsuperscript{36} The creative individual, while bound socially, psychologically and culturally to his environment, played a unique role as social critic. He achieved this by being true to his own subjective psychological experience.\textsuperscript{37} It was Robert Dickerson, along with Charles Blackman
and Laurence Hope, who were seen in the mid 1950s as producing significant work of 'psychological import'. All three painters were dealing with aspects of human isolation, the figures in their paintings unmistakably alone in the urban environment. Reed's article was illustrated with four paintings, including *K.O.'d by Griffio (Straight Left by Griffio)* (1953) **Plate 10.** However, Reed regarded this finished painting as having lost some of the uniqueness found in Dickerson's less finished pieces, claiming that 'something of his power is lost in the very process of working through the original concept'.

The isolation of the individual in the city and the portrayal of children were major themes invading figurative painting of the 1950s. In contradiction to the suburban lifestyle of the 'Australian Dream', the inner city, as represented in the work of Robert Dickerson, became a site of alienation and displacement, its inhabitants isolated and threatened by their surroundings. Childhood frailty, became a critique of the inadequacies of the hostile adult world. In Robert Dickerson's *The Wall* (1953) **Plate 11** the fragility of the small girl is exposed by the overpowering monumentality of the urban environment. The shadows bear down oppressively upon her. Burdened by the bottle of wine she carries home for her father, her innocence to the nature of her errand is obvious. Her willingness to carry it out exposes her vulnerability naivety to the adult world into which she is being initiated.
Robert Dickerson exhibited at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in 1956. Alan McCulloch's review in the Herald was positive, although only one painting sold, The Tired Man (1956) Plate 12, but significantly, to the National Gallery of Victoria. It is this work, of urban isolation, an individual weary of life both physically and psychologically, which has become an icon of Robert Dickerson's work.

The fact that Robert Dickerson sold only one painting is not surprising, John Reed was never a dealer in the commercial sense; if work sold, well and good, but exhibitions were never pitched towards a potential market to secure sales. The Reeds did not see works of art as objects of commerce. They sought rather to share a common creative concern for the breadth of human experience, where the relationship between artist and patron was based upon friendship and a sense of mutual involvement.

Throughout the 1950s Robert Dickerson was marginalised as a painter in Sydney, most specifically, because his work was incompatible with the main critical discourses surrounding art in Sydney at this time. He entered a more receptive environment in Melbourne because his work appeared to fit within already established criteria for discerning advanced modern art. If Christopher Heathcote is correct in that, 'the story of Australian art from 1953 to 1965 is most effectively explained as an account of events in Melbourne, and interstate responses to
them'. Then Robert Dickerson's critical acceptance in Melbourne was more consequential than his apparent 'alienation' in Sydney. This is most significant when considering his involvement in the *Antipodeans* exhibition of 1959.
CHAPTER 3: THE ANTIPODEANS

Recently a new art group was formed in Melbourne and named the Antipodeans... There are seven artist members: Charles Blackman, John Brack, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Perceval, Clifton Pugh and Bob Dickerson of Sydney... The reason why we have come together may be stated quite simply... they are all figurative artists. The image plays a crucial role in all their work. And they have come together, therefore, to defend and to champion as well as they can the place of the image in art.¹

So Bernard Smith announced the formation of the Antipodeans in the Contemporary Art Society Broadsheet. The Antipodeans effectively polarized the complexities of art in Australia during the 1950s into a conflict of binary opposites.² The Antipodeans marked the defining reference point from which the abstraction versus figuration construct of Australian art emerged. The Antipodean Manifesto also re-ignited a rivalry between the Australia's two main artistic centres with a thinly veiled attack on the Sydney's abstract painters.³

Since 1959, the artists involved in the Antipodeans have played down the importance of the Manifesto by stressing their main interest was in having a good group exhibition with the possibility of a London show to follow. If anything, their signatures on the Manifesto have proved a great embarrassment for most of them.⁴ Barbara Blackman has suggested that the exhibition was more a public finale to a decade of 'painterly mateship' than a stand made on an issue of art.⁵
However, the *Antipodeans*:

...produced one very fine exhibition, perhaps one of the most impressive in Australia's post-war years, and a document, *The Antipodean Manifesto*, which quickly won a somewhat infamous reputation in the archives of Australian art history.

3.1 THE *ANTIPODEANS*: AN OVERVIEW

Bernard Smith first conceived the idea of an exhibition with a manifesto about six months before discussing the idea with the artists later involved. He was alarmed that certain critics were proclaiming the future of painting lay in abstraction, and felt the pluralistic nature of painting in the 1940s, was being replaced by a form of aesthetic censorship imposed through dogmatic criticism. Such a critical environment would inhibit the public reception of artists engaged in political or moral concerns by painting in a 'figurative' mode. *The Antipodean Manifesto* was conceived to confront this apparent danger to the vitality of Australian art from the impulsive and naive champions of abstraction.

At this point it must be mentioned that many of the mundane details and material concerning the formation of the *Antipodeans* was not widely circulated during the period covered in this paper. Bernard Smith, with many key documents in his possession, was partly responsible for this. In, 'The Truth about the Antipodeans', Smith
attempted to rectify this situation by providing an 'objective' record of the events leading up to the *Antipodeans* exhibition.⁸

In 1959 however, Bernard Smith appears to have been more concerned with advancing the 'crucial' claims of the *Antipodeans* than with secondary details. Smith declared, in the Contemporary Art Society *Broadsheet* in May 1959, that the *Antipodeans* had formed to defend the precarious position of figurative painting. As he explained:

> There is no need, it might be said, for a group of Australian artists to leap to the defence of the image. ...We believe, however, that there is such a need today. ...today the overwhelming success of non-figurative painting abroad, especially in America has become something of a tyranny. Artists throughout the Western world ...are being press-ganged by the power of fashion into the non-figurative modes of art. Certainly all the Antipodeans are quite well aware that non-figurative art possesses considerable aesthetic appeal ...(and) is one of the most interesting products of the present century.⁹

But:

> The great formal adventure is beginning to yield diminishing returns. No one is shocked anymore, ...Acceptance is widespread. Non-figurative art has become accepted by avant-garde taste everywhere as a pleasant form of decorative art ...¹⁰

And with a final attack on non-figurative art:

> The Antipodeans believe that non-figurative art does not free the artist but restricts him, reducing him to the status of a decorator. Painting and sculpture ...have always been committed to the human situation and to the interpretation of nature. Non-figurative painters are attempting to cut themselves from both, preferring to luxuriate in a bath of mere paint which may mean anything to anybody.¹¹
3.2 DAVID BOYD: THE ARDENT ANTIPODEAN

As Barbara Blackman perceptively pointed out a decade later:

Each came to the party through a different door and saw it in a different light, and sees it in a different light distended again in his own particular shades of memory down the corridor of time since.\textsuperscript{12}

Smith had been a close friend of John Perceval and Arthur and David Boyd for some years before the Antipodeans show. David Boyd was the first of the artists Smith approached with his proposal. No doubt, after the response by critics to his Explorers series, Smith knew David Boyd would be interested. David Boyd has never regretted his involvement in the Antipodeans.\textsuperscript{13} The Antipodeans provided him with his first opportunity to be involved in a group show alongside a number of well respected Melbourne modernist painters. Although not necessarily his primary intention, such a public affiliation provided David Boyd with a means to answer the claims of his critics.

The greatest division within the Antipodeans was between David Boyd and John Brack; the biggest problem with the Manifesto was to reconcile the views of these two.\textsuperscript{14} Bernard Smith acted as the mediator, convincing John Brack that it was preferable to assert varied viewpoints than to dilute the manifesto to only those points on which everyone agreed.\textsuperscript{15}
As David Boyd later explained to Barbara Blackman:

Our unity depended mainly on a particular attitude of mind rather than a unanimous regard for individual artistic merits. John Brack had recently written a devastating review of my Explorer series and if we had been an ordinary selection committee there is no doubt in my mind that John Brack particularly would have voted me out.\textsuperscript{16}

It was in the \textit{Antipodeans} show, that David Boyd first exhibited paintings from his \textit{Tasmanians} series, which like the \textit{Explorers} paintings that preceded them, were intended as symbolic comments on society.\textsuperscript{17} As David Boyd had written to Bernard Smith:

I believe the artist to be a kind of moralist ... By "moralist" I mean the artist's function to continually remind the community of the need to adhere to human values... The predominant idea in painting today does not appear to concern itself with human problems. Rather it has retreated into itself and emerges as an "art-for-art's sake" doctrine.\textsuperscript{18}

As has already been discussed, David Boyd's ability as a painter had been widely questioned by critics when he exhibited the \textit{Explorers} series the previous year.\textsuperscript{19} His supporters defended his 'virtuous intentions'\textsuperscript{20} as a reason to overlook certain technical limitations in his work.\textsuperscript{21} Bernard Smith on reflection admitted that David Boyd's \textit{Tasmanians} series, 'when considered from a purely aesthetic point of view, was less successful', yet argued that these problems were the result of the 'intractable character of the subject matter he was dealing with' at that time.\textsuperscript{22}
In the *Antipodeans*, David Boyd exhibited nine paintings,\(^2\) including, *The Emasculation of the Aboriginals* (1959) *Plate 13*, and *Truganini’s Dream of Childhood* (1959) *Plate 14*. A work that demonstrates somewhat striking compositional similarities to Arthur Boyd’s earlier *Reflected bride I (Bride reflected in a creek)* (1958) *Plate 6*.

For David Boyd, the *Antipodeans* provided him with a means by which he might silence his critics. He had exhibited the *Explorers* paintings individually the previous year and had been vulnerable to criticism launched at him personally. The *Antipodeans* however appeared to provide David Boyd with a more secure platform. With the professional association of the other ‘respected’ painters, any criticisms directed at the exhibition would be diffused amongst them all. By exhibiting alongside his brother Arthur Boyd, it would add weight to the ‘family tradition’, a claim that had already circulated in his defence. The *Antipodean Manifesto* also provided a critical justification for his work within the context of Australian art.

However, as David Boyd recalled a decade later:

> An unhappy amount of ill-feeling was created. Some of the Antipodeans were worried about the effects it might have on their future careers. I must record here that I was completely happy with the result. I was particularly grateful to be professionally associated with a number of artists whom I admired enormously and I believed passionately in the Antipodean movement as I indeed still do. An amusing and not unexpected aftermath is that many admirers of Arthur, Charles, John, Perceval, Clif and Bob were displeased with these artists’ part in the affair and wished to keep untarnished their
admiration, solved their problem by placing all the blame on Bernard's and my shoulders. The others were forgiven and we two likened to evil persuaders who had led gentle souls like Charles and Arthur astray.²¹

3.3 ROBERT DICKERSON: THE ABSENT ANTIPODEAN

Robert Dickerson was the only member of the Antipodeans not present at any of the meetings. It had been agreed among those present at the first meeting to invite Dickerson to join the Antipodeans, as he was considered ‘spiritually akin’ to the aims of the group.²⁶ A draft copy of the Manifesto was sent to him in Sydney. Although Dickerson claims he never read the draft,²⁶ evidence suggests that he was at least aware of its contents.²⁷ However, Robert Dickerson's involvement in the build-up to the show could be considered as somewhat superficial.

This must be contextualised, in that his first solo exhibition in Sydney, An Exhibition of Paintings by Robert Dickerson, was held at Farmer's Blaxland Gallery in May 1959, only two months before the Antipodeans. In drawing comparisons, between the Farmer's exhibition and Robert Dickerson's later inclusion in the Antipodeans, the first proved an individual highlight, the latter a broader contextual milestone in the narrative of Australian art history.
The *Blaxland Gallery* exhibition included paintings from the previous decade, many which are today recognized as among Robert Dickerson's most outstanding works.28 *The Tired Man* (1956), lent by the National Gallery of Victoria Plate 12, *The Dressing Room* (1959), *The Escalator* (1959) Plate 16, owned at that time by Kym Bonython, and *The Early Morning Tout* (1957), were all included in the show.

The exhibition received positive reviews from the Sydney critics. Barry Stern writing for *The Observer* announced the arrival in the city of, ‘Caliban from Outer Suburbia’. He considered *The Bank Teller (Clerk)* (1958) Plate 15, as ‘one of the best paintings in the show’.29

The face depicted in Dickerson's portrait is weak. It says: what can I do about the world? He is a symbol of the living dead, those people who stain into the background and are lost in their own mouldiness.30

The review in the *Sydney Morning Herald* was unqualified in its praise:

These large works of powerful and sombre distinction are the most exciting on Australian painting by a young artist since Nolan's first one-man show.31

And continued, that the strength of Robert Dickerson's paintings, as in *Wynyard Station* (1958) Plate 17, lay in that:

They are paintings of an oblique slice of humanity - of the unnoticed, the neglected or the forgotten. They are of the disenchanted - silent and solitary. This fatalism embraces no flag-waving or banded protests, but states a simple case with sensitivity and understanding. Figures are lost in deep gloom... and the uncomfortable but telling poetry is established.32
The Farmer's Blaxland Gallery exhibition was significant for Robert Dickerson. The positive critical reception to Dickerson's show contradicts the broad claim that Sydney critics were unwilling to consider figurative painting. However, as has already been mentioned, Dickerson's work remained difficult to place within the broad constructs of Australian art being formulated. In the Antipodeans exhibition of August 1959, Dickerson exhibited only five paintings, including three shown earlier in Sydney. The irony is that it was his peripheral involvement in the Antipodeans that centred him within the narrative Australian art history.

3.4 THE ANTIPODEAN MANIFESTO

Bernard Smith has conceded that he saw The Antipodean Manifesto as his particular contribution to the exhibition. He was also well aware of the classic precedents, such as the Communist Manifesto and futurist manifestos.

It has been suggested, The Antipodean Manifesto, was less a document of the 1950s, more a nostalgic attempt Bernard Smith to revive the wartime values that influenced him as a young man. Art was not simply about composition and form, although this was not to
be ignored. It was about communication, and provided a means of addressing social and political issues.37

Dixon and Smith, have noted the Cold War origins of The Antipodean Manifesto,38 being both concerned with ‘the triumph of non-figurative art in the West’ and ‘the dominance of socialist realism in the East’.39 Bernard Smith was concerned that artists and critics in Australia had ‘allowed themselves to be colonised effectively by those American forms of abstraction that proscribed any form of dissidence or political comment’.40 While, state sanctioned Socialist Realism placed ‘too many restraints upon the independent creative activity of the artist’.41 Both were poles apart from a formal viewpoint, yet employed similar deterministic rhetoric to dismiss alternative modes of practice.

It was Smith who delivered the opening address at the exhibition and outlined the Antipodeans position to an eager audience.42

We formed the group, we say, to defend the image. If you are young painter today and you want to be fashionable and you want to conform then you paint abstract. We are opposed to abstract painting let there be no doubt about that.43

Claiming that most current abstract painting in Australia was little more than a ‘tame reflection of what is being done abroad’.44 Smith argued that abstraction represented a ‘new tyranny’ in the West, with the ranks filled by conceited practitioners claiming ‘again and again that abstract art is the only truly contemporary art, that the image is out of date’.45
Of the *Antipodeans*:

We state in our manifesto that we are not seeking to create a national art. ...Each artist in the group has his own individual style, a style evolved from his contact both with art overseas and his personal experiences in this country. Although we are not nationalistic in sentiment or outlook we do think that an artist can no more avoid revealing his situation in place as well as his situation in time. 46

Continuing:

I am convinced, however, that among the painters of this group there is work which has no real parallel in point of style overseas. This—rather than the pale copying of overseas fashions— it seems to me is truly international because it makes a genuine contribution to the total art of human society. 47

Yet, Smith's most astute remark wasn't in attacking abstract painting, it was concerning the reception of the *Antipodeans*:

But let me try to make our position quite clear, because unless I do I am sure we shall be misunderstood: indeed I must say that even when I do make it quite clear I am still sure that we shall be misunderstood. 48

3.5 THE RECEPTION TO THE *ANTIPODEANS*

Bernard Smith has documented that the response of the newspaper critics to the *Antipodeans* 'ranged from coolly neutral to dismissive', while 'sales did not much more than cover expenses.' 49 However the critics who reviewed the *Antipodeans*, as with any show, concentrated on the work of the artists, with only limited discussion, and certainly no serious critical evaluation, of the claims forwarded in the *Manifesto*. 50
It has been recent commentators that have leveled the most damming criticisms at the document.\textsuperscript{51}

Alan McCulloch, in the \textit{Herald}, mentioned little beyond:

The manifesto is very well put together, the main drift of its content being a call to arms to modern figurative painters to save art from the in-roads of non-figuration.\textsuperscript{52}

McCulloch suggested that, if people were unsure of the reference to \textit{tachist}, they should visit the newly opened \textit{Gallery A} at 70 Flinders Lane. However, he conceded, 'if 'The Antipodeans' have done little else they have given us a good exhibition'.\textsuperscript{53} Robert Dickerson's \textit{Wynyard Station} (1958) \textbf{Plate 17} received 'top marks' and illustrated McCulloch's review.

Franz Philipp's review 'Antipodeans Aweigh', in \textit{Nation}, in late August, was by far the most comprehensive. 'It (the \textit{Manifesto}) is a thoughtful and interesting document, typical, in the best sense of the word, of the postwar climate', although he qualified its significance, in that, 'manifestos are only prefaces'.\textsuperscript{54} Two-thirds of the review concentrated on the merits of each artists' work.
Robert Dickerson received only a brief mention. More amusing, however, were Philipp's remarks upon the work of David Boyd:

Mythmaking is not, however, a light-hearted adventure. There have been many wrecks on the cliffs of melodrama, and David Boyd with his Tasmanian Aboriginal series has not always avoided them. His last cycle of nine paintings - less successful, I believe, than his explorer series of last year - is often melodramatic and occasionally crude.\textsuperscript{56}

Considering the harsh reception delivered to the *Explorers* series, Philipp's observations could not be considered too complimentary.

Except for Bernard Smith and David Boyd on whom all the blame was seemingly placed, Barbara Blackman recalls that:

Each recoiled, retreated in guilt and confusion, however admitting his part in the affair, and ever afterwards has sought to find extenuating circumstances for his regrettable irresponsibility.\textsuperscript{56}

Deborah Haycraft suggests:

Perhaps it was because they were seeing it for the first time as others saw it, free from the subtlety and qualification that had attended discussions at the meeting. Even though they sought to arouse controversy, the Antipodeans were all shaken by the degree of hostility expressed by their colleagues. Many of the members had abstract painters as friends. Thus the abstractionists felt betrayed by their friends as did the figurative artists who were not invited to join.\textsuperscript{57}

It is important to stress that the paintings, exhibited by both David Boyd and Robert Dickerson in the *Antipodeans*, are not of significant consideration when addressing their involvement. David Boyd's *Tasmanians* series, although unseen previously, is neither technically
or intentionally divorced from his previous *Explorers* series. For Dickerson, the Farmer's *Blaxland Gallery* show included a more comprehensive collection of his work from the 1950s. Of the works exhibited at the *Antipodeans*, only David Boyd’s, *Truganini's Dream of Childhood* (1959), is in the National Gallery of Australia.\textsuperscript{58}

It has been advanced that the *Antipodeans* established the artists involved as professionals,\textsuperscript{59} but this claim is disputable for a number of those involved. Arthur Boyd and John Brack had established professional reputations long before the *Antipodeans*.\textsuperscript{60} However for David Boyd and Robert Dickerson, their involvement in the show was certainly significant for their subsequent inclusion in the wider discourse of Australian art history as it was established in the years following the *Antipodeans*.

However, as Barbara Blackman, most succinctly observed. *The Antipodean Manifesto* was:

Too long to be quoted *in toto* it suffered the misrepresentation of being quoted in section out of context. In Sydney...too easily identified as the gauntlet to be taken up by the Direction One painters and the imminent Sydney Nine. In London it was misread... as a declaration of regionalism and myth for art's sake.\textsuperscript{61}
CHAPTER 4: AFTER THE ANTIPODEANS

During the period 1959 to 1962, the controversial stand the *Antipodeans* became a pivotal reference point within the evolving conflict between abstraction in Sydney, and figuration in Melbourne. The construct was applied as a means of interpreting and presenting contemporary Australian painting of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Conceived as a binary model, it was by no means an immutable framework, but rather a fluid discourse located between two ill-defined extremes, the *Antipodeans*, and *abstraction*.

The *Antipodeans* provided the nexus from which a discursive framework extended. It was retrospectively legitimised to 1956, with the *Pacific Loan Exhibition* of contemporary Australian paintings and *Direction 1*. It was also in response to the *Antipodeans*, that the *Sydney 9* group shows, were situated within this construct.

As recent commentators have pointed out, it is an 'erroneous assumption' that all Sydney art of the 1950s and 1960s was abstract, while all Melbourne art was figurative. As was the fallacy, that the painters and groups located within this construct were uniform in their aims and practice.
However, it was adopted by participants within the 'art world' as a means of defining contemporary Australian painting between 1956 and 1962. Within this paper, the histories of Australian art written during this period, and the organisation and promotion of Australian art internationally, will be addressed. The significance of both of these elements to the formation of the discourse is described, while the longevity of the narrative surrounding the Antipodeans is also considered. Lastly, certain discontinuities and contradictions within framework are identified, by discussing the scope newspaper reviews over than same period, not as a means of providing an alternative model, but rather, to illustrate the discursive complexities of the period that defy synthesis within the simplistic interpretation erected around the Antipodeans.

As has already been outlined, both David Boyd and Robert Dickerson, had different critical receptions to their work before the Antipodeans. However, their involvement in the Antipodeans located them centrally within the construct that evolved around the group's defence of the image. The critical discourse surrounding the Antipodeans as a group, in correlation to that of David Boyd and Robert Dickerson as individual painters, allows examination of the contradictions within the narrative.
4.1 THE PUBLICATION OF BOOKS ON AUSTRALIAN PAINTING

During the post war decade serious publications on Australian art had virtually ceased. Following the death of Sydney Ure Smith in 1949, until the appearance of Kym Bonython's *Australian Painting and Sculpture* in 1960, no books of any great consequence dealing with Australian painting had appeared. Art in Australia had ceased publication in 1942, and there were no widely circulating art magazines, other than the Contemporary Art Society *Broadsheets*. Art criticism was confined to newspaper reviews and occasional articles in the literary quarterly *Meanjin* published through by University of Melbourne.

*Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture: A survey of Australian Art from 1950 to 1960*, heralded a renewed interest in the publication of books on Australian art. As Alan McCulloch observed, the 'book is the only one of its kind', and 'a valuable publisher's test case'. Yet, he felt the inclusion certain artists at the expense of others created 'a disproportionate and unbalanced view of the total scene'.

Being the first significant book published on Australian art of the 1950s, the conceptual framework applied provides an interesting exemplar. The primacy of painting within the arts is reinforced, while the
Antipodeans and The Antipodean Manifesto are centrally located in the evolution of Australian painting during the 1950s.\textsuperscript{12}

Laurie Thomas in the Introduction explained that in Melbourne 'symbolic' and 'literary' aims were 'vogue' with 'the group of artists calling themselves the Antipodeans':\textsuperscript{13}

They called for some meaning to be put back into abstract art and for the reintroduction of the 'image'. The use of the word 'image' was deliberately ambiguous, and ones suspects that what they meant by it was 'figure' or 'physical object' as distinct from mental image\textsuperscript{14}

However, a more perceptive comment was concerning their future:

In light of the past, it is unlikely that this group of painters will remain grouped for long. Apart from the fact that their links are, in any case, rather loose, Australian painters have never taken kindly to manifestoes, theories or formal membership of any societies other than the big ones whose arms are wide enough to embrace artists of utterly diverse styles.\textsuperscript{15}

In Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture, the Antipodeans defence of the image against the dominance of abstract painting in Sydney, was the paradigm employed to explain recent painting in Australia. It also defined the individual artists whose work deserved detailed discussion; the Antipodeans, as well as, the Direction 1 participants, John Olsen and John Passmore.

Kym Bonython's book heralded a range of, eagerly anticipated publications\textsuperscript{16}. In Australia, Longmans began publishing its introductory Arts in Australia series booklets, with titles by Brian Finemore, on
Painting, Sculpture by Lenton Parr, and Pottery by Kenneth Hood.\textsuperscript{17} Later, New Painting 1952-62, by John Reed, was added to the series to compensate for the narrow contemporary coverage in Finemore's earlier title. The content was somewhat weighted toward John Reed's own connections with seven works selected specifically from the Museum of Modern Art in Australia's collection.\textsuperscript{18}

Georgian House embarked on a series of Australian Art Monographs, in association with the University of Melbourne, and Bernard Smith acting as editor. The first two books were published in 1962, on Sali Herman and Clifton Pugh.\textsuperscript{19} An impressive title, Leonard French: The Campion Paintings, was published also in 1962.\textsuperscript{20} There were also a number of books published in London that filtered back to Australia.\textsuperscript{21}

Antipodean Vision: Australian Painting – Colonial – Impressionist – Contemporary, was published in book form by F W Cheshire, in association with the Art Advisory Board, in late 1962.\textsuperscript{22} The commentary on the Contemporary section, by Daniel Thomas, demonstrates how the construct revolving around the Antipodeans had gained increasing currency as the model for interpreting contemporary Australian painting. Thomas identified a divide within Australian art between the 'Melbourne expressionists or social commentators' and 'Sydney's non-figuration'.\textsuperscript{23}
As Thomas outlined:

The Antipodean exhibition was a group manifestation in defence of 'The Image'. A written manifesto made an appeal for figurative art and Australian subject matter, on the grounds that non-figurative art was incapable of communicating, and that in particular it could not communicate the Australian artist's experience of his time and place.

The rearguard manifesto criticized the non-figurative art which by then dominated Sydney... 24

As Thomas continued:

Sydney's non-figuration was consolidated in 1956, a key year. ...One focal point was a small group which that year held an exhibition called 'Direction 1'.

Passmore, Eric Smith, Rose and Olsen participated, and Olsen's painting 'Western World No.1' is typical of the new movement's interest in spatial form, as well as of its high quality as painting. 25

Post 1956 Sydney abstraction ...represented in this exhibition by Lewers, Hodgkinson, Gleghorn, Coburn and others. Some of them grouped together as the 'Sydney 9, 1961'. It was felt that the best of the younger non-figurative painters needed a focus of attention as an alternative to the figurative Antipodeans. Olsen, Rose and Smith reappeared in this group, and there were Hessing, Plate and Rapotec. 26

The construct, centred on painting in Sydney and Melbourne, also acted as a means of exclusion:

One must mention that Perth, Adelaide, and Brisbane have significant artists at work, though none have formed classifiable schools of painting. 27

What can be concluded from these extracts is that the Antipodeans struggle against the Sydney abstractionists had been refined as the narrative of recent Australian painting. Direction 1, the Antipodeans, and Sydney 9, 1961, had all been allocated there respective roles in
the apparent continuity of the events. Discussion revolved mainly around those artists central to this series of episodes at the expense of a more robust description of artistic practice.

However, the most important publication to canonise this story was Bernard Smith’s Australian Painting 1788-1960 published in 1962. As Burn has pointed out, since the publication of Australian Painting 1788-1960, Bernard Smith’s work has provided the most persuasive foundation for the history of Australian art. Other writers have largely underpinned their own work on the model provided by Smith. Australian Painting 1788-1960 forged the major assumptions and perceptions of most writers, curators and patrons.

The conflict between the Antipodeans and abstraction in Sydney provided the culminating period to those identified in Australian Painting 1788-1960; the colonial, the Heidelberg ‘school’, and the rise of modernism in Australia.

As Elwyn Lynn observed in a review of the book:

The dramatic account of the survival of the Antipodean Image against Sydney abstraction allows little space for a correct analysis of abstraction or a fair account of the Sydney school...
Bernard Smith's strategy in writing *Australian Painting 1788-1960* was to introduce the historical concepts and then expand on them by identifying and discussing the artists who exemplified these ideas.53

As Elwyn Lynn explained in a following review in *Meanjin*:

...Smith's method is to select the artists who exemplified the tendencies of their time. Naturally this is also a method of exclusion, but the absence of any discussion of Jon Molvig - sometime rider on the boudary of Antipodean territory, whose inhabitants, Perceval, Blackman, Pugh, Brack, Dickerson, Arthur and David Boyd, have been separately treated for their contributions to the corral- is surely odd. Perhaps Queenslanders have been forgotten in Dr Smith's dramatisation of the great conflict between Sydney and Melbourne in 1959, for this theatrical extravaganza has certainly distorted a number of his comments and assessments.54

In *Figurative and Non-figurative 1950 -1960*, Smith recounts the events leading up to the *Antipodeans. Direction 1* had 'launched abstract expressionism in Sydney'.35 A 'good deal of Sydney's art began to look like a provincial expression of American painting'.37

Robert Dickerson, had remained 'the only painter of real quality among the post-war generation who was working entirely within the figurative mode'.38 It was:

In Melbourne, however, figurative painting survived with vigour; maintained a critical edge upon life, and drew strength from a local tradition, still held in respect, that reached back to the Heidelberg School.39

John Perceval, Clifton Pugh, Charles Blackman, David Boyd and Arthur Boyd all received championing statements. Bernard Smith claimed, Arthur Boyd's, *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste* paintings, 'were probably the most important series of subject pictures
 painted in Australia during the 1950's.\textsuperscript{40} He had 'succeeded better, perhaps, than any other member of the original Angry Penguin circle in elevating an Australian theme to a universal level, endowing it with a breadth of reference and feeling beyond the limits of nation or region'.\textsuperscript{41}

The claims of The Antipodean Manifesto were justified in the section, The Melbourne Reaction against Abstraction:\textsuperscript{42}

The formation of the group (the Antipodeans) was a reaction not so much against abstract art as one of the long-proven forms of contemporary expression as against the clamorous pretensions of the multitude of new converts to abstract expressionism and its varieties then rising upon all sides. The manifesto which the Antipodeans published in the catalogue of their exhibition...is best understood as a formal protest against the mass conversion to abstract expressionism of artists and critics.\textsuperscript{43}

As noted by other writers, Bernard Smith's own involvement in the Antipodeans was merely acknowledged in a footnote.\textsuperscript{44} Australian Painting 1788-1960, although published in 1962, effectively concluded with the Antipodeans exhibition. Smith claimed that 'the course of Australian art after 1959 is beyond the scope of this book'.\textsuperscript{45} This effectively allowed Smith to cement the Antipodeans defence of the 'image' as the culminating event in the history of Australian art to 1960. It allowed Smith to overlook the rapid demise of the group and contradictory events that occurred after 1959.
In May 1963, the first issue of *Art and Australia* was published by Ure Smith, with the opening article, by James Gleeson, on painting in Australia since 1945. Gleeson applied the established model to explain the different artistic tendencies found in Sydney and Melbourne. 'Melbourne painters use a more figurative approach than their Sydney counterparts' with a 'strong element of Primitivism'. While, 'not all Sydney's painters are abstractionists':

Most of the younger painters of the Sydney School (if this is not too deliberate a word to use for a phenomenon that appears to have been spontaneous) have accepted the international idioms of the modern movement with more readiness than their Melbourne contemporaries.

It would be a mistake to interpret this acceptance of an international language as an abrogation of particular and national sympathies. After all, a style can only gain the broad currency of internationalism if it speaks with a fundamental tongue. ...it is the realization of this fact that leads young painters all over the world to use their creative energies to enrich the pictorial Esperanto we call Abstract Expressionism.

The discourse centred on the *Antipodeans* became the general construct employed to by writers to explain contemporary Australian painting in the early 1960s. It was not until a decade later that the authority of these texts was revised.
4.2 CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN PAINTING OVERSEAS

As Bernard Smith has pointed out, a London exhibition was a main objective of the *Antipodeans*. The possibility was discussed among the participants at the meetings and was a significant incentive for all artists involved. Smith had written to Kym Bonython at the time:

> The London exhibition which we have in mind is, I am sure the kind of work that can do most to make Australian art known abroad. For this will be a group small enough and coherent enough to make a single impact on British opinion. It will follow up and develop the impression created by artists like Nolan, Tucker and Drysdale. Whilst I like some local abstract and semi-abstract work here quite a lot, I am sure that the overseas public will not be interested in the work of our local non-representational painters. For the great bulk of it simply cannot compare with the best kind of work done in England and America-they are looking for something original from the Antipodes - not pale reflections of the things they are familiar with.

London provided the focus for Australian artists in the early 1960s. Gary Catalano has suggested that the critical success of the *Recent Australian Painting*, misled Australian painters during the 1960s into becoming overly dependent on overseas judgement and critical acclaim. Success overseas became vitally important for an artist's local reputation. This applied both to artists working in London, as well as, for locally based artists in being included in the critically acclaimed touring shows of Australian painting.

The importance placed upon these overseas exhibitions, stems partly from the sporadic nature of attempts made within Australia to present...
contemporary Australian art to the local audience. The Pacific Loan Exhibition of Contemporary Australian Painting was only shown at the Art Gallery of New South Wales after touring to America on the SS Orcades. The works exhibited at the Whitechapel Art Gallery were not seen together in Australia, while only a selection of works destined for the Tate Gallery were shown in Adelaide and Perth before traveling to London. Australian Painting Today, in 1963/64, was the first survey show to be well scrutinised by local audiences before leaving Australia for Europe.

The three major exhibitions of Australian painting held in London in the early 1960s were, Recent Australian Painting, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, in June/July 1961, Antipodean Vision at the Tate Gallery, in 1962, and Commonwealth Art Today held at the Commonwealth Institute Gallery, between November 1962 and January 1963.

Recent Australian Painting established the reputation of Australian modernism in London. The selection of paintings was largely undertaken by Bryan Robertson, the Director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, on a visit to Australia in 1960. Bryan Robertson was aided by Kym Bonython, who later lent twelve works from his own collection for the show. The exhibition catalogue included an essay by Bryan Robertson himself and an Introduction written by a youthful, Robert Hughes. Robertson extolled the dramatic and mythic potential of the
Australian environment. Australia's geographical and cultural isolation accounted for 'unique' qualities and 'exotic look' of the work. As Gary Catalano has observed, the 'brash, virile and earthy' works of the Antipodeans and Sydney's linear expressionists dominated the exhibition. Anything that indicated an Australia different to that which the English audience expected, was either lost in the presentation, or absent altogether.

Robertson considered the 'instinctive exuberance and spontaneity of Australian painting' a result of 'isolation from the main patterns of art' and the Renaissance tradition. This stance was reinforced by Robert Hughes in the Introduction, where he explained:

They (Australian artists) have no tradition readily available to profit from: neither can the same tradition oppress them by sheer weight. They are thrown back on their own resources. They have to make a cultural pattern, which is, under the circumstances of isolation, a more stimulating and productive task than adding to one. The exhilarating sense of starting from scratch exists here on a far deeper level than in Europe.

Once again, the Antipodeans defence of the image against the converts of abstraction in Sydney was applied as the defining construct of contemporary Australian painting for the English audience. Abstract painting is as strong, vigorous and inventive in Australia as the work of the semi-figurative artists. Sydney is the main centre for abstract painting, with its cosmopolitan atmosphere, and Melbourne is the stronghold for painting concerned with a more direct imagery and an attempt to build up a mythology of content.
It was left to Robert Hughes to articulate the 'details':

Recently, ...an 'opposition group' was formed in Melbourne under the leadership of the distinguished art historian, Bernard Smith. His programmatic intent was clear. Australia, he argued, lacks a tradition of art but possesses strong social traditions. It has acquired its own myths, heroes and white man's folklore. If the artist, then, is to function as an effective social unit his art must reflect this and draw its inspiration from it. The painter must be a mythagogue, making articulate the dreams and beliefs half-submerged in the national consciousness. This, he proceeded, cannot be well done by non-figurative art, since it is 'incapable of communicating' except on a basic level. He therefore entered an appeal for figurative art, bolstered by a demand for 'The Image'.

The group—known as the Antipodeans—consists of Arthur and David Boyd, Perceval, Blackman, Pugh and Fred Williams. The Antipodean ideal ... (is) evident ... in Blackman's melancholic girls: very strong in Pugh's enraged birds, rotting carcases and meticulously-observed bush landscapes; and it finds its strongest expression in the Boyd brothers' paintings. 

As Hughes declared:

The whole question of the image bulks large in Australian art at present: it is the central issue.

He attempted to stamp his personal signature on the debate by distinguishing between the 'art of associations':

The Antipodean notion of an image seems to concern a pressure point for which a number of beliefs and feelings which arise from the contemplation of an object, which need have nothing to do with aesthetic sensation or the existence of the object itself

And:

The 'other' concept of image...has nothing to do with allegory or situation. The image does not result directly from the imposition of an artist's will...(but) he directs and channels... This produces a total image, in which seer and seen are inextricably fused....the result is a pure distillation of a particular time and place.

This process is seen most clearly in Olsen's work, in Rapotec's and Plate's.
However, Hughes merely traversed the established construct, rather mutating the interior between the *Antipodeans* and the antithetical Sydney painters, Olsen, Rapotec and Plate, than actually providing a new interpretation.\textsuperscript{68}

The issue of the *image* reappeared with *Antipodean Vision*. The exhibition at the Tate Gallery coincided with the English publication of Bernard Smith's *Australian Painting 1788-1960*.\textsuperscript{69} As previously mentioned the binary model of the *Antipodeans* versus Sydney abstraction was employed in detail by Daniel Thomas in his commentary on the *Contemporary* section of the show.\textsuperscript{70}

The other significant exhibition held in London at this time was, *Commonwealth Art Today*, displayed at the Commonwealth Institute from November 1962 to January 1963. While it show cased painting and sculpture from over twenty countries from within the Commonwealth, the Australian section presented a familiar story.

In the *Foreward*, by Eric Newton, Art Advisor to the Commonwealth Institute, the 'myth of isolation' was again employed:

> It would be useless to attempt to make simple generalisations ...while for Canada...the link with European civilisation and the power of European loyalties is strong and recognisable. In others, and particularly Australia, geographical distance and a different way of life have twisted the original European origins into something vital but surprisingly un-European.\textsuperscript{71}
The Introduction to the Australian section, by Ronald Greenaway, retold the familiar story:

By the mid-1950s a group that centred loosely around Arthur Boyd began to emerge. These artists, who worked from various expressionistic influences largely inherited from the Melbourne contemporary Art Society of the 1940s, found their spokesman in Dr Bernard Smith, Senior Lecturer in Fine Arts, and together they jointly issued an ‘Antipodean Manifesto’ which condemned the growing movement of ‘non-objective’ and related painting.

At once a bitter feud, which still smoulders today, was ignited in Melbourne and Sydney.\textsuperscript{72}

4.3 THIS WEEK’S REVIEW

As has been examined, both the histories of Australian art, and the major overseas exhibitions of contemporary Australian painting, employed the narrative of the Antipodeans defence of the image against abstraction in Sydney as defining painting in Australia between 1956 and 1962. Direction 1 had launched ‘abstract expressionism’ in Sydney with artists and critics apparently swiftly converted.\textsuperscript{73} Thus, one of the foundations of this construct was the apparent intolerance of Sydney critics to figurative painting in their zealous advocacy of abstraction.

Newspaper reviews provided the main critical forum for contemporary Australian painting. Weekly reviews were an essential element of the
dialogue surrounding artistic practice. With regard to the narrative surrounding the *Antipodeans*, a re-examination of reviews provides correlative material to that already discussed.\textsuperscript{74} What these reviews illustrate are the discursive complexities of the period that defy synthesis within the simplistic narrative built on the *Antipodeans*. Gary Catalano has previously outlined a number of contradictions between Bernard Smith's *Australian Painting 1788-1960* and the newspaper reviews on which his assertions were based.\textsuperscript{76} While in this paper, the positive reception by critics to Robert Dickerson's first solo Sydney show has already been outlined.

In the following chapters, the narrative surrounding the *Antipodeans*, as presented, for example in *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, is correlated with newspaper reviews of the period. Specifically, in relation to the critical reception of David Boyd and Robert Dickerson after their involvement with the *Antipodeans*. As a consequence, the simplicity of the construct becomes untenable and a more multifaceted description emerges.
CHAPTER 5: DAVID BOYD THE ‘PAINTER’ AS PAINTER
1960-1962

David and Hermia Boyd’s working partnership continued after David Boyd’s involvement in the Antipodeans. They held regular exhibitions of pottery until they returned to England at the end of 1961.¹ However, the couples continued output of pottery in the years after the Antipodeans does appear to have hindered David Boyd’s claim for legitimacy as a painter.²

As one of the Antipodeans, David Boyd, was a central figure within the evolving construct contemporary Australian painting. In the books published on Australian painting during the early 1960s, discussion of David Boyd’s work could not be overlooked.³ David Boyd was also included in most of the overseas shows organized during the early 1960s. David Boyd was included in both Recent Australian Painting and Commonwealth Art Today.⁴

However, as will be examined, following the Antipodeans, David Boyd did not suddenly receive emphatic reviews of his work in Sydney and Melbourne.⁵ Although, his two solo shows held in Adelaide and Brisbane, in 1960 and 1961, were both critically well received.⁶ What is interesting, are the many contradictions in the discourse surrounding David Boyd’s practice after 1959.
5.1 DAVID BOYD: THE POTTER AFTER THE ANTIPODEANS

Only two months after the *Antipodeans*, David and Hermia Boyd presented 'a remarkably large and positive exhibition' of pottery at the *Terry Clune Galleries*:

> David Boyd has thrown a collection of pots, jugs and bowls with a stress on freedom of flowing lines and an impressive variety of textures....

> But it is the quality of glazes—in the quite beautiful range of colours—that these works are outstanding. Dull, dark metal glazes oppose deep brown reds; grey-blues and shimmering vibrant yellows are near burnished bronze greens—and the colours are often supported by skillful linear decoration.'

> There is at its best in this pottery an earthy even boisterous quality—a feeling of hearty living—of robust appetites for rather rough red wine and richly flavoured food...\(^7\)

The couple received yet another positive review from Alan McCulloch, in the *Herald*, for an exhibition of pottery and paintings in Melbourne at the *Museum of Modern Art*:

> Looking at this exhibition is rather like looking through the pages of *The Connoisseur*; your appetite is whetted by a variety of artistic objects, each one of which appears to be perfect in its reference to style and period. \(^8\)

Although he maintained:

> A ceramic sculpture 'Truganini (The Offering)' is an attempt to link David Boyd's ceramics to his paintings, but both sculpture and paintings are too abrupt an excursion into the fields of Australiana, to hold more than casual interest.\(^9\)
The Offering: Truganini (1972) Plate 18 is a bronze cast of the earlier ceramic piece. Comparing this bronze to Monoliths (1960) Plate 19, the parallels dismissed, by McCulloch are clear.

What is interesting is that while David Boyd's involvement in the Antipodeans was writing him into the broad narrative of Australian painting, the Boyd's continued 'expressionistic' earthenware practice, was being written out of the history of ceramics in Australia.

Kenneth Hood's Pottery, published in 1961, represents the first attempt to outline the history of pottery in Australia. Kenneth Hood credited Merric Boyd with producing the first studio pottery in Australia. However, Bernard Leach and Michael Cardew were regarded as providing the present source of inspiration for progressive potters. Bernard Leach's, A Potter's Book, was deemed 'the most authoritative book on the technique and philosophy of pottery'.

Victoria Hammond has outlined how the increasing dominance of the Anglo-Oriental tradition especially during the 1960s led to the eclipse of Merric Boyd's reputation by the end of that decade. Ceramics inspired by Bernard Leach's work came to dominate local practice, with the stoneware aesthetic advocated as the criteria defining a 'good' pot. This philosophy was at odds with that produced by David and Hermia Boyd in the late 1950s. Even if the couple had not left for England in
1961, David and Hermia Boyd would have found their earthenware practice increasingly marginalised in the environment of the 1960s.\textsuperscript{14} By the time Peter Rushforth published the first article on ‘Pottery in Australia’ in *Art and Australia* in December 1965,\textsuperscript{15} the rhetoric was overwhelmingly toward unadorned stoneware.\textsuperscript{16} Stoneware pots by, Peter Rushforth, Les Blakeborough, Ivan Englund, H R Hughan, and Milton Moon, illustrated the article. Merric Boyd was mentioned in passing, however *Arthur Merric Boyd* pottery and the work of David and Hermia Boyd, were omitted from discussion altogether.

5.2 DAVID BOYD: THE PAINTER AFTER THE ANTIPODEANS

As has already been detailed, David Boyd’s *Explorers* series of 1958 received harsh reviews from critics in both Sydney and Melbourne. David Boyd’s *Tasmanians* paintings, exhibited at the *Antipodeans*, did not reflect significant stylistic developments on these earlier works, or raise more than passing comment in the reviews. Franz Philipp, saw the *Tasmanians* as ‘...less successful, I believe, than his *Explorer* series of last year’. Arnold Shore, suggested they were merely ‘large canvases with sentimentality and grotesque cartooning’.\textsuperscript{17}
David Boyd was, none the less, active within the Melbourne branch of the *Contemporary Art Society*, elected President of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia (Victoria) in December 1960 and also as a Councilor of the *Museum of Modern Art in Australia*. Boyd was also elected as the interim Chairman of the newly formed Federal Council of Contemporary Art Society of Australia in April 1961. He relinquished these posts in 1962 to undertake the *Italian Government Art Scholarship*.

For David Boyd, there was continued access to Melbourne and Sydney venues for the exhibition of pottery. Yet, he did not hold another solo exhibition of paintings in either city until the *Trial* paintings were sent back from London for local display in 1964. However, the *Antipodeans* did provide David Boyd with 'credibility' as a painter outside Sydney and Melbourne. David Boyd, held shows in both Adelaide and Brisbane, and was received in both capitals as an important figure in contemporary Australian painting.8

In 1960, David Boyd exhibited paintings from the *Explorers* and *Tasmanians* in Adelaide and received significantly 'better reviews than in the eastern states'.19
As Elizabeth Young announced in *The Advertiser*, 'Compassion Marks the Boyd Exhibition':

The first one-man exhibition in Adelaide of paintings by Melbourne artist, David Boyd, is an event not to be missed. Although we have seen little of his painting, he is already well known for the high aesthetic quality of his pottery and ceramics, and in Melbourne, as a member of the Antipodean Group formed recently in protest against completely non-figurative art. Boyd has already made his place as an affirmative, thoughtful and entirely sincere painter. More than any other in the Antipodean Group he brings to his work a richness of imagination and humility of vision ...  

Back in Sydney, writing for the *Nation*, Bernard Smith, saluted David Boyd on his reception in Adelaide. 

David Boyd's recent Adelaide exhibition was a triumph for himself and for that kind of painting, highly difficult to achieve pictorial success in, which concerns itself with moral issues. ... these had been shown before in Sydney and ... Melbourne last year. They were handled quite severely by the critics of both cities... In his most recent paintings, he has produced a magnificent reply to all his critics.

As Smith concluded:

Adelaide is the one city in which Boyd's work has found some sympathetic critics and collectors from the beginning. It responded splendidly to the present show. The reviews of the art critics Elizabeth Young and Paul Beadle, generous and discerning, must have been a welcome change to the artist after three years of castigation by critics of the eastern states.

Yet Bernard Smith's most perceptive comments were on David Boyd's attempt to traverse the critical boundaries that had been established for him in Australia:

...he first made a reputation as a potter and ceramic sculptor. Today he is well-known as a mature artist-craftsman with a flair for individual shapes, amiable patterns and fine glazes; in
ceramics, his wife Hermia has occupied an equal place in a creative partnership. But the critics who have acclaimed their pottery have united to condemn his paintings. ... We type our talents, in order perhaps to keep them in their place. Having attained distinction in one art (craft), it is difficult to be regarded as anything but the merest amateur in another ...  

Alan McCulloch writing for the *Herald*, displays most obviously the critical contradictions surrounding David Boyd. In May 1961, McCulloch published a glowing review of the Boyd's pottery at the *South Yarra Gallery*. Little over a month later, in reviewing the *Italian Government Art Scholarship* for 1961, under the title, 'Looking on the dark side', McCulloch complained, that the show was 'badly hung and badly lit', while:

...In the circumstances there is not much point in discussing the winning picture, by David Boyd.
It can be dismissed briefly as an exercise in the manner of two other painters, Blackman and Dickerson, without the inventiveness of one or the humanism of the other.  

David Boyd's winning painting was Monoliths (1960) **Plate 19**. Having dismissed David Boyd, Alan McCulloch claimed that Leonard French's *The Mass* was the 'major work of the whole show'.

Shortly after winning the *Italian Government Art Scholarship*, in contrast to his reception in Melbourne, David Boyd exhibited the early paintings from the *Trial* series, including *Monoliths* (1960), at the *Johnstone Gallery* in Brisbane.
Dr Gertrude Langer, reviewing for the *Courier Mail*, titled her article 'Boyd Paintings Memorable':

David Boyd, better known here by his excellent ceramic work, is now holding his first Brisbane exhibition of paintings at the Johnstone Gallery.

He is a member of the 'Antipodean Painters' of Melbourne.

As can be seen in his selections from three series of paintings: 'The Explorers', 'Tasmanian Aboriginals' and 'The Trial', he shares the Melbourne group's preoccupation with human evolution and the building up of an Australian saga.

He also shares with them certain characteristics of style, such as the preference for either harsh or lurid colour and the pushing of expressions to the grotesque as if to counteract the danger of sentimentality inherent in the emotionally charged subject matter...  

In both Adelaide and Brisbane it appears that there was a dependency on the authority of the discourse on art in Sydney and Melbourne. In the early 1960s, David Boyd's status as a member of the *Antipodeans* appears to have assigned legitimacy to his work as a painter specifically in these smaller centres.

Not until 1964, did David Boyd hold show in Sydney and Melbourne. The *Trial* series was sent back from London. The series was also displayed at the *Bonython Gallery* in Adelaide and at the *Johnstone Gallery* in Brisbane. Again, David Boyd's reception in these secondary cities was better than in the two major capitals.  

5.3 DAVID BOYD IN LONDON

A major factor worthy of note is that all the major international touring shows of the early 1960s were concerned solely with painting. This necessarily meant that all discussion concerning the vitality of Australian art centred on painting at the expense of other media.

David Boyd was included in both Recent Australian Painting at the Whitechapel Art Gallery and in Commonwealth Art Today. Truganini's Dream of Childhood (1959), lent Kym Bonython, was exhibited in Recent Australian Painting. As Robert Hughes, outlined in the Introduction:

The Antipodean ideal ...finds its strongest expression in the Boyd brothers' paintings. It also appears that by 1961 Davic Boyd was consciously attempting to reinvent his public persona from that of a 'potter' to that of a 'painter' Plate 1 and Plate 20.

David Boyd was excluded from Antipodean Vision. The selection of Contemporary section met with a 'fair amount of criticism from Australian artists, both living in London and back in Australia, who had been excluded from the show. Apparently, David Boyd was originally to have been included. In the early stages of organisation, David Boyd was approached by the Chairman of the selection committee Robert Campbell, Director of the Art Gallery of South Australia. He had
suggested that three works would be included, significantly, from the *Tasmanians* series. This decision was apparently later overturned by other members of the selection panel, on political grounds rather than artistic.\textsuperscript{33}

No doubt David Boyd's compensation came with his first London show of eighteen large canvases from the *Trial* series at *Gallery One* in February 1963. As T G Rosenthal commented in 'The Paintings of David Boyd':

> Australian painting today hardly needs any introduction to a British public but the paintings of David Boyd have not been previously seen here so that they are interesting as yet another example of the only 'national' school of painting to have developed in recent years...\textsuperscript{34}

The show that received very positive reviews from English critics and established David Boyd as a painter in London for the following decade.\textsuperscript{35}

### 5.4 DAVID BOYD: THE ANTIPODEAN

For David Boyd, it was Bernard Smith's role as the *Antipodeans* advocate,\textsuperscript{36} that helped solidify his own place in Australian art history. While the discourse surrounding the *Antipodeans* had achieved broad currency with a critics and writers in the early 1960s, Smith's own work has remained the most important reference.\textsuperscript{37}
In *Australian Painting 1788-1960* the conflict between abstraction in Sydney and the *Antipodeans* provided the climactic conclusion to the history of Australian art up to that point. The *Antipodeans* were strategically placed within the structure of the text to maximise their literary impact. *The Survival of Figurative Painting in Melbourne, 1956-59*, and *The Melbourne Reaction Against Abstraction*, provide the final sections to *Chapter Nine: Figurative and Non-Figurative 1950-1960.*

Smith takes the opportunity to defend David Boyd from the criticisms directed at his paintings over the previous five years:

> In Melbourne the figurative image also survived in the work of David Boyd, who grew up under the influence of his elder brother, but developed a talent and imagination all of his own. There is, as might be expected, a certain kinship in the response of both brothers to art and life.

As Smith had also previously attempted, he grounded David Boyd's claims as a painter by highlighting his earlier training at the *National Gallery School*. Smith also justifies his 'excursion' into pottery by inferring, that while David and Hermia Boyd had become well known throughout Australia for their pottery for David Boyd this was a deviation, not unlike Arthur Boyd and John Perceval's exploration of ceramic sculpture.
With respect to the apparent similarities between the work of David
and Arthur Boyd:

These early explorer and Tasmanian paintings are romantically
conceived; the figures crowd upon the canvas grotesquely, and
often possess a touch of ccmic. All this was indubitably
Boydian. But David Boyd’s work is no mere imitation of his
Brother’s. 42

It was a ‘family tradition’ like the Brueghels and the Le Nains, rather
than plagiarism as claimed by the critics. 43 In outlining David Boyd’s
strengths as a painter, Smith continued that in form:

David Boyd’s work is more direct (than his brother Arthur
Boyd’s). ...In the later paintings produced during 1959 and
1960, the anecdotal element of the early work has been
suppressed; the forms are cubic, simple and massive, an
element of classicism entering into the expression. 44

While:

In the process of creating the series, the Tasmanian tragedy
has grown into a universal expression of the conflict between
white and coloured. The paintings belong to the world of Notting
Hill riots, Little Rock, Sharpeville and the trial of Albert
Namatjira. They are concerned with human conflict, guilt, love,
compassion and forgiveness; and what they express they
express as paintings, not as literature or propaganda. 45

The selection of images appears to confirm Smith’s claims. Arthur
Boyd’s *Groom Waiting for his Bride to Grow Up* precedes David
Significantly, Smith shayed away from illustrating David Boyd’s earlier
works from the *Explorers* series.
David Boyd's practice as a painter after the *Antipodeans* is laden with contradictions. His involvement in the group centralised him within the discursive framework surrounding the *Antipodeans*, which necessitated his inclusion in both the books published, and international exhibitions of the early 1960s. There also appears an acceptance by critics in Brisbane and Adelaide of the significance of David Boyd's paintings. This is in stark contrast to the continued dismissal of his work by critics in Sydney and Melbourne, even after his departure for London.

When David Boyd returned his *Trial* paintings in 1964, Alan McCulloch observed, in 'The Judiciary is under fire':

> There are numerous reasons why the paintings of David Boyd should be in the top Australian bracket. His Boydian background, comprising a line of artistic progenitors, as well as a whole family of living artists, might well be considered enough in itself. Add to this the strong support of various noted authorities and the accession of an Italian Scholarship which took the artist to London... and the reasons become very convincing. But in trying to arrive at a true assessment of any painter's work the only evidence that really counts is the evidence of the painting itself.\(^{46}\)

Yet McCulloch still sought to reproach David Boyd:

> I find Boyd's conceptions on this subject immature in the extreme. The influence of Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Perceval and Blackman all appear to have contributed to whatever imagery the pictures possess.\(^{47}\)

David Boyd's 'indictment of the law has, to me, the character of a schoolboy's prank'.\(^{48}\)
CHAPTER 6: ROBERT DICKERSON: IN THE RING
1960-1962

The *Antipodeans* placed Robert Dickerson in a controversial position as a painter in Sydney. His inclusion in the group confirmed the links and friendships he had developed with Melbourne artists since the early 1950s.\(^1\) In Sydney, in the decade up to 1959, Robert Dickerson had remained on both the social and critical extremities. The exhibition of paintings at Farmer’s *Blaxland Galleries* in 1959 had been well received,\(^2\) yet Dickerson had generally been excluded from the broad discourse surrounding the development of painting in Sydney.

The *Antipodeans* carved out Dickerson’s ‘assured place in Australian art history’.\(^3\) As a figurative painter and a member of the group he was inextricably drawn into the construct of the *Antipodeans* stand against abstraction in Sydney. Yet his inclusion has always remained somewhat irreconcilable. Dickerson had only been nominally involved in the formation of the group, had not attended the group’s meetings, and remained resident in Sydney throughout the 1950s and into 1960s. Robert Dickerson’s inclusion in the *Antipodeans* provides an ideal opportunity to uncover the critical inconsistencies within the construct.
6.1 ROBERT DICKERSON: IN THE RING

Following the *Antipodeans*, Robert Dickerson’s previous exclusion from the Sydney scene of the 1950s, his self-taught status, and working class background, became accentuated details in his biography. As Hetherington outlined in, ‘Robert Dickerson: A Rebel against Convention’:

Dickerson’s whole life, not merely the boxing part of it (his ‘life-classes’), has been a hard fight; it continues to be hard, ... He does not, however, count it among his hardships that he never went to art school or had any other formal training in painting.

‘The only training you need ... is to be a human being and live among people’, claimed Dickerson. As Hetherington continued:

Dickerson certainly lives among the people, especially the city people who provide the inspiration of practically all his work. He likes drinking beer in working class pubs, yarning with the men who earn a living working with their hands ... He is a rebel, if not against all convention, then against the stuffier expressions of it, and looks utterly unlike a conventional artist.

The projection of this unconventional image is epitomised in his photograph in the catalogue for *Recent Australian Painting* Plate 22.

Dickerson’s ‘thirty or so professional bouts’ helped forge the directness in his work:

When the mood is on him he paints at a rate of about a picture a week, working long hours to do it. To paint ten hours at a stretch is hard physical labour, but probably no more wearing than a ten-round professional fight.
Hetherington's article reinforced a number of claims made by Alan McCulloch in a review of Robert Dickerson's second individual show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1960:

Dickerson's personal feelings of isolation probably developed during the four or five years when he earned his living as a professional boxer.

The cruelty of the ring affected him deeply whether he won or lost. In the depths of his artist's soul he was unable to regard fighting as a light-hearted sport.

But the experience of this period has become his greatest asset; the treatment of a single deeply felt theme is the strength of the show.²

By the 1960s, Robert Dickerson's reputation had been secured within contemporary Australian painting. Ironically, the same factors that had imposed his personal isolation from the 'art world' in the 1950s, were now well established within his biographical narrative. His experiences of 'isolation' were appropriated by the critics to vindicate the legitimacy of his work as a painter.

6.2 THE RUDY KOMON GALLERY: EXHIBITING MELBOURNE PAINTERS IN SYDNEY

The Rudy Komon Gallery opened in Sydney only months after the Antipodeans had revived the artistic rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne. The Gallery opened with a broad survey show of Australian art, entitled, Tom Roberts to Jon Molvig. An interesting feature of the Rudy Komon Gallery was its leaning toward Melbourne painters.¹⁰
No doubt there were a number of reasons for this tendency, partly circumstantial, partly a reflection of Rudy Komon's personal taste. Although a significant factor, was that from an early stage in the Gallery's existence, Leonard French was a close and valued adviser to Komon. French had been the Exhibitions Officer at the National Gallery of Victoria and had organised the significant Survey shows. He was well respected on the Melbourne scene, and was able to facilitate the Rudy Komon Gallery as a venue for Melbourne based artists wishing to exhibit in Sydney. As Robert Dickerson later remarked, Rudy Komon 'didn't have a good eye for painting but took notice of people who had a good eye for painting'.

Komon exhibited A Group of Melbourne Painters in 1960. The show included, Charles Blackman, Leonard French, Clifton Pugh, John Brack, John Perceval, and Fred Williams. The reviews for the exhibition indicate that the stand made by the Antipodeans in Melbourne less than a year before had become part of the critical environment in Sydney. As Robert Hughes announced, 'Antipodeans Go North'. The exhibition gave him the opportunity to air his views concerning the group:

In Rudy Komon's exhibition of six Melbourne painters for Sydney viewers, Charles Blackman steals the show. This is not surprising, since he is more concerned with purely plastic values than any other painter represented except perhaps Len French. Within the Antipodean group he is the outsider, not troubling himself with the rather contrived Australia-image pushing that afflicts the Boyd brothers and Clifton Pugh. His images are painterly, not literary, while the other Antipodeans seem unable
to paint without the story-telling content as a prop. "The Image" is for most of the Antipodeans a verbal thing, disconnected from the formal aspects of the work; and this provokes, as Laurie Thomas has said, a hotted-up kind of Victorian anecdotalism. Abstract art does not contain their kind of image; hence, they reason, it contains no image at all.\textsuperscript{13}

With regard to his personal allegiances, Hughes complained:

But when is an Antipodean going to produce landscape images of the grace and power that one finds in a Passmore or an Olsen?\textsuperscript{14}

James Gleeson, in the \textit{Sun}, under the title, 'A Distinct Difference: Figurative Artists of Melbourne', suggested:\textsuperscript{15}

If they can be taken as representing a cross section of painting in Melbourne today then we must assume a distinct difference is developing between the art of the two largest Australian cities.

At present Sydney is dominated by a group of outstanding abstract painters.

In Melbourne the emphasis is still on figurative art, with a strong element of primitivism.\textsuperscript{16}

A view echoed in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}:

Works from some of Melbourne's leading artists now showing at the Rudy Komon Gallery emphasise the striking differences between the viewpoints and backgrounds of these artists and painters in Sydney.\textsuperscript{17}

The 1960 \textit{Helena Rubenstein Scholarship} exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales coincided with the Komon's \textit{First Anniversary Show}. All the \textit{Antipodeans}, except David Boyd, were included. James Gleeson was again enticed to comment:\textsuperscript{18}

...in the trecento, the neighbouring cities of Sienna and Florence were able to develop quite different characteristics in their styles of art.
One would suppose that similar dissimilarities could have been developed in the 20th century between cities as closely linked by common traditions and experiences as Sydney and Melbourne.\textsuperscript{19}

Gleeson suggested that both exhibitions demonstrated the differences between the two cities; figuration dominated practice in Melbourne while Sydney artists tended to 'place emphasis on abstraction'.\textsuperscript{20}

Both Charles Blackman and Clifton Pugh held solo exhibitions at the \textit{Rudy Komon Gallery} in the following year. Charles Blackman's show was entitled, \textit{The Artist in the Making}, and covered his early work from 1953 to 1958. The critic for the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} felt the work reflected 'the influences of German expressionism, via the Melbourne school'.\textsuperscript{21}

The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald's} critic commented on Clifton Pugh's exhibition in June 1961 that:

At the Rudy Komon Gallery, Clifton Pugh shows that his previous positive, even pugnacious, patterning has a new influence of Arthur Boyd complexities to temper the stark simplicities of landforms and figurative motifs.

For Pugh is now firmly involved in the figurative vein - part primitive realism and part expressionism, sharpened by a flavour of surrealism - that pervades the inbred characteristics of Melbourne's 'Antipodean' painters.\textsuperscript{22}

It is evident in surveying the reviews of the Komon's exhibitions, that the construct of the \textit{Antipodeans} stance on the 'figurative image' had filtered into the reviews of the Sydney critics. However, for Robert
Dickerson, even though he had exhibited with the *Antipodeans*, and was part of the Komon ‘stable’, his paintings were treated differently by the Sydney critics.

6.3 RUDY KOMON: DICKERSON'S TRAINER

As has already been discussed, during the late 1950s, Robert Dickerson had forged links with Melbourne and was actively supported by powerful figures within the Melbourne art scene. In Sydney, Robert Dickerson did not receive any substantial critical recognition until his first solo show in 1959. But, it was not until his association with Rudy Komon that he was elevated to an artist on a national scale. Dickerson, thus was strategically placed; accepted by critics in Melbourne associated with Rudy Komon as Sydney’s symbolic figurative painter.

At an early stage Rudy Komon had adopted the European idea of subsidising artists. His first contract was signed with Jon Molvig, the second with Robert Dickerson. However, they were the only two written contracts he made. He continued to support artists but without contracts. Yet as John Brack observed, the gallery flourished, but that did not mean that every artist he handled became rich.
Robert Dickerson held his second Sydney show at the *Rudy Komon* Gallery in June 1960. The exhibition received solid reviews in all the Sydney papers. James Gleeson in the *Sun* stated:26

Mr Dickerson is a realist who searches for realities that most of us prefer to ignore.

He does not paint real people. He invents symbols for a range of the more sombre human emotions, such as loveliness (loneliness), fear, anxiety, uncertainty and quiet desperation.

Their impact is immediate. Their message is received at full strength at the moment of contact.27

A number of Gleeson’s observations were reinforced by Robert Hughes in the *Nation* a few weeks later:28

…Each figure on Mr Dickerson’s canvases is isolated, but without identity: an illustration of one aspect of the human condition, loneliness. His work harps with maddening insistence on one string.

Dickerson’s work is certainly repetitious, but not monotonous. He seems to have stumbled on an attitude to his art so important that it can be repeated indefinitely. Nolan invented the Kelly helmet, and so created an archetypal form. The aesthetic of isolation is, in a similar way, an archetypal attitude; and Dickerson is this country’s main exponent of it. The values implied in a Dickerson painting, the conflicts and, particularly, the varieties of suffering, are narrower in range but go deeper than those implicit in the work of, say, the Boyd brothers.29

For Hughes, by shifting the narrative, Robert Dickerson’s paintings became a vehicle by which to question the vision of his previous *Antipodean* counterparts:

**Beside such works as “Portrait of a Boy” and “Man Sitting on the Beach”, Arthur Boyd’s stockmen appear stagey, David Boyd’s Truganini rhetorical. Dickerson drives straight to the heart of his human predicaments, without allegory or fuss. Curiously, Dickerson and Drysdale seem to be the only two**
major Australian painters who can make a 'national' image out of contemporary life. The Boyds, and Nolan in particular, have chosen to go back sixty years into history to find their images.30

Robert Dickerson exhibited again with Komon in early 1962, however, it was not as critically successful as his previous exhibition. As Robert Hughes observed in relation to his earlier paintings:

...the gaze of his new work...is neither as concentrated nor as oppressive as before. Some of the old firmness is absent ...a fuzzy atmospheric romanticism has leaked in, cloying pain and sweetening compassion.31

*Mother and Child* (1963) **Plate 23**, provides a telling example of changes in his work.

Under Rudy Komon's patronage, Robert Dickerson was drawn into the art scene in Sydney. The personal isolation that had effectively manifested itself in the strength of Dickerson's earlier work was now absent. Whereas his previous work had been grounded in experience, his latter was more a simulated response to the critical discourse surrounding his status as a painter.

Dickerson left the Komon 'stable' after this show in a dispute over money.32 However, Rudy Komon handled many of Robert Dickerson's seminal paintings; lending works for the international touring shows, and placing paintings in important collections. Rudy Komon continued to exhibit Robert Dickerson's work even after his departure from the Gallery.33
6.4 ROBERT DICKERSON: OUTSIDE ON THE INSIDE:

As has already been outlined, there were a significant number of books published in the early 1960s, in which the conflict between abstraction in Sydney and the Antipodeans in Melbourne was used as the construct by which the divergent practices were interpreted.

In Kym Bonython’s *Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture*, Robert Dickerson was represented by three works, including the *Tired Man* (1956) and the *The Escalator* (1959):

Dickerson lays bare the soul, but it is the soul of others, not his own. He does it with savagery and with love. For him, the sheer size of his figures is a necessary part of his expression, an emphasis, the only way he can make vivid the awful loneliness of a child, the mind of a conspirator, the tiredness of an old man.  

He paints people as though he had got inside their souls and was crying for their troubles. Many of them seem to have been painted with a blunt instrument.

Later, in *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, Bernard Smith tried to reconcile Robert Dickerson’s paintings, his membership of the Antipodeans, and the narrative of Australian painting up until 1959.
As Smith observed, Robert Dickerson:

...is probably the best-known figurative painter at work in Sydney, and the only important artist of his generation in the city who remained immune to the mass-conversion to non-figurative painting which took place in Sydney during 1956 and 1957.38

Dickerson, like Nolan:

...has a natural feeling for weight and tone and disposition of shape and mass, so that his paintings are usually constructed with distinction. From a limited technical vocabulary he has constructed a repertoire of cubic and expressive forms which he handles with great skill. It is a personal language with which he comments upon the human situation. ...It is a melancholy and pathetic vision of lonely and isolated people made tolerable by a certain amount of sentiment. Yet behind these images lies the menacing allegory of universal isolation.37

Smith asserted that, 'Dickerson's emphasis upon the isolation of the individual is a feature of figurative painting of the post war years'.38 In the past the individual had made a heroic stand against society, yet for:

Dickerson and his contemporaries, notably John Brack and Charles Blackman (both fellow Antipodeans) possess no such generous faith in the resources of the individual. People, in the mass or as individuals, are pathetic creatures at the mercy of forces beyond their control.39

In Sydney, Robert Dickerson was 'the only painter of real quality among the post war generation who was working entirely within the figurative mode'.40 For Smith's narrative, Dickerson's alienation, was an ideal opportunity to highlight the artistic integrity of the figurative artist working in a city overwhelmed by abstraction.
As discussed, in the 1960s, inclusion in the international touring shows of contemporary Australian painting confirmed the status of individual artists here in Australia. Robert Dickerson was well represented in all the major overseas shows sent from Australia.\textsuperscript{41} His work was 'praised' in London,\textsuperscript{42} where he was presented as both a 'kindred painter' of the Antipodeans, and an 'urban counterpart' for Drysdale.\textsuperscript{43}

For Dickerson, the early 1960s would have been an ideal time for him to travel to London, as did Blackman and the Boyds. But, Dickerson was unable to capitalize on the general reception of Australian art in London,\textsuperscript{44} and did not exhibit individually in London until 1973 at the Qantas Gallery, by which time the 'fashion' for Australian painting had passed.

By the early 1960s Robert Dickerson had achieved critical acceptance. As Gertrude Langer claimed in the Courier Mail after the opening of Robert Dickerson's exhibition at the Johnstone Gallery:

\begin{quote}
Robert Dickerson holds an important place among Australian figurative painters.

These works deserve attention\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the aim of this paper was to examine the *Antipodeans* in the documents of Australian art history. The aim was to be review the rhetoric surrounding the formation of the group by concentrating on the critical construct that situated the *Antipodeans* defence of the *image* in Melbourne against the invasion and critical dominance of abstract painting in Sydney. The establishment and evolution of this interpretive framework between 1959 and 1962 was outlined. Also considered was how earlier and later events were incorporated into the narrative.

No attempt has been made to confirm or disprove the validity of the interpretative framework built around the *Antipodeans*, nor any attempt made replace it with an alternative model for Australian art during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Rather, when, where and how the construct was employed to interpret Australian painting during this period has been described.

The involvement of both Robert Dickerson and David Boyd in the *Antipodeans* was addressed in detail. The contradictions between the critical reception of the *Antipodeans* as a group and that of Robert Dickerson and David Boyd as individuals from 1956 to 1962 highlights the complexities of the period and the limitations of the simplistic interpretive model built around the *Antipodeans*. 
EPILOGUE:

The most important event within Australian art in 1962 was the two exhibitions held by the *Annadale Imitation Realists*, later the *Subterranean Imitation Realists*, at the *Museum of Modern Art* in Melbourne, and the *Rudy Komon Gallery* in Sydney. The group consisted of Mike Brown, Ross Crothall, and Colin Lanceley. The pop assemblages exhibited by the group were positively reviewed by critics in both Sydney and Melbourne.¹ But most importantly the type of work produced by them, seriously brought into question validity of the *Antipodeans* stand against *abstraction* in Sydney as defining contemporary Australian painting.

However, the *Antipodeans* have remained a pivotal reference point in the history of Australian painting. This was due partly to the books published in the early 1960s when the narrative around the *Antipodeans* was still being formulated. Both Kym Bonython's, *Modern Australian Painting and Sculpture*, and Bernard Smith’s, *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, employed the construct. Bernard Smith's text provided the most comprehensive survey available on the history of Australian painting.² It wasn't until the 1970s that a range of new titles were published addressing the 1930s, including an expanded edition of *Australian Painting 1788-1970*.³
Bernard Smith's account of the conflict between the *Antipodeans* and abstraction in Sydney provided the culmination to the 1950s and reinforced the events of 1959 as a mile post in Australian art history. Smith did not address events in the early 1960s that contradicted the narrative established in *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, such as *Sydney 9*, or the *Subterranean Imitation Realists. Muffled Drums* was dismissed as little more than 'good, clean fun ...(yet) a trifle *retardataire*'.

As Smith concluded:

> The visual image was not to be put down easily. Nevertheless, it is to be stressed that as the 1950s drew to a close in Australia, most of the younger painters of the post-war generation were experimenting with some form of abstract painting ... But the claim of abstract painters to be the sole Guardians of contemporary art is heard less in the land. It is unlikely that figurative painting will be replaced entirely by an art without images. But the course of Australian art after 1959 is beyond the scope of this book.

With a final claim:

> Australian art is today, however, a going concern which is gaining respect and some distinction abroad. But if Australia is to continue to produce an art of international standing it will be an art that emerges from Australian experience and gives a critical edge to it: an art that both celebrates and sacrifices; diverse in interests; encompassing everything from social realism to action painting within its ambience, while allowing the adherents of no doctrine to posture as an elect called by History to create the only true art of the time; an art combining tolerance with a lively clash of conflicting interests; an art contemptuous neither of ideas nor of intuition in the creative process; an art which, at its best, can rise above the interests and limitations of the nation and the self.
The only comparable book in scope to Bernard Smith's was Robert Hughes, *The Art of Australia*. Yet, it only achieved wide circulation after 1970. Some commentators have suggested Hughes' book claimed the limelight of authority and marginalised Bernard Smith’s own achievement. However, *The Art of Australia*, inevitably revisited much of the ground previously covered in *Australian Painting 1788-1960*. This has been acknowledged by Smith himself.

As the substantial part of *The Art of Australia* was written in the early 1960s the *Antipodeans* defence of the *image* still received generous coverage, yet from Hughes' perspective. Hughes did, somewhat unfairly, dismiss David Boyd as 'a potter of some skill but of no interest as a painter'. Robert Dickerson was mentioned alongside the other *Antipodeans*, yet Hughes lamented that the 'emotional power' of his earlier work had given way to 'candied and repetitious' images.

Robert Hughes still viewed *The Antipodean Manifesto* as 'the most controversial document in recent Australian painting'. Hughes admitted that much of the abstract painting done in Australia in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

> was little more than a provincial reflection of *Ecole de Paris* decorative abstraction, and no more dynamic or original than the Charm School's work had been. (although) The error, of course, was to suppose that the paintings were weak because they were abstract.
Robert Hughes also addressed the apparent ambiguities of the term, *image*.\textsuperscript{14} The culminating chapter was *Abstract Painting 1938-66*, which detailed the *Sydney 9* response to the *Antipodeans*:

Sydney 9 went inter-state to answer the Antipodeans. A ludicrous tension now existed between the ‘abs’ and the ‘figs’. Shrieks of ‘international bandwagoners!’ and ‘cottage industry!’ were exchanged north and south, across a mutually observed Mason-Dixon line that painters seldom and exhibitions rarely crossed.\textsuperscript{16}

Hughes suggested, the *Antipodeans* were much to blame and:

…did much to debilitate the art climate. In this context, the only effect of *Sydney 9* was to break the ice. What began as an ideological war-party …turned into a diplomatic mission.\textsuperscript{15}

Robert Hughes was, however, obliged to address events after 1961. In the *Epilogue* he addressed the assemblage work of the *Annadale Imitation Realists* perceptively:

In retrospect, however, the first *Annadale Imitation Realists* show seems to have been one of the few significant statements made in Australian art in the early sixties – if only because the three artists turned their back, decisively, on the ‘poetic’ elements of Australian painting, with all their conventions, whether in abstract or figurative art.\textsuperscript{17}

The *Annadale Imitation Realists* destroyed the validity of the *Antipodeans* defence of the *image* against *abstraction* in Sydney, as the interpretive framework defining current practice, and relegated it to the historical period 1956 to 1962.
APPENDIX:

THE ANTIPODEAN MANIFESTO

Let it be said in the first place that we have all played a part in that movement which has sought for a better understanding of the work of contemporary artists both here and abroad. Indeed, we are, in no uncertain sense, members of the modern movement in art. We take cognisance of all that has happened in art during the past fifty years — not to do so would be folly.

But today we believe, like many others, that the existence of painting as an independent art is in danger. Today tachistes, action painters, geometric abstractionists, abstract expressionists and their innumerable band of camp followers threaten to benumb the intellect and wit of art with their bland and pretentious mysteries. The art which they champion is not an art sufficient for our time, it is not an art for living men. It reveals, it seems to us, a death of the mind and spirit.

And yet wherever we look, New York, Paris, London, San Francisco or Sydney, we see young artists dazzled by the luxurious pageantry and colour of non-figuration. It has become necessary therefore for us to point out, as clearly and as unmistakably as we can, that the great Tachiste Emperor has no clothes — nor has he a body. He is only a blot — a most colourful, elegant and shapely blot.

Modern art has liberated the artist from his bondage to the world of natural appearances, it has not imposed upon him the need to withdraw from life. The widespread desire, as it is claimed, to ‘purify’ painting has led many artists to claim that they have invented a new language. We see no evidence at all of the emergence of such a new language nor any likelihood of its appearance. Painting for us is more than paint. Certainly the non-figurative arts can express moods and attitudes, but they are not capable of producing a new artistic language. We are not, it seems to us, witnessing in non-figuration the emergence of an utterly new form of art. We are witnessing yet another attempt by puritan and iconoclast to reduce the living speech of art to the silence of decoration.

Art is, for the artist, his speech, his way of communication. And the image, the recognisable shape, the meaningful symbol, is the basic unit of his language. Lines, shapes and colours though they may be beautiful and expressive are by no means images. For us the image is a figured shape or symbol fashioned by the artist from his perceptions and imaginative experience. It is born of past experience and refers back to past experience — and it communicates. It communicates because it has the capacity to refer to experiences the artist shares with his audience.
Art is willed. No matter how much the artist may draw upon the instinctive and unconscious levels of his experience a work of art remains a purposive act, a humanisation of nature. The artist's purpose achieves vitality and power in his images. Take the great black bull of Lascaux, for example, an old beast and a powerful one, who has watched over the birth of many arts and many mythologies. He is endowed with a vitality which is an emblem of life itself. Destroy the living power of the image and you have humbled and humiliated the artist, have made him a blind and powerless Samson fit only to grind the corn of Philistines.

As Antipodeans we accept the image as representing some form of acceptance of, and involvement in life. For the image has always been concerned with life, whether of the flesh or of the spirit. Art cannot live much longer feeding upon the disillusion of the generation of 1914. Today Dada is as dead as the dodo and it is about time we buried this antique hobby-horse of our fathers.

When we look about us there still seems much to be done in art worth doing. People, their surroundings and the past that made them are still subjects, we should like to point out, worthy of the consideration of the artist. We are not, of course, seeking to create a national style. But we do seek to draw inspiration from our own lives and the lives of those about us. Life here in this country has similarities to life elsewhere and also significant differences. Our experience of this life must be our material. We believe that we have both a right and a duty to draw upon our experience both of society and nature in Australia for the materials of our art. For Europeans this country has always been a primordial and curious land. To the ancients the antipodes was a kind of nether world, to the peoples of the Middle Ages its forms of life were monstrous, and for us, Europeans by heritage (but not by birth) much of this strangeness lingers. It is natural therefore that we should see and experience nature differently in some degree from the artists of the northern hemisphere.

We live in a young society still making its myths. The emergence of myth is a continuous social activity. In the growth and transformation of its myths a society achieves its own sense of identity. In this process the artist may play a creative and liberating role. The ways in which a society images its own feelings and attitudes in myth provides him with one of the deepest sources of art.

Nevertheless our final obligation is neither to place nor nation. So far as we are concerned the society of man is indivisible and we are in it. When we think of all that has happened to people like ourselves during the last fifty years we know that we do not fully understand them — and we want to. How can they bear living? But they do. So we want
to ask questions. If such an aim is impure then we would say that
purism leads to puritanism, puritanism to image-smashing, and image-
smashing, after an Indian summer of decorative luxury, to the death of
art.

If the triumph of non-figurative art in the West fills us with
concern so, too, does the dominance of socialist realism in the East.
Socialist realism, as we understand it, places too many restraints upon
the independent creative activity of the artist for it to produce work of
vitality and power. We wish to stress that in defending the image we
are not seeking to return to naturalistic forms of painting and sculpture
but are defending something which is vital to the life of art itself.

We want to say, finally, that we are more directly concerned with
our own art, more involved in it, than in anything else. This is not
escapism. It is simply a recognition that the first loyalty of an artist is to
his art. Today that loyalty requires, beyond all else, the defence of the
image.

CHARLES BLACKMAN       ARTHUR BOYD       DAVID BOYD
JOHN BRACK             BOB DICKERSON      JOHN PERCEVAL
CLIFTON PUGH           BERNARD SMITH
NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Smith, B, Australian Painting Today, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1962, 31
3 The approach employed in this paper is indebted to the earlier work of Michel Foucault, as outlined in Foucault, M, The Archaeology of Knowledge (including The Discourse on Language), Harper & Row, New York, 1972. More specifically, where the apparent unity of a discourse, is eroded through the description of contradictions and irregularities, highlighting the spaces of dissonance. See specifically, Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, op. cit., 149-156
4 The other five painters being Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, John Brack, John Perceval and Clifton Pugh. Bernard Smith was the only non-painter signatory to The Antipodean Manifesto

CHAPTER 1: THE POTTER AS PAINTER: DAVID BOYD 1956-1958

1 David and Hermia Boyd exhibited their work in Sydney at David Jones' Small Gallery in July 1955 and later that year in Melbourne at Georges department store. Reviews were positive; see specifically, 'Elegance of Pottery Surprises', Sydney Morning Herald, 20 July 1955, 2; McCulloch, A, 'Exciting Italians', Herald, 9 November 1955, 19
3 This was claimed by Kenneth Hood; Hood, K, Pottery (The Arts in Australia Series), Longmans, Melbourne, 1961, 30
5 Cochrane, The Crafts Movement in Australia, op. cit., 66
6 Ibid, 80
7 Pottery in Australia; Volume 1 No.1, May 1962
8 Cochrane, The Crafts Movement in Australia, op. cit., 83-85; For example, the Rudy Komon Gallery held two exhibitions of ceramics by Milton Moon in 1962 and 1966.
9 Cochrane, The Crafts Movement in Australia, op. cit., 104-105; see 'Elegance of Pottery Surprises', Sydney Morning Herald, 20 July 1955, 2; McCulloch, A, 'Pottery as art', op. cit., 27
10 In the accompanying publication, The Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Melbourne, The Olympic Civic Committee of the Melbourne City Council, Melbourne, 1956, over 240 individually listed entries are provided for the paintings and drawings
on display at the National Gallery of Victoria and over fifty entries for sculpture. For ceramics, only very brief biographical entries are recorded with a few black and white images slotted in among the other ‘mino’ categories of commercial art, aboriginal art, industrial design and opera.

11 Cochrane, The Crafts Movement in Australia, op. cit., 86; Hood, Pottery (The Arts in Australia Series), Longmans, op. cit. Peter Rushforth would also be play an early role in defining ceramic practice in Australia during the 1960s; Rushforth, P, ‘Pottery in Australia’, Art and Australia, Volume 3 No.3, December 1965, 192-197; Australian & New Zealand Pottery, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1963
12 Hood, Pottery (The Arts in Australia Series), op. cit., 30
16 Edwards, The Painter as Potter: Decorated Ceramics of the Murrumbeena Circle, op. cit., 3
17 ibid, 4; also Timms, Australian Studio Pottery & China Painting, op. cit., 64-66
18 ‘Elegance of Pottery Surprises’, op. cit., 2; see also Vader, The Pottery and Ceramics of David & Hermia Boyd, op. cit., 108-110 for other positive reviews cited from The Bulletin and The Mirror.
21 Gertrude Langer responded with a similarly positive review to their second show at the Johnstone Gallery in 1957, Langer, G, ‘Boys show their pottery’, Courier Mail, 27 November 1957, 2
22 ‘Elegance of Pottery Surprises’, op. cit., 2; ‘Boys Show Their Pottery’, op. cit., 2; ‘Boys’ Pottery’, op. cit., 2
23 In this paper David Boyd’s work in ceramic sculpture is considered as just one facet of his work as a potter.
24 ‘Elegance of Pottery Surprises’, op. cit., 2
25 Timms, Australian Studio pottery & China Painting, op. cit., 70
27 McCulloch, ‘Ideas in art – or are they gimmicks?’, op. cit., 24
29 David Boyd, cited in Benko, The Art of David Boyd, op. cit., 210
30 Benko, The Art of David Boyd; op. cit., 217


2 For example, Jean Campbell has suggested that The Sydney Group was the 'most significant of the art bodies in the 1940s'; Campbell, J, Early Sydney Moderns, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1988, 181-182. The more familiar Sydney Charm School label for art in Sydney during the late 1940s and early 1950s, was apparently first used by Elwyn Lynn in a CAS Broadsheet in 1957; Dutton, G, The Innovators: The Sydney Alternatives in the Rise of Modern Art, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1986, 99. It appears that this term was used by both Lynn and Robert Hughes in reviews after this date, for example, Hughes, R 'Melbourne's Forties', Nation, No.100, 11 August 1962, 19; Hoff, U & Lynn, E, 'A History of Australian Painting', Meanjin, No.93, Vol.22 No.2, 1963, 233. The term was not used by Bernard Smith, in Smith, B, Australian Painting 1788-1960, Oxford, Melbourne, 1962, although the construct was employed. The Charm School became a blanket label for Sydney art of the 1940s in Robert Hughes' later book. As he observed, 'Sydney, in the forties, ... produced a decade of luxury art: the romantic poeticism of the forties, to give its official name: or, more succinctly, the Charm School.' Hughes, R, The Art of Australia (Revised Edition), Penguin, Melbourne, 1970, 170. Geoffrey Dutton has observed that with such a mixture of individuals it is a wonder they managed to get themselves into a group at all; Dutton, The Innovators, op. cit, 99. For a balanced discussion of the artists in resident at Mericiola, see, France, C, Mericiola and after, National Trust & S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 1986. Another alternative interpretation has been forwarded by Gavin Wilson who has suggested that Mericiola, for a some of these artists and in particular Donald Friend, was only a stage before the formation of the Hill End Group. Wilson, G, The Artists of Hill End, Beagle Press/Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1995, 93

3 Haese, R, Rebels and Precursors, Allen Lane, Melbourne 1981, 256
4 ibid, 256
5 ibid, 256-257
6 ibid, 289
7 Haese, Rebels and Precursors, op. cit., 255-256
7 ibid, 75-76
8 ibid, 76
9 ibid, 77
10 ibid, 78
11 For example, Hetherington, J, Australian Painters: Forty Profiles, F W Cheshire, 1963, 212-216
12 Dickerson was introduced to people like Weaver Hawkins, Elwyn Lynn, Leonard Hessing, and Carl Plate, but claims never met Paul Haefliger. Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
13 Dickerson, J, Robert Dickerson – Against the Tide, Pandanus Press, Brisbane, 1994, 40
14 Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit
18 The Pacific Loan Exhibition of Contemporary Australian Paintings toured to Auckland, Honolulu, Vancouver, San Francisco before returning to Australia and exhibited at the Art Gallery of NSW in November 1956. To see how the show was both promoted and received, see, ‘Art of Australia for U.S. Display’, Sydney Morning Herald, 3 October 1956, 2; ‘Exhibition Reveals Vitality in Art’, Sydney Morning Herald, 16 November 1956, 2; Gleeson, J, ‘Australian Art Impressed U.S. Viewers’, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 December 1956, 2; ‘New Art Movement ‘Arrives’ in Australia’, Sydney Morning Herald, 6 February 1957, 2
21 Hughes, The Art of Australia, op. cit., 259-261
22 Dutton, The Innovators, op. cit., 134; The only sales at the show were by Klippel, for which he received 26 pounds, and by Olsen for eight guineas, which covered expenses, so his receipts were zero. Passmore, Smith and Rose were charged for expenses; sourced from the Macquarie Galleries account books, cited in Dutton, The Innovators, op. cit., 134
23 ‘Three New Art Exhibitions in Sydney’, Sydney Morning Herald, 10 July 1957, 2
24 Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
25 Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
26 Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit. By 1958 the Reeds had acquired three important works by Dickerson. They were included in Reid B, Modern Australia Art, Museum of Modern Art in Australia, Melbourne, 1958, 69. Catalogue entries: 42. Prone figure (1955) 43. The Clowns (1956) 44. The Bathers
There appears to be minor discrepancies in the details of these works now in the Heide Collection. Many of Dickerson’s early paintings are undated and untitled, thus some details have inevitably changed over time. For further details see Palmer, M, *Heide Museum and Art Gallery*, Melbourne, 1981, 53; Dickerson, *Robert Dickerson - Against the Tide*, op. cit., 141-142


The Gallery of Contemporary Art opened on June 1 1956 with Sidney Nolan’s *Ned Kelly* series on display. This was followed by the annual Contemporary Art Society show, Charles Blackman, and then Robert Dickerson’s solo show. Reviewed by McCulloch, ‘Walkabout for art’s sake’, *Herald*, op. cit., 21. As Christopher Heathcote has pointed out Reed’s personal taste played a crucial role in the solo shows that were held at the Gallery of Contemporary Art – Blackman, Hope, Nolan and Dickerson; Heathcote, *A Quiet Revolution*, op. cit., 74

Reed, ‘A Statement on Bob Dickerson: Painter’, op. cit., 15

ibid, 15

ibid, 16

ibid, 16

ibid, 16-17

These ideas were based on the assumption that advanced modern art proceeded from two impulses; the *symboliste* perspective, where the image represented the externalisation of the central subject’s psychological state; and the *paysage moraliste*, where the landscape translated into a moral commentary. See, Heathcote, *A Quiet Revolution*, op. cit., 25, expanding on Haese, *Rebel and Precursors*, op. cit., 235-238

Haese, *Rebel and Precursors*, op. cit. 241-242


Haehcote, *A Quiet Revolution*, op. cit., 27

Reed, ‘A Statement on Bob Dickerson: Painter’, op. cit., 16


ibid, 75

ibid, 80

McCulloch, ‘Walkabout for art’s sake’, op. cit., 21

For which Dickerson received a cheque for 10 pounds after expenses; Dickerson, *Robert Dickerson – Against the Tide*, op. cit., 66


Haese, *Rebel and Precursors*, op. cit., 239; While Haese was specifically addressing the 1940s, this relationship between artist and patron appears just as applicable later on, as in that of John Reed and Bob Dickerson in the mid 1950s

Heathcote, *A Quiet Revolution*, op. cit., 22

CHAPTER 3: THE ANTIPODEANS


5 Blackman, ‘The Antipodean Affair’, op. cit., 611
10 ibid, 6
11 ibid, 6-7
12 Blackman, ‘The Antipodean Affair’, op. cit., 611
14 Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, op. cit., 207; David Boyd sent three pages of notes to Bernard Smith for inclusion in the manifesto.
15 Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, op. cit., 204
16 Blackman, ‘The Antipodean Affair’, op. cit., 614; One need only read the initial scathing attack by John Brack on David Boyd's *Explorers* series six months earlier; Brack, J, ‘Leave the Epic Alone!’, *The Observer*, Vol.1 No.20, 15 November 1958, 627
19 Brack, ‘Leave the Epic Alone!’, op. cit. 627; McCulloch, A, 'Ideas in art - or are they gimmicks?', *Herald*, 29 October 1958, 24; 'A Potter Paints', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1958, 2
20 Brack had argued that 'virtuous intentcns' were not something that the skills of painter were or should be assessed on, Brack, ‘Leave the Epic Alone!’, op. cit., 627
22 Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, op. cit., 207
23 The Antipodeans catalogue lists the following works:
15. The Intruder in the Hunting Grounds - 125gns
16. The Fugitives - 85gns
17. The Emasculation of the Aboriginals - 130gns
18. The Dance - 65gns
19. Truganini- The Last of the Tasmanian Aboriginals - 85gns
20. Truganini- A Dream of Childhood (lent by Kym Bonyngham)
21. Truganini- The Drowning of her Betrothed - 100gns
22. Truganini- Her Mother Stain - 140gns
23. Truganini- Bruny Island - 50gns
25 Dickerson was one of a number of artists whose inclusion was discussed at the first meeting. Other painters who surfaced for possible invitation were, Leonard French, Noel Counihan, and Fred Williams. For a further discussion of the inclusion of Robert Dickerson, see, Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, op. cit., 201-202; Guy, *The Antipodeans Revisited*, op. cit., 2; Blackman, ‘The Antipodean Affair’, op. cit., 614
26 Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit
27 Dickerson was obviously aware of the group’s intention to have a manifesto, for in his reply to John Brack’s invitation, he stated, ‘I am eager to participate, it has tremendous possibilities...I’d like to suggest dropping the Brotherhood. The
Antipodeans sounds good to me. I'll provide (Bernard) with the necessary material for the manifesto he is preparing', cited in Haycraft, 'The Making of a Manifesto', op. cit., 286, from an undated letter from Dickerson, *Smith Papers*. Also 'Thanking you for the Manifesto which I read and re-read several times and I must say I agree with the bulk of it', cited in Haycraft, 'The Making of a Manifesto', op. cit., 288, from an undated letter from Dickerson to Smith, *Smith Papers*


1. The Tired Man - nfs (not for sale)  13. The Pavement - 150 gns
2. Hot Summer Night - nfs  14. The Dressing Room - 150 gns
3. The Escalator - nfs  15. Child in the Moonlight - 165 gns
4. Sunday on the Georges - 150 gns  16. Wynyard Station - 185 gns
5. Guy - 100 gns  17. The Bank Teller - 150 gns
6. Robyn and Sharon - 150 gns  18. Night Traffic - 100 gns
10. The Resurrection - 150 gns  22. The Early Morning Tout-150 gns
12. The Punter - 150 gns  24. Newtown Mother - nfs

29 Stern, B, 'Caliban from Outer Suburbia', *The Observer*, Vol.2 No.11, 30 May 1959, 340
30 ibid, 340
31 'Remarkable Paintings by Robert Dickerson', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1959, 2
32 ibid, 2
33 Bob Dickerson: *Antipodeans* catalogue entries
   37. Children in the Bush - 160 gns
   38. Low Tide at Moorebank - 150 gns
   39. Wynyard Station - 180 gns
   40. Man in the Moonlight - 150 gns
   41. The Bank Clerk - 150 gns

Let it be mentioned again that as can been seen in the title change *The Bank Teller* to *The Bank Clerk*, there are a number of early works by Robert Dickerson where names or dates have been altered over time. Such changes cause difficulties in accurately identifying some works. There appear to be conflicting accounts concerning the current whereabouts of the works shown by Dickerson in the *Antipodeans* show; see *The Antipodeans: Another Chapter*, Lauraine Diggins Fine Arts, Melbourne, 1988, 14; Dickerson, J, *Robert Dickerson - Against the Tide*, Pandanus, Brisbane, 1994, 142-145. The details in *The Antipodeans: Another Chapter* are assumed to provide the most accurate record for further discussions

34 The Manifesto is reproduced in Appendix: The Antipodean Manifesto
35 Smith, *The Death of the Artist as Hero*, op. cit., 204
37 Haycraft, 'The Making of a Manifesto', op. cit., 287
38 Specifically, in the climate following the 1956 invasion of Hungary. Dixon & Smith, *Aspects of Australian Figurative Painting 1942-1962*, op. cit., 32; Smith strongly retorted the claims by Dixon and Terry Smith that the *Antipodeans* in their stance had inhabited an 'empty space' in the 'liberal middle ground'. Smith, B, *Two commentaries on the exhibition: Aspects of Australian Figurative Painting 1942-1962: Dreams, Fears and Desires*, Power Institute Occasional papers, No.1, May 1984, 5
39 See Appendix: The Antipodean Manifesto
41 See Appendix: The Antipodean Manifesto
CHAPTER 4: AFTER THE ANTIPODEANS

1 In Australian Painting 1788-1960, Smith claimed that, ‘It (Direction 1) launched abstract expressionism in Sydney and the new mode was quickly accepted by the critics’, Smith, B, Australian Painting 1788-1960, Oxford, Melbourne, 1962, 312. Yet as Dutton has observed, ‘it was a minor show, both in the quality of the works and the volume of pieces sold, but it has become a symbolic mile-post in the haphazardly constructed road of Australian art’, Dutton, G, The Innovators, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1986, 134. For a review see, ‘Exhibition of Work by Five Leading Artists’, Sydney Morning Herald, 4 December 1956, 2. Pearce has also pointed out that, Direction 1 received only the briefest exposure (7 days) and was a financial failure; only Robert Klippel sold a work for 25 gns. Pearce also claims that it was critically misunderstood, identified often as one of the key, crystallising events in the history of abstract art in Australia, though none of the participants ever subscribed to the idea that they were promoting abstract expressionism in Sydney. See Pearce, B, ‘Direction 1’, Art and Australia, Volume 24 No.4, Winter 1987, 497-504

2 The group 9 Sydney 1961 first exhibited at David Jones' Art Gallery to a rapturous review, 'Group Displays a National Vigour', Sydney Morning Herald, 19 July 1961, 2. The second, more confrontational show, was Sydney 9 at Gallery A, Sept 20 – Oct 13 1961. 23 works by nine artists are listed in the catalogue; Olsen(4), Rose(2), Rapotoc(3), Hessing(3), Meadmore(4), Smith(2), Upward(1), Gilliard(1), Plate(3). Virginia Spate in the forward to the Gallery A catalogue referred to the apparent divide between practice in Sydney and Melbourne. 'The first exhibition of these nine artists in Sydney last month was regarded as a significant artistic event. It remains to be seen whether it will prove so in Melbourne where, of course, the debate on 'the image' continues. In the increasing numbers of abstractionists, the younger artists are no

42 Smith, B, 'The Antipodeans Exhibition: Notes for the Opening Address', first published in, Smith, The Critic as Advocate, op. cit., 130-134
43 ibid, 130
44 ibid, 131
45 ibid, 133
46 ibid, 131
47 ibid, 131
48 ibid, 130
49 Smith, The Death of the Artist as Hero, op. cit., 207
50 For reviews of the show see, McCulloch, A, 'Battle cry of Antipodeans', Herald, 5 August 1959, 23; 'Charles Blackman Stands Alone', Age, 4 August 1959, 2; 'Artbursts – Antipodeans', The Bulletin, 19 August 1959, 24-25; Philipp, F, 'Antipodeans Aweigh', Nation, 29 August 1959, 18-19
52 McCulloch, 'Battle cry of Antipodeans', op. cit., 23
53 ibid, 23
54 Philipp, 'Antipodeans Aweigh', op. cit., 18
55 ibid, 18-19
56 Blackman, 'The Antipodean Affair', op. cit., 615
57 Haycraft, 'The Making of a Manifesto', op. cit., 288
58 The Antipodeans: Another Chapter, op. cit., 14
59 Blackman, 'The Antipodean Affair', op. cit., 616
60 Grishin, The Art of John Brack, op. cit., 70, 73; Grishin has suggested that for John Brack, his involvement with Antipodeans was a mistake.
61 Blackman, 'The Antipodean Affair', op. cit., 615
longer moved by the ideal of a figurative interpretation of the Australian ethos. Nevertheless, with a few exceptions, the earnestness and maturity expressed in these works from Sydney, is in Melbourne not generally apparent. ... In Sydney, this question of the validity of abstract art is of central importance.' As Alan McCulloch observed 'the catalogue forward awakens the old baggage of interstate jealousy', McCulloch, A, 'Symphony and Pyramid', Herald, 30 August 1961, 30


4 Grishin, S, The Boxer Collection: The Sydney Alternative, Nolan Gallery, Canberra, 1982, 3. As Grishin has pointed out there was only one Antipodeans group show, while Sydney 9 had only a limited lifespan. The exhibitions were 'groupings of convenience' that brought together artists of various persuasions and differing levels of accomplishment. Grishin has suggested the groups reflected the differing philosophies about art circulating in both Sydney and Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s rather than a simple conflict of formalist criteria; the writings of Herbert Read in Melbourne, and the influence of Prof. John Anderson on aesthetic thought in Sydney


6 Bonython, K, Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture: A survey of Australian art from 1950 to 1960, Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1960. The book included, a 'Forward' by Prof. Joseph Bourke, and an 'Introduction' written by Laurie Thomas, 60 artists, 84 plates, with 51 in colour. Six works were included from Kym Bonython's own collection including Robert Dickerson's Escalator and David Boyd's Truganini's Dream of Childhood


9 McCulloch, 'The Moderns--or some of them', op. cit., 26

10 Ibid, 28


12 Thomas, L, 'Introduction', in Bonython, K, Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture, Griffin, Adelaide, 1960, 7-8

13 Ibid, 7


15 Thomas, 'Introduction', in Bonython, Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture, op. cit., 7-8

16 McCulloch, A, 'More books on our artists', Herald, 18 January 1961, 16

17 The Longmans Arts in Australia series published during the early 1960’s included titles on painting, sculpture, architecture, pottery, design, and aboriginal art. For this paper relevant titles are; Finemore, B, Painting, Longmans, Melbourne, 1961; Hood, K, Pottery, Longmans, Melbourne, 1961; Parr, L, Sculpture, Longmans, Melbourne
1961. For a review of the series, see Preston, H, 'The Arts in Australia (Series)', Meanjin, No.90, Vol.21 No.3, 397-398

Reed, J, New Painting 1952-62, Longmans, Melbourne, 1963. Finemore's book did not address the 1950s with any conviction, stating that 'Since the 1950's the variety of styles has increased greatly, and it would be foolish to try to find one dominant style. But many young painters have adopted non-representational art. They are inspired by the later 'School of Paris' painters, by 'German Expressionists' and more latterly by the American abstract artists... (concluding)... A distinctive national art develops slowly, reflecting the growth of its fatherland. Considering the past history of Australian art, it seems likely that it will continue to reflect the styles of other lands', though transformed by the Australian temperament. See Finemore, Painting, op. cit., 5. Of the 27 works reproduced, the only contemporary artists included were Nolan, Boyd, Rees and O'Brien, with paintings dating from the years 1949-1951.

The Georgian House Australian Art Monographs were anticipated to be more comprehensive, including artists such as Arthur Boyd, Albert Tucker, and John Perceval, however, by 1965 only four titles had been published. These were; Thomas, D, Sali Herman, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1962; Macainsh, N, Clifton Pugh, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1962; Spate, V, John Olsen, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1963; Matthew, R, Charles Blackman, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1965


Thomas, D, 'Contemporary' in Antipodean vision: Australian Painting – Colonial – Impressionist – Contemporary, F W Cheshire, Melbourne, 1962, 25

ibid, 25

ibid, 25. John Olsen's 'View of the Western World no.1' (1956) was the work illustrated Haefliger's article 'New Art Movement 'Arrives' in Australia', Sydney Morning Herald, 6 February 1956, 2

ibid, 26

ibid, 26

Smith, B, Australian Painting 1788-1960, Oxford, Melbourne, 1962. This followed the publication of the John Murtagh Macrossan Lectures in, Smith, B, Australian Painting Today, University of Queenslan, St Lucia, 1962. This is not to underestimate the importance of European Vision and the South Pacific, published a couple of years earlier, but this paper is specifically directed at the interpretation of Australian art in the 1950s and 1960s.

Burn, The Necessity of Australian Art, op. cit., 39

ibid, 62-63. While Burn was discussing the displacement of the 'authority of academic naturalism' by modernism during the interwar years, such comments are just as applicable to the construct of the Antipodeans opposition to the onslaught of abstraction in Sydney.

Terry Smith, cited in, Beilharz, P, Imagining the Antipodes, Cambridge, Melbourne, 1997, 50

Lynn, E, 'In Our Image', Nation, No.106, 15 December 1962, 21

Terry Smith, cited in Beilharz, P, Imagining the Antipodes, op. cit., 50


Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 308-310, 312. For comment on the term 'abstract expressionism' as applied to the artists involved in Direction 1 and the
use/misuse of the term by Smith and Haeffiger, see Pearce, 'Direction 1', op. cit. 498; France, 'New Directions 1952-1962', op. cit., 7
37 Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 321-322
38 ibid, 321-322
39 ibid, 321-322
40 ibid, 324
41 ibid, 325
42 ibid, 328-330
43 ibid, 328
44 ibid, 333
46 ibid, 331
46 Gleeson, J, 'Painting in Australia since 1945', Art and Australia, Vol.1 No.1, May 1963, 2-19,48
47 ibid, 9
48 ibid, 9
49 ibid, 10
52 Letter from Bernard Smith to Kym Bonython, 21 February 1959, cited in Smith, 'The Truth about the Antipodeans', op. cit., 202
53 Catalano, The Years of Hope, op. cit., 91
55 This is not to underestimate the worth of the Survey shows organised by Leonard French at the National Gallery of Victoria. But individually, these shows were thematic and concentrated on select groups of artists. For details see, Heathcote, 'Appendix: the Survey Exhibitions', A quiet revolution, op. cit., 218-219
For reviews of individual shows see;
Survey (February 1958); McCulloch, A, 'Non-objective art is stimulating', Herald, 5 February 1958, 36.
Survey—Comments on Life (June—July 1958); McCulloch, A, 'Escalator in a class of its own', Herald, 18 June 1958, 27.
Survey IV (November—December 1959); McCulloch, A, 'Survey Show is a failure', Herald, 4 November 1959.
Rebels and Precursors: Aspects of Painting in Melbourne 1937-1947 organised by the National Gallery of Victoria, totalled 180 works by six artists, Bergner, Boyd, Nolan, Perceval, Tucker and Vassilieff. While this exhibition may have reflected the period where 'the battle for the acceptance of contemporary values in art was fought and to a great extent won', (Introduction, p3), it did not cover, or claim to address, the environment of the 1960s. For reviews see; McCulloch, A, 'Worth of the rebel show', Herald, 15 August 1962, 26; Hughes, R, Melbourne's Forties, Nation, No.100, 11 August 1962, 19-20
56 For a review of the Adelaide display of works on route to England, see McCulloch, A, 'The Tate Show nearly makes it', Herald, 21 March 1962, 24
Australian Painting Today: a survey of the last ten years, toured the six major state galleries between September 1963 and July 1964 before travelling to Europe. Tour dates from the catalogue;
Queensland Art Gallery, 19 September–20 October 1963
Art Gallery of New South Wales, 7 November–8 December 1963
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 9 January–9 February 1964
National Gallery of Victoria, 27 February–29 March 1964
National Gallery of South Australia, 16 April–17 May 1964
Western Australian Art Gallery, 4 June–5 July 1964
58 Burn, The Necessity of Australian Art, op. cit., 88-89
59 Catalano, The Years of Hope, op. cit., 68
60 Robertson, 'Preface' in Recent Australian Painting, op. cit., 8, 10-11
61 Hughes, 'Introduction' in Recent Australian Painting, op. cit., 14
63 Robertson, 'Preface', in, Recent Australian Painting, op. cit., 11
64 Hughes, R, 'Introduction' in Recent Australian Painting, op. cit., 18-19
65 Ibid, 19
66 Ibid, 19-20
67 Ibid, 20
68 It wasn't until writing the commentary for Australian Painting Today in 1963, that Hughes openly dismissed the construct as being passe; 'Australians still tend to think of their art as the document of a battle between abstract and figurative, the former centred in Sydney, the latter in Melbourne. It is a greatly overrated conflict, and this exhibition shows that it's rather an illusory one... Despite the efforts of reactionary critics to set abstraction and figuration fighting like two cocks in a pit, the two not only coexist but modify one another...' Hughes suggests that both employ 'metamorphic imagery' which has led to 'a closing of the traditionally hallowed gap between abstraction and figuration in Australian painting'; Hughes, R, 'Introduction' in Australian Painting Today, QAG, Brisbane, 1963, 4-6; see also, Hughes, R, 'Abs and Figs for Export', Nation, No.131, 2 November 1963, 18
70 Thomas, D, 'Contemporary', in Antipodean Vision: Australian Painting- Colonial-Impressionist-Contemporary, op. cit., 21-27
71 Newton, E, 'Foreward' in Commonwealth Art Today, op. cit., 9
72 Greenaway, R, 'Australia' in Commonwealth Art Today, op. cit., 13
73 Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 312, 326
74 For this paper Alan McCulloch's weekly reviews for the Herald in Melbourne, from July 1959 to June 1963, and those for the Sydney Morning Herald from June 1959 to December 1960, were reviewed. Reviews for exhibitions by David Boyd, Robert Dickerson, and those held at the Rudy Kmon Gallery were also correlated.
75 See for example, Catalano, The Years of Hope, op. cit., 48-54
CHAPTER 5: DAVID BOYD: THE 'PAINTER' AS PAINTER
1960-1962

2 See McCulloch, 'How print-makers here measure up', op. cit., 27
3 See Bonython, K, Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture, Griffin, Adelaide, 1960, and most importantly, Smith, B, Australian Painting 1788-1960, Oxford, Melbourne, 1962. What is also interesting is that David Boyd's work in other media justified his inclusion in both Hood, K, Pottery (The Arts of Australia Series), Longmans, Melbourne, 1961, 12-13,30, and, Parr, L, Sculpture (The Arts of Australia Series), Longmans, Melbourne, 1961, 18
4 David Boyd was also included in other touring exhibitions, for example, Four Arts in Australia, Art Advisory Board and Department of External Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1962, which toured South-East Asia.
5 McCulloch continued to be highly critical of David Boyd's practice as a painter. See McCulloch, A, 'Looking on the dark side', Herald, 5 July 1961, 20; In reviewing the Italian Government Art Scholarship, McCulloch paid almost no attention to David Boyd's winning entry. Even after Boyd's successful reception in England, McCulloch continued to be harsh on the works returned for exhibition in Australia, see his comments concerning The Trial series in McCulloch, A, 'The Judiciary is under fire', Herald, 10 June 1964, 27
7 'Boyd's Pottery', Sydney Morning Herald, 18 November 1959, 2
8 McCulloch, 'How print-makers here measure up', op. cit., 20
9 ibid, 20
10 Hood, K, Pottery (The Arts in Australia Series), Longmans, Melbourne, 1961, 2
11 ibid, 4
13 ibid, 48
14 The first survey show, called Australian & New Zealand Pottery was organised by Kenneth Hood for the National Gallery of Victoria in 1963-1964. The exhibition also toured to New Zealand. There also appears a bias towards the stoneware aesthetic. Benko, The Art of David Boyd, op. cit. 188-193, provided a limited coverage of the Boyd's pottery. It wasn't until 1977 that a 'detailed' publication was released on the work of the Boyd's, Vader, J, The Pottery and Ceramics of David & Hermia Boyd, Matthews/Hutchinson, Sydney/Melbourne, 1977. The first exploration of the scope of ceramic practice begun by Merric Boyd and carried on by his children was, Chapter 3: A large clan of slightly eccentric habits, 50-71, in Timms, P, Australian Studio Pottery & China Painting, Oxford, Melbourne, 1996
15 Rushforth, P, 'Pottery in Australia', Art and Australia, Vol.3 No.3, December 1965, 192-197
16 ibid, 192
17 Philipp, F, 'Antipodeans Aweigh', Nation, Number 25, 29 August 1959,19; Shore, A, 'Charles Blackman Stands Alone', Age, 4 August 1959, 2
18 David Boyd exhibited works from his Explorer and Tasmanians series at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts Gallery in Adelaide in 1960. In 1961 the Tasmanians and early works from the Trial series were exhibited at the Johnstone Gallery in
Brisbane. It was not until 1964, with David Boyd based in London, that a large exhibition of works from the Trial series was seen in Melbourne (South Yarra Gallery), Sydney (Dominion Gallery), the Bonython Gallery in Adelaide and again at the Johnstone Gallery in Brisbane.

19 Benko, The Art of David Boyd, op. cit., 34
21 Smith, B, 'David Boyd in Adelaide', Nation, Number 46, 18 June 1960, 16-17. It is also interesting to compare this similarities between the claims made in this article and those found in the pages on David Boyd's work in Smith's Australian Painting 1788-1960, published two years later. See Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, Oxford, Melbourne, 1962, 324-326
22 ibid, 16
23 ibid, 17
24 ibid, 17
25 McCulloch, 'A history', op. cit., 23
27 ibid, 20
30 Four Arts in Australia which travelled to South-East Asia, included paintings, sculpture, prints and pottery. But at this time South-East Asia was still a relatively unimportant destination for the critical reception of contemporary Australian art.
33 Benko, The Art of David Boyd, op. cit., 220-22
35 For a range of cited reviews see Benko, The Art of David Boyd, op. cit., 48-54
38 As observed at the time by Lynn, E, 'In Our Image', Nation, No.109, 15 December 1962, 21
39 Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 325
40 Smith, David Boyd in Adelaide', op. cit., 16
41 Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 325
42 ibid, 325
43 ibid, 327; this argument was first forwarded by Hoff, U & Westbrook, E, 'Boyd and Brack', The Observer, Vol.1 No.22, 13 December 1958, 693
44 Smith, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 325-326
45 ibid, 328, In a review of the book, Eiwyn Lynn felt that Smith's claims in this respect were somewhat 'disproportionate' to the work. Hoff, U & Lynn, E, 'A History of Australian Painting', Meanjin, No.93, Vol.22 No.2, 1963, 233

3. Dickerson, J. Robert Dickerson-Against the Tide, Pandanus, Brisbane, 1994, 65
5. Ibid, 212
6. Dickerson quoted by Hetherington, ibid, 212
7. Ibid, 212
8. Ibid, 216
10. The following exhibitions were held at the Rudy Komon Gallery in the period 1959 to 1962. See Frolich, The First Gallery in Paddington, op. cit., 71-72

1959
1. Tom Roberts to John Molvig
2. 1960
4. Robert Dickerson
5. A Group of Melbourne Painters: Blackman, French, Pugh, Brack, Perceval, Williams
6. Sam Byrne and Gil Jamieson
7. First Anniversary Show

1961
8. Charles Blackman: The Artist in the Making
9. A Group of Brisbane Painters: Rigby, Siblery, Roggenkamp, Molvig Olley, Yeates
10. Clifton Pugh – Paintings
11. Hal Missingam tourist drawings
12. Picasso ceramics from the Vallauris Potteries
13. A Group of Melbourne Painters: Blackman, French, Hope, Jamieson, Laycock, Tanner, Williams
14. Second Anniversary Show

1962
15. Robert Dickerson
16. The Subterranean Imitation Realists: Mike Brown, Ross Crothall, Colin Lanceley
17. Jon Molvig- Eden Industrial series
18. Fred Williams – Oil paintings and watercolours
19. Andrew Sibley – Paintings and watercolours
20. Milton Moon – pottery
21. Third Anniversary Show

22. Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
In Komon's First Anniversary Show, works by all the Antipodeans, except David Boyd, were shown for sale:

Charles Blackman 'Suite No.5'-300 gns
Arthur Boyd 'Landscape'-250 gns
John Brack 'Two Bridesmaids'-150 gns
Bob Dickerson 'Second Round'-130 gns
John Perceval 'Farmhouse at sunset'-200 gns
Clifton Pugh 'Owl'-95 gns

See also, 'Great Variety in Komon Gallery', Sydney Morning Herald, 30 November 1960, 2

21 'Contemporary's Lack of Quality', Sydney Morning Herald, 8 March 1961, 2
22 'Artists explore nature's drama', Sydney Morning Herald, 1 June 1961, 2
23 Dickerson found an early advocate in John Reed; Reed, 'Bob Dickerson: Painter', op. cit., 15-17. While Alan McCulloch was always complimentary in his reviews of Dickerson's work; McCulloch, 'Walkabout for art's sake', op. cit., 21; McCulloch, "Escalator" in a class of its own, Herald, 18 June 1958, 27; McCulloch, 'Splendid in Isolation', op. cit.
24 Stern, 'Caliban from Outer Suburbia', op. cit., 340; 'Remarkable Paintings By Robert Dickerson', op. cit., 2. It was apparently this show that Dickerson first attracted Rudy Komon's attention. John Coburn introduced Dickerson to Jon Molvig, who in turn introduced Dickerson to Rudy Komon; Robert Dickerson interviewed by Barbara Blackman, November 1983, National Library of Australia Oral History Collection.
25 ibid, 5; Brack, J, 'From an interview with Rudy Komon', in Frolich, The First Gallery in Paddington, op. cit., 11
26 ibid, 26
27 Hughes, R, 'The Great Dickerson Loneliness', Nation, No.47, 2 July 1960, 17
28 ibid, 17
29 ibid, 17
30 ibid, 17
31 Hughes, R 'Mr Dickerson Relents', Nation, No.90, 24 March 1962, 20. As Dickerson also recollects, over time there was an implied demand upon him to paint 'more charming pictures'; Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
32 Dickerson, Robert Dickerson – Against the Tide, op. cit., 84; Dickerson interviewed by Blackman, op. cit.
33 For example, Komon lent, 'Children in Darlinghurst No.2' for Four Arts in Australia, and 'The Dressing Room' (1959) for Australian Painting Today in 1963-64. Komon also placed seminal paintings by Dickerson, for example, 'The Boy in the Street (The Man in the Street)' (1946), sold to the Art Advisory Board in 1970, now in the National Gallery of Australia; 'K.O.'d by Griffo (Straight Left by Griffo)' (1953), sold to the National Gallery of Australia in 1976; 'The Bank Clerk (The Bank Teller)' (1958) and 'The Late Shopper' (1958) both sold to the Holmes a Court Collection; source Rudy Komon Gallery Archives, Index Cards, National Library of Australia, MS 8327. For example, Dickerson continued to be represented in the annual Anniversary exhibitions; in the Third Anniversary Show with 'Figures', and the Fourth Anniversary Show with 'Boy in the Canefield'; Dickerson was also included in New Trends in Australian Art, the first show for 1965, with 'Paddington Children'; titles as per catalogues.
34 Thomas, L, 'Introduction', in Bonython, K, Modern Australian Painting & Sculpture, Griffin, Adelaide, 1960, 7
CONCLUSION

EPILOGUE

3 This is not to Robert Hughes, The Art of Australia, which in its original format was apparently completed in 1963, and initially published in 1965. The first edition was withdrawn from distribution so that only a small number of copies remained in circulation. The revised edition was published in 1970. For this reason The Art of Australia is more appropriately associated with the other titles published around 1970, when the revised text became widely available. See the 'Preface to the Second Edition' for further details, Hughes, R, The Art of Australia (Revised Edition), Penguin, Melbourne, 1970, 19-20
4 Smith, B, Australian Painting 1788-1960, op. cit., 331
5 ibid, 331
6 ibid, 332-333
7 Beilharz, P, Imagining the Antipodes, Cambridge, Melbourne, 1997, 146
Hughes begins by discussing the individual merits of the painters in isolation from the Antipodeans exhibition, and then discusses the misrepresentations of the Manifesto; Hughes, The Art of Australia, op. cit., 231-250

In The Art of Australia, rather than discussing Robert Dickerson alongside the eclectic scope of figurative painters working in Sydney, such as, Jeffrey Smart, Donald Friend, Jon Molvig, in Chapter 8: Figures and Images 1950-62, Robert Dickerson is included in Chapter 9: Myth and Personae 1947-62 along with the other Antipodeans. Regardless of the contradictions surrounding Robert Dickerson reception by critics in the early 1960s, Dickerson's association with the Antipodeans was the defining link between his individual practice and the broader field of Australian painting as recorded by both Smith and Hughes. Hughes, The Art of Australia, op. cit., 240-243

ibid, 246

ibid, 247

ibid, 248; Hughes discusses the elements of the phrase 'figured shape or symbol fashioned by the artist from his perceptions and imaginative experience' from the Manifesto, in an attempt to expose the ambiguities of the claims of the Antipodeans.

ibid, 294

ibid, 294

ibid, 307
LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1

Plate 2
Arthur Boyd
Coffee set 1948
Earthenware
Private collection

Plate 3
David & Hermia Boyd
Lidded bowl 1956 & coffee pot 1958
Earthenware
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria & private collection

Plate 4
David & Hermia Boyd
Bowl 1959
Earthenware
Collection of the Queensland Art Gallery

Plate 5
David & Hermia Boyd
Wine pot and goblets 1956
Earthenware
Unknown

Plate 6
Arthur Boyd
Reflected bride I (Bride reflected in a creek) 1958
Tempera, oil on composition board
Private collection

Plate 7
David Boyd
King Found 1957/58
Oil on board
Jack S Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Plate 8
Robert Dickerson
*The Boy in the Street (The Man in the Street)* 1949
Enamel and plaster on canvas and cardboard
Collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Plate 9
Robert Dickerson
*The Low White Wall* 1952
Enamel on Board
Collection of the Australian National University

Plate 10
Robert Dickerson
*K.O.'d by Griffo (Straight Left by Griffo)* 1953
Enamel on composition board
Collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Plate 11
Robert Dickerson
*The Wall* 1953
Enamel on hardboard
Collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales

Plate 12
Robert Dickerson
*The Tired Man* 1956
Enamel on hardboard
Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria

Plate 13
David Boyd
*The Emasculation of the Aboriginals* 1959
Oil on composition board
Collection of David & Hermia Boyd

Plate 14
David Boyd
*Truganini's Dream of Childhood* 1959
Oil on composition board
Collection of the National Gallery of Australia

Plate 15
Robert Dickerson
*The Bank Clerk (The Bank Teller)* 1958
Enamel on hardboard
The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth
Plate 16
Robert Dickerson
*The Escalator* 1959
Enamel on masonite
Collection of Lyn Williams, Melbourne

Plate 17
Robert Dickerson
*Wynyard Station* 1959
Enamel on masonite
Collection of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria

Plate 18
David Boyd
*The Offering: Truganini* 1972
Bronze
Collection of David & Hermia Boyd

Plate 19
David Boyd
*Monoliths* 1960
Oil on composition board
Collection of David & Hermia Boyd

Plate 20
Photograph of David Boyd from the catalogue for *Recent Australian Painting*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1961

Plate 21
David Boyd
*Truganini and the Sealer* 1959
Oil on composition board
Collection of David & Hermia Boyd

Plate 22
Photograph of Robert Dickerson from the catalogue for *Recent Australian Painting*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1961

Plate 23
Robert Dickerson
*Mother and Child* 1963
Enamel on masonite
Collection of the Art Gallery of south Australia
Plate 12
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