

TANJA RIESE

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**Printmaking Department
Canberra Institute of the Arts**

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Fig. 1

I can only make direct statements, only 'tell stories.' Whether or not the stories are 'true' is not the problem. The only question is whether what I tell is my fable, my truth. ¹

Carl Jung 1960

INTRODUCTION

This year I based my work on *the face*. It is a metaphor for my internal world, describing my personal conflicts and struggles. In exploring the idea of a continuous internal struggle I feel that I am not alone. I am discovering that my feelings of self doubt, my attempts to find *the self* and the difficulties encountered in this journey are experienced by many people. It is a journey that necessarily involves many conflicts, discoveries and doubts.

I know this to be *my truth* and I believe that there can be no end to learning in this matter.

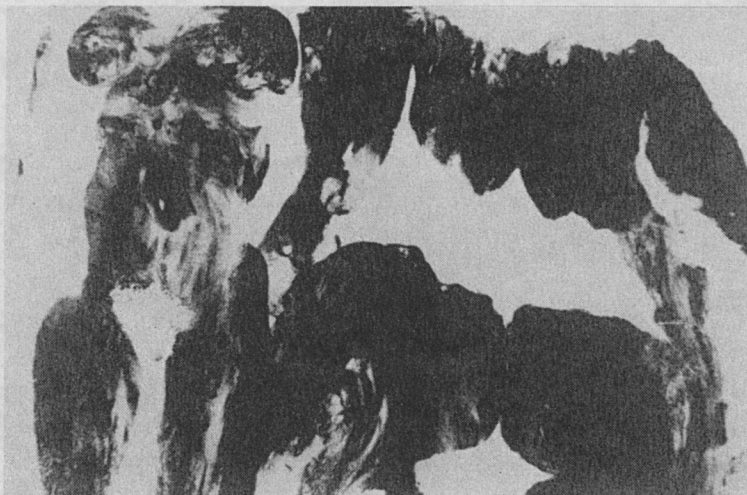


Fig. 2

*But yearning too has its ghosts. I painted such
ghosts. By no means for my pleasure, it was an
obligation.²*

Egon Schiele 1912

INFLUENCES ON MY WORK

i. Origins

In 1987 I completed the Art theory course in Psychology at Sydney College of the Arts. The 'psychology projects' that formed part of the course have since then become very important to my work. These projects were based on a theme of our own choice; a dream, an image or feeling about which we felt strongly. The idea was then developed visually, together with written documentation.

I took myself as a theme, concentrating on my feelings about, and my relationship to my own body. In the writing that accompanied this work I recorded my reactions to certain modes of representation and methods of working. I observed the degrees of nudity and detail revealed by either drawing or taking a direct impression from the body onto paper (fig. 2); identifying myself or creating anonymity by excluding the face and the effect on myself of hanging these life-size images on the wall or having them viewed by others.

It struck me that occasionally I rejected certain trains of thought, feeling somehow threatened by them and often found it difficult to continue with the work. I became curious about the things I disliked or avoided and the psychological motives for them. This experience has developed in me an interest in the unknown of the self; the other or dark side within myself.



Fig. 3

*Art never seems to make me peaceful or pure. I
always seem to be wrapped in the drama of
vulgarity.* ³

William de Kooning

ii. Artists

I am attracted to Artists who make visible the intensity of emotion; the painful, the grotesque as seen in the expressionist art of the twentieth century. In works such as The good Judges (1894) and Seven deadly sins (1902) ⁴ James Ensor reveals the hideous, unseemly qualities of man. The leering masks show physically what are normally the hidden motives; personal pretentiousness and greed become clearly visible.

Egon Schiele *joined in that collective probing of the psyche* ⁵ which took place in Vienna in the early twentieth century. Much of his work is an *exploration of voyeurism and the self.* ⁶ This concern became evident in his numerous self-portraits with their disturbing psychological intensity. I admire the work of Schiele for its unashamed realism in representing his anxiety and desires.

Max Beckmann is an Artist I am drawn to for the strange tension in his images. He said in 1938, *I am seeking the bridge which leads from the visible to the invisible, like the famous cabalist who once said 'if you wish to get hold of the invisible you must penetrate as deeply as possible into the visible'.* ⁷ I understand this to mean that Beckmann is depicting his emotional reality in the form of a more tangible visual reality which is also the vehicle and means by which he can reach the emotion.



Fig. 429



Fig. 530

*I know not if I am
an artist
nor do you!
I have a say, and say to you
what form does it take?
can you tell? ⁸*

Joy Hester 1940

The work of Joy Hester deals with the afflictions of her body and mind. It reads as a personal journey through dreams, relationships and fears. They are bold, emotional images without hesitation and it is their passionate honesty that I admire. These works contain a feeling of *inevitability*, of tragic emotion that needs to be seen. Joy Hester's drawings have encouraged me to be less restrained in my own work.

I have also been impressed by the paintings of Francis Bacon with their distorted bodies that seem to be agonized and tortured. In an interview with David Sylvester, Bacon discusses the *deeper levels of personality* which emerge when *allowing chance to work*. He says, *they came over without the brain interfering with the inevitability of an image. It seems to come straight out of what we choose to call the unconscious*⁹ This idea of allowing an image to come forward without altering it consciously is of interest to me.

Peter Booth makes clear his *private tensions* and *personal trauma*¹⁰ in nightmarish scenes peopled with hideous and deformed figures (fig. 4, 5). The faces are often mask-like, providing protection to individuals in a crowd who may then act without responsibility. These paintings speak to me of the darker side of human nature, where the crowd seems to become an anonymous entity made up of individual masks.

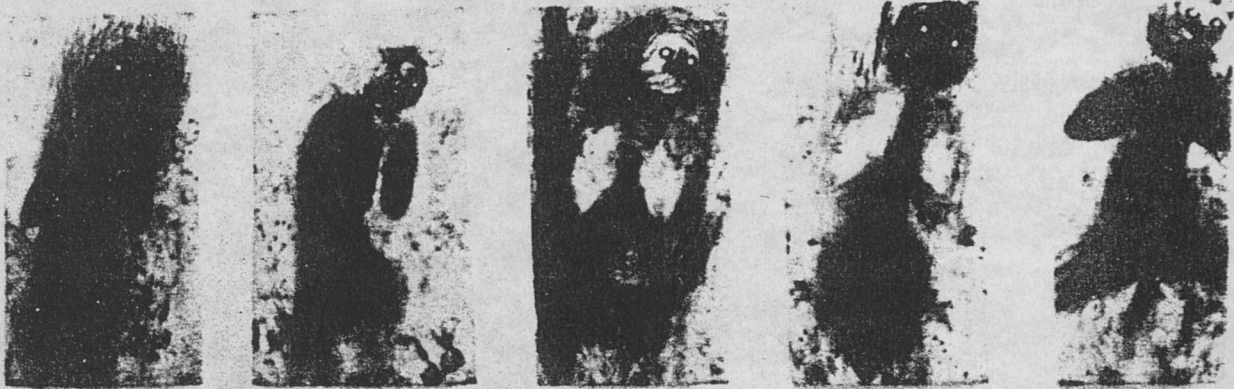


Fig. 6³¹

*...the scale seduces me into a loss of view and control.*¹¹
Miriam Cahn 1986

Miriam Cahn's series of charcoal drawings titled Das Wilde Lieben and Das Kassische Lieben 1983 (fig. 6) attracted my attention at the 1986 Sydney Biennale. The drawings were huge figures with a strong, dark presence and peering eyes. In the words of Annelie Pohlen her images are *traumatic, comparable to that incomprehensible dance of figures in a dream where location is as difficult to define as it is in Cahn's work.*¹²

In a lecture given at Sydney College of the Arts in May 1986,¹³ Cahn described her method of working. She begins to *read* the image by feeling her way with powdered charcoal over huge sheets of paper placed on the floor. The image is completed in one session without stopping or correcting, enabling her to avoid conscious control of the work. It can only be imagined or physically felt while in progress.

This method of working is of interest to me as it seems to grow from the innerself not the external world. Cahn allows the element of the unknown to emerge in the method she uses. I am attempting to work this way myself, using unexpected qualities which can be characteristic of printmaking processes, particularly drypoint, monoprint and lithography.



Fig. 7

*The inner man reveals all of himself by being himself. He is mirrored by what is visible.*¹⁴

Otto Dix

THE USE OF THE FACE

The face represents to me the part of a person that most intensely conveys their emotion. I have had, as long as I can remember, an immediate attraction to drawing the face. This year I decided to pursue this subject matter: to bring to light reasons for this attraction and to see what I could learn of myself from my own representations of the face.

The following idea developed: exploring myself through the self-portrait while attempting to remain constantly aware of my personal responses to the images. At times I used other people's faces as a starting point and attempted to treat them as my own image. Since my interest did not lie in creating a likeness or in the superficial appearance of the face but rather in the emotion that it carried and concealed I thought that this could work. However these images were for the most part, meaningless to me (fig. 12).

I found that the emotional involvement in drawing my own image was very strong and that this gave the work a greater intensity. I aimed to know more about my own emotions. My intention was to move inwards and the face was a method by which this could be achieved.



Fig. 8

*Unconscious impulses make man seek and find
what he thinks comes to him by chance.* ¹⁵

Walter Sorrell

The face in our culture is what we use to present ourselves to the outside world and is also the primary focus for expressing and reading emotions. Of the senses, sight is by far the most dominant in our society. We look from our faces into other faces: it is that with which we see and are seen.

I am trying to look through the eyes in both directions - they are a window to the inside and the outside. I am looking at myself and discovering the face I normally do not show to myself, and must then rework the personal myth that I have carefully developed over the years.

The face functions both to reveal and conceal the emotions. My intention was to look through the mask to what lay behind, but found, instead, at times that I was being confronted by it. The mask protects the innerself but may also stifle it. To hide behind the mask, in the words of Soren Kierkegaard is to condemn oneself to a life of *half obscurity*.¹⁶

As it is my face, or a face in my imagination that is the base of most of the images, I feel it would be too contrived if I were to consciously try and show in my facial expression what I feel, then to interpret these expressions. Rather, I endeavoured not to show any specific or premeditated expression when I drew from myself. I have found that the expression usually develops in the image through a distortion of the face (fig. 15) or through the tones and lines of the work itself (fig. 1, 14). It is intended not as a literal interpretation of facial expression but a glimpse of the inner emotions.



Fig. 9

*...I try to express through painting, a function different
from poetry and music but, for me, a predestined
necessity...¹⁷*

Max Beckmann

WORK PROCESS AND TECHNIQUE

I used several techniques to find that which suited my method of working best. Those that I eventually found most useful were direct physical techniques, either scratching into an etching plate or into a lithographic surface. These techniques were most successful for me, I think, because the process did not interfere with or delay the realisation of ideas. These processes allowed intuitive ideas to emerge leaving the way open for results that were not entirely expected.

Writing accompanied the work in the form of a diary. This diary reads as a record of my emotions throughout the year and contains many questions and doubts. I wrote when I felt compelled to write; when I was frustrated with the work or felt I had come to a halt in my ideas. I do not regard this diary as part of the work to be presented, rather, it is a personal document where I consult myself and consider my position both personally and in the work. The writing provided me with clues for new methods of approach. It was here that I attempted to sort my ideas and observe the directions of the work. Reading the diary through now shows that I mainly wrote down when the work was going badly or when I was dissatisfied with the results. There seemed to be no urgent need to write when things were going well.

I used the following techniques of woodcut, monoprint, lithography and etching roughly in that sequence although they often overlapped. In some months for example, the work may have been predominantly lithographs but I had begun some etchings or may have been reworking a group of earlier monoprints at the same time. I will therefore discuss these techniques chronologically in order of their main emphasis.



Fig. 10

*Our conscious life simply rests on a sea, a vast sea
of an inner world of which we know very little.*¹⁸

Peter O'Connor 1985

i. Woodcuts

The woodcuts are the beginning of the inward movement in my work. The two series of woodcuts show the facade which is impenetrable and reflective like a shield. The first was based on a drawing of another person and the second was cut from my own image directly onto the block (fig. 10). I find that the second image has a much greater presence and intensity.

The woodcuts are roughly cut and abstracted like carvings or masks and represent a stage of looking without being able to see beyond the face itself. They are the extreme outside of the face that discourages intimacy. Although it is a fairly direct way of working, woodcut can be time consuming and I found that I became overly concerned with the technique rather than the image.

My feeling about these images is that they seem guarded and remote, reflecting my own apprehension at the time.



Fig. 11

*I think, perhaps, that despair is more helpful,
because out of despair you may find yourself
making the image in a more radical way by taking
greater risks.* ¹⁹

Francis Bacon

ii. Monoprints

The series of monoprints were made using photographs, mostly of other people (fig. 11, 15). I began using the photograph because I wanted to try and draw facial expressions that a model could not hold. My idea was that even though they were the faces of other people they would be representative of myself as I added to the image my own interpretation. It did not work that way however, as after some time I began to see them merely as flat images. Roland Barthes writes that, *...the photograph is the advent of myself as other: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity.*²⁰ Without a sense of identity the face eventually lost its meaning for me.

I felt I was being seduced by the look of the image. I liked the appearance of these monoprints and therefore found it difficult to move on and develop in a more exploratory manner. I realised that a visually pleasing result often acted as a distraction for me as I was less likely to question myself and inclined to continue indefinitely in the same manner. As Francis Bacon stated about his painting, *I think that, quite possibly, when things are going badly you will be freer...and you do it with a greater abandon than if things have been working for you.*²¹



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

*...that faint uneasiness which seizes me when I
look at 'myself' on a piece of paper.'*²²

Roland Barthes on Photography 1984

iii. Lithographs

Many of the lithographs, which were begun shortly after the monoprints, also originated from photographs. Here, initially, I had similar results to the monoprints - a too literal representation. The lithographic process however, enabled me to manipulate the images by alternatively darkening areas or scratching into the stone to eliminate tone (fig. 12, 13). The original faces then underwent a metamorphosis from portraits into a visual representation of subconscious thoughts and fears.

Through the photograph the face seemed even more solidly present than in life, as it was fixed in space and time with a constant expression. I found I had to move away from the physical reality of the face, to avoid being blocked by the mask. Following the initial series of lithographs I abandoned the use of the photograph and continued to draw either from life or from memory.



Fig. 14

Rather than setting out to paint something I begin painting and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself, or suggest itself under my brush...the first stage is free, unconscious.²³

Joan Miro

iv. Etchings

In July I began with a series of small etchings which were like visual notations; an immediate response to a thought or feeling (fig. 3). They were primarily drypoint and occasionally I worked directly into hardground. The size of these etchings was significant for me as I was able to develop my ideas in a short time and I tended to feel less inhibited working on a small scale, enabling more freedom of expression.

The etchings were, for the most part, spontaneously made with as little 'thinking' about the image as possible. Generally they did not come from a pre-existing conscious mental image, rather they seemed to 'happen' or emerge from myself onto the plate. Etching provides the advantage of working quickly, making immediate responses possible. There is also the element of the unknown as mentioned previously, whereby the image is never fully visible until it is inked and printed.

Often I would use the etching plate as a mirror, scraping straight into the surface the lines that I saw reflected. This seemed to create an immediate tension, firstly through holding the scribe so close to the face and secondly through the process of physically scratching into a reflected image of myself. In some of the later etchings I have experimented with the techniques of aquatint (fig. 7,8,18) and mezzotint (fig. 1). In these processes I worked from black to white rather than the reverse which is more common in etching. This method of working appealed to me particularly because of the characteristic deep blacks and soft quality of the tones, giving the image a mysterious quality.



Fig. 15

The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly. ²⁴

Carl Jung.

PSYCHOLOGY AND MEANING

In my process of working, as previously described I was willing to let myself be led by ideas as they were perceived through the work, letting the innerself reveal itself. The images that came out of this manner of working show an increasing degree of anxiety and frustration. Part of me was trying to be objective, honest and learn about myself, while another part was resisting this strongly. This caused considerable tension throughout the year as I felt a constant , compelling resistance from a part of myself to what I was doing.

The work describes a growing awareness of the existence of opposing 'forces' within myself and the conflict between these (fig. 15, 16, 17). Their presence is felt in the form of mutually contradictory thoughts or desires; the desire to look but not to see. The work deals with my personal struggle of opposites - the objective and subjective selves. The fear of the unknown is matched by the attraction to it. My work has become an attempt to present aspects of this struggle visually.

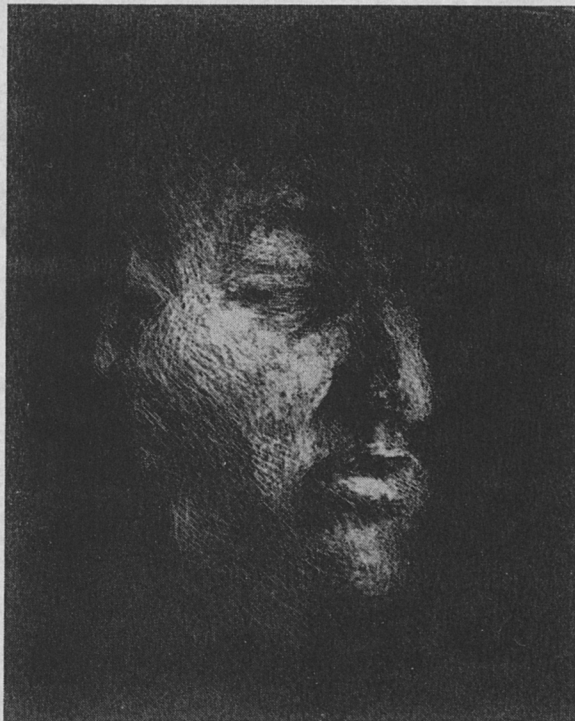


Fig. 16

Jung on 'self'

*It is not only the centre but the whole
circumference which embraces both consciousness
and unconsciousness; it is the centre of this
totality. ²⁵*

Carl Jung

I have developed over the years, a growing interest in the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. Certain ideas expressed by Jung have become increasingly meaningful to me and my work. Jung writes, *the self is our life's goal, for it is the completest expression of that fateful combination we call individuality.*²⁶

Jung and his theories are concerned primarily with the *reconciliation of opposites* within oneself. This is achieved through the process of *individuation* which may be described as bringing into consciousness the unconscious aspects of our being. According to Jung, *self* can only be achieved through the knowledge of these parts and acceptance of them. This involves coming to terms with parts of the psyche that have been rejected and pushed into the subconscious; the *shadow figures* of our personality. In the words of Jung: *Consciousness and unconsciousness do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and rejected by the other.*²⁷

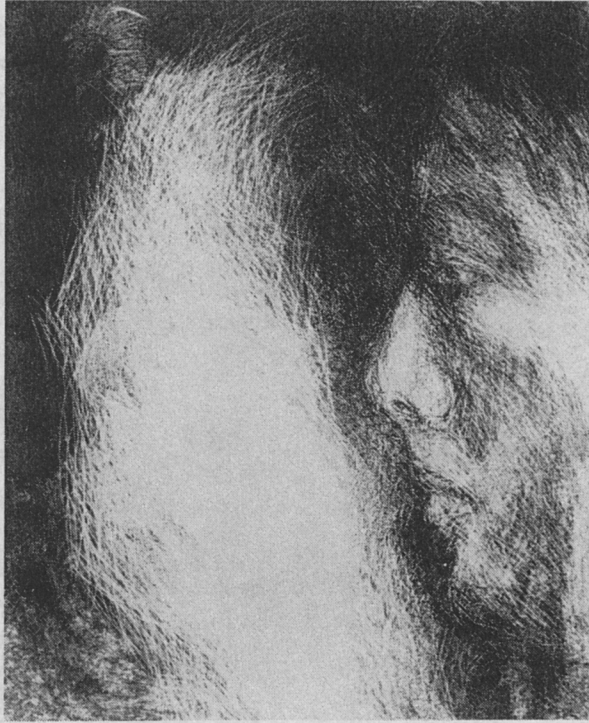


Fig. 17

To become oneself is man's true vocation.

Soren Kierkegaard²⁸

My subconscious, as I perceive it, is like an unknown store of knowledge and feeling. I sense it exists but have no words to define it or its contents. Occasionally, out of the obscurity, something begins to emerge; thoughts that my logic does not recognise; impulses and desires contradictory to my conscious will.

While making the work, I intended to allow my subconscious to come forward. I tried to do this by working quickly, spontaneously and not giving the conscious thought processes the chance to interfere. Sometimes this tended to have the reverse effect as I was consciously trying to do these things. I was not in a relaxed state and therefore not receptive to the messages of the subconscious.

I have consistently tried to avoid 'working out' or composing the images beforehand. This however, created feelings of anxiety and insecurity at times. I felt like I was walking into pitch darkness and often hesitated in my work or stopped altogether, and was forced to use another approach.



Fig. 18

CONCLUSION

This year's work was not intended to resolve internal conflicts, but to reveal them. As the works are not finite statements with a clear explanation I accept that they may be seen in several ways. To me the works define an evolving process - an unfolding experience. I see them as a record of my thoughts and feelings this year: anxiety and uncertainty; a struggle between my doubting self and that part of me that tells me to choose and follow a definite direction. The works speak of both the temptation to remain safe and deal with the impersonal or to question my feelings and ideas and expand my personal boundaries.

My training through childhood has been towards the rational experience making it difficult to tune into the subjective world. Therefore, my seemingly oblique way of working, of letting myself be led by ideas, is designed to switch off that conscious screening of thoughts which I now consider to be too directive. This would hopefully let the subconscious come to the fore and so reveal the inner world that I feel drawn towards and wish to explore. I see the work as a starting point of a long process of learning and I have only begun to scratch the surface.

CHRONOLOGY OF WORK DURING 1988

1. untitled monoprint (face with downcast eyes) 24.0 x 20.0, black ink on Arches 88
2. untitled monoprint (face looking outwards) 53.2 x 43.2, black ink on Bemboka paper
3. untitled collage (assembled face) 53.2 x 43.2, mixed media on Bemboka paper
4. untitled monoprint (face surrounded by black shadow) 47.0 x 41.0, ink on Arches 88
5. untitled lithograph (head and shoulders looking outwards) 57.5 x 45.0, edition of 5 on Japanese paper
6. untitled lithograph (face looking outwards) 12.7 x 9.3, edition of 9 on grey BFK Rives
7. untitled lithograph (profile with white shadow) 24.3 x 20.0, on grey BFK Rives
8. suspicion lithograph (double face) 25.5 x 20.3, edition of 4 on grey BFK Rives
9. untitled lithograph (head with black shadow, mouth open) 26.0 x 20.0, on grey BFK Rives
10. untitled drawing (profile) 14.2 x 11.0, black pencil and crayon on grey BFK Rives
11. untitled drawing (gazing face) 14.2 x 11.0, black pencil and crayon on Stonehenge
12. untitled drawing (shouting face, eyes closed) 21.0 x 18.2, black ink and pencil on grey BFK Rives
13. untitled drawing (leaning figure) 19.0 x 26.0, watercolour and black pencil on Arches Aquarelle
14. untitled drawing (two heads, one whispering) 19.0 x 26.0, watercolour and black pencil on Arches Aquarelle
15. untitled drypoint (profile looking down) 5.0 x 4.8, edition of 10 on Hahnemuhle
16. embrace aquatint 7.0 x 5.0, edition of 20 on grey BFK Rives
17. untitled colour drypoint (face stretched back) 7.0 x 5.0, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives
18. untitled drypoint (hand over one eye) 7.0 x 5.0, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives
19. untitled drypoint (gazing face) 7.0 x 5.0, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives
20. untitled aquatint (face with two masks) 10.2 x 10.0, edition of 10 on Hahnemuhle
21. untitled aquatint (floating mask) 10.2 x 10.0, edition of 20 on Hahnemuhle
22. untitled colour drypoint (head turned away) 12.7 x 11.5, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives

23. untitled colour drypoint (shouting face, eyes closed) 13.5 x 10.5, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives
24. untitled colour drypoint (ghostly face) 10.3 x 16.1, edition of 10 on grey BFK Rives
25. untitled mezzotint (gazing face) 10.5 x 6.0, edition of 10 on Hahnemuhle
26. untitled drypoint (profile with second face) 8.7 x 7.2, edition of 10 on Hahnemuhle

N.B. This list of works is in approximate chronological order. As techniques often overlapped and many images were resumed and editioned at a later date I have grouped the works chronologically within the techniques. All sizes are in centimetres referring to image size, height before width.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|
| 1. | untitled, mezzotint, 1988 | 10.4 x 5.9 |
| 2. | <u>Bodyprint</u> in Derivan Kindergarten Brush and fingerprint on paper | Lifesize |
| 3. | untitled, drypoint, 1988 | 7.0 x 5.0 |
| 4. | Peter Booth drawing 1983 (face) gouache and paste | 14.8 x 6.7 |
| 5. | Peter Booth drawing 1981 (Landscape with crowd, large beast and flying figures) gouache, crayon ink | 72.0 x 102.6 |
| 6. | Miriam Cahn <u>Das Klassische Lieben</u> 1983 charcoal on paper | Lifesize |
| 7. | untitled, aquatint, 1988 | 10.0 x 10.0 |
| 8. | untitled, aquatint, 1988 | 10.0 x 10.0 |
| 9. | untitled lithograph, 1988 | 52.5 x 38.5 |
| 10. | untitled woodblock with monoprint and oilstick, 1988 | 45.5 x 45.5 |
| 11. | untitled, monoprint on Bemboka paper, 1988 | 53.0 x 43.0 |
| 12. | untitled, lithograph, fourth state, 1988 | 26.0 x 19.9 |
| 13. | untitled, lithograph, fifth state, 1988 | 26.0 x 19.9 |
| 14. | untitled, drypoint, 1988 | 10.2 x 15.9 |
| 15. | untitled, monoprint with collage and ink, 1988 | 53.0 x 43.0 |
| 16. | <u>Suspicion</u> , lithograph, 1988, third state | 25.5 x 20.5 |
| 17. | untitled, lithograph, 1988, fourth state | 24.3 x 19.9 |
| 18. | untitled, aquatint, 1988 | 7.0 x 5.0 |
| | cover: untitled, drawing, ink on fabrics, 1987 | 28.8 x 19.5 |

NOTES

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6. Alessandra Comini, Op. cit., p.20.
7. From the Southern cross: a view of world art c.1940-1988, Australian Biennale 1988, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, 1988, p.72.
8. Janine Burke, Joy Hester, Richmond, Victoria, 1983, p.31.
9. Australian Biennale, Op.cit., p.66.
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