



# Introduction

The **parts** exhibition, located in the Centre Court and Print Room of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, is a selection from the Gallery's Permanent Collection.

This exhibition brings together drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures that are made up of a number of individual pieces. The fourteen represented artists have chosen a modular format for a wide variety of reasons, but in every case the completed artwork is much more than merely a sum of its parts.

This pamphlet outlines the five major themes of the exhibition.

Resource sheets are provided to give further information about each artists work. They are located in a holder on the table in the Centre Court. Please feel free to sit and read them or take a set with you during your visit to the exhibition.

## Key to Map on Cover

- Ⓐ Centre Court
- Ⓑ Print Room
- Ⓒ Resource Sheets
- ⊗ You are here

*parts*

## Bodies

- ① **Christine Webster**, *Blood*, 1992
- ② **Richard Reddaway**, *Barrel Vault*, 1988
- ③ **Grant Takle**, *Incognito in the Garden*, 1991

These three very different works all take the human body as their theme. In Christine Webster's *Blood*, the nude body is presented as both sacred and profane. Used symbolically, the colour red brings with it the religious associations of martyrdom and redemption, but also alludes to violence and sexuality. In contrast, the repeated male back in Richard Reddaway's *Barrel Vault* suggests what can be achieved when people work together. The arch's 'weight' is supported equally across eight angled backs, offering a well-balanced argument for co-operation. The human spine becomes a metaphor for both stability and collapse in Grant Takle's work, which reveals how systems, both physical and social, are only as strong as their weakest link.



## *parts* Systems

- 4 **Richard Killeen**, *Black Insects, Red Primitives*, 1980
- 5 **Julia Morison**, *Amalgame 48*, 1992
- 6 **Ruth Watson**, *Take Heart*, 1999

Advancing steadily over the gallery entrance, Richard Killeen's stylised insects and enigmatic primitives evade our attempts at categorisation, their potential for being re-arranged with every installation suggesting the benefits of interpretations that make room for many voices. A mystical cabinet melds science and magic to bring together a variety of diverse images in Julia Morison's *Amalgame 48*. Celebrating the tension between its two parts, exterior and interior, it also exists as a unique, single unit of a hundred-piece set. In *Take Heart*, Ruth Watson has flattened or crumpled pieces of gold chocolate wrappers to construct a heart-shaped map that considers exploration and ownership, in both romantic, and geographic, senses.

## *parts* Time

- 7 **Gail Wright**, *First Quarter, Full Moon, Last Quarter, New Moon*, 1980
- 8 **Michael Shepherd**, *Dead Letter Mail*, 1995

A modular format can allow the artist to express a sense of sequence or chronology. In Gail Wright's work, the waxing and waning moon becomes an analogy for other cycles, both physical and emotional. She uses a variety of surfaces and application techniques to suggest both the passing of time and the changing stages of a relationship. A poignant medley of 'dead' letters illustrates Michael Shepherd's poignant attempts to contact and advise his past self, the seemingly official stamps emphasising the hopelessness of ever reaching this destination.

## *parts* Teasing the Eye

- 9 **Ray Thorburn**, *Modular 3, Series 2*, 1970
- 10 **Michael Eaton**, *Set 2 No. 9*, 1975

Ray Thorburn and Michael Eaton have both drawn on the Op(tical) art style of the 1960s, using line and colour to create the illusion of depth and movement on a two-dimensional canvas. Thorburn's mesmerising combinations of tone and pattern explore the optical possibilities of repetition and subtle variation, while Eaton seems to bend and fold the canvas, challenging the conventional limitations of a flat painted surface.

- 11 **Bronwyn Taylor**, *Mother Confronts Vanity Fair*, 1989
- 12 **Rosemary Johnson**, *Landscape*, 1969
- 13 **Imants Tillers**, *The Oracle Speaks: Take One Step*, 1990
- 14 **Colin McCahon**, *Northland Panels*, 1959

For some artists, the land yields up much more than mere location. A selection of bronze objects are presented as though they are the results of some strange archaeological dig in *Mother Confronts Vanity Fair*. By placing these objects together on a table Bronwyn Taylor suggests a hidden logic to their grouping, prompting viewers to construct a narrative that will account for such a compilation. Rosemary Johnson's three cast bronze pieces reveal a similar interest in deconstruction, as she 'unpacks' a landscape into its fundamental elements of surface, cavity and mass.

The multiple tiles of Imants Tillers' painting use artistic 'quotations' to join together the Northern and Southern hemispheres, alluding to the piecing together of a creative and cultural identity from a variety of influences. He questions the validity of an unbroken line of artistic descent, suggesting fragmented, and sometimes polarised, sources of inheritance. In contrast, the simple and evocative fragments of Colin McCahon's *Northland Panels* reveal the power of memory to trigger emotions, sections of a remembered vista vividly expressing the artist's longing for other moments and places.



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