

THORNTON WALKER

Despite the diversity of Thornton Walker's subject matter and technique, his interest in the dynamics of composition, perspective and spatial depth remains constant. While maintaining a focus on formal painterly concerns, Thornton incorporates subject matter recalled from travel, personal memories and sometimes dreams, conferring an ethereal, meditative quality to his work. Thornton's paintings, on both paper and canvas, explore both landscape and figurative images that allude to a hidden narrative. Each painting is overwhelmingly beautiful yet mysterious and still. Thornton uses a technique of mixing oil paint with different alkyd mediums to create a very thin paint, with virtually no viscosity, allowing a painterly effect that is both fluid and unpredictable. As well as oil paintings, his practice includes printmaking, pastels and pen and ink. He also regularly sets aside time to paint still life watercolours as a way of 'keeping his eye in,' producing non formulaic paintings that continues to surprise him. Of his practice in general he says "I want to convey not a feeling of stillness but stillness itself, a reality removed from 'normality', an aspiration to a way of simply being and observing minus the baggage." As ever, his impressive and powerful canvases allow the viewers to immerse themselves in his extraordinary imagery. Demonstrating a masterful and sensitive handling of surfaces, Thornton's works enchant us with their combination of unique material and spiritual qualities.

Thornton Walker studied printmaking at the Prahran College of Advanced Education and Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. After graduating in 1977, he travelled for eight years throughout Europe and the United States and later undertook studio residencies in Spain and Malaysia. With over sixty solo exhibitions to his name, he is now recognised as one of Australia's leading figurative tonal painters. His work is represented in collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, QUT Art Museum, Parliament House, British Museum and the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art (Japan).

BIOGRAPHY

- 1953 Born, New Zealand
- 1965 Arrived in Australia
- 1974-76 Diploma of Art (Printmaking), Prahran College of Advanced Education
- 1977 Commenced Post Graduate Diploma (Printmaking), Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
- 1977-85 Lived and worked in Europe and USA
- 1994 Residency, Barcelona, Spain (Australia Council)
- 1997 Residency, Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia
- 2007 Printmaking fellowship, Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
- 2012 Residency, Hotel Panaga, Malaysia
- 2016 Residency, Poets and Painters, The Big Punchbowl Reserve, Tasmania

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 "Pictures from an imaginary world", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2022 "The heron and the cat in the bath", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- "The rising moon and other contemplations", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2020 "Studies in solitude", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2019 "The breaking wave", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- "The raked sea", Bett Gallery, Hobart
- 2018 "The sea and the folded cloth", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2016 Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- "Through the trees", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2015 "Sea, snow and other matters", Bett Gallery, Hobart
- Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2014 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2013 Heiser Gallery, Brisbane
- Scott Livesey Gallery, Melbourne
- 2012 Bett Gallery, Hobart
- Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
- Hotel Penaga, Penang, Malaysia
- 2011 "The stillness in movement", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- Scott Livesey Gallery, Melbourne
- 2010 Dallas Art Fair, San Francisco, USA, (Dolby Chadwick Gallery)
- Bett Gallery, Hobart
- 2009 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- Heiser Gallery, Brisbane
- 2008 Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney

- 2007 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Heiser Gallery, Brisbane
- 2006 'Watercolours', Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2005 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 2004 Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney
"La flûte de Pan", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- 2003 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 2002 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Christine Abrahams Gallery at Mary Place Gallery, Sydney
- 2001 Milford Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 2000 Christine Abrahams Gallery at Mary Place Gallery, Sydney
- 1999 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 1998 Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 1997 Rimbun Dahan Residency, Kuang, Malaysia
Philip Bacon Gallery, Brisbane
- 1996 Beaver Galleries, Canberra
Philip Bacon Gallery, Brisbane
- 1995 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
- 1994 Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
- 1993 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
- 1992 Perth Galleries, Perth
Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
- 1991 Garry Anderson Gallery, Sydney
- 1990 "Thornton Walker: Recent Paintings", Deutscher Fine Art, Melbourne
Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
- 1989 "Recent Paintings", Cafe Maximus, Melbourne
Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
- 1987 "Vital Functions and Mythography", United Artists Gallery, Melbourne
- 1986 United Artists Gallery, Melbourne
- 1984 Leveson Street Gallery, Melbourne
- 1982 Paul Craft Gallery, Melbourne
- 1980 Drummond Art Gallery, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 King's School Art Show, The King's School, Sydney
'Off the Wall' Summer Group Show, Australian Galleries, Sydney
- 2019 Hadley's Art Prize, Hobart
"Paper walls", Glen Eira City Council Gallery, Melbourne
"papermade", Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 2017 Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Sydney (Beaver Galleries)
"Small works", Tussock Gallery, Point Lonsdale, Vic
"Poets and painters", Bett Gallery, Hobart
"Poets and painters", Moonah Arts Centre, Hobart
- 2016 "Small works", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
"Impressions", Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
- 2014 Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
- 2013 Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Sydney (Beaver Galleries)
- 2012 "Small works", Beaver Galleries, Canberra
Australian Print workshop, Melbourne
- 2011 "Home and Away", Prints from the Australian Print Workshop, Embassy of Australia, Washington, USA
- 2010 Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan

- Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls, NSW
Paul Guest Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery
Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
Dallas Art Fair, USA (Dolby Chadwick Gallery)
2009 "The Still Life", Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Qld
"Here, Now", Mossgreen Gallery, Melbourne
2007 Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Redcliffe Art Prize, Redcliffe Art Gallery, Qld
2006 Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
2004 Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Christine Abrahams Gallery)
Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
2003 "Changing Surfaces", Shepparton Art Gallery, Vic
2002 Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Christine Abrahams Gallery)
2000 Melbourne Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (Christine Abrahams Gallery)
1999 "Important works on Paper", Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
1998 Sixth Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
"Important works on Paper", Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
1997 Contemporary Art Fair, Canberra (Beaver Galleries)
"Mulch and Metaphor: the garden in contemporary art", Mornington Peninsula Regional Art Gallery, Vic
1996 Fifth Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne (Beaver Galleries)
"Still Life", Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
Gallery Two, Launceston, Tas
"Food in Art", Mornington Peninsula Regional Art Gallery, Vic
1995 "Blake Prize National Touring Exhibition", Australia
"Works on Paper - A Selection", Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
"Herald Sun Art Prize Exhibition", Melbourne
1994 "Works on Paper", Rex Irwin Art Dealer, Sydney
Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair
"Art Asia", Hong Kong
1993 "Works on Paper", Rex Irwin, Sydney
"Art Asia", Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
1992 Melbourne International Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne
"Works on Paper", Rex Irwin, Sydney
1991 "Recent Australian Painting", Deutscher Gallery, Melbourne
1988 "St Kilda One", Linden Gallery, Melbourne
"100 x 100 Print Exhibition", Arden Street Gallery
"Fifty Fine Artists", Bi-centennial Exhibition, Melbourne
"A New Generation 1983 -1988: The Philip Morris Arts Grant Purchases", National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
1987 Moët and Chandon Australian Art Foundation Touring Exhibition, Australian State Galleries
"United Artists at Mori", Mori Gallery, Sydney
"Art Now - Painting in the Eighties", Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
1986 "A First Look: The Philip Morris Arts Grant Purchases", National Gallery of Australia at the ANU Drill Hall, Canberra
"Melbourne Painters", Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra
1985 St Kilda Acquisitive Exhibition, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
1984 St Kilda Acquisitive Exhibition, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
1982 St Kilda Acquisitive Exhibition, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
1976 Travelling Exhibition: Australian Prints to France, Print Council of Australia
Pahran College of Advanced Education Graduate Exhibition

AWARDS

- 2020 Finalist, King's School Art Prize, Sydney
2019 Finalist, Hadley's Art Prize, Hobart
2017 Finalist, Eutick Memorial Still Life Award
2016 'The Art Vault' studio residency, Mildura, Vic
Punchbowl Poets and painters retreat & residency, Tas
Climarte poster commission
2012 Studio residency, Hotel Penaga, Penang, Malaysia
2010 Finalist, Paul Guest Art Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery

- Finalist, Kedumba Drawing Prize
2007 Printmaking Fellowship, Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
2006 Master class in printmaking, Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
1997 Studio Residency, RimbunDahan, Malaysia
1994 Ansett Drawing Prize, Australia
Australia Council Studio Residency, Barcelona, Spain

PUBLICATIONS

- 2022 "Thornton Walker has found a spiritual pathway through the intrusion of lockdown", Sasha Grishin, www.canberratimes.com.au, 27 October
2020 "Paintings that are meditative, understated and powerful", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 26 October
2017 "Punchbowl poets and painters book", Bamba Press
2016 "Through the trees", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 13 May
2015 "Meditations on the uncanny", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 6 August
"Thornton Walker"(book), essays by Professor Sasha Grishin, Dr Patrick Hutchings & Guy Abrahams, *Melbourne Books*
2014 "Art of enigma", Peter Haynes, *Canberra Times*, 30 October
2012 "Walker's works show darker side of exotic lands", *The Mercury*, 17 November
"Vintage Chinese Photos Inspire Exhibition", Elizabeth Lord, *The Mercury*, 9 November
2011 "The framing of dreams", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 2 April
"Stillness is the Move: Frozen Frames in Thornton Walker", Lesley Chow, artinfo.com.au
'What now", Interview, Sasha Grishin, *Australian Art Collector* no. 55, Jan - March
2010 "Zen in a teacup", Annemarie Lopez, *Australian Art Review*, May - July
2009 "Challenging path flows in rewards", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 12 May
2007 "Meditations on eternity", Sasha Grishin, *The Canberra Times*, 15 May
"Of Possibility and Paradox", Patrick Hutchings, *The Age*, 15 September
"No Logo, Just a Mystery to Bowl US Over", Jeff Makin, *Herald Sun*, 24 September
"Mood Painting", Sasha Grishin, *Australian Art Collector* no. 42, October - December
2006 "Critic's Choice", Jeff Makin, *Herald Sun*, 10 April
2005 "Little bowls for the soul", Jeff Makin, *Herald Sun*, 18 July
2004 "Creating dream-like space for meditation", Sonia Barron, *Canberra Times*, 15 November
2001 "In Sync with Simplicity of Bowls", TJ McNamara, *NZ Herald*, 26 November
1999 "Bowl a personal trademark", Sonia Barron, *Canberra Times*, 8 May
1998 "A residency in Malaysia inspires new landscapes", Kate Herbert, *Melbourne Times*, April
"In the frame", Jeff Makin, *Herald Sun*, 18 May
"Art holds key to landscape", Peter Timms, *The Age*, 17 June
"The year in review", Peter Timms, *The Age*, 30 December
1997 "Haunted by melancholic images", Sam Christudas, *Sunday Star*, Malaysia, 14 December
"When institution meets serendipity", Sue Smith, *Courier Mail*, May
"Zen pal", Phil Brown, *Brisbane News*, May
Catalogue - *RimbunDahan Residency*, text by Guy Abrahams
"Strong and Contemplative", Leone Stanford, *Brisbane Review*, May
1996 "Mood painting with a sense of enigma", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 18 May
"Maker of sonnets in paint", Helen Musa, *Canberra Times*, 26 May
"Residential coup", Zeldia Cawthorne, *Herald Sun*, 28 December
1995 "A local talent bowls 'em over", Gerard Whateley, *Herald Sun*, 26 September
"Melbourne Art", Robert Rooney, *The Australian*, 15 September
1994 *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Art*, A & S McCulloch, Allen & Unwin NSW, p733
1992 Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 20 May
1991 "Children of the cosmos", Elwyn Lynn, *The Australian*, 14 April
1990 "Reserves of precious virtue", Sasha Grishin, *Canberra Times*, 14 November
1988 *A New Generation 1983-1988: The Philip Morris Arts Grant*, Australian National Gallery exhibition catalogue
"Flash and feisty", Peter Ward, *The Weekend Australian*, 11-12 June
"Taking a risk on art", Joanna Mendelssohn, *The Bulletin*, 14 June
"Walker heightens our experience of the real", Sonia Barron, *Canberra Times*, 20 June
1987 "Exhibition Commentary", *Art and Australia*, Vol 25, No 1
Sasha Grishin, *The Canberra Times*, 20 September
Moët and Chandon Catalogue '87
1986 Gary Catalano, *The Age*, 19 February

Robert Rooney, *The Australian*, 22 February

COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Parliament House, Canberra; Artbank, Sydney; University of New South Wales, Sydney; Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane; Deakin University, Melbourne; Commonwealth Government Offices, Canberra; AXA Australia, Melbourne; Macquarie Bank, Sydney; Peter McCallum Cancer Institute, Melbourne; British Museum, London, UK; Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan