

Albert Tucker and Non-Western Art

11 February to 11 August 2013
Albert and Barbara Tucker Gallery
Curator: Lesley Harding

HEIDE
MUSEUM
OF MODERN
ART



Albert Tucker
Enduring Figures 1956
oil on composition board
94.3 x 129 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation

Albert Tucker held a career-long fascination with non-Western art. First collecting masks and sculptures in Melbourne in the 1940s, he later travelled to the Sepik River region of Papua New Guinea and acquired carvings and pottery that he displayed at home and in his studio.

Spanning a period of over thirty years, the works in this exhibition reveal the various ways in which Tucker was inspired by tribal art and trace the development of his painting style, from a cubist-inspired visual language to one that is resolutely his own. The carvings, masks, sculptures and pottery are all drawn from Albert and Barbara Tucker's personal collection. They are shown here in much the same way as the Tuckers chose to live with these works themselves—interspersed and in conversation with the artist's paintings, informing and complementing each other.

Like many modernists, Tucker's interests in non-Western art came via Picasso and the French cubists. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the School of Paris artists looked to African and Oceanic art as a model for alternative ways of representing the world—a vitalising force

that would inspire their quest to define modern life. In particular, it helped shift artists' reliance on naturalism, opening up the possibilities of abstraction. This was a reality more conceptual than visual: 'I paint things as I think them, not as I see them', Picasso said.

As well as including mask-like faces in their early paintings, the cubists developed composite, cumulative shapes that responded directly to the capacity of 'primitive' art to combine many forms into one. Space was treated without regard for perspective, concave could stand for convex, a solid could represent a void, and objects might be represented from a variety of viewpoints at once. In short, the conventions of Western painting were thrown up in the air.

For Tucker, the appeal further lay in the capacity for such art to convey archetypal human experience and to link back to tradition and ceremony, for which signs and symbols are more important than illusion. He saw the imagery as part of a continuum, a way of connecting cultures and of relating past and present.

List of works

This catalogue is arranged alphabetically by artist then chronologically. Measurements are height before width before depth.

Albert Tucker

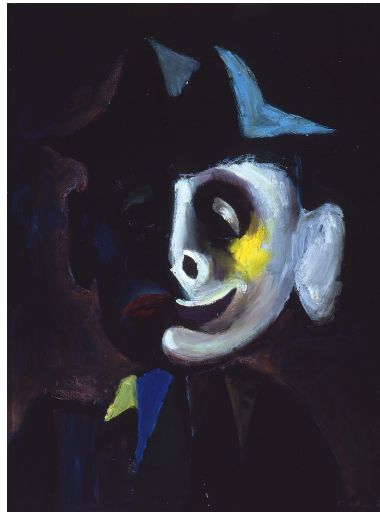
born 1914 Melbourne;
died 1999 Melbourne



Untitled (Bull)
oil on paper
21.7 x 32.2 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



City 1944
oil on plywood
61 x 76 cm
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



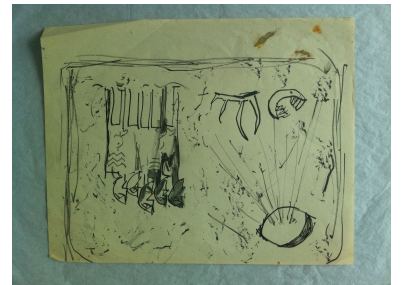
Tivoli Clown 1945
oil on composition board
61 x 45.5 cm
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



Image of Modern Evil 31 1947
oil on composition board
50.5 x 37.5 cm
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



Lover and Dog 1949
oil on canvas on composition board
73.2 x 61 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Untitled (study for Encounter) c. 1955
fibre-tipped pen and pencil on paper
22.1 x 28 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Untitled (study for Encounter) c. 1955
fibre tipped pen and pencil on paper
22 x 28.1 cm
Private collection, Melbourne

Albert Tucker

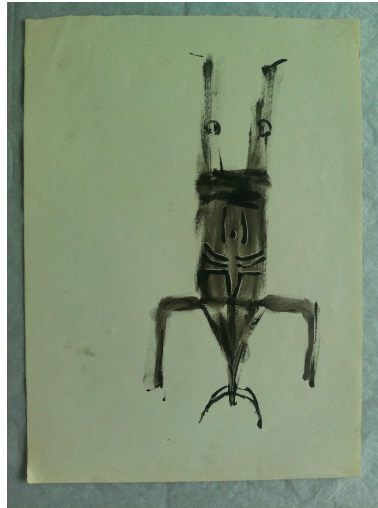
born 1914 Melbourne;
died 1999 Melbourne



Untitled (Faun with Shield and Rifle)
c. 1956
oil on paper
32.2 x 22.1 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



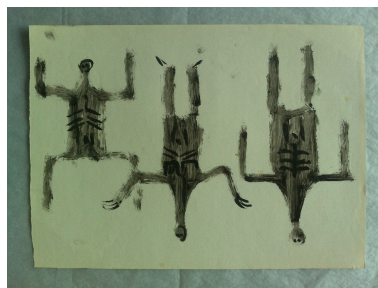
Untitled (Figure and Boulder) c. 1956
oil on paper
22.2 x 32.2 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Untitled (Figure with Crescent Mouth)
c. 1956
oil on paper
22.1 x 16 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Untitled (Figure with Horns) c. 1956
oil on paper
31.7 x 21.5 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Untitled (Three Figures) c. 1956
oil on paper
16 x 22 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Duel 1954
oil on composition board
81 x 62 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Ikon 1954
PVA on composition board
35 x 25 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Albert Tucker

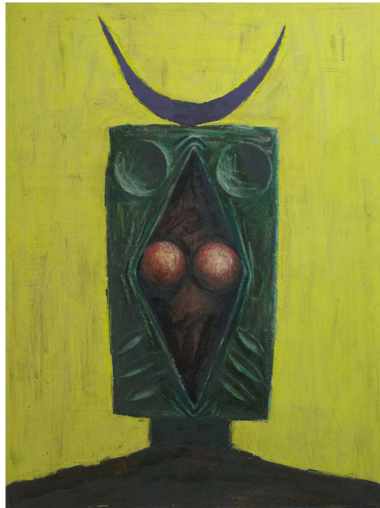
born 1914 Melbourne;
died 1999 Melbourne



Wounded Figures 1954
oil on composition board
81 x 62.4 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



Encounter 1955
oil on composition board
94.4 x 129 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



Totem 1955
oil on composition board
129.5 x 96.5 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Enduring Figures 1956
oil on composition board
94.3 x 129 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



Head 1956
oil on composition board
66 x 48 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Explorer 1957
synthetic polymer paint and collage on
composition board
48 x 68.5 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



King Kelly and His Legions 1957
oil, PVA, foil collage and cardboard on
composition board
96.2 x 130 cm
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2009



Tattooed Head 1957
oil on composition board
62.1 x 80.9 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation

Albert Tucker

born 1914 Melbourne;
died 1999 Melbourne



Armoured Bushranger 1958
synthetic polymer paint and PVA on
composition board
122 x 91.5 cm
Bequest of John and Sunday Reed 1982



Cratered Head 1958-1960
synthetic polymer paint on composition
board
122 x 101 cm
Gift of the Albert & Barbara Tucker
Foundation 2019



John Batman 1959
synthetic polymer paint and collage on
composition board
122 x 91 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



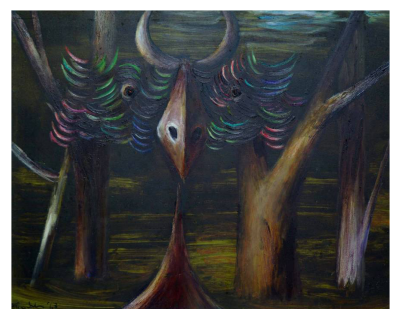
Man 1959
synthetic polymer paint on composition
board
130.5 x 66.5 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Masked Intruder 1965
oil on composition board
122 x 151 cm
Gift of the Albert and Barbara Tucker
Foundation 2018



Armoured Faun I 1968
oil on composition board
76 x 60 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



Horned Entity 1968
oil on composition board
60 x 75.5 cm
Private collection, Melbourne

Albert Tucker

born 1914 Melbourne;
died 1999 Melbourne



Armoured Faun c. 1974
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
59 x 75 cm
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown

Board Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
wood and natural pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown

Board Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
wood and natural pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown

Carved figure Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
wood and cowrie shells
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown

Faceboard or double mask Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
wood, natural pigments and natural fibre tassels
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown

Mask Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
wood and natural pigments, with natural fibre hanging apparatus
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Roof finial or gable decoration Chambri Lakes, Sepik River, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
earthenware and pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Roof finial or gable decoration Chambri Lakes, Sepik River, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
earthenware and pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Spirit figure Sepik River, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
wood and pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Storage pot Chambri Lakes, Sepik River, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
earthenware and pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Storage pot Chambri Lakes, Sepik River, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
earthenware and pigments
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Vessel Chambri Lakes, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea collected 1969
earthenware
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Yaul ornament Yuat River, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
earthenware
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Yaul ornament Yuat River, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969
earthenware
Private collection, Melbourne

Unknown



Squatting figure Trobriand Islands, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea
c.1900-40 c. 1900-1940
wood and white pigment
52 x 13.5 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Unknown



Mask Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969 c. 1945-1960
wood and natural pigments, with cane hanging apparatus
39 x 32.3 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Unknown



Mask Sepik River, Papua New Guinea
collected 1969 c. 1945-1960
wood, natural pigments and cowrie shells
56.5 x 30.3 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Unknown



Board Pre 1969
carved wood, natural pigments
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Unknown



Mask Pre 1969
carved wood, natural pigments, shells
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation

Unknown



Spirit figure Sepik River, Papua New
Guinea collected 1969 c. 1970s-1980s
wood and natural pigments
131 x 33.5 cm
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation
