

Albert Tucker: The Modern Metaphysical

11 June to 23 October 2022
Albert and Barbara Tucker Gallery
Guest Curator: Michelle Hambur

HEIDE
MUSEUM
OF MODERN
ART



*Albert Tucker, Mary Dickson and
Giorgio de Chirico, Rome 1954*
gelatin silver photograph
30.5 x 40.4 cm
Photographer unknown
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2001

While in Rome in 1954, Albert Tucker met the renowned Italian painter, Giorgio de Chirico, the leading proponent of Metaphysical Art, a movement closely related to Surrealism. Their encounter was a defining moment in Tucker's artistic trajectory. De Chirico's art had been a strong influence on his work since he first became aware of it as a young artist in Melbourne in the early 1930s. Following de Chirico's example, he experimented with dreamlike imagery, deserted cityscapes, ambiguous corporeal forms, dramatic lighting and motifs related to classical antiquity and modernity. The continued impact of de Chirico's art on Tucker's practice and the visual connection between their artworks is explored in this exhibition.

Tucker's interest in de Chirico was encouraged by Gino Nibbi, an Italian immigrant who arrived in Melbourne in 1928 and established the Leonardo Art Shop at 166 Little Collins Street. Retailing imported European art books and high-quality prints, the shop became a hub for many artists of the time. Nibbi, an admirer of Metaphysical Art, owned a painting by de Chirico and aided

Tucker's exploration of the artist's stylistic, thematic, and philosophical idiosyncrasies. In 1939 the Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art provided a further opportunity for Tucker to see works by de Chirico at firsthand, together with paintings by other European avant-garde artists.

The onset of the Second World War prevented Tucker from travelling to Europe to continue his artistic edification until 1947. When he finally departed, he declared himself a 'refugee from Australian culture'. After periods in Paris and Frankfurt, in 1954 he settled in Grottaferrata on the outskirts of Rome and Nibbi, who had returned to Italy, facilitated the introduction to de Chirico. De Chirico subsequently attended Tucker's exhibition with Sidney Nolan at the Rome Press Club and Tucker joined de Chirico's regular 'Sunday Soirees', mingling with a carefully curated guest list that included aristocracy and leading philosophers of the time. Tucker left Europe in 1958 but de Chirico's influence continued to resonate, and the memory of his meetings with de Chirico remained with him throughout his life.

List of works

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

Giorgio de Chirico

born 1888, Vólos, Greece. Died 1978,
Rome, Italy



Gli Amici
etching, artist's proof
19 x 14 cm
Private collection, Melbourne



Untitled from Mysterious Baths series
c.1930
linocut print
45 x 31.7 cm
Collection of Imants Tillers and
Jennifer Slatyer, New South Wales



Ettore and Andromache I 1969
colour lithograph, proof edition
50.5 x 39.5 cm (image) 70 x 51 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented through the NGV Foundation
by the Reverend Ian Brown, Founder
Benefactor, 2005

Irving Penn

born 1917, Plainfield, New Jersey, United
States. Died 2009, New York



Giorgio de Chirico, Rome 1944
gelatin silver print
19.5 x 20.5 cm
Private collection, Melbourne

Albert Tucker

born 1914, Melbourne, Victoria.
Lived and worked Melbourne. Died 1999



Antipodean Head c.1959
ink and watercolour on paper
18.8 x 24.5 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



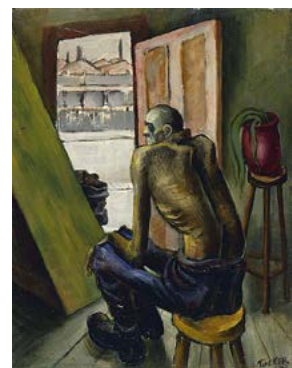
Philosopher 1939
oil on cardboard
45.7 x 51.5 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist 1988



The Futile City 1940
oil on cardboard
44.5 x 54.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Purchased from John and
Sunday Reed 1980



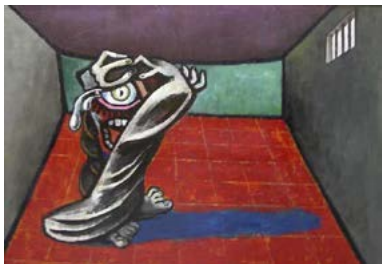
Self Portrait 1940
gelatin silver photograph
40.2 x 30.4 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2001



Spring in Fitzroy 1941
oil on paper on cardboard
56 x 43.4 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Albert and Barbara Tucker 1997



The Waste Land 1941
oil on cardboard
33.8 x 46 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1982



The Possessed 1942
oil on plywood
54.4 x 76.0 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1982



Image of Modern Evil 15 1945
oil on composition board
31.6 cm x 47 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist 1982



Sunbathers 1945
oil on composition board
44 x 61 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation
of Victoria with the assistance of
Commonwealth Industrial Gases
Limited, Governor, 1982



Head c.1957
watercolour, brush and ink, pencil and
crayon on paper
22 x 19 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Untitled c.1957
watercolour, oil pastel, pencil, crayon
and coloured pencils on paper
19 x 22 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Steps at Night, Station Rail c.1960
pastel and watercolour on paper
25.4 x 31.8 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Night Figure with Flag in Street c.1970
pastel and watercolour on paper
55 x 71.4 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



River Dreaming 1971
oil and gouache on paper
25 x 35 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Image of Modern Evil 1972
pen and chalk on paper
22.5 x 29 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Image of Modern Evil 1972
cast bronze
10.4 x 36 x 16.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE 2005



Image of Modern Evil—Figure Standing II
1972

bronze

32 x 22 x 11 cm

Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne

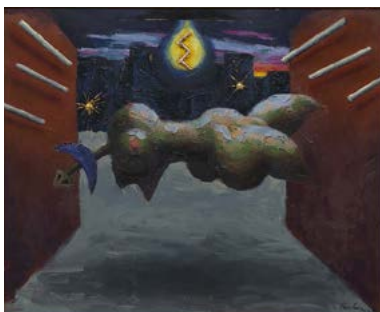


Crescent Head Woman 1976

pastel and gouache on paper

25.4 x 31.8 cm

Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Night Image 1978

synthetic polymer paint on
composition board

82 x 100 cm

Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Railway Crossing, Albert Park 1988

synthetic polymer paint on
composition board

74 x 100 cm

Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Sunbather, Port Melbourne 1989

oil on composition board

91 x 122 cm

From the Collection of Great Eagle
Holdings, located at The Langham,
Sydney

Courtesy of Smith & Singer Fine Art

Unknown



Albert Tucker, Mary Dickson and

Giorgio de Chirico, Rome 1954

gelatin silver photograph

30.5 x 40.4 cm

Heide Museum of Modern Art

Gift of Barbara Tucker 2001