

# Albert Tucker: The Truth in Masquerade

21 February to 16 August 2015  
Albert & Barbara Tucker Gallery  
Curator: Linda Short

**HEIDE**  
MUSEUM  
OF MODERN  
ART



Albert Tucker  
*Luna Park* 1945  
oil on composition board  
53 x 81 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005

*For me art stops with the moment of poised tension just before the solution of an enigma, that sense of an impending encounter with final truth.*

Albert Tucker, c.1945

As a young artist in the early 1940s, Albert Tucker infused his paintings with ideas and images influenced by his inner-city locale. With this strong focus on urban themes and a daring stylistic approach, Tucker's formative works vividly capture Melbourne's growing modernity during the changing social climate of World War II. At the time his cityscapes were shocking and new, breaking with artistic traditions and exposing the highly charged mood on the streets. The streets themselves became a stage on which Tucker presented the dramas and spectacles of modern life as he perceived them.

Tucker's theatrical portrayal of society drew directly from the flamboyant nightlife and fast-paced cabaret that was the popular entertainment of the period. In the late 1930s and early '40s he frequented Melbourne's flourishing variety halls and showgrounds for

both personal enjoyment and artistic sustenance. He photographed entertainers on stage at the Tivoli Theatre and Wirth's Circus, and captured in sketches and photographs the lively ambience of local funfairs, stage wrestling and street parades. He was also involved in the politically motivated New Theatre League, designing sets and backcloths for Melbourne productions. All of these experiences coloured his developing repertoire of painted motifs and narratives, most notably in stylised figures with clown and mask-like faces, and dramatic 'spot-lit' sceneries, but also in the subtle undercurrents of his imagery.

Tucker continued to view the world through a theatrical lens. In later works he often used masquerade to explore the truths of particular encounters and life situations—addressing issues of morality and sexuality as well as alienation and mortality. This exhibition surveys Tucker's enduring interest in the carnivalesque as a fictional realm that could reveal aspects of reality. In addition to his paintings and photographs it includes related archival material that shows some of the sources from which this creative touchstone evolved.

# List of works

This catalogue is arranged alphabetically by artist then chronologically. Measurements are height before width. Exhibition prints are sheet size.

## Harry Jay

born 1905, Berlin, Germany. Died 1987

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*Auditorium, Tivoli Theatre*  
exhibition print from original gelatin  
silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection

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*Auditorium, Tivoli Theatre*  
exhibition print from original gelatin  
silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection

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## Melbourne New Theatre

Established 1936, Melbourne, Victoria

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Handbill, *I'd Rather Be Left* 1941  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection

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Theatre Program, *I'd Rather Be Left* 1941  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection  
Gift of Dr Angela O'Brien, 2001

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Theatre Program, *The Naughty Nineties*  
14 Oct 1940  
Australian Manuscripts Collection  
State Library Victoria

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## Tivoli Circuit

Established 1832, Sydney, New South  
Wales. Closed 1966 Melbourne, Victoria

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Theatre Program, *The All Laughter Show*  
18 Nov 1940  
Australian Manuscripts Collection  
State Library Victoria

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Theatre Program, *Artists and Models*  
2 Feb 1942  
Australian Manuscripts Collection  
State Library Victoria

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Theatre Program, *The Anniversary Show*  
*50 Years*  
2 Feb 1942  
Australian Manuscripts Collection  
State Library Victoria

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## Albert Tucker

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

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*Mask* c.1939  
exhibition print from original gelatin  
silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State  
Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Our Room Upstairs, 26 Little Collins  
Street, at Night* c.1939  
exhibition print from original gelatin  
silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State  
Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Melbourne New Theatre Performer* c.1941  
exhibition print from original gelatin  
silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State  
Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Backdrop designed by Albert Tucker and Yosl Bergner for Melbourne New Theatre Production 'Where's That Bomb' 1938*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Dick Diamond in May Day March, Melbourne c.1943*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*May Day, Melbourne c.1943*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Wirth's Circus, Melbourne 1940*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Tivoli 1940*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Tivoli Oct 40 1940*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Little Luna Park, St Kilda, at Night c.1945*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Archive  
Heide Museum of Modern Art

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*Luna Park, St Kilda, at Night c.1945*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
21 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Tivoli (Four of the Five Cleveres in 'The Naughty Nineties') Oct 1940*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Wirth's Circus, Melbourne Nov 1940*  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Melbourne New Theatre Production 'I'd Rather Be Left'* 1941  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Melbourne New Theatre Production 'I'd Rather Be Left'* 1941  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Melbourne New Theatre Production 'I'd Rather Be Left'* 1941  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*Joy Hester* 1942  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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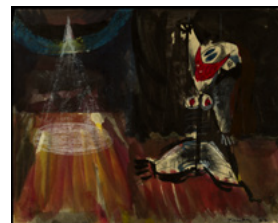
*Bert 42, Little Collins Street Melbourne* 1942  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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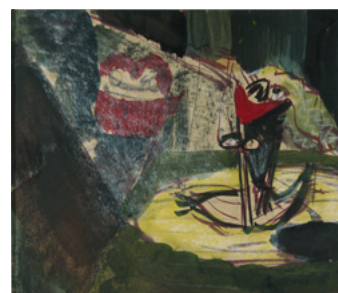
*Koornong School Warrandyte* 1943  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection  
Heide Museum of Modern Art and State Library Victoria  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

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*At the Tiv* 1944  
watercolour and pastel on paper  
20.2 x 25 cm  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased 1976

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*At the Tiv* 1944  
watercolour and pastel on paper  
19.8 x 23.4 cm  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased 1976

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*City* 1944  
oil on plywood  
61 x 76 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005

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*Study for Image of Modern Evil 9* 1944  
watercolour, gouache and brush and ink on paper  
18.5 x 24.5 cm  
Private collection, London

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*Luna Park* 1945  
oil on composition board  
53 x 81 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005

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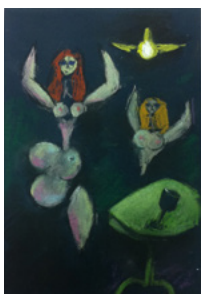
*Luna Park* 1945  
pen and ink, brush and ink and  
watercolour on paper  
13 x 17.8 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

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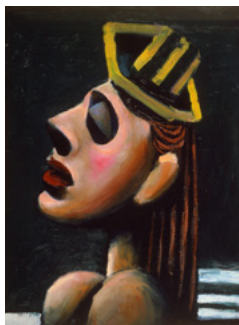
*Tivoli Clown* 1945  
oil on composition board  
61 x 45.5 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005

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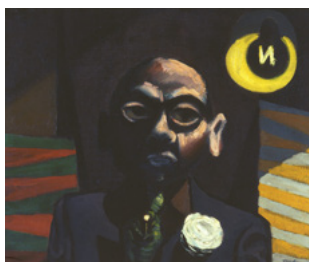
*Two Figures* c.1950  
pastel on paper  
30 x 20 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

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*Leading Lady* 1946  
oil on composition board  
60.5 x 45.5 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2009

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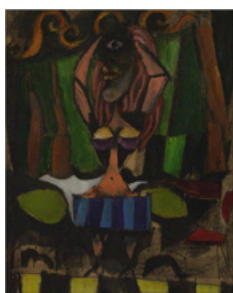
*Vaudevillian* 1946  
oil on muslin on cardboard  
67 x 78.5 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
Bequest of John and Sunday Reed 1982

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

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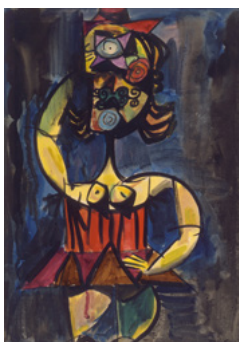
*Woman* 1950  
gouache, charcoal and pen on paper  
21 x 17 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

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*Untitled (Four studies)* 1950  
pencil, watercolour, crayon and gouache  
on paper  
27.3 x 21.4 cm (each) 89.2 x 74 cm (overall)  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
On long-term loan from the Albert &  
Barbara Tucker Foundation

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*Woman Rue St Denis I* 1950  
synthetic polymer paint, brush and ink  
on paper  
52 x 37 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
On long-term loan from the Albert &  
Barbara Tucker Foundation

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*Study for Joie de Mort* c.1988  
watercolour, oil pastel and ink on paper  
24 x 32 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

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*Extinction Express* 1988  
oil, pastel and watercolour on paper  
18.5 x 48.8 cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

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*Joie de Mort* 1988  
synthetic polymer paint on composition board  
91.7 x 122 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by Mr Albert Tucker AO, Governor, 1995



*The Assassin* c.1995  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
80 x 100 cm  
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



*Postcard Featuring Backcloth Design by Albert Tucker for 'I'd Rather be Left'* 1941  
exhibition print from original postcard  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection

#### Photographer unknown



*Exterior of the Tivoli Theatre, 249 Bourke Street, Melbourne* c.1912  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Australian Manuscripts Collection  
State Library Victoria



*Building Stage Set for Sabotage* 1943  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection  
Gift of Dr Angela O'Brien 2001



*New Theatre Exterior Under Construction* 1943  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection  
Gift of Dr Angela O'Brien 2001



*Production Still from Sabotage* 1943  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
29.7 x 42 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
Performing Arts Collection  
Gift of Dr Angela O'Brien 2001



*Production Still from Sabotage* 1943  
exhibition print from original gelatin silver photograph  
42 x 29.7 cm  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
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*Production Still from Sabotage* 1943  
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