

Albert Tucker: Australian Stories

2 September 2017 to 25 February 2018

Albert & Barbara Tucker Gallery

Curator: Sue Cramer

HEIDE
MUSEUM
OF MODERN
ART



Albert Tucker
Wild Colonial Boy 4 1968
synthetic polymer paint on composition
board
91.3 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation

This exhibition brings together paintings by Albert Tucker portraying a cast of legendary Australian characters—bushrangers, convicts and explorers—in harsh and indomitable landscape settings. Tucker began painting outback themes while living in Italy in the mid-1950s during an extended period abroad, his interest in Australian myth and by extension national identity sharpened by his distance from home. Drawing upon the formal advances of European modernism—Expressionism, Surrealism and the built-up, collaged surfaces of Art Informel—he developed a highly distinctive iconography that defied nationalist stereotypes, and gave symbolic form to the role of the outsider.

Visiting archaeological sites on the outskirts of Rome, Tucker became interested in Etruscan history and began to see a relationship between the ancientness of Europe and that of the Australian continent. His paintings from this period are steeped in allegorical meanings and draw on classical legends—of fauns, satyrs and Pan, the Greek god of nature. Tucker's masked

and armoured bushrangers appear not as typical heroes, but as lurking centaur-like figures waiting to pounce on their prey. His gaunt and scarified explorers, pitted against the wilderness, are like the martyrs and saints of European tradition, recast in a uniquely Australian drama.

After returning to Australia in 1960, Tucker turned his attention to the historical story of Melbourne's founder John Batman and his ex-convict wife Eliza Callaghan, and to the gruesome saga of escaped convict Cannibal Pierce. His rendering of these subjects is both fantastical and surreal. In other works, images of card-playing gamblers point to the self-destructive tendencies of humans, and the tensions between fate and chance. Underlying themes of the struggle for survival and the tussle between good and evil are also apparent in many of the works displayed.

List of works

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

Albert Tucker

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



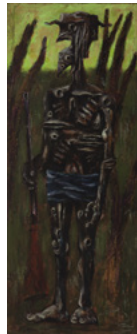
Encounter 1954
oil on composition board
63.4 x 93 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of the Albert & Barbara Tucker
Foundation 2020



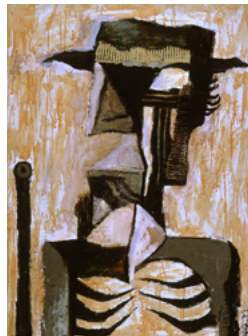
Armoured Figure 1955
oil on composition board
80.5 x 63 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



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



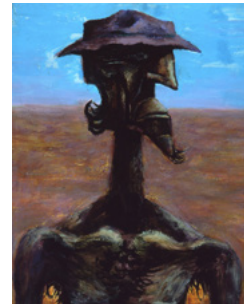
Explorer III 1958
synthetic polymer paint and PVA on
composition board
203 x 81.5 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



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



Surrender at Glenrowan 1959
synthetic polymer paint, PVA and oil on
canvas
156 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



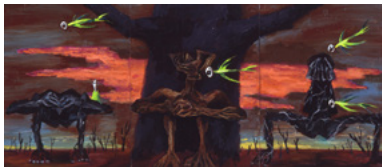
Explorer in Desert 1965
oil on composition board
90 x 70 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



Intruder Resting 1965-66
synthetic polymer paint on composition
board
122 x 152 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert &
Barbara Tucker Foundation



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



Arrival at Coopers Creek 1968
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
60 x 45 cm (panel); 87 x 162 cm (overall)
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005



Cannibal Pierce 1968
oil on composition board
61 x 76 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Wild Colonial Boy 4 1968
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
91.3 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



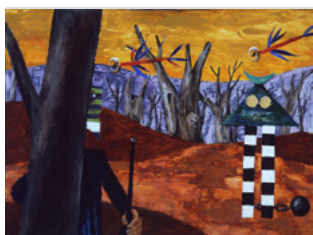
Wild Colonial Boy 5 1968
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
91.3 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Armoured Faun 1969
oil and PVA on composition board
122 x 152 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of the Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation 2016



Fleeing Girl 1971
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
55.6 x 71 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



John Batman and Eliza Callaghan 1971
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
137 x 183 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2007



Gamblers 1988
oil on hardboard
96 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005