

Albert Tucker: Spirit Worlds and Dreamscapes

15 March – 31 August 2025
Albert & Barbara Tucker Gallery
Guest Curator: Simon Grant

HEIDE
MUSEUM
OF MODERN
ART



Albert Tucker
*Joy Hester, Little Collins Street,
Melbourne 1942*
gelatin silver contact
Albert Tucker Photographic Collection,
State Library Victoria and Heide
Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008

Albert Tucker: Spirit Worlds and Dreamscapes is the first exhibition to explore the artist's lifelong connection to spiritualism, the supernatural, ghosts and the occult. Ever since his mother Clara took him to a Spiritualist church as a child, Tucker believed in forces beyond the rational and outside conventional structures of perception, and in the agency of these unseen forces to help better understand—and feel—the living world.

Tucker had his first paranormal experience when he was seventeen and had further experiences in the decades to follow. Such ideas opened up his sense of a polarised realm of good and evil that he felt was the 'real battle of life'. His profound faith in a benevolent, invisible and omnipotent power shaped and directed his art throughout his career: 'I've always had this feeling that we are being driven and pushed by these powers', he observed, 'cosmically, we are manipulated'. He viewed the artist, in a sense, as a 'clairvoyant' who could 'trigger a self-hypnotic state and become a channel for these forces, giving them form and making them visible in our system of reality'.

Three women would influence Tucker's openness to exploring the paranormal, the spiritual and the ghostly. After absorbing his mother's interest in Spiritualism, he found a kindred spirit in his first wife Joy Hester, who had powerful psychic tendencies of her own. His second wife Barbara Bilcock, described by the philosopher–author Colin Wilson as a 'remarkable mystic', played an important role in nourishing and supporting Tucker's relationship to the spiritual over many years.

Spirit Worlds and Dreamscapes features Tucker's paintings, sketches and photographs dating from the early 1940s to the mid 1990s. In addition, the display includes a small number of Sepik River masks that he acquired on a visit to Papua New Guinea in 1969 and a selection of books from his personal library that give insight into his wide-ranging esoteric interests.

List of works

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

Joy Hester

Born 1920, Melbourne, Victoria.
Lived and worked Melbourne. Died 1960



Naked Figures and Angels c.1945
brush and ink on paper
26.8 x 29.9 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2014

Albert Tucker

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



Creator form
charcoal on paper
15.1 x 22.6 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Cyclopic Head n.d.
watercolour on paper
30 x 23 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Figure in Silhouette n.d.
pastel on paper
15.2 x 21.4 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Floating Night Image n.d.
watercolour and graphite on paper
17.3 x 18.2 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Untitled n.d.
oil on card
41 x 30.5 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



In the Mirror: Self Portrait with Joy Hester
1939
gelatin silver photograph
40.1 x 30.4 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2001



The Possessed 1942
oil on plywood
54.4 x 76 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1982



Tony Jackson Little Collins Street Melbourne 1942
gelatin silver photograph
4 x 5 cm
Albert Tucker Photograph Collection
Heide Museum of Modern Art & State Library Victoria, Melbourne
Joint gift of Barbara Tucker 2008



Image of Modern Evil 25 1946
oil on cotton gauze on cardboard
75.7 x 63.2 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist 1981



(Wounded Man) c.1963
oil on composition board
71.5 x 91.5 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Image of Modern Evil: Demon Dreamer 1943
oil on paper on cardboard
40.8 x 50.8 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist 1982



Rebirth 1951
oil on cardboard
51 x 45.7 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



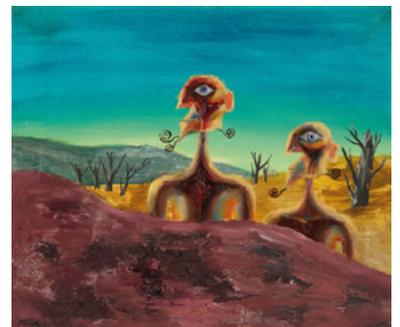
Self-portrait 1970s
oil on board
30.2 x 22.7 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation,
Melbourne



Image of Modern Evil 9 1944
oil on cotton gauze on cardboard
51.7 x 63 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the artist 1981



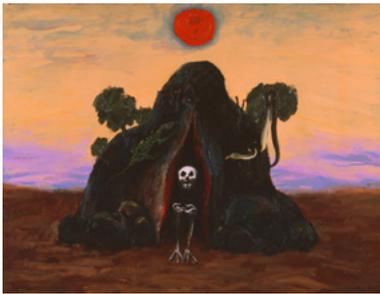
Wounded Mountain 1955
oil on composition board
66 x 131 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of Barbara Tucker 2008



Emerging Gods 1971
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
66 x 76 cm
Private collection, Melbourne, courtesy
of Smith & Singer Fine Art



Lasseter Dreaming c.1978
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
71 x 91 cm
Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation, Melbourne



St Anthony in Australia 1987
oil on composition board
91 x 122 cm
Heide Museum of Modern Art
Gift of the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation 2021



Night Phantoms 1988
oil on canvas
96.8 x 127 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation, Melbourne



Night Image c.1990
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
89 x 116 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation, Melbourne



Apparition Next to Dwelling 1994
watercolour on paper
33 x 23.9 cm
Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation, Melbourne

Unknown



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



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



Board
Sepik River, Papua New Guinea pre 1969
carved wood, natural pigments
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation



Mask
Sepik River, Papua New Guinea pre 1969
carved wood, natural pigments, shells
Heide Museum of Modern Art
On long-term loan from the Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation

Books

C. W. Leadbeater
Man Visible and Invisible 1902, 1969
Private collection

Arthur E. Powell
The Astral Body 1927, 1978
Private collection

Sylvan Muldoon, Hereward Carrington
The Projection of the Astral Body 1929,
1994
Private collection

Vera Stanley Alder
The Finding of the Third Eye 1938, 1970
Private collection

James Frazer
*Magic and Religion: being Chapters 1 to
VII of the Abridged Edition of "The Golden
Bough"* [1944]
Albert Tucker Archive
Heide Museum of Modern Art

W. E. Butler
Magic: Its Ritual, Power and Purpose
1952, 1967
Private collection

Tobias Churton
The Gnostics 1987
Private collection

T.C. Lethbridge, Tom Graves, Janet Hoult
The Essential T.C. Lethbridge 1980
Private collection