

Griffen

'Glorious landscapes on a grand scale: a new vision for Australian landscape.'

- Professor Sasha Grishin PhD, Art Historian, Australian National University.



The first thing you notice about Peter Griffen's work is its vibrancy and wildness, and an enticing playfulness that offers you the freedom to explore.

Peter's early training as a Geographer informs his unique engagement with the landscape. So too the influence of his mentors, Tom Gleghorn who introduced New York's Abstract Expressionism to Australia, and Fred Williams whose monumental approach transformed the way Australians saw landscape.

Study tours in Europe introduced other important influences, including Frans Hals, Piero della Francesca and William Turner, while the St Ives painters, the Cobra Group and Europe's Anselm Kiefer and Georg Baselitz have also guided Peter's development.

Like his older contemporary, Guy Warren, Peter has created his own abstracted language and a reputation as one of Australia's most consistent abstract painters.



Peter's work is held in private collections in Australia, Europe, Asia, New Zealand and the USA, and in corporate collections ranging from Crown Casino, Qantas, Potter Partners, Department of Transport, Westpac, Price Waterhouse, Macquarie University, Hong Kong's Park Lane, Los Angeles' Nance & Associates, and Massachusetts Education Department. He is currently represented in Australia by galleries in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra, and overseas in London, Copenhagen and Paris.

Born in Adelaide in 1948, he trained in Geography and Mathematics. Following National Service, Peter began his career as an artist, first exhibiting in 1972. He completed a visual arts degree at Sydney's City Art Institute (now COFA) and has since had over forty solo showings throughout Australia, as well as five in London, four in Paris and two in St. Tropez. He recently returned from a major showing in Lyon.



Peter's powerful relationship with landscape draws on his expeditions into the endless hot, dry emptiness of the outback: direct experience that has enabled him to create an enriched visual language, one capable of capturing the sheer intensity and complexity of feelings this landscape evokes. At a deeper level the patient viewer will also discover intriguing references to cultural history and tribal mythology.

Clement Greenberg, the greatest art critic of the Modernist era who launched the careers of artists such as Jackson Pollock and William de Kooning, insisted that Abstract Expressionism has little to do with ideas but everything to do with feeling and sensation. Clement Greenberg's insights have unquestionably paved the way for Peter Griffen's work.

Peter looks to take the viewer on a journey, to connect with and share feelings for the landscape's intrinsic vibrancy. But like all journeys, Peter believes, there must first be uncertainty. "To make discoveries, risks must be taken; the traveller must get lost. And in art, at some stage, the painting must go out of control. The universe was formed from chaos, and likewise the artist must risk entering the chaos of his ideas and emotions if he is to discover potent new images."

As he continues to explore through his paintings, the visual ebullience of Peter's work celebrates the richness of the human experience of wildness.



For more details on the artist and his work, including forthcoming exhibitions, visit: www.petergriffen.com

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Peter Griffen in his studio. Image: Earl de Blonville