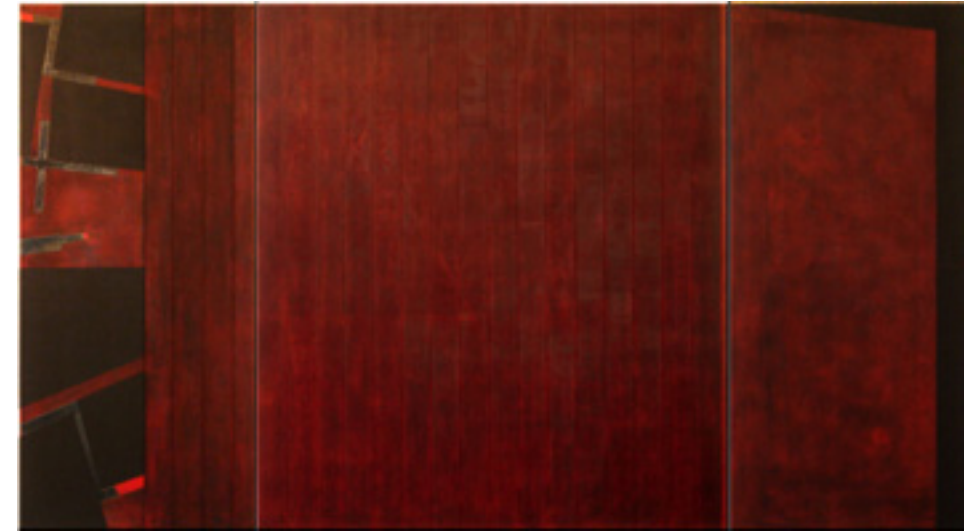


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JOHN TESCHENDORFF



Catalogue No. 1. XXXVII Guantanamo Fence 2006/2007 Oil Acrylic Automotive Lacquer Enamel & Wax on Canvas 1800 x 3000 x 60 cm

History of Ideas IV

1 - 29 April 2007

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| 1. XXXVII Guantanamo Fence 2006/2007
Oil Acrylic Automotive Lacquer Enamel & Wax on Canvas
1800 x 3000 x 60
\$ 20,000 | History of Ideas Series IV (Lukisan Kecil)
All Oil Acrylic Enamel & Wax on Canvas on Wood
290 x 330 x 55
\$ 950 each |
| 2. XXVIII Stone Garden Jimbaran Bay 2006
Oil Acrylic & Wax on Canvas
900 x 900 x 50
Private Collection | 14. Sekala Niskala I 2007 |
| 3. XXIX Temple Guantanamo Bay 2006
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900 x 900 x 50
\$ 3,800 | 15. Sekala Niskala II 2007 |
| 4. XXXI Plague (This is war) 2006
Oil Acrylic & Wax on Canvas
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| 5. XXXIII Plague (House of the People) 2006/2007
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| | 26. Drawing XXXIII Quillon 2007
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- The assistance of Annette Seeman, Marcel Teschendorff & Peter Lane of Art Presentations is gratefully acknowledged.

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David Bromfield & Robert Bell: JOHN TESCHENDORFF Visual Culture Research Unit Curtin University 1999
Matoulas George & Spurrier Stephen: THE CASK AN AUSSIE ICON Melbourne Fringe Festival Publications 1999
COMMITMENT: Selected Contemporary Craft & Design CCWA 2001
Grahame Noreen & Spurrier Steven: LITTLE TREASURES COLLABORATIVE ARTISTS BOOKS Ugg Boot Press Queensland 2001
Thaonthong Suchat & Bovornkitti Lertsiri INTERNATIONAL ART FESTIVAL ON THE BEACH Eastern Centre of Art & Culture Burapha University Chonburi Thailand 2004

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Greenwood Ted 'Putting Life in Living Spaces', Melbourne Age, 26 September 1976
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Mansfield Janet 'Fire And Earth Contemporary - Australian Ceramics' MAGM Sydney September 1987
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Johnston Fran 'From A Gallery of Dreams' Fremantle Herald 17 February 1992
Miley Caroline 'What Crafts Industry? Craft 2000 Conference Perth 1992' Craft Victoria Vol 23 No 220 March 1993
Bromfield David 'Display Pays Tribute to Seat of Power' The West Australian 23 November 1996
'Artyfacts' The West Australian 26 September 1997
'Curtin Scoops Australia Council Art and Craft Awards' The Voice Newspaper/Curtin University 27 September 1997
Bromfield David 'New Objects' The West Australian 27 March 1999
Bromfield David 'John Teschendorff @ Galerie Dusseldorf Behind the 8 Ball Web Site Perth June 2002
Weston Neville 'Seeing Something Special' The West Australian 27 April 2002
Spencer Ric 'Strange Days Indeed' The West Australian 5 November 2005

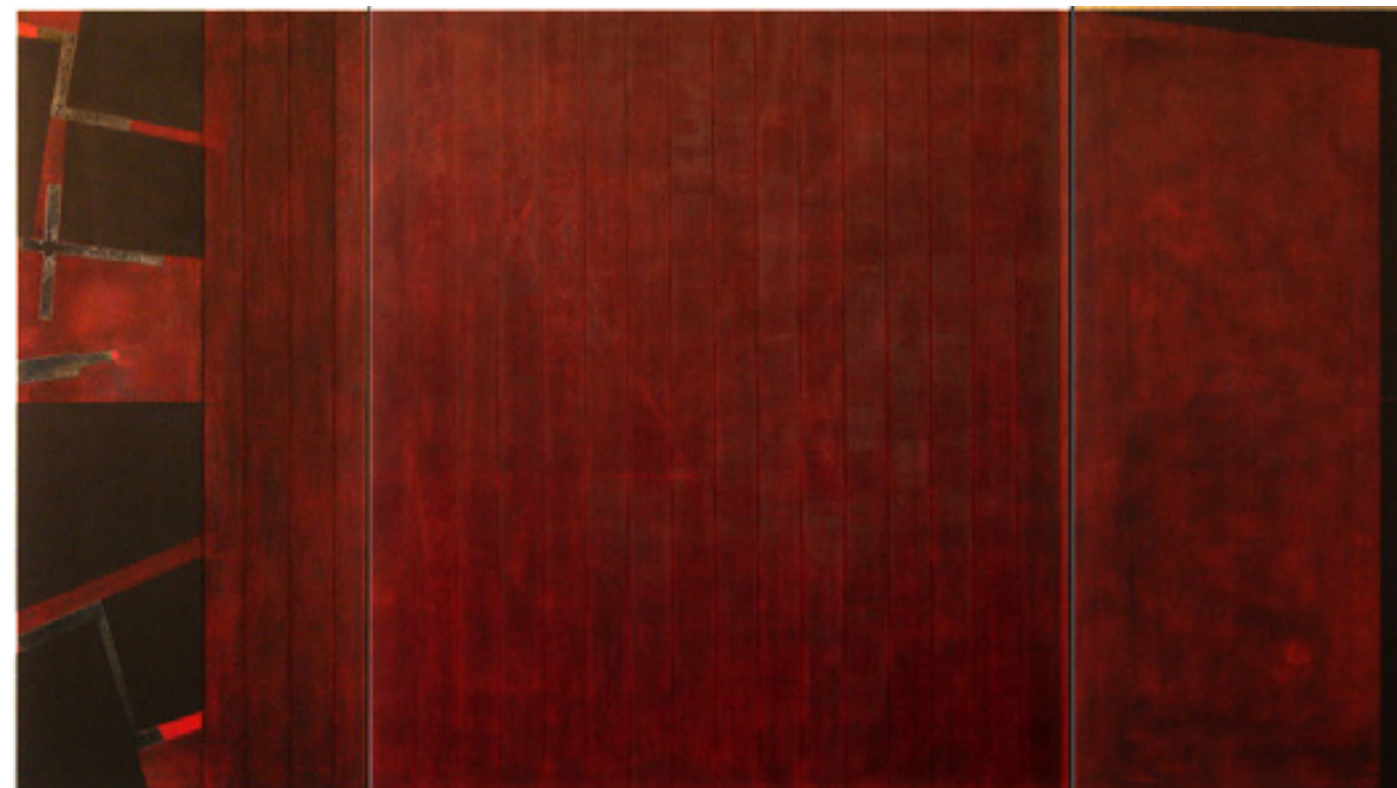
- 1997 The Collection-Recent Acquisitions Art Gallery of Western Australia Perth
21 Years On - Galerie Düsseldorf 21st Anniversary Exhibition Galerie Dusseldorf Perth
The Cask Show-An Australian Icon Melbourne Fringe Festival Exhibition National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne
The David Bromfield Testimonial Exhibition Gulag Gallery Perth
- 1999 International Mail Art Shahjeh Art Museum United Arab Emirates
The Cask Show An Australian Icon University of Southern Queensland Gallery Toowoomba Queensland
- 2000 Earth Objects Galeri Soemardja Institut Teknologi Bandung Java Indonesia
- 2001 ART 01 Western Australian Art Fair 2001 Passenger Terminal Fremantle
The Vanishing Meat Eater Memorial Exhibition for David Bromfield The Verge Gallery Perth
Little Treasures Artists Books RMIT Gallery Melbourne & Grahame Galleries and Editions Brisbane
International Works on Paper Fair Fox Studios Sydney
- 2002 KURB (your enthusiasm) Opening Exhibition KURB Gallery Perth
Collectors Items Moore's Building Contemporary Art Galleries Fremantle
Fuse/Small Works Tangent Gallery Curtin University School of Art Perth
Little Treasures Artists Books II Grahame Galleries & Editions Brisbane
- 2003 Bankwest Contemporary Art Award Invitation Exhibition Perth Institute of Contemporary Art
Joondalup Invitation Art Award Perth
- 2004 mine own executioner Invitation Exhibition Mundaring Arts Centre Mundaring Perth
Eastern Centre for Asian Art & Culture Burapha University Thailand
Little Treasures Artists Books III Centre for the Artists Book/Artists Book Gallery University of Western England Bristol UK
- 2005 International Mail Art Shahjeh Art Museum United Arab Emirates
- 2006 Melbourne Art Fair 06 Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne
Staff Room Curtin Art Staff Exhibition Moore's Building Contemporary Art Galleries Fremantle
Thirty Years On Galerie Düsseldorf 30th Anniversary Exhibition Galerie Dusseldorf Perth

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Diamond Valley Art Collection Victoria
- Victorian Ministry of the Arts State Collection Melbourne
- Geelong Regional Art Gallery Victoria
- Jackson Collection of Australian Ceramics Victoria
- Visual Arts Crafts Board of the Australia Council Sydney
- National Gallery of Australia Canberra
- University of Melbourne Art Collection
- Royal College of Art London
- The Marer Collection of International Ceramics/Scripps College Claremont California USA
- Benalla Regional Art Gallery Victoria
- Bezalel Academy of Art and Design Jerusalem Israel
- National Gallery of Victoria
- Art Gallery of Western Australia
- University of the Northern Territory Art Collection Darwin
- Monash University Art Collection Victoria
- Newcastle Regional Art Gallery Newcastle NSW
- Powerhouse Museum Sydney
- Silber Collection of Contemporary Ceramics California USA
- Orange Regional Art Gallery Orange NSW
- Shepparton Regional Art Gallery Shepparton Victoria
- University of Tasmania Art Collection
- Malaysian Institute of Art Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
- German Consulate Perth Western Australia
- Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
- Holmes a Court Collection Western Australia
- City of Fremantle Art Collection Fremantle Western Australia
- Curtin University Art Collection Perth Western Australia
- State Library of Victoria Collection Melbourne
- Bankwest Art Collection Western Australia
- Murdoch University Art Collection Perth Western Australia
- All Saints College Perth Western Australia
- National Gallery of Thailand Bangkok Thailand
- Private Collections in Australia Malaysia Thailand New Zealand Ireland UK USA Peru
Venezuela Austria & Israel

AWARDS & COMMISSIONS

- Diamond Valley Art Award 1975. (Presented by The Hon Gough Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia)
- Honorary Diploma XXXVI Concorso Internazionale Museo Internazionale Ceramiche Faenza Italy
- 1978 Australia Council VACB Purchase Fund
- 1978 State College of Victoria Postgraduate Scholarship, Royal College of Art, London
- 1981 Australia Council VACB Purchase Fund
- 1981 Artist in Residence, Bezalel Academy of Art & Design, Jerusalem, Israel
- 1984 Invited submission, Westpac Banking Centre Commission, New York, USA
- 1987 Hyatt Hotel Commission, Adelaide
- 1988 Australia Council VACB Grant International Ceramics Symposium Artist in Residence Program, Australian National University, Canberra
- 1991 Visiting Professor (Fine Arts), Malaysian Institute of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1997 Australia Council VACF Major Development Grant [New Work]
- 2000 Artist in Residence Faculty of Art & Design Institut Teknologi Bandung Indonesia
- 2004 Invited participant International Art Festival Eastern Centre of Art & Culture Burapha University Thailand



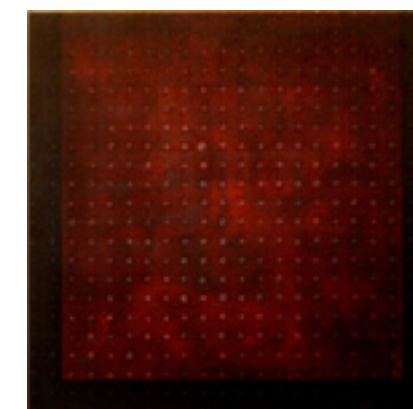
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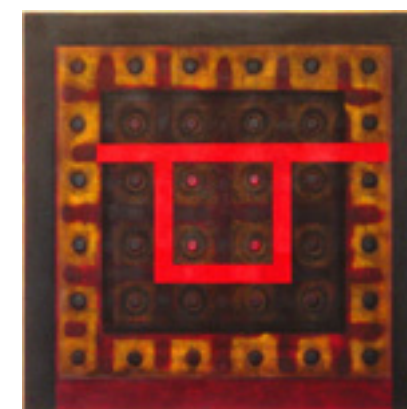
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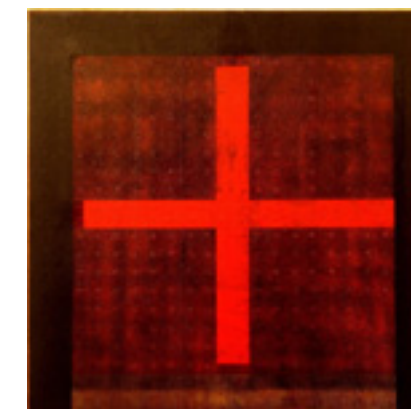
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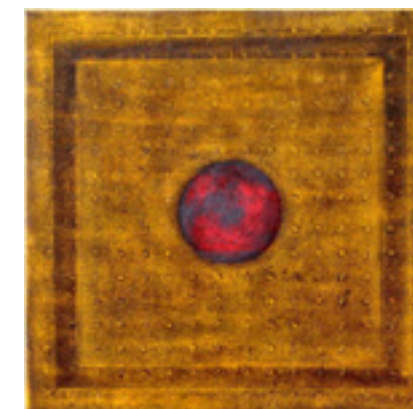
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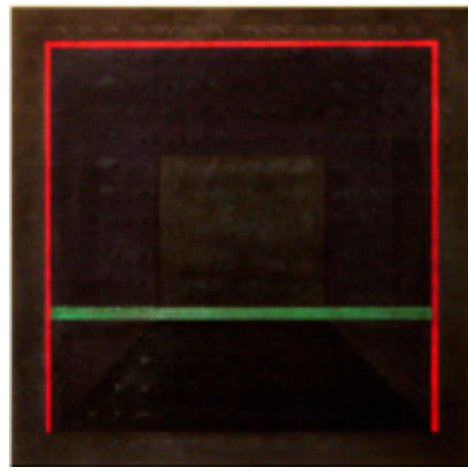
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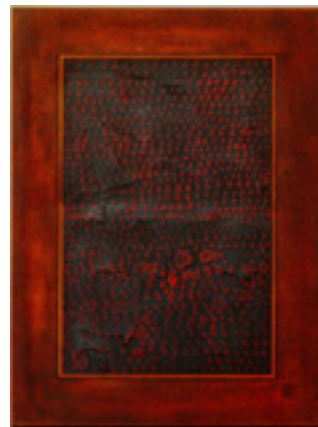
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Acrylic Enamel & Wax on Canvas
770 x 570 x 50



11. XXXX Kyoto II 2007
Acrylic Enamel & Wax on Canvas
770 x 570 x 50

JOHN TESCHENDORFF

b. Melbourne Australia 1942

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1974 Gryphon Gallery, Melbourne,
- 1977 Gryphon Gallery Melbourne
- 1978 Art of Man Gallery Sydney
- 1980 Stuart Gerstman Galleries Melbourne
- 1981 Oxford Galleries Oxford UK
- 1984 Cooks Hill Galleries Newcastle NSW
- 1989 Fremantle Arts Centre Fremantle
- 1991 Galerie MIA Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
- 1999 Galerie Düsseldorf Perth
- 2002 Galerie Düsseldorf Perth
- 2005 Galerie Düsseldorf Perth
- 2007 Galerie Düsseldorf Perth

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE

- 1975 Crafts Victoria '75 National Gallery of Victoria.
Beaumaris Ceramic Award Exhibition.
Crafts Victoria Travelling Exhibition to Victorian Regional Galleries.
Diamond Valley Art Award Exhibition.
- 1976 Bendigo International Award, Bendigo Art Gallery.
Living Space Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Victoria.
Mask Show Mildura Arts Centre.
The Drinking Vessel Show, Crafts Council of Victoria.
Beaumaris Invitation Exhibition.
- 1977 The Money Show Ewing Paton Gallery Melbourne University
Twelve Days of Christmas Crafts Councils of Australia Gallery Sydney
- 1978 Australian Collection Pieces National Gallery of Victoria
Seventh Australian Sculpture Triennial Mildura Arts Centre Mildura Victoria
- 1978 Latrobe University Union Sculpture Festival Melbourne
XXXVI Concorso Internazionale Museo Internazionale Ceramiche Faenza Italy
- 1979 Mayfair Ceramic Award Crafts Councils of Australia Gallery Sydney
Royal College of Art London
- 1980 Artists Ceramics McClelland Gallery, Frankston Victoria
Victorian Ceramics Jam Factory Gallery Adelaide
Mayfair Ceramic Award Exhibition Melbourne
- 1981 Diamond Valley Art Awards Exhibition Melbourne
Contemporary Australian Ceramics Renwick Galleries Smithsonian Institute Washington USA
- 1982 Ceramics in Victoria Ballarat Fine Art Gallery Victoria
Australian Ceramics Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Launceston
Australian Crafts '82 Meat Market Centre Melbourne
Ceramics from the State Collection University of Melbourne
National Acquisitions Award Exhibition 1982 Museum and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory Darwin
Touring Exhibition Contemporary Australian Ceramics Major Galleries in USA Canada New Zealand & Australia
1982 Mayfair Award Australian Crafts Council Gallery Sydney
- 1983 New Directions Contemporary Australian Ceramics Jam Factory Galleries Adelaide
August Works Major works by Australian Artists/Craftsmen Meat Market Centre Melbourne
The Jackson Collection of Australian Ceramics Geelong Regional Art Gallery Victoria
Ceramics from the State Collection Waverley City Gallery and GIAE/Monash University Gallery Victoria
- 1984 Darling Downs 1st National Acquisitive Ceramics Award Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery Queensland
Alice Springs Ceramics Acquisition, Araluen Arts Centre Alice Springs NT
Material and Form The Sculptor as Craftsman' Third Australian Sculpture Triennial Melbourne
Peace Earth Peace Mail Art Exhibition University of Alberta Edmonton Alberta, Canada
- 1985 Four Aspects of Contemporary Australian Ceramics (with Jeff Mincham Jenny Orchard and Stephen Szonyi) Orange Regional Art Gallery Orange NSW
Common Ground R.M.I.T Ceramics Graduates 1948-1981 Devise Gallery Melbourne
Selected Works The Mayfair and Jackson Collections of Contemporary Australian Ceramics Geelong Regional Art Gallery Victoria
National Ceramics Conference Exhibition University of Melbourne
- 1986 Impulse and Form Art Gallery of Western Australia
Clay '86 Touring Exhibition Tasmania (Launceston, Burnie, Devonport, Hobart)
Luv a Duck Invitation Exhibition Undercroft Gallery University of Western Australia Perth
- 1987 Early Acquisitions from the Victorian State Collection Victorian State Collection Gallery Melbourne
Ceramic Showpieces from the Shepparton Collection Orange Regional Gallery Orange NSW
Fire and Earth - Contemporary Australian Ceramics Manly Art Gallery and Museum Sydney
- 1988 International Ceramics Solander Galleries Canberra
Ceramics from the 1st International Symposium National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne
- 1989 Disintegration Six Aspects of Australian Ceramics Townsville Regional Art Gallery & Art Gallery of Queensland
- 1992 Dreams [works by Teschendorff/Beames/Clark/Seeman/France and Jones] 1992 Festival of Perth Exhibition, Fremantle Arts Centre Fremantle WA
- 1994 Heavier Than Air (with Annette Seeman) Perth Institute of Contemporary Art Perth
Icons to Irony Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Annual Exhibition Perth
- 1995 The Delinquent Angel: Australian Historical, Aboriginal and Contemporary Ceramics 1830-1995 Museo Internazionale Ceramiche Faenza Italy
- 1996 Touring Exhibition The Delinquent Angel to Major Galleries in Japan Thailand Malaysia Singapore and Australia 1996- 1997
Post-Pak Exhibition Canberra Institute of the Arts Australian National University Canberra
Thrones CCWA Gallery Perth

The artist's resolve to remain in this difficult intellectual space is confirmed by the intensity of the new *Series IV* images. Whilst there is a luminous *material* intensity in the depth of surface due to the way Teschendorff builds layer upon layer of paint & wax, often concealing complex drawings, detail, colour & text, the potential to seduce the viewer is offset by an embedded lack of resolution; a paradox between making & meaning that encourages interpretive decoding of his essentially simple, repetitive symbols. In this sense, his use of title is a beginning of the artist's need to constantly decode his own imagery, as well as offering the viewer a starting point.

The ineffable quality of the truly effective symbol is a function of its complexity, in the sense of presenting virtually limitless possibilities for decoding – the symbol (s) must offer more possibilities for decoding than could possibly have been consciously encoded in it.(10)

This is no more evident than in Teschendorff's use of a fiery Latin cross in XXXVIII *In Memoriam: Australia Day Perth 2007 (Shape of things to come)*, the uneasy presence of a sanguine hunter's moon in XXXXI *al Azhar (Blood Moon)* & the appropriated green stripe of portraiture bisecting XXXXII *Ka'bah (Portrait with green stripe)*. These most recent images confront the artist's ability to explore the potential for an intense & personal emotional response to the materiality of surface & image, and to the allusion to the contemporary events that inform the works. For submerged beneath these seductive abstracted surfaces is an interrogation of conflict, war, religious bigotry, democratic process and guilt; even death, torture & terror. Yet there is something in these works that seeks to reclaim a measure of humanity from the calculated horror & depravity of twenty-first century conflict. They are works for our time; at once nervously self-seeking yet redolent with quietude and doubt. It is in this space of paradox that they reveal the artist's belief in an eventual future, not now, perhaps not soon, but free from the singular & conjoint threat of self-righteous coalitions of the willing or a real or imagined axis of evil.

Annette Seeman March 2007

Annette Seeman is a WA artist & academic. Currently Coordinator of BA (Art) Honours PG Diploma & MA (Visual Arts) in the Faculty of Built Environment Art & Design Curtin University Perth

Endnotes

- (1) Jack Flam *Motherwell* 1991 Phaidon Press Oxford p21
Flam, formerly Professor of Art History at Brooklyn College NY was a close friend of Motherwell, & became, (in 1979) co-editor of *Documents of Modern Art* a series begun by Motherwell in 1944.
- (2) Ibid p21
- (3) Ibid p22
- (4) Artist Interview #1 John Teschendorff in Annette Seeman *The Domestic Muse & the Unheroic Object* 2005 Unpublished MFA Thesis Graduate Research School UWA p63
- (5) See Bell (Australia) Lane (UK) Zamorano-Vivas (Spain) Anderson (Australia) Cochran (Australia) Pasco (Australia/Italy) Borrmann (Germany) Hood (Australia/USA) Young (Australia) et al for more detail of Teschendorff's practice during 1970-1985
- (6) Artist Interview #1/Teschendorff in Annette Seeman p65
- (7) Ibid p65
- (8) See Susan Sontag *Regarding the Pain of Others* 2003 Farrar Straus & Giroux NY
- (9) Sharon Sliwinski *Camera War, Again* in Suhail Malik (Ed) *Journal of Visual Culture* Vol 5 Number 1 April 2006 Sage Publications London & New York p91
- (10) Jack Flam *Motherwell* 1991 Phaidon Press Oxford p22

This scholarly essay was commissioned by John Gustav, Fifth Baron von Tischendorf March 2007



History of Ideas Series IV
(Lukisan Kecil)
Oil Acrylic Enamel & Wax
on Canvas on Wood
290 x 330 x 55

14. Sekala Niskala I 2007

15. Sekala Niskala II 2007

16. Sekala Niskala III 2007



17. Sekala Niskala IV 2007

18. Sekala Niskala V 2007

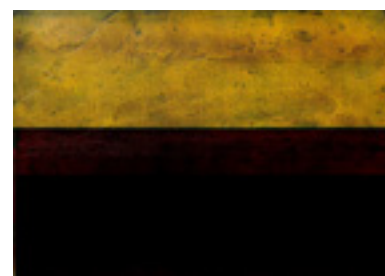
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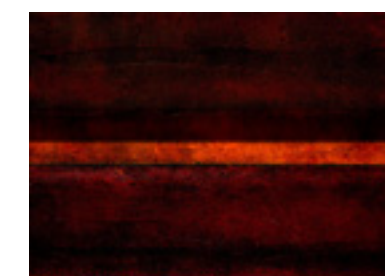
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21. Drawing XXVIII The only way out
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22. Drawing XXIX Untitled (for Elizabeth
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26. Drawing XXXIII Quillon 2007 Pencil
Acrylic & Wax on Arches Paper
Image Size 330 x 370

**THE POLITICS OF ABSTRACTION:
A REFLECTION ON JOHN TESCHENDORFF'S HISTORY OF IDEAS SERIES IV 2006-2007**

Abstraction, in any of its multitudinous forms continues to perplex those who anticipate seeing something that they recognise in an artwork, particularly in those artworks traditionally described as a painting or a drawing. Paradoxically, if abstraction is indeed art about *nothing*, how is it that many artists have succeeded so brilliantly in using abstraction to actually say *something* that transcends both figuration & the world of the real? For example, Robert Motherwell (one of Teschendorff's admired artists), pursued an enduring engagement with tragedy in our time in his series of images *Elegies to the Spanish Republic*. Beginning in 1945 & continuing into the 1990s this amazing series passionately interrogated the artist's interest in pictorial language, in Symbolist literature, particularly Spanish literature & poetry, in music & in modernism as an intellectual/philosophic construct. American academic & author, Jack Flam (1) talks about the nexus between the complexity of the images and the application of a 'relatively fixed vocabulary of what [...] remain relatively simple, basic forms'

The *Elegy* paintings, though not necessarily concerned directly with the Spanish Republic, are nonetheless always elegiac in tone & tragic in feeling, and convey what [the artist] has often characterised as a particularly 'Spanish' range of emotion: the tragic sense of pride & passion suggested in *cante jondo*, in the spectacle of the *corrida* and in the notion of *duende*. [...] they also involve a complex system of allusions...they refer, in a very evocative way to numerous forms in the real world, and they also make powerful, though indirect, literary allusions'. (2)

Flam's use of 'allusion' in the interpretation of the Motherwell paintings eloquently describes the way an artist evokes a personal series of emotional associations. In 1949, whilst deeply immersed in the works of Federico Garcia Lorca, Motherwell painted 'At five in the Afternoon' (the title is a refrain from Lorca's poem *Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias*). 'The painting was meant neither as an illustration of the Lorca poem, nor as a visual equivalent to it. But by referring to the poem in the title of the painting [he] has evoked a whole network of allusions that enrich our viewing of the painting – by connecting specifically to the emotional tissue of the poem and by bringing to the fore specific qualities inherent in the painting. [...] it is possible to *decode* this painting in ways that go beyond the conscious way that the forms of the painting were originally *encoded*. And in fact, by giving the painting such an allusive title [he] has to some degree begun the process of *decoding* himself. Any system of allusions is, among other things, an aid to decoding, or the indication of a direction in which the decoding can proceed.' (3)

Understanding something of the way Flam defines how allusions and codes operate is useful when approaching Teschendorff's involvement with his *History of Ideas*, for as an artist he is known for a singular aversion to talking about his work & its meanings. In 1983, thirty years after Motherwell painted 'At five in the Afternoon', a world apart, and still seventeen years before the *History of Ideas Series I*, Teschendorff exhibited *Elegy for a Suburban Mother I* (1981/82). Using serried rows of black domestic objects he alludes to darker personal spaces, to tragedy real & imagined, hidden beneath the familiar & essentially self satisfied veneers of suburban tranquillity.

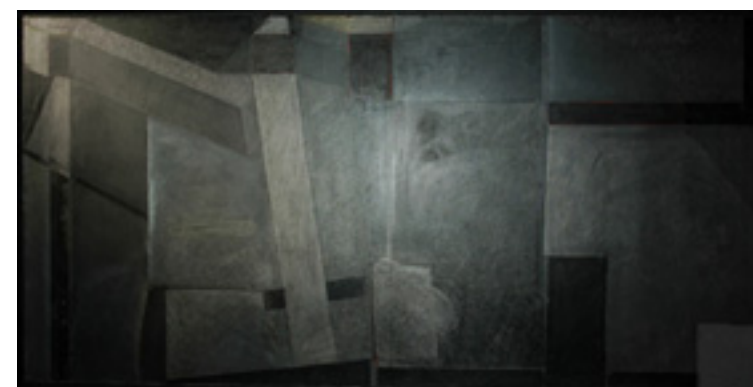


Elegy for a Suburban Mother I Melbourne 1982 82 x 170 x 13.5 cm
Wood Porcelain Found Objects Collage Oil Acrylic & Enamel
Art Gallery of Western Australia

The *Elegy* series was important for me, both in the time that it was made (the early 1980's) and in the things that were spoken about, things associated with the past, and, as with my suburban stuff, it always emerged as grey/black. I often thought that the dark space of the thing defined itself before I actually knew what was going to be in it...*Elegy I* was a considered attempt by a male artist to describe the condition of the suburban mother. [...] I have always hoped that there were enough clues in the title and in the work itself, to enable interested viewers to *read* a story of their own making' (4)

Whilst Teschendorff's *Elegy* series and the associated *Still Life* series are now recognised as a defining moment in the development of contemporary Australian ceramics (5), the technical & structural requirements of assemblage became problematic for him, & were eventually rejected in 1985 in favour of working more directly with surface, with drawing & with paint. (6) 'It is interesting to see that these first drawings (*Tales of Life & Death 1991-1994*) were all grey/black...I also began the first *History of Ideas* in 1992, also black. There is increasingly less of the symbolical/identifiable (figurative) use of the domestic object in the *History*, but in many ways the works are as redolent with the matter of the domestic as before. In fact, the abstracted image & surface talks more eloquently of this hidden/heroic space than the earlier narratives that were concerned more with the allegorical realities within the space, and of the space itself' (7)

In late 2002 Teschendorff made the first drawings for his *History of Ideas Series III*. Whilst the increasingly fundamentalist political tensions between east & west, & their associated atrocities during the first few years of the new millennium made real Susan Sontag's observation that *one can no longer talk about war without talking about the presentation of war* (8) Teschendorff set about describing the matter of conflict, the presentation of war, without the visual specificities, without the essential real time images of conflict or atrocity. Allowing the viewer to *decode* an allusive image without the necessity to engage what Canadian academic Sharon Sliwinski describes as a '*psychic dilemma* [where] the spectator as a witness, as in psychic crisis, and as defending against traumatic perception – may allow for an important reconsideration of the relationship between ethics & aesthetics. One might say that regarding atrocity photographs entails a crisis of witnessing made from the very reception of the traumatic information presented in the image. Each new image demands a fresh mourning for the lost ideals of humanity. (9)



A Darkness at Noon with Four Red Boxes
(another job for Daniel Libeskind)
Fremantle 2003
Charcoal Graphite Chalk Acrylic & Wax on
Arches Paper
Two panels 107 x 216 cm overall
Galerie Düsseldorf Perth

An early work from the third series, *A Darkness at Noon* (2003) began as a reflection on Arthur Koestler's 1940 political novel. The four red boxes in the title (and in the drawing) refer to Rubashov's confessional discourse on the political themes of totalitarianism, socialism, communism & individualism. But observing the frenzied aftermath to the 9/11 attacks, Teschendorff was compelled to rework the drawing to attempt to contextualise the enormity of what had then become *the* media/political/religious event of the decade. The Koestler setting remained, & was joined by the dark cavernous spaces of Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, the subtitle alluding to further work for this ubiquitous artist/architect at the now mythologised ground zero. Apart from an oblique reference to two towers (one standing one not) in the lower right, the work is darkly abstract, darkly allegorical. Does Teschendorff believe, as Motherwell & others before him, that for many western artists, black is death & white is life? If so, it is possible to be overwhelmed by the dramatic weight of Libeskind's presence, with the laboured darkness of holocaust, balanced in some strange way by the calculated humiliations of September 11. But, spend time with this drawing & the darkness slowly retreats, the luminosity of the human spirit begins to reassert itself; perhaps to leave behind, at least until the next time, that noxious amalgam of government, religion & media, the site of fundamentalist rhetoric & of imperialist agendas