



DRAWN

George Haynes, Merrick Belyea, Nic Compton and Ric Spencer

Shire of Mundaring Invitational Art Acquisition Exhibition

24 February - 21 April 2024

FOREWORD

Drawing holds a unique power as a means of thinking and communication. It serves as a visual language that transcends words, expressing thoughts, emotions, and perceptions in a distinctly personal and captivating manner.

Drawing is not merely a technical skill but a way of connecting with the world. George Haynes, Merrick Belyea, Nic Compton and Ric Spencer understand and utilise this inherent power to explore, comprehend and communicate. For them, drawing is a form of thinking, a way to navigate the complexities of existence and translate abstract thoughts into tangible imagery.

George Haynes has considerably impacted Western Australian Art as a representational and figurative painter and drawer, and as a teacher and mentor. His exploration of colour, tone, perspective and composition,



combined with his acute observation of light in nature, results in his unique expression of Western Australian light. His curiosity has no bounds in exploring possibilities in painting. Still, his drawings are a recognisable signature of his practice, expertly drafted in charcoal, bold textural renders of light in play. Drawing has been a constant stream

of consciousness for George, a lifelong process of capturing and translating life's moments onto paper.

Merrick Belyea's drawings are notes to self. Usually, rapid en plein air sketches with willow charcoal and enamel spray paint to capture the essence of an idea or feeling that has captivated him. These notes are reworked in the studio

until the thought or emotion is revealed and often discarded, rarely exhibited. Executed during the COVID-19 epidemic lockdowns, the drawings conjure a menacing foreboding as we looked east to the Darling Scarp, towards a border we could no longer cross. They

sparked the paintings for *Scarp*, Merrick's solo exhibition at Art Collective WA in February 2023.

Nic Compton, a sculptor, uses drawing to understand form, communicate ideas, and explore his connection to nature. Inspired by walks in New Zealand and Western Australia, Nic simplifies the experience of

being in nature and explores themes of growth and deterioration. For Nic, drawing is like coming home; it is a necessary thing to do, to re-centre, ground, and recalibrate.

Recently, his drawings have become a form of meditation, distraction, and contemplation as he convalesces after open-heart surgery. Restricted in movement and unable to sculpt, he draws.

For Ric Spencer, drawing is a profoundly personal aesthetic experience; he describes it as drawing out the experience through the body or conversational aesthetics. Drawing is a deliberate act of making, an intimate and intuitive relationship between the object of attention, his body, the pencil, and the paper as he works to capture the weight, form, feeling and essence of experience. In *Suburban Foraging (coffee rock)*, Ric focuses on rocks similar to those of the Darling Scarp but found in his suburban garden or during walks in his coastal neighbourhood. Reaching into



the depth of their ancient being, he draws forth their essence in layers of pencil that accumulate to build up the structure and record the 'feedback loop' or conversation with the rock. The soft graphite pencil can express acute sensitivity and energetic blackness.

Drawn showcases the distinctive language of drawing by four eminent Western Australian artists. Their lines and marks on paper draw from diverse creative wells and conceptual concerns, but for each

artist, whether they draw to describe, research, investigate, meditate or heal, they have very personal connections to the objects of their attention. They prompt us to pause, observe, and reflect on the intricacies of our surroundings and experience the beauty of this visual language for ourselves.

Jen Kerr, Curator, 2024

GEORGE HAYNES



The works in this exhibition are a selection of charcoal drawings accompanied by a series of lithographs from the inaugural Mark Howlett Foundation commission in 1995 (held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia). They are keen observations of everyday Australian life and landscape. Haynes is a master of light, creating harmonious drawings of tone and texture with a flair for composition that imbues a musical quality to his works. His sophisticated depiction of light has influenced and inspired generations of artists.

George Haynes was born in Kenya in 1938. In 1962, after studying at the Chelsea School of Art in London, he moved to the artistic enclave of Darlington, WA where he lived for some time. He has depicted the area in his paintings and drawings ever since.

Haynes is a prolific artist whose work resides in the most prestigious private and public Collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Artbank, Bankwest, The University of Western Australia,

Curtin University, Murdoch University, Royal Perth Hospital and St John of God Health Care.

George Haynes: In Search of Painting is the newly published artist monograph featuring essays by eminent arts writers John McDonald (Art Critic, Sydney Morning Herald) and Sally Quin (Curator, The University of Western Australia Art Collection). The 200-page book illustrates Haynes' art career with over 150 colour photographs.

George Haynes is a member of Art Collective WA.

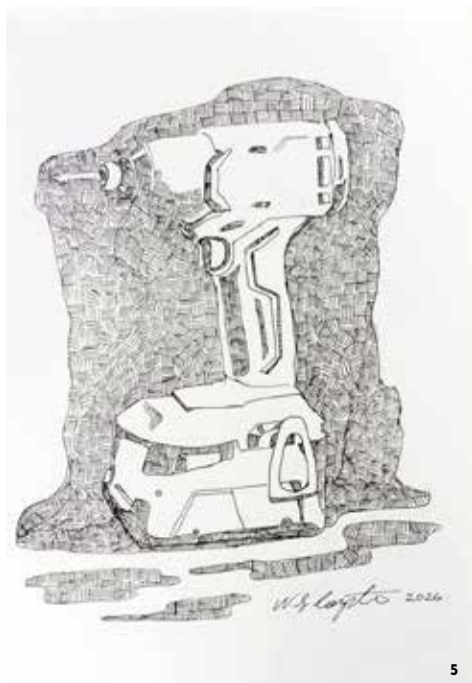
NIC COMPTON

The act of drawing is mark making – incorporating light and dark, texture and colour - to communicate ideas or ways of seeing. Drawing from life can show you the complexity of the simplest objects. Drawing is part of Compton's art practice and often forms part of the pathway to building sculptural work. After recent open-heart surgery, some of his drawings have been observations of domestic scenes, like the gas heater that sparks to life when the tap is turned on or the CPAP machine that provides air under pressure for easier sleep. Other drawings have been imaginative explorations of the organic world and vascular systems that support all life.

Compton has continued to draw throughout his career, and very much enjoys the act of sketching and drawing, both for the meditative benefits and the insights that such intense focus can provide.

Nic Compton studied at Claremont School of Art and Curtin University majoring in sculpture. He moved to Parkerville in the 1990s where he also had a studio at the original Parkerville Children's Home. Here he was able to work on the large timber sculptures that were part of his solo exhibition *Deep Time Trawling* at Fremantle Arts Centre in 2000. Compton has a passion for wood carving and construction, and many of his drawings are concept designs for sculptures. He has completed many public and private commissions, and his work is held in a number of collections including the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Lawrence

Wilson Art Gallery, City of Wanneroo and Shire of Mundaring. Compton currently lives and works in York, WA.



MERRICK BELYEA

This series of drawings was completed during uncertain COVID times. Darlington clouds are looking east on a hot afternoon as the wind shifts and the atmosphere physically changes. Clouds grow and are constantly on the move. Static detail is not helpful to depict an incoming storm. These drawings are ruminations on the enormity of natural phenomena and the uncertainty of how to depict it. For Belyea, a drawing is never finished and is the purest form of trying to understand exactly what is in front of us. A drawing provides him with a mnemonic less imperfect than a photograph and gives him some cannon fodder for larger and more ambitious works.

Merrick Belyea was born in 1969, in Perth, Western Australia and studied fine art at Claremont School of Art. He moved to Parkerville in the early 1990s where he had a studio in an old dormitory building at the original Parkerville Children's Home. Since his first solo show in 1995, Belyea has maintained a regular exhibiting schedule and studio practice, now based in Fremantle, WA.

Belyea was invited to exhibit at the Australian Embassy in the Philippines in 2001 and Art Stage Singapore in 2015. He was included in the Australian Art Collector 'Australia's Most Collectable Artists' list in 2004 and 2006. Belyea is an active member of the Western Australian art scene, playing a pivotal role in a number of artist-run-initiatives, most recently as a foundation member of Art Collective WA. In 2021, he was awarded the John Stringer Prize for his painting series, *Brigadoon*.

Belyea's works are included in prominent collections, including the Art Gallery

of Western Australia, Wesfarmers Arts, Artbank, Janet Holmes à Court Collection, St John of God Health Care, The University of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University, Bankwest, Royal Perth Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital, North Metropolitan TAFE, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, AM International Calabria Italy, City of Fremantle, City of Joondalup, City of Wanneroo, City of Melville, City of Swan and City of Perth.

Merrick Belyea is a member of Art Collective WA.



RIC SPENCER



Ric Spencer's practice is platformed on walking as art, centred on the experience of conversational aesthetics and the translation of found experience into an examination of the art process. This series of pencil drawings continues a collection of works based on suburban foraging, in this case finding rocks in his garden or while walking on the side of suburban roads. The series is of small laterite spalls, commonly known as coffee rock, a sedimentary layered rock found on the Darling Scarp, around Perth's suburbs and across the South West of WA. This ubiquitous rock is very much a part of the hill's landscape where Spencer grew up, seen in gardens and on road verges throughout the suburban streets where he walks. The rock drawings are in graphite and represent a geological connection between drawing material and subject matter.

Ric Spencer is a Western Australian visual artist, writer and curator currently living and working on Whadjuk Boodjar in Coolbellup, WA. Spencer grew up in Lesmurdie and has a long connection to the Darling Scarp. In childhood, he spent much of his time in Mundaring visiting friends, playing sport, and spending many days at the Weir. Over his career Spencer has been involved in numerous art activities as a curator, writer and artist; has exhibited in Australia

and internationally; and has had his writing published in Australian, UK and American art journals. Recent exhibitions include *Bread of Bone*, Holmes à Court Gallery and Vasse Felix Gallery (2023), *Extraction*, Holmes à Court Gallery (2021), *On Revolution*, Gallery Central (2021), *No Parking*, PS Art Space (2019), *Brilliant*, Moores Building Art Space (2018), *PCWK*, Nyisztor Studio, (2018) and *...in between you and I*, a solo show at PS Art Space (2016).

IMAGES

Cover: Merrick Belyea, *Darlington Cloud 3* (detail), 2020, enamel and charcoal on paper, 59 x 42 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA.

1. George Haynes, *From the Bike Path* (detail), 2010, charcoal on Arches paper, 56 x 76 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA.
2. Nic Compton, *Symbiosis Heart*, 2024, dry pastel on paper, 42 x 30 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.
3. George Haynes, *Jane and the Cyad* (detail), 1995, lithograph on paper, ed. 43 of 50, 57 x 76 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA.
4. Merrick Belyea, *Darlington Cloud 5* (detail), 2020, enamel and charcoal on paper, 59 x 42 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Art Collective WA.
5. Nic Compton, *Tool #3*, 2024, ink on paper, 30 x 20 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.
6. Ric Spencer, *Suburban Foraging (coffee rock) series* (detail), 2023, pencil on paper, 42 x 56 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



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