

FROM THE HOMEFRONT:

ROBERT ROONEY

WORKS 1953-1988

From the Homefront:
Robert Rooney
Works 1953 - 1988

October 19 - November 28, 1990

Monash University Gallery
Monash University
Clayton, Victoria 3168
Australia

Curator	Jenepher Duncan
Assistant Curator	Merryn Gates
Editorial	Jenepher Duncan Merryn Gates
Typing	Sandra Ellemor
Photography	Henry Jolles Others as specified
Catalogue Design	Design XTension
Printing	Victorian Printing Pty Ltd 3 George Street Blackburn 3130

Published by Monash University Gallery
October 1990

Front Cover *Variations Slippery Seal II, 1967*
(detail) Cat. No. 43.

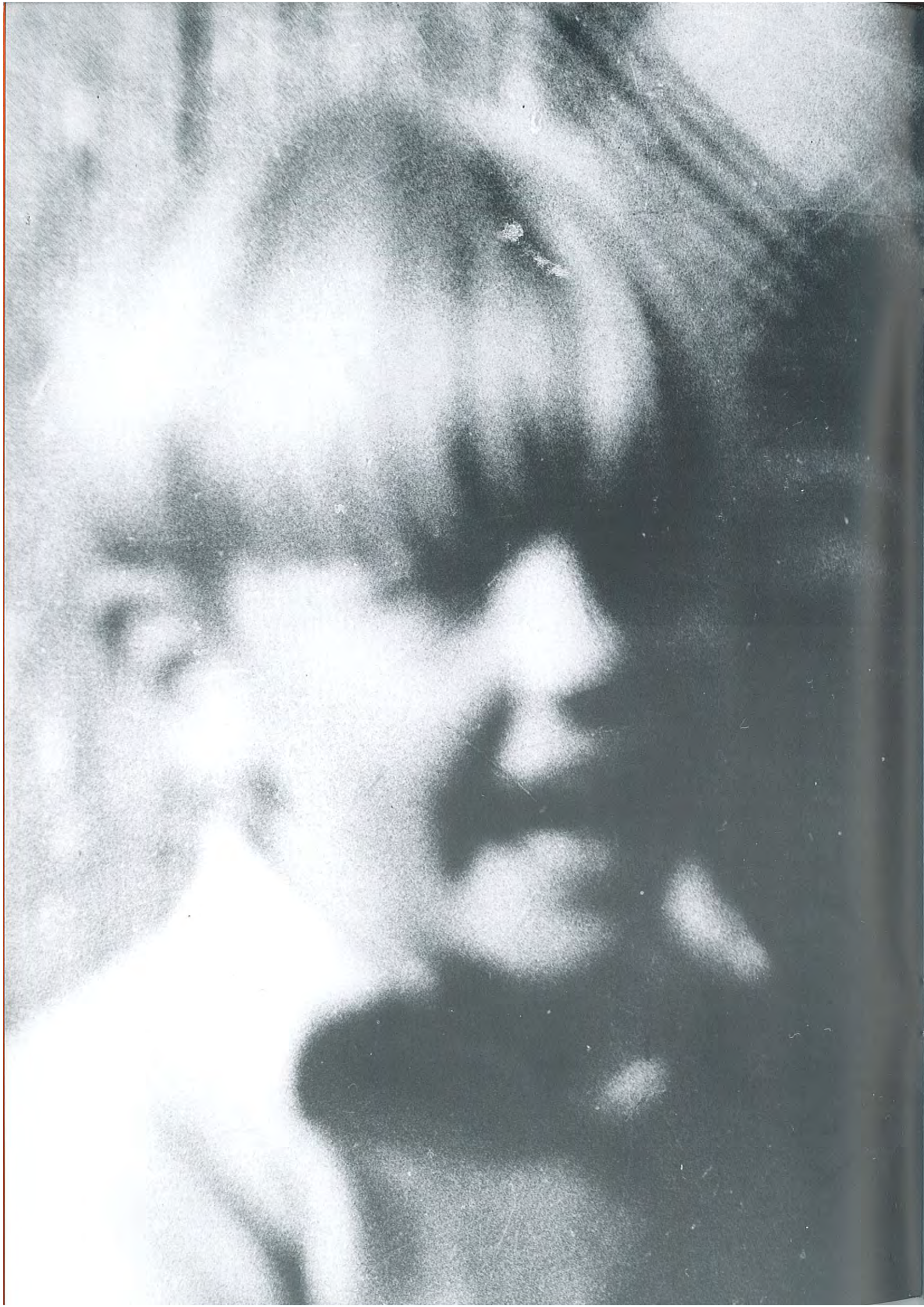
MONASH UNIVERSITY GALLERY

Director	Jenepher Duncan
Curator	Merryn Gates
Secretary	Sandra Ellemor
Security	Bevan Smith

© The Authors
ISBN 0 7326 02157



Assisted by the Visual Arts Craft Board
of the Australia Council



THE ARGONAUTS CLUB

Before the sun and the night and the blue sea, I vow
to stand faithfully by all that is brave and beautiful,
to seek adventure, and having discovered aught
of wonder, or delight, of merriment or loveliness,
to share it freely with my comrades, the Band of
Happy Rowers.

SIGNED *R. Rooney*
NUMBER *Alanta 20.*



A U S T R A L I A N B R O A D C A S T I N G C O M M I S S I O N

Left: Robert Rooney, age 5.

Above: 'The Argonaut's Club', membership certificate.

C O N T E N T S

- 4 **Robert Rooney**
CHARLES GREEN
- 11 **Songs I have Seen**
ROSEMARY ADAM
- 15 **Robert Rooney and the
McKimm/Rooney/Clayton Music
Collaboration: Melbourne, 1960s**
JOHN WHITEOAK
- 22 **Robert Rooney as Pop**
PHILIP BROPHY
- 29 **Artist's Statements**
- 30 **Selected Writings by Robert Rooney**
- 34 **Biography**
JENEPHER DUNCAN
- 44 **Exhibitions and Bibliography**
MERRYN GATES
- 51 **Catalogue of Works**
- 59 **Acknowledgements**

Robert Rooney

BY CHARLES GREEN

1. THE COUNTERFEITER

Vincent's education, which had been materialistic in tendency, prevented him from believing in the supernatural which gave the demon an immense advantage. The demon made a frontal attack upon Vincent; he approached him crookedly and furtively. One of his cleverest manoeuvres consists in presenting us our defeats as if they were victories.

Andre Gide, *The Counterfeiters*.¹

Robert Rooney is one of Australia's most sophisticated artists; it is altogether typical that he has consistently presented his public with fictions, both in his works and in his representations of his life. It is even more characteristic that he chooses to improve on reality, and give it a subtlety that more straightforward telling might not achieve. Rooney only reluctantly allows that his biography may be relevant to more than an iconographical interpretation of his works.

Shortly after Robert Rooney left art school, at the end of 1957, he was commissioned by the advertising agency Nichols Cummings to complete a series of pen-and-ink illustrations for



Pilkington Predicts: public transport can be enjoyable, n.d., offset print. Collection: the artist



Pilkington Predicts: the progress of your firm will be symbolized this way, colour reproduction, *Time*, November 1, 1963, p.3

their customer Pilkington Glass. Rooney had studied Graphic Design at Swinburne Institute, in suburban Hawthorn close to the home where he has lived for most of his life. Although he failed the final year of his course, he was able to turn out a long series of drawings which were accepted by the agency, and which appeared in journals like *Readers Digest* and *Time*. Rooney said: 'I couldn't believe it, they were so primitively drawn...They got their money's worth out of me, but I did earn enough to buy a new stereo.'²

Rooney's assessment is disingenuous, to say the least. His

drawings were not at all primitive; they were in fact highly sophisticated, and showed considerable awareness of the styles of commercial illustration current at the time. Further, these small pieces predicted all the major themes in Rooney's art over the next three decades. Either the young Rooney was possessed of remarkable prescience, or the latter-day Rooney has been an artist of singularly consistent vision.

This is not to reify the cliché of heroic profundity. For what links *Pilkington Glass: Pilkington Predicts...*, 1958, with the 1983 series of paintings *As You Were*, is not evidence of depending experience – usually demonstrated by older artists' idiosyncratic 'master's' touch. Rooney seems, in this comparison, to have eliminated over time any signs of manufacture and signals of struggle. There is instead a proliferation of description, allusion and punning. In his works these qualities stand in for presence, but even in 1958 there was evidence of Rooney's homeward voyaging; memory assumed the qualities of a mythical Golden Fleece. Rooney was painting images that retrieved childhood and adolescence. He had been, of course, a childhood member of the ABC's children's club, *The Argonauts*, for which Jeffrey Smart was coincidentally Phidias, the broadcaster on art. In retrospect, Rooney's reading of Gide's schoolboy antiheroes, in *The Counterfeiters*, was seen in his memory's reversal of commercial success into art director's mistake. His oblique displacement of sources was seen too in the fortuitous but inadvertent adaptation of post-war Neo-Romantic illustration, of the tragic, suicidal figures of British artists John Minton and Keith Vaughan, to the ends of advertising safety glass for domestic settings. The particular scratchy line, irregular blocking out, School of Paris deformations and shorthand simplifications were all characteristic of these influences. Similarly, the persistent inclusion in his Pilkington drawings of a raised point-of-view, and the foreground presence of the watcher – often a child – was in keeping with the sentimentality of his influences. This was distinct from the different capriciousness of equivalent Sydney Charm School illustration, like that of Adrian Feint, Donald Friend or Melbourne artist, Eric Thake. For Rooney's borrowings were, strangely enough, altogether more sombre even if they were sentimental.

Gary Catalano said, in *The Years of Hope*, that Rooney's early paintings reminded him of a Robert Dickerson.³ By now it is a truism to remark on Charles Blackman's influence, especially of his paintings of schoolgirls and suburban billboards.

Far more pertinently, given Rooney's bibliophile nature, we should consider the influence of the sentimental, humanist working-class vision of Ben Shahn, the American social realist whose works were extraordinarily popular in the 40s. Rooney knew Shahn's work through a volume in the *Penguin Modern Painters* series, by James Thrall Soby.⁴ Catalano correctly observed that

WHO IS GOD? WELL IT IS AN IMMENSE PERSON AND HE LIVES UP IN HEAVEN. I GOESS UP IN OUTER SPACE HE MADE THE EARTH AND THE HEAVEN & THE STARS AND THE SUN AND THE PEOPLE. HE MADE LIGHT HE MADE DAY HE MADE NIGHT. HE HAS SUCH POWERFUL EYES HE DOESN'T HAVE MILLIONS AND THOUSANDS AND BILLIONS AND HE CAN STILL SEE US WHEN WE'RE DEAD. HE STARTED ALL THE PLANTS GROWING AND HE I THINK OF HIM WHO MAKES FLOWERS & GREEN GRASS & THE BLUE SKY & THE YELLOW SUN. GOD IS EVERYWHERE & I DON'T KNOW HOW HE COULD DO IT



Ben Shahn, 'Artist's Christmas and New Year Cards', *Graphis*, 20:112, 1964, p.137



Ben Shahn, *Cherubs and Children* 1944, Ben Shahn, Penguin Modern Painters, Great Britain, 1947, plate 27

there was a distinction between Rooney and other Australian figurative painters of the time. Rooney exemplified an unusual type of metaphoric sensibility, for whom dominant registers of significance were eliminated in favour of an equivalence of incident. There was no single, most important part of the picture – unlike, say, an Albert Tucker. All parts of a painting were treated as sites for the imagination. Totemic emblems and overt symbolism, so beloved of more macho Antipodeans and thought to be indispensable in the establishment of 'significance', were minimised. For Rooney, at all points of his career but especially during the austere *Slippery Seal* paintings of the late 60s, symbols were never wilfully asserted. From the beginning he refused to overdetermine meaning – his shapes were ambiguous. As Catalano noted, children's swings were able to turn into gallows. This was especially odd given his use, even in the late 50s, of photographic sources from the domain of popular culture. His images have little of the mood, though much of the iconography – for example Coke bottles – that we associate with Pop art, drawing on reproductions. In the car accident series these were newspaper cuttings, mainly from *The Sun*. During the 80s, in the *As you were* series, he was to project slides onto canvases, drawing on an extensive collection of transparencies.

According to Soby, it was interesting to note how frequently Ben Shahn portrayed men informally playing musical instruments: 'For his art is often so closely identified with American episode that it furnishes a visual parallel to our epic folk songs'.⁵ Once again, the fiction of hindsight comes into play, for not only

was Rooney an accomplished jazz pianist in the decade following art school, but he was also one of Melbourne's most experimental composers. He was a member of the McKimm/Rooney/Clayton Trio, who experimented with improvisational indeterminacy using graphic notation, and flirted with a crossover between avant-garde jazz and 'serious' concert music. Bartok's folk-based composition had been an important influence on Rooney, as had been the percussive, jerky piano style of Cecil Taylor.⁶ His paintings, then as now, reflected the influence of music. Bars and stripes in paintings like *The Flying Man*, 1962, appear to be self-consciously related to musical intervals, as well as to the packaging labels and Post-Painterly Abstraction that Rooney acknowledges as interests. From his first exhibitions, reviewers consistently noted the use of repetition – often labelled repetitiousness – in his work. Rooney's isolation of figures in voids effectively reduced his falling men to ciphers. Though similarities to Bacon were drawn, the effect was more melancholic than violently expressive. Tellingly, Edwin Tanner agreed to open Rooney's 1963 South Yarra Gallery show.

From the perspective of the *As you were* paintings' clearly signalled appropriation, it is clear that Rooney had always been aware of the arbitrary, mediated nature of visual signs, that his images were transpositions from an original, and that the language of figurative painting was a meta-language rather like scientific formulae. Thus, Alan McCulloch noted that Rooney's red accents were as 'abrupt as signals'.⁷ Other reviewers resented these qualities, quite accurately seeing in his paintings a reaction against humanism. This now recalls his interest in Gide's novel *The Counterfeiters*. Like the French writer's characters, Rooney's figures lacked 'dignity', being 'more specimens with human outlines than people'.⁸ Another critic thought, again with unintentional perception, that Rooney was more interested in stripes than people.

ROBERT ROONEY

AS YOU WERE 1983



NEW PAINTINGS

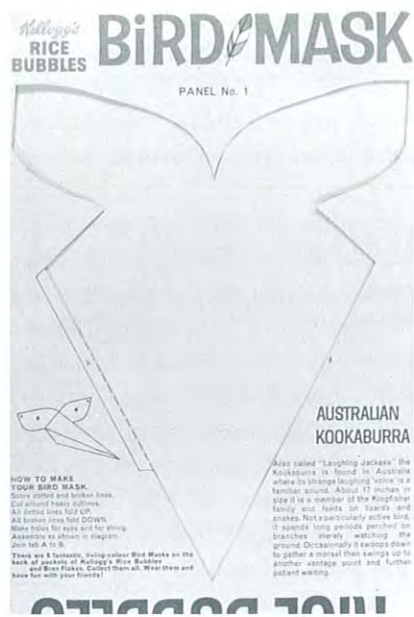
OCT. 12 - 29

PINACOTHECA

10 WALTHAM PLACE, RICHMOND. Ph. 428 3066
Gallery Hours: Wed. Thurs. Fri. 11 - 6, Sat. 11 - 5

Robert Rooney: *As You Were*, New Paintings, exhibition poster, Pinacotheca, 1983

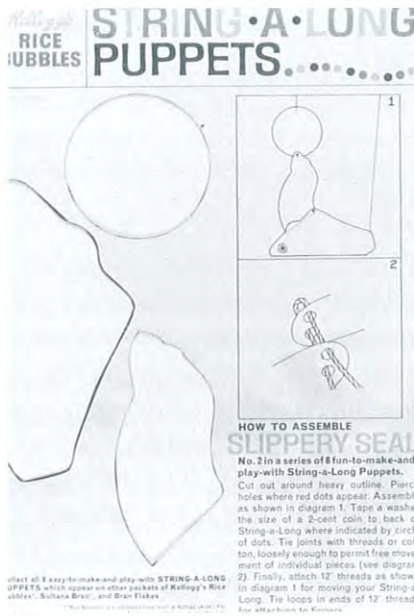
Like Ben Shahn, Rooney chose to image ordinary urban life in a highly formalised, stylised idiom that spoke of musical literacy. He emphasised repetition, spacing incident laterally or in dispersed fashion across a picture, and flattening space into overlapping planes. Both artists made curious use of bright red/blue colour contrasts. All these similarities may be seen in a comparison of Rooney's *Hero*, 1959, and Shahn's *Cherubs and children*,



Kellogg's Cereal Packet cut-out used as stencil for *Cereal Bird Beaks*. Collection: the artist



Kellogg's Cereal Packet cut-out used as stencil for *Canine Capers*. Collection: the artist



Kellogg's Cereal Packet cut-out used as stencil for *Slippery Seals*. Collection: the artist

1944. The American artist's surreal use of dislocated bright red, as the colour of middle distance architecture, effectively flattened perspective and focused incident. This is repeated in Rooney's paintings of the 50s and 60s, and in the brightly coloured backgrounds of 'dead' space in recent works.

Of course Shahn was not the sole influence on Rooney. However, an examination of his debts confirms Rooney's consistency. The artist acknowledged the art school influence of Philip Guston, whose war-time works he saw. Guston's paintings of the 1940s, seen in Australia on the pages of *Art News* were as sentimental, dreamy, dislocated and allusive as early Rooneys. Both artists' works show a fine control of placement and cropping that had benefited from the lessons of Cubism and photography. And the Pilkington Glass drawings share with Shahn's paintings the quality that lines, though often carrying great satirical weight, can also have an autonomous hieroglyphic intensity. The awareness of this laconic abbreviation, in later paintings from the *As you were* series, derailed both nostalgia and the ability to identify with the suggested narrative. The *Slippery Seal* paintings were based on the shapes of a cut-out seal on the back of a packet of breakfast cereal. Reviewing these paintings in 1968, Patrick McCaughey noted that 'Rooney's wit has a subversive effect on his system-building and serialising. The regular repeated image suddenly starts to look random and irrational as he superimposes one regular format onto another.'⁹ Add up all these elements, and it was no wonder that for a short time an ironic, disco-oriented younger generation adopted Rooney as grandfather figure during curator, Paul Taylor's exhibition *POPISM*, at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1982.

Even Robert Rooney's recent paintings from the *Silly Symphony* series, like *Zebra Special*, 1988, betray the cut-and-paste influence of his design training at Swinburne Technical College during the 50s. The Schwitters-like collages of his final year folio were remarkably accomplished, and light years away from tonal realism. He had consciously avoided Meldrumite teaching by attending Swinburne's design course rather than the National Gallery School. Rooney said that he had always wanted to be a 'contemporary' artist, admiring the modernity that he saw in 50s illustrators like Andy Warhol and *Graphis* magazine features. Although Swinburne didn't consider Rooney to be very promising, he was left alone sufficiently in order to follow his own direction, forming a friendship with fellow-student Dale Hickey. Later, he was to gradually pick up a painter's skills from friends; Bob Jacks showed him how to stretch a canvas, but he largely taught himself. Rooney now emphasises the formative nature of these years. He has noted several times that his later works have been a reworking of the 50s apprenticeship. The artist adopted the apprentice's role so fluently that many of the early paintings had the same earnestness as Arshile Gorky's extended studentship of School of Paris masters during the 40s.

This analogy was pointed out by Elwyn Lynn in the catalogue essay for Rooney's Clune Gallery show, in 1964.¹⁰ Rooney said that 'The images in my recent paintings tend to have biographical associations, not necessarily autobiographical, in the sense of going back to my childhood - it is also to do with images and



I rise in flame 1958, oil on composition board, 68.5 x 91.3 (Private Collection)



Mortality Play 1958, oil on composition board, 68.5 x 91.0 (Collection: the artist)



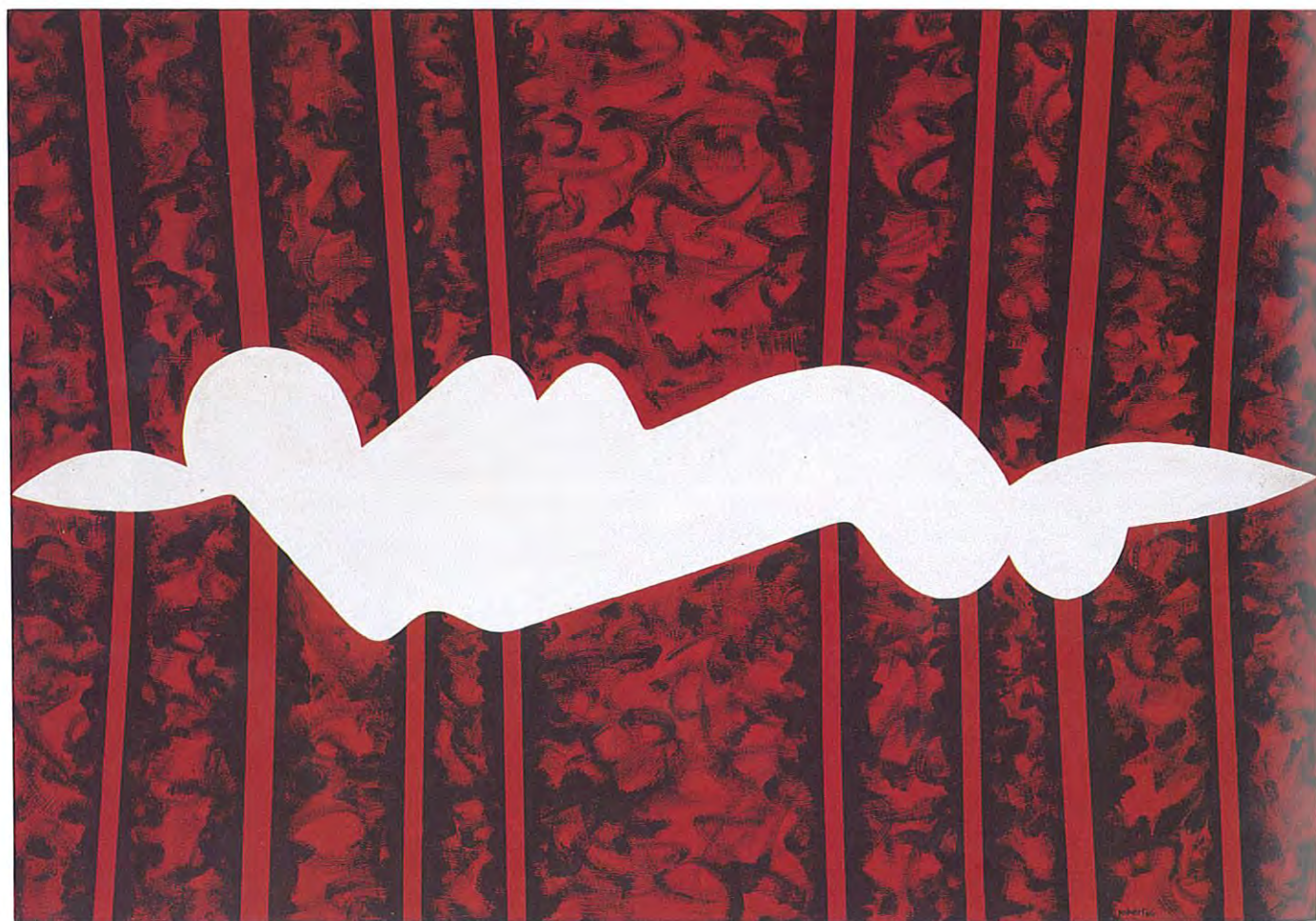
Hero 1959, oil on composition board, 68.5 x 91.5 (Collection: the artist)



Accident 1960, oil on composition board, 61.0 x 122.0 (Collection: the artist)



Red Death 1960, oil on composition board, 81.2 x 133.3 (Collection: the artist)



Available Form 1966, oil on composition board, 63.5 x 91.5 (Private Collection)

ideas I was introduced to when I was at art school in the fifties'.¹¹ His distinction between autobiography and biography was unusual and very revealing; it spoke of a virtual scientific detachment with which he approached his own identity – as its chronicler – and of his awareness that his biography was the subject-matter for conversion into narrative. This was the attitude of an advertising background; Rooney asserted, in an interview for the fashion magazine *Follow Me* in 1986, that 'Emotions can be manufactured like everything else'.¹² Narrative was precisely what Rooney did not find to be a primary experience, as his photographic documentations of the 70s were to testify.

The *Pilkington Glass* drawings predicted Rooney's life-long fascination with the signs of Modernity. *Pilkington predicts...* inevitably recalls the corpus of Modernist utopian diagrams of perception, from Russian Constructivist theory to Bauhaus Pure Design pedagogy – that of Paul Klee, Oskar Schlemmer and Walter Gropius. Oscar Schlemmer's *Delineation of space by a human figure, theoretical drawing*, 1924, was reproduced in post-war *Art New's* 'Design Topics', by Walter Gropius. This diagram is eerily reminiscent of Rooney's work. There is a latent suggestion, as in the Rooney, that the Subject – who is in this case also the foreground watcher – is the epicentre of a network of influences and is at the affect of a constructed environment. The unexpected ambivalences in Gropius's accompanying text are indicative of Modernity's dark side, and suggestive of the psychological drama that Rooney was to find in similar sources. In the middle of a discussion of artistic perception, the Bauhaus master suddenly writes: 'First the wife, then the husband looks down from the window into the street. She sees the gray, trivial, everyday life as it is; but he projects his rich imagination into the scene, transforming it into a sensational picture given brilliance, intensity and meaning to the pattern of life before his eyes.'¹³

In Rooney's early paintings, completed just after art school, figures were wedged together in a shallow, cubist space. The juxtaposed teenagers looked like they were exercising in gymnastic formation; limb overlapped limb. In these pictures, as in some of the artist's early art school prints, heads were placed together, or a watcher gazed inwards, from the foreground back into the space of the picture. The artist's prophecies looked, like Janus, backwards as well as forwards. Rooney drew widely and wildly on the past, and his attraction to the modern was invariably Romantic, though of a type that was both more nihilistic and more sophisticated than that usually chosen by Australian artists. His early car-crash paintings, not to mention the later *Death of James Dean 1 and 2*, 1983, recapitulated another Classical myth – that of Icarus, the doomed youth. When, in the early 1950s, Rooney had looked at books on ballet, one of the photographs, that impressed him was of Serge Lifar in *Icare*. Behind these themes lay his interrogation of experience for traces of the Self; Rooney was to continue this enterprise, and image the body's erasure, in later works.

2. THE CIRCULATION OF TRAFFIC

I am never anything but what I think myself – and this varies so incessantly, that often, if I were not there to make them acquainted,

my morning's self would not recognise my evening's. Nothing could be more different to me than myself.

Andre Gide, *The Counterfeiters*.¹⁴

In 1970 Robert Rooney abandoned painting, and began taking photographs with the simplest camera – an Instamatic – that he could find. Apart from his minimalist participation, in the infamous 'Cup' show with Simon Klose and Dale Hickey at Pinacotheca in 1973, he did not paint again until 1982. The period between 1970 and 1973 represents one of the rare moments of true avant-garde crisis in Australian art history. Otherwise it is usually more correct to speak simply of a history of avant-garde 'taste'.

Just as it seemed for Rooney that his friend Dale Hickey's return to painting was 'the most radical thing, to return to the most traditional academic realism', so Rooney worked with snapshots.¹⁵ Not content with the idealisation that crept inevitably even into Hickey's uncompromising, single-minded paintings of cups and later Cottesbridge landscapes, the artist sought to avoid the look of art: 'Dale gave it (Cottesbridge) all the colour it didn't have'.¹⁶ The Pinacotheca artists' awareness that minimal painting had reached an end-point was not unique. Firstly, avant-gardes in other countries reached the same conclusion at approximately the same time; the sense of an international conceptual movement was widespread. Even Don Judd irritably remarked: 'I think American art is far better than that anywhere else, but I don't think that situation is desirable. Actually, its international art in America and the best thing that could happen would be equal international art elsewhere.'¹⁷ Secondly, commentators noted the crisis in advanced art at about the same time. Robert Pincus-Witten wrote, in *Artforum*, that 'The international Conceptual movement is groggy and moribund. In short, Conceptualism, as a means of sustaining a group of artists' work in concern, is over'.¹⁸ In New York, as well as Melbourne, artists took to documentations and stopped making primary 'things'.

The look of the untutored was one way of avoiding the claims of reductivism. Rooney, like many other artists, made systematic excursions into the realms of the amateur. His type of Pop painting had always related more to photography than to recognisable icons like Campbells soup cans. As Paul Taylor observed, the camera became his sole tool because it seemed to let one avoid making artistic decisions. In this he had been influenced by the artist's books of Californian Ed Ruscha. Rooney said: 'I don't particularly like photographer's photographs. He (Ruscha) was using photographs merely as some sort of technical recorder.'¹⁹

Rooney's desire to be a recording eye reminds one of the ambitions of the Russian revolutionary film-maker Dziga Vertov and his 'kino-eye'. Dziga Vertov's most characteristic sequences were his interminable shots of domestic routines, and of traffic in movement. Much of Rooney's documentation was of similar subjects. *Holden Park 1 and 2*, 1970, resulted from the ritual of parking a car in predetermined locations chosen arbitrarily from his street directory. These photographs were important as a way of fully experiencing day-to-day life; as Rooney said of his work: 'I'm never in a hurry'.²⁰ His snapshots of streets, signs, and cars

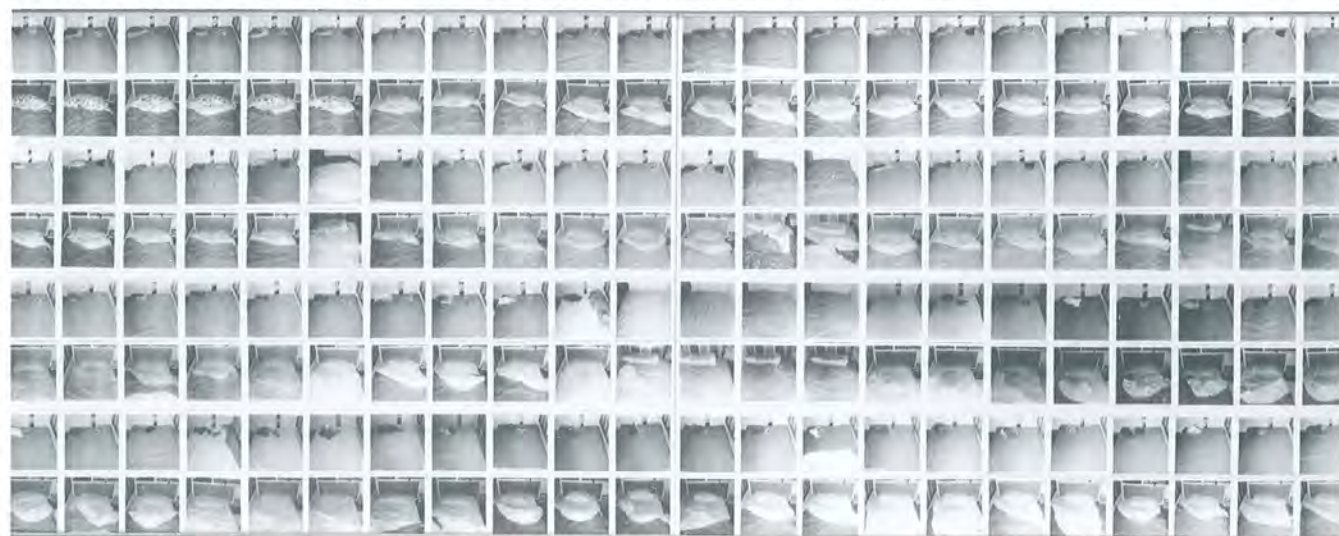


Holden Park 1 & 2 May 1970 1970, 19 colour photographs, each 8.9 x 8.9, sheet 76.0 x 102.0. Collection: the artist

Corners 1972, 36 black and white photographs, each 8.9 x 8.9, sheet 59.5 x 106.4. Collection: National Gallery of Victoria



AM / PM 1974, 176 black and white photographs, each 8.9 x 8.9, sheet 101.7 x 101.7. Collection: National Gallery of Victoria



shares with more domestic panels, like *Garments: 3 Dec 1972 – 19 March 1973, 1973*, a concern with organisation and efficient circulations. He placed his camera directly in front of street fences and signs, so that objects were parallel with the picture plane, and therefore easily described and mapped; clear circulation was crucial. This was a far more important interest, relating to his obsession with repetition, rather than to themes of the banal or Pop iconography. His Holden Parks were doubles of the earlier car accident paintings, just as the folded clothes were, above all, objects in circulation. These were images of the modern city. In a strange way early Modernist themes of the city's interlocking fabric, hygiene, and change were this artist's raw materials. If clothes and scorched almonds reflected an interest in tracing the transitory, then the haunting *The White Rug: For S.K., 1974*, was an image of virtually Buddhist silence. In moving traffic, the body is forgotten except as a place of exchange and an intersection point of information, within a sense of self enlarged by the travelling vehicle. Equally, *The White Rug* imaged the forgotten body and resulting silence. This absence was not that of the Sublime, though it amounted to a negation of traditional ideas of expressiveness. Like the systems of underground cables, pipes and sewers under our roads, what was beneath the surface was an exactly ordered municipality. Rooney had been affected by the encyclopedic conceptualism in the writings of Robert Smithson, who 'had an influence. You could refer to anything. That's always been my way of working'.²¹

In 1968 Patrick McCaughey wrote about Rooney's paintings in terms that might equally have been addressed to his music: 'a lunatic type of visual syncopation, deliberately disjointed and disconcerting. The hard Pop colour adds to the play aspect of Rooney's work and makes no concessions to the decorative'.²² Circulation of traffic, from Rooney's perspective as pedestrian or passenger in others' cars, was disjointed, jerky, and at the same time repetitive and hypnotic. This was the characteristic sense of focus offered by his work, and was very different to the unitary, holistic experience offered by a Robert Hunter painting. For Rooney's works unfolded laterally, whether photographs or paintings. John Whiteoak observed in his study of the artist's music that 'this focus eventually manifested itself in an interest in the complex relationships (e.g. phasing) which can be perceived when repeated, but slightly varied shapes (or sound shapes) are grounded symmetrically'.²³ *Garments: 3 Dec 1972 – 19 March 1973, 1973*, was a panel of 107 photographs of Rooney's folded clothes, taken at the end of each day. The pictures were accompanied by a typewritten text; Rooney listed the date, colour, and the brand-names of the clothes. He said that 'During that period (the 70s) you inflicted boredom on yourself'.²⁴ There is more to the work than this. The cumulative effect of all these clothes is, at this distance from 70s rhetoric, extraordinarily evocative. The ability to both suggest and disperse metaphor was present as in his earlier works. One set of garments might have been a symbol, but with 107 sets any symbolic resonance was drained.²⁵ Each day's picture suggested darker presences, but far more subtly asserted difference from its fellows.²⁵ The documentations suggested the self's location within a circulation of objects. As Robert

Pincus-Witten noted of American conceptual art, 'The ego is demonstrated, reiterated and ultimately proven. I document, therefore I am.'²⁶

There were few artists in Melbourne, noted Paul Taylor, whose lives have been as unexceptional as Robert Rooney's.²⁷ Looking at Rooney's photographic documentations, and later his portraits, leaves the sense of incessant activity and classification. Rooney has often remarked on his desire to make a complete Grand Tour of every last street of the place of his childhood. If his pilgrimages were quite ruthless searches for himself, they were also an attempt to stop the flow of time, by freezing moments in the most detailed descriptions possible. Rooney could not retrieve subjectivity, and was too honest to pretend differently. Thus there are no people in most of his photographs until the portraits of the late 70s. The inhabitants of this city seemed to have gone away, and streets resembled De Chirico's deserted Italian piazzas. The end of art experienced by many Conceptualists during the 70s found a counterpart in this end of life.

When Rooney started taking portraits of his friends and acquaintances in the art world, he allowed his subjects to determine their own poses, and to participate in the choice of setting. It was as if, after the emptiness of the documentations, he found traces of himself in other people, as reviewers like Mary Eagle observed.²⁸ These selves were revealed in ephemera, and the portraits are very much to do with the preservation of life and memory. It was still objects and things that were important. In his miraculous portrait of Peter Booth his friend's mask and the hoses on the floor dominated attention. According to Catalano, 'In the works of many autobiographers the self is the main object of our attentions... Rooney, however, tries to present the objective shared world in all its otherness, and he leaves us with few hints of what he may think or feel about it.'²⁹ Details, such as Peter Booth's feet resting on two lines of hose as if plugging together an electric circuit, were too considered to be amateurish accidents, as was the central placement of John Nixon against a revolutionary-red field in Rooney's portrait of Art Project's director.

3. WORDS

That if, in order to act, we must make a choice, at any rate we are free to choose; and that if we aren't free to choose, the thing is simpler still; the belief that becomes truth for me (not absolutely, no doubt, but relatively to me) is that which allows me the best use of my strength, the best means of putting my virtues into action. For I can't prevent myself from doubting, and at the same time I loathe indecision.

Andre Gide, *The Counterfeiters*³⁰

Two themes may be defined within Rooney's work: the art of deflection in his showing rather than telling about himself; and the collection of images that might, or might not, place a nomadic self. All his development has taken place in the context of art's present prestige as an accessory in the pursuit of the good life. It was thus inevitable that his work would be taken up by Popists during the early 80s, when he exhibited the results of his return to

painting. In 1981 he had shown his complete photoworks. When he did this, 'it was like clearing everything away. I started reorganising my studio. I found all these things - stencils, photographs, reproductions. I began to go over war art, Armed Service annuals, and propaganda.'³¹ Simultaneously, he started subscribing to art magazines again, buying up as many back issues as he could. More importantly, he wrote art criticism regularly from 1980. He noted, from this time, that, 'everything began to fit together', and the activity of writing forced a more rigorous and radical analysis of his intentions upon him.³² Although more commentators have focused on Rooney's use of quotation in his paintings of the early 80s, an interest in representations truth-values



As You Were 1983, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 x 198.0. Collection: University of Tasmania

was probably more important. Rooney's visual puzzles were so fascinating, and his iconographical explanations so compelling, that attention naturally concentrated on his borrowing, puns and the play of significations. For example, *The Mighty Saw*, 1983, was based on the juxtaposition of images suggesting the smashing of Axis powers during World War II: a giant saw from an advertisement in *Fortune* magazine; a picture of pilots from an airforce services annual; and a map of the world from linocuts illustrating the *Child's Journey*. However, something is missing; the objects combined with a certain emptiness or expectancy. This gave his pictures a nostalgic aura. Borrowings shared a canvas but were isolated by Rooney's cropping and re-framing. Because of the division into zones, which often contained distinctly different types of representation, interactions between the picture's parts were limited. Additionally, since we were aware of the period status of his images, we were never involved to the point of identification. They were no more real than musical notes; this denial or evasion of the real was the flip side of Rooney's enervated satire.³³

In painting, according to Rooney, 'some connections are deliberate, some are not, and that to me is what makes it interesting'.³⁴ Rooney's use of visual language was neither programmatic nor naive. He negated presence in order to represent, and since his viewers lacked the simpler anchors of less ambivalent referents, they were set adrift. The more his pictures were explained, the more understanding receded. *As you were* was at one level a complex pun, as the title suggests, about nostalgia and a military order to stand easy. One picture, of a sailor and officer standing at attention, was placed between diagrams of skies filled with warplanes. The mood was both elegiac, like looking at John Minton's late 40s pen-drawings of vanished post-war Europe, and 'retro-ironic' to

use Paul Taylor's memorable phrase.³⁵ These were not attempts at the preservation of childhood memory, or even endeavours to create the substitutes for memory that he had fabricated during the 70s. Instead, the objects blocked memory because, like electric music's 'white noise', they filled sight. Therefore, much of the picture-space was empty, and formal construction was defined not by objects but by encircling patterns. It was clear that the sailors and war-planes were provisional, transitory and soon to be swallowed up by negative spaces.

Most of Robert Rooney's works speak of his intense anxiety and discomfort with traditional ideas of the self. Rooney has preferred instead to make images of physical absence and invisibility. When he curated *Innocence and Danger: An artist's view of childhood* at Heide in 1987, he chose to concentrate on the aggressive, sinister aspects of childhood, and the two extremes of innocence and danger.³⁶ Rooney's persistence as a critic testifies to the importance he has placed on the painting of speech and words, since words may be substituted for actions, and have replaced the poignant documentation of sites from which the Self had been expelled.

NOTES

It should be unambiguously clear that this essay is in no way meant to be a complete survey of either Robert Rooney's life or his work. My intention is both speculative and interpretive; the views expressed are my own, as are the inaccuracies and omissions. I owe thanks most of all to the artist, who with unfailing generosity and remarkable organisation reduced the paid of research. I am grateful to Bruce Pollard, Ashley Crawford (for permission to use his Rooney interview notes) and Lyndell Brown.

1. Andre Gide, *The Counterfeiters*, (translated Bussy, 1931), Penguin, 1966, p.29.
2. Robert Rooney, interview with Ashley Crawford, 1988.
3. Gary Catalano, *The Years of Hope*, Oxford University Press, 1981, p.147.
4. James Thrall Soby, *Ben Shahn*, Penguin, 1947.
5. Soby, *ibid.* p.4.
6. John Whiteoak, 'Beyond Jazz Improvisation: Melbourne', unpublished paper, 1988.
7. Alan McCulloch, *The Herald*, August 28, 1963.
8. Bill Hannan, *The Bulletin*, Sept. 14, 1963.
9. Patrick McCaughey, 'Mainstream and Province', *The Age*, April 24, 1968.
10. Elwyn Lynn, catalogue essay, Robert Rooney exhibition, Terry Clune Gallery, Sydney, 1964.
11. Robert Rooney, interview with Ashley Crawford, *op.cit.*
12. Robert Rooney, quoted in Teresa Zolnierkiewicz, 'The unpainterly painter', *Follow Me*, Sept.-Nov. 1986, pp.266-270, p.270.
13. Walter Gropius, 'Design Topics', *Art News*, 40/8, Dec. 1947, pp.298-304, p.299.
14. Gide, *op.cit.* p.68.
15. Rooney, interview with the author, November 1989.
16. Rooney, interview, *ibid.*
17. Don Judd, 'Complaints, Part 1', *Studio International*, 12:6, April 1969, p82.
18. Robert Pincus-Witten, 'Anglo-American reference works: Acute conceptualism', *Artforum*, 10/2, Oct. 1971, pp.82-85, p.83.
19. Rooney, quoted in Robert Lindsay, *Robert Rooney: Project 5*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978.
20. Rooney, interview with the author, *op.cit.*
21. Rooney, interview, *ibid.*
22. McCaughey, 'Mainstream and Province', *op.cit.*
23. John Whiteoak, p.7.
24. Rooney, interview with the author.
25. Gary Catalano, 'The Poetics of Waiting', in *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, Regional Development Program, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1978.
26. Pincus-Witten, *op.cit.* p.84.
27. Paul Taylor, 'A portrait of an artist', *The Age*, 31 October, 1981.
28. Mary Eagle, 'Reprieve from self-conscious art', *The Age*, 4 June, 1979.
29. Catalano, 'The Poetics of Waiting', *op.cit.*
30. Gide, *The Counterfeiters*, *op.cit.* p.176.
31. Rooney, interview with author, *op.cit.*
32. Rooney, *ibid.*
33. Cf. Gary Catalano, 'Both sides of the gulf', *The Age*, 21 Nov. 1989.
34. Rooney, interview with Ashley Crawford, *op.cit.*
35. Paul Taylor, 'As you were', catalogue essay, Robert Rooney, Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney, 1984.
36. Victoria Thieberger, 'Childhood without cuteness', *The Age*, 12 June 1987.

Spons I Have Seen

BY ROSEMARY ADAM

As an early manifestation of Neo-Dada in Melbourne, Spon deserves to be better known. The only Australian precedents for the Spon 'publications' initiated by Robert Rooney in 1959 seem to be Barry Humphries's Melbourne Dada exhibition catalogues of the early 1950s.¹ Like Humphries, Robert was familiar with the European Dada and Surrealist movements at an early age; similarly he made use of mixed typography and collage, delighted in visual and verbal puns, parodied literary and artistic sacred cows, and mocked authority. Spon, however, eschewed stage performances, being essentially introspective. It was, above all, an *attitude*.

Explaining Spon, like talking about Zen, is a risky venture: you either 'get' it or you don't. Be that as it may, in 1961 Robert Rooney attempted a light-hearted definition of Spon:

SPON: is spon taneous re spon sible re spon dence res spon dentia re spon sless re spon der re spon sions re spon sive re spon sory spon ge spon dee spon dulicks spon dyl spon y louse spon daic spon ger spon goid spon o is spon sal spon salia spon toon spon sing spon dilitus
as gertrude stein says: spon is spon is spon.²

These words of diverse meaning, related by a common syllable, are the very stuff of Spon.

As far as I know, the word 'Spon' was first heard in several episodes of the Goon Show originally broadcast in 1957-58 on BBC Radio. One of these concerned the dreaded 'Spon Plague' (a disease that attacked the kneecaps of its victims); another, 'Wings over Dagenham', centred on the beleaguered garrison of Fort Spon; while 'The Evils of Bushey Spon' dealt with a backward village of uncertain location. No doubt there are other examples, since the Goons used the word quite freely.

Also in 1957, Robert Rooney and fellow art students Dale Hickey, Bill Sykes, Lesley Ann Davidson and myself were completing the final year of the Diploma of Art Course at Swinburne Technical College. John Adam, whom I married in 1957, had finished a year earlier. Most of us were avid Goon fans who would impersonate the main characters and re-enact scenes from the shows; this triggered off more spontaneous clowning and led to the evolution of a curious style of spoken and written language which crept into the Spon literature.

Spon took from the Goons a dada sense of the absurd and the iconoclastic, together with a spontaneity akin to Surrealist automatism, or the free association of words, images and thoughts. The innovative writing style of Gertrude Stein and Jack

Kerouac's spontaneous prose and poetry also played an important part in the formation of Spon, as did jazz and rock 'n' roll.

After we left Swinburne, 'sponic' activities continued in Sunday gatherings at the 'Stove', a studio-loft in Balwyn shared by John Adam and Dale Hickey in 1958-59. John and I (with daughter Julie) had a flat in an old mansion nearby, where Robert would come to visit us. Robert had started working at Hall's Bookstore in Prahran, where he began to collect oddments from the 'sixpenny' table as well as comical and pathetic objects people had left behind in secondhand books. In 1959 he started to paste some of this material, which he called 'rott', into booklets 'for Stove people'; these he posted to us.

Among Robert's treasure trove were rare printed book marks such as one in the shape of a woman's corset, which opened to reveal a lining of banknote³; another, advertising the Scottish Widows Fund, had an illustration in the Pre-Raphaelite style by Walter Crane.⁴ There were all kinds of illustrated books like 'Frolicking Feet' (on ballroom dancing) and others on such curious activities as Swedish club swinging, the art of posing, and exercising in the bath.



Swinburne Technical College, Art School, Class of 1957. Robert Rooney second from left, Dale Hickey (with pipe) centre, Rosemary Adam sixth from left. Photograph: Bill Sykes.

Until he acquired an Olivetti portable typewriter in May 1960, the first 'Spon' magazines were handwritten by Robert on quarter-imperial cartridge paper folded in half and stapled together, with covers simply lettered in red Textacolor and black ink. Later, the covers became more elaborate, with the addition of coloured papers, collage and a decorative style of script borrowed from Ben Shahn. The format also became larger.

More sponic material was found in the *Australian Women's Weekly*, as in 'Teen-agers, Their Pictures and Stories' (n.d.). Here Robert used letters from the column 'Ask Dorothy Dix' in absurd combination with 19th century Neo-Classical illustrations. 'Spons Without Words' (September 1960), on the other hand, consists of 19th century engravings of magical tricks artfully montaged in the manner of Max Ernst's surrealist novels, *The Hundred - Headless Woman* (1929) and *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil* (1930). In one scene, set in a library, a man watches approvingly while his accomplice raises a stick to beat a huge fish impaled on a metal rod suspended between two chairs.

Concurrently with 'Spon', Robert began issuing the 'Spondee Review', an arts review parodying the American *Evergreen Review*, which published new work by Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso and other Beat writers and poets as well as contributions from the European avant-garde. An early foretaste of Robert's reviewing activities may be found in the first issue of 'Spondee Review'.⁵ 'Advance in paint', a collage of pseudo-paintings culled from illustrated magazines, advises the reader that 'Hung close and squarely over the chest, they gain importance'. A footnote demands 'Where's the WETTEX!' On another page, there appears a diagram of a toilet captioned 'erica macgilchrist's [sic] paintings come from within'. This, and a review of Dim Sime (Dawn Sime),⁶ a painter who 'looks on the outside (of what!) for inspiration' are excerpts from an authentic exhibition review.⁷

The Spondee Art Book entitled 'New Talent: 12 Young Painters, New Directions',⁸ parodies an article by Thomas B. Hess on the second generation New York School artists in the 25th *Art News Annual* (1956).⁹ Among the American and Australian artists featured in 'New Talent' are 'Sam Spondee' (Sam Francis), 'Franz Slime' (Franz Kline), 'Rothko Rott' (Mark Rothko), 'Mig Murdlum' (Jim Meldrum) and 'Clifton Spag' (Clifton Pugh). Randomly chosen photographs of unidentified people and visual images (some of them food) from magazines represent the artists and their paintings. Again, the artists' statements are genuine. One of them, attributed to 'Seymour Glasnick'¹⁰ (Seymour Remenick), reads:

IN THE LAST YEAR i HAVE BECOME iNCREASiNGLY
AWARE OF WHAT i MUST DO. i CANNOT DESCRiBE THE
LOOK OF THiS ART BUT i THiNK i WILL KNOW iT
WHEN i SEE iT.

At its height in 1960-62, Spon became a correspondence between Robert Rooney and John Adam, alias 'John Spon'. Early in 1960, John and I moved to Sale, in Gippsland, where John took up his first teaching post at Sale Technical School. After this, 'Spons' were sent to 'Sale people'. John responded in kind with 'Sale Spon', a satirical journal mainly comprising drawings, poems and collages. In one such exchange, a 'Spondee Review' (c. March 1960)¹¹ containing, among other things, a bow made of real hair purported to be 'Florence Nightingale's mustache', brought the response by return mail of a 'Mustache Edition' of 'Sale Spon' - complete with dashing moustachioed portraits of Robert as 'E.Z. (Ben) Spon R.A.' and John as 'Salvador Buddi'.¹²

Robert also sent us the latest books and kept us informed about exhibitions and events in Melbourne and elsewhere. In the same

'Spondee Review' is a poem written in the style of e.e. cummings:

poem.
for jasper johns.
be on your
avant garde
said the
fog factory bard
to the
conscientious
nonobjector
dont be a
fool
unhip
and uncool
cause my
heart belongs
to dada

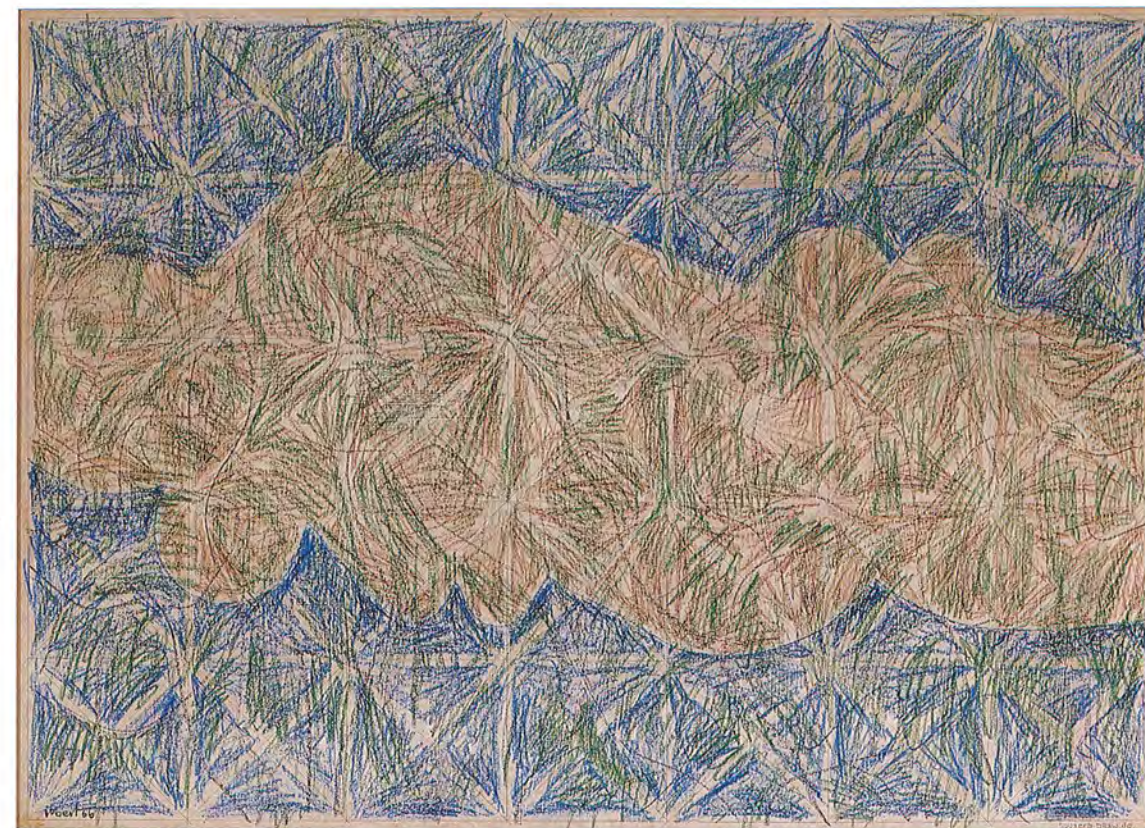
A letter from Robert of about the same time contains the following outburst:

well i didnt answer your question about the found objects show have i seen it HEY just a minute JUST A MINUTE who said dadas as dead as a dodo GO ON GO ON GOONanyway who said dadas as dead as a dodo well what about all the books coming out on DADA and Duchamp and the BBC are having have had a series of programs on DADA and the antiart movement and also its effect on art and literature today, like pollock motherwell john cage the beat poets and all that...anyway what about ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG and JASPER JOHNS ...is dada as dead as a DODO no well if the M.O.M.A.S found objects is an example it definitely is. it was, another MOMA flop it was, a collection of junk. it was, uninspired even old mcculloch thought so tooo [sic]...now theyve got on hung up their collection of permanent rubbish (a few good very few good) permanent rubbish thats all they got...¹³

These remarks reflect Robert's interest in Neo-Dada. 'Dada is as dead as the dodo', misquoted here by Robert, is from the infamous Antipodean Manifesto, written by Bernard Smith to accompany the 1959 Antipodean Exhibition and signed by the artists (Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Brack, Bob Dickerson and Clifton Pugh). Apparently, Robert was equally disgusted by an exhibition of 'found objects' held at the Museum of Modern Art of Australia, Melbourne, a frequent butt of his ridicule, though he sometimes exhibited there.

To return to Spon: we all had nicknames ending in 'spon' or 'spondee' just as (Robert explained) the French 'Pataphysicians had added the word 'satrap'¹⁴ to their names. Spondee, like iamb, dactyl and trochee, means a metrical unit or foot. Robert wrote under a number of spononyms, including T.X. Dactyl (a playwright and critic) and E.Z. Spon (a poet). E.Z. Spon's autobiography in verse, based on trivial and often traumatic happenings in Robert's childhood, appears serially in the 'Spondee Review'. By coincidence one of the writers featured in the *Evergreen Review* was Alexander Trocchi, whose first novel was *Young Adam* (1961).

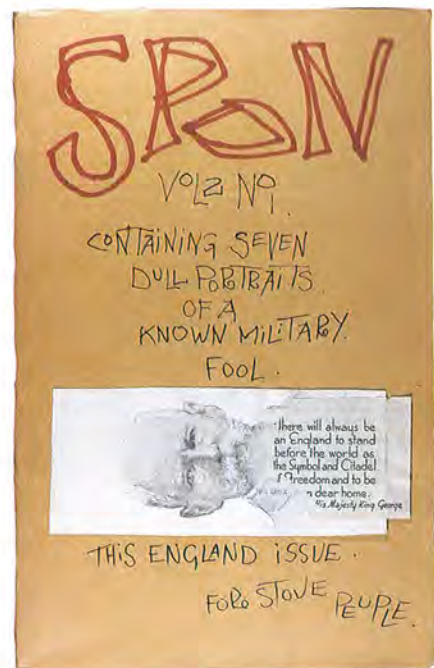
In keeping with these titles, there is much punning on the



Squared Drawing 1966, crayon on paper on composition board, 69.0 x 94.0 (Collection: the artist)



Thru 1966, synthetic polymer paint on composition board, 106.5 x 137.0 (Collection: Rosemary Adam)

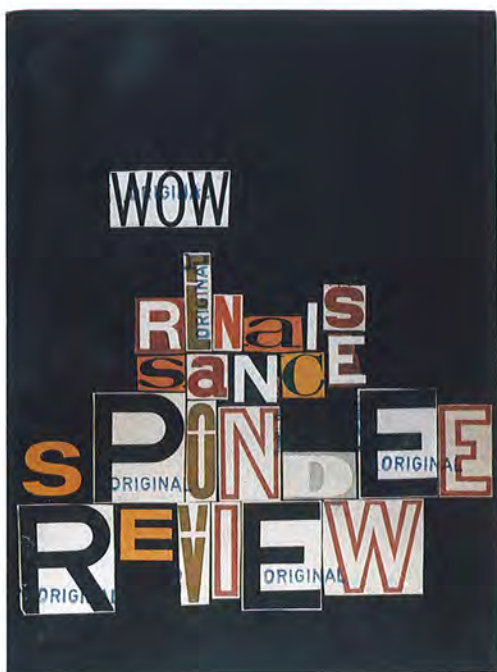


'Spon' Vol. 2, No. 1. Containing seven dull portraits of a known military fool. This England issue, for Stove people. n.d.



'Spondee Review' Vol. 1, No. 3. For Sale people c.1960

'Spondee Review' Vol. 1, No. 4. For Sale people n.d.



'Spondee Review' Vol. 2, No. 6. 'Wow, the Renaissance Spondee Review'

subject of the foot: witness Robert's review of 'Fred Scholl, Painter of the Foot'.

SOME PAINTERS LIKE PICASSO ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING THEIR STYLE WHILE OTHERS PREFER TO PAINT MANY VARIATIONS OF THE ONE SUBJECT. FRED SCHOLL IS ONE OF THE LATTER GROUP OF PAINTERS. FOR ALMOST THE LAST 25 YEARS SCHOLL HAS PAINTED THE FOOT 'LITTLE FOOT PORTRAITS' HE LIKES TO CALL THEM. USING AN ALMOST MAGIC SHARP FOCUS TECHNIQUE HE HAS CREATED A WORLD WHICH IS BOTH REAL AND MOVING. FRED SCHOLL IS INDEED A MASTER OF HIS CRAFT AND WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT A MASTER OF FOOT PROPORTIONS. SAYS FRED SCHOLL 'I GET A LOT OF PLEASURE OUT OF THE FEET I EVOKE'.¹⁵

Scholl's paintings are illustrated by diagrams showing 12 methods of applying corn plasters, with appended titles such as 'Foot Rott', 'Foot Fall', 'Begone Dull Foot' and 'Undoubted Queen Foot' (one of many satires on the Royal Family). 'The Female Golosh - her history, a play for the ears' by T.X. Dactyl, is another case in point.¹⁶ This masterpiece of 'sponsense' was inspired by a remark by our life drawing teacher Roger James - "Ah, a female galosh!" - upon finding an odd galosh behind a cupboard. Other plays like 'Three Chairs in Search of God'¹⁷ and 'Craps last Tape'¹⁸ parody plays by Eugène Ionesco and Samuel Beckett.



Cover, *Evergreen Review*, 2:5, Summer 1958

The name 'Documents of the Spon', another periodical edited by Robert (c.1961-62), was suggested by Robert

Motherwell's *Documents of Modern Art*.¹⁹ It contained both Rott and Spon, but literature predominates. If 'Spon' emphasises physical pursuits, 'Documents of the Spon' often deals with the irrational. Contents range from an advertisement for a Swedish Pimplespon (a type of fishing rod)²⁰ to letters decorated with naive drawings sent to Hall's by an elderly customer.²¹ This person, John Alfred Ralston, gave his address as 'Ward 1, Hospital for lost Dogs & the Aged' in Cheltenham. 'The Bath Order of Men in the Moon' edited by E. Freud Dapspoon, was titled after some lunatic's incoherent annotations scribbled over a book of Ben Chifley's speeches.²² Other eccentric customers appear as characters in 'On the weeds', a play E. Pluribus Unum translated by E.Z. Spon (September 1961).

In 1962 I received a letter from Robert on the subject of Pop Art and Spon:

...anyway im looking around me agin [sic] and collecting symbols cliches everything is gathered ticketslabels-bottletops rubbish spon and rott are piling up in my studio

this all and all will be the subject of my i hope big paintings coming sometimes in collage form and sometimes in enlarged replica all this is becoming close to what is called pop art which is i hope not going to become too fashionable it descends from jasper johns larry rivers jim dine claus oldenburg andy warhol roy lichtenstein and in england peter blake and um david hockney derek boshersic and peter phillips all of whom derive their art from popular imagery like advertising cliches the tooth paste smile the adult taste tiger in your tank youll need aspro sometime today etc etc pinball jukebox decoration in fact anything and everything is used and spon has anticipated much of this so spon has become art yes pop art is spon is pop art... hurrah for spon hurrah for rott hurrah for junk hurrah for rubbish & hurrah for obsolescence made art hurrah hurrah!

The most intense period of 'Spon' production was over by the end of 1963, when the Adam family returned to Melbourne. Despite Robert's announcement in the late 1960s that Spon was dead, Spon did not die. Proof of its continued existence may be found in his serial paintings of the 60s, the photoworks of the 70s, and the most recent paintings in this exhibition.

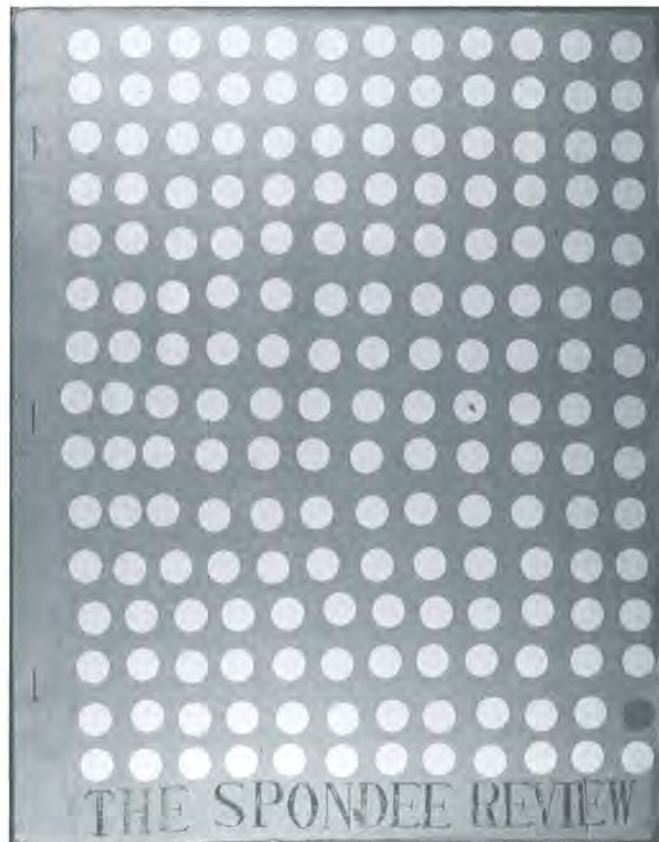
- 1 For information on these catalogues, see Margaret Plant, *Irreverent Sculpture*, Melbourne, Monash University Gallery, 1985, 'Barry Humphries', pp. 8-16.
- 2 'Spondee Review', December to March 1961. The robert 61.
- 3 'Spon', a collection of Rott, Volume 1, No.1. Published by me Robert for Stove people. n.d. (c.1959). Most 'Spons' are undated and none have been published.
- 4 'Spon', Vol.1. No.3. For Stove people. n.d.
- 5 'Spondee Review', Vol.1 No. 1 (Spondee Review of the Arts). n.d. (c.1959).
- 6 'Spondee Review', Vol.1, No.4. For Sale People. n.d.
- 7 Melbourne Reviews, Gallery, 43 (Dalgety Street), St.Kilda. 'Erica McGilchrist, Dawn Sime, Len Crawford', in *Modern Art News*, Volume 1, Number 2, 1959
- 8 Spondee Art Book, SAB, No.1 n.d.
- 9 Thomas B. Hess, 'U.S. Painting: Some New Directions', *Art News Annual* 25, 1956, pp.74-98, 174-180.
- 10 This name is a pun on Seymour Glass, a character in J.D. Salinger's story 'A Perfect Day for Bananafish' in *For Esme - with Love and Squalor and Other Stories* (1953).
- 11 'Spondee Review', Vol.1, No.3. For Sale people. n.d. (c.1960).
- 12 Mustache Edition. Hey Sale Spon March 1960. Includes 'Spon Lake' Yes Published in Heaven by John Buddy. registered at the Govt Beard for transmission as a frog'. Excerpts from 'Sale Spon' have been published in the 1960-62 section of *Wolb Inflatulol: John Spon's Journal 1960-1975*, Melbourne W.A.C. Publications Pty. Ltd., 1975, pp.6- 57.
- 13 Letter to John and Rosemary Adam n.d. The expression 'permanent rubbish' refers to the Museum of Modern Art of Australia's permanent collection as listed in the Museum's first publication, *Modern Australian Art*, 1958.
- 14 The Satraps include Raymond Queneau, Eugène Ionesco, Jaques Prévert, René Clair and Jean Dubuffet. See 'Pataphysics is the Only Science', *Evergreen Review*, Volume 4, Number 13, May-June 1960.
- 15 'Spondee Review', Vol.2, No.6, 'Wow, the Renaissance Spondee Review', n.d.
- 16 'Spondee Review', Vol.2, No.8, robert printer, n.d.
- 17 'Spondee Review', Vol.2, No.7, n.d.
- 18 'Craps Last Tape', a new play by T.X. Dactyl. Spondee Book SB 1. n.d.
- 19 These include: Jean (Hans) Arp, *On My Way, Essays and Poems, 1912-1947*. (1948). Max Ernst etc. *Beyond Painting* (1948), and Robert Motherwell ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets* (1951).
- 20 '5 Documents of the Spon', May 21, robert 61
- 21 'Correspondence'. 'Documents of the Spon', New Series No.1. n.d.
- 22 'The Bath Order of Men in the Moon', a document of the Spon, edited E. Freud Dapspoon, published today by me. n.d.

THE SPONIC ARCHIVES (c.1959–1962)

Frolicking Feet (Instruction Booklet)
 Introducing 'Spontact', edited by J. Roberspondee: Master of Foot n.d.
 'Spon', a Collection of Rott. Vol.1, No. 1. Published by me Robert for Stove people. n.d.(c.1959)
 'Spon', Vol.1, No. 2. Special Documents of the Spon issue, plus rare short art novel. Published by me Robert for Stove people. n.d.
 'Spon' Vol.1, No. 3. For Stove people. n.d.
 'Spon' Vol.1, No. 4. Special It's Really Art issue, with notes for 1914, for Stove people. n.d.
 'Spon' Vol.2, No. 1. Containing seven dull portraits of a known military fool. This England issue, for Stove people. n.d.
 'Craps Last Tape', a new play by T.X. Dactyl. Spondee Book SB 1. n.d.
 'Love and Miss Fred', a novel by D.J. Salisponer. Spondee Book SB 2. n.d.
 'Mary Jane, Ideas (Perhaps Erroneous) of a Child at School'. Spondee Book SB IV. n.d.
 'Bill Sykes, His Romantic Career'. Spondee Book SB 5. n.d.
 'Spon 2', December 62. Published when ready by me, robert 62
 'Spon 3', March 1962. The 'Naked Cult' movement exposed now
 'Old Style Type Spon', December 1962, robert 62
 'New Talent: 12 Young Painters, Recent Directions.' Spondee Art Book SAB No. 1. n.d.
 'A Memory of Sundays (The Story) by the Robert, for Rosee and John'. robert July 1960
 'Roberts Stamp Collection'. n.d.
 'Teenagers, Their Pictures and Stories'. n.d.
 'Spons Without Words', September 1960
 Dear Subscriber. n.d.

'Spondee Review' Vol.1, No. 1. (Spondee Review of the Arts). n.d. c.1959
 'Spondee Review' Vol.1, No. 2. n.d.
 'Spondee Review' Vol.1, No. 3. For Sale people. n.d. (c.1960)
 'Spondee Review' Vol.1, No. 4. For Sale people. n.d.
 'Spondee Review' December to March 1961. The robert 61.
 'Spondee Review' Vol.2, No. 5. March 1960, for Salesponers. n.d.
 'Spondee Review' Vol.2, No. 6. 'Wow, the Renaissance Spondee Review'
 'Spondee Review' Vol.2, No. 7. n.d.
 'Spondee Review' Vol.2, No. 8. robert printer. n.d.
 'Spondee Review' Vol.3, No. 9, for Sale people. n.d. 2 July
 'The Spondee Review', New Series, Number One, Genuine Old Style Spon and Rott. n.d.
 'The Spondee Review', New Series, Number Two (June 4 and 5) n.d.
 Documents of the Spon No. 1. 'Rubbing Eases Pain'. robert 61.
 No. 2. 'Etiquette Problems in Pictures'. The robert 61.
 No. 3. 'Sponed Memories', n.d.
 No. 4. 'A Matter of Conviction', a Play of the Spon, with a Backward by T.X. Dactyl. robert 1
 No. 5. Documents of the Spon, May 21. robert 61.
 No. 6. September For All Spon Person's 'The Philosophers Scrap Book', created by robert. n.d.
 September 1961 'On the Weeds', a play by E. Pluribus Unum, translated by E.Z. Spon
 'The Bath Order of the Moon', a document of the Spon, edited by E.Freud Dapson, published today by me. n.d.
 New Series No. 1, 'Correspondence', n.d.
 This being Vol.1, 1962 of Documents of the Spon
 'Anatomica de Sponartum', Documentum VI MCM LXL. July 1961, robert 61.
 '6 Poems by Ern Malley', from The Darkening Ecliptic 1944. Printed by the Robert. November 1960
 'Klee, Some Writings and Paintings'. June 18, 1960
 'Jack Kerouac, "The Rumbling Rambling Blues". n.d.
 'Jack Kerouac, '8 Mexico City Blues'. n.d.

'The Spondee Review', New Series, Number One, Genuine Old Style Spon and Rott. n.d.



'Anatomica de Sponartum', Documentum VI MCM LXL. July 1961, robert 61.



Robert Rooney and the McKimm/Rooney/Clayton Music Collaboration: Melbourne, 1960s¹

BY JOHN WHITEOAK

During the early sixties in Melbourne, Robert Rooney, Barry McKimm, Syd Clayton and several associates synthesised a style of musical improvisation which combined elements of contemporary music with avant-garde jazz of the period. Subsequently, as a performing trio, they experimented with various levels of indeterminacy using graphic notation,² and were amongst the earliest in Melbourne to attempt to return ensemble improvisation to the 'serious' concert platform. Their activities later in the sixties also represent one of the earliest occasions in Australian history in which experimentation in music and visual art were combined. Yet, their work has been more or less overlooked by both Australian jazz and 'art music' historians.³ In this article I will attempt to redress this oversight by outlining the emergence and demise as a performing trio, together with discussion of some significant aspects of their music.

It is argued here that the music of the trio was partly the result of a more or less coincidental coming together of three unique artistic personalities. They each had a strongly individual approach to improvising, the use of controlling processes and the scoring of these processes.⁴ Rooney had a particularly visually oriented approach to music: for example, his interest in the symmetrical formation of the black and white keyboard influenced the way he improvised and is reflected in the symmetry of some of his musical themes and compositions. His approach was also cerebral, emphasising structure at all levels. In contrast, McKimm's creativity in scoring and improvising tended to be based on intuition – his immediate intuitive reaction to the musical ideas available. Clayton's characteristic tendency was always to move in the exact opposite direction to what he felt was conventional.

To some degree, the music of Rooney, McKimm and Clayton also emerged in counter-reaction to the relatively bland and conservative artistic environment of Melbourne in the early sixties. Later in the sixties it developed against a backdrop of considerable social, political and artistic upheaval, but it is not feasible to attempt a serious discussion of these extra-musical factors here.⁵ The visual arts, however, were a significant part of the artistic and social context in which their improvised music developed and all three musicians were actively involved in the visual arts to some degree. The connection between Rooney's music and his visual art is particularly strong and will be examined later. But first, it is essential to briefly discuss the jazz and contemporary 'art music' context from which their music evolved.

THE MELBOURNE MODERN JAZZ CONTEXT

During the late forties in Melbourne a considerable degree of experimentation with imported styles of modern jazz

improvisation took place but, by the early fifties, this initial wave of interest had begun to wane. In the late fifties a small revival of local interest in modern jazz occurred, notably through the efforts of a younger generation of musicians surrounding saxophonist Brian Brown at Jazz Centre 44, their principal venue.⁶ This venue became a meeting place for young Melbournians serious about jazz and presented, for example, performances of 'poetry and jazz' featuring local poet, Adrian Rawlins. But, while the music played by the Brown band was less restrained, and comprised more contemporary jazz elements than those of earlier Melbourne modern jazz bands, it was basically mainstream American modern jazz of the period.

Around this time, well-known local jazz guitarist/composer/arranger Bruce Clarke had assembled a rehearsal group of style leaders of the 'pre-Brown' generation of Melbourne 'modernists', together with the highly respected Sydney expatriate, Frank Smith (reeds).⁷ Inspired in particular by Smith's broad musical knowledge and versatility, these musicians recorded privately, drawing on a wide variety of contemporary jazz and also some non-jazz influences, for example, Indian raga. Most of the examples presented on a later commercially released compilation of their work from this period sound more or less conventionally structured in terms of jazz form, phrasing and harmony. However, in some pieces no piano is used and the invention of melodic lines takes place unrestricted by the usual fixed framework of vertical jazz harmonies.⁸

Recordings by Ornette Coleman (saxophone), a principal exploiter of this so-called 'free jazz' concept, had begun to reach Australia by now and were becoming objects of interest (and often puzzlement and scorn) to sections of the local jazz community. Nevertheless, with the exception of Clarke's private experiments and several other isolated examples of jazz experimentation, the jazz context in which Rooney, McKimm and Clayton began to collaborate was, as suggested earlier, relatively conservative. The most common tendency in local modern jazz at this time was towards a clean, restrained, tightly structured style, similar in many respects to that of the Dave Brubeck Quartet.⁹

THE 1963 MCKIMM MENDELSON QUARTET

Shortly before 1963, Barry McKimm (trumpet) was working in the orchestra of a local theatre with German expatriate, Heinz Mendelson (reeds).⁹ Sharing a mutual interest in jazz, McKimm and Mendelson began to use their time between shows to improvise together in a very free style – at first, simply for self-expression and enjoyment. Influenced in particular by Ornette Coleman's style, they spontaneously invented melodic lines and two stranded textures without reference to a particular form, theme, or harmonic structure.

By April 1963, the local interest generated by their playing was sufficient to inspire the establishment of a jazz club, the *Fat Black Pussy* (90 Toorak Road Sth Yarra), where they could develop their free approach to jazz on a full time basis. By the club's opening date (6/4/63) they had formed the McKimm/Mendelson Quartet, which included bass player, Brian Fagan, and drummer, Barry Woods, recently recruited from Sydney by McKimm.¹⁰ Melbourne's first free-jazz club received excellent publicity and was packed nightly with what informants describe as 'arty-type' young people.¹¹ The Quartet broke up after approximately four months, principally because of dissatisfaction with financial arrangements.

The music played by the McKimm/Mendelson Quartet was based on a short original written theme, typically a melodic line without chord indications. This theme would be developed spontaneously and the overall structure of the piece (order of solos, contrapuntal sections or other special features) would gradually become defined in the minds of group members through repeated improvised performances.¹² In this way they soon built up a large repertoire of pieces which the fans could recognise and request by name. The idea that intuitive group response to a simple theme could eventually, through repeated improvisations, bring random elements together to form a complex, living, musical structure was an important discovery for McKimm – one which would subsequently greatly influence his approach to improvisation. It was also a step in the direction of non-jazz indeterminacy.

THE 1963/4 BARRY MCKIMM QUINTET

Amongst the followers who regularly visited the *Fat Black Pussy* during 1963 was a young jazz pianist and visual artist, Robert Rooney. Rooney began to improvise informally with McKimm and bassist, Syd Clayton, shortly before McKimm left the 'Cat'. These three musicians were to become the creative core of various rehearsal and working line-ups during late 1963 and 1964 (see appendix 1).

Rooney had been experimenting with the notion of combining jazz with elements of contemporary music since the late fifties, albeit in a fairly basic or naive way. He had, for example, used tone rows and fragments from Bartok's *Microcosms* as vehicles for jazz improvisation. He also used what he calls, 'synthetic chords'; chords constructed from the melodic intervals of the theme itself (a device also employed by Bartok). Two critically important influences on his jazz playing were the angular, sparse and highly structured improvisations of American jazz pianist, Thelonious Monk, and later, the forceful, percussive, almost jerky piano style of another American, Cecil Taylor. Taylor's explicit reference to the contemporary 'art music' idiom on the recording, *Looking Ahead*, finally convinced Rooney that his own attempts to synthesise a mix of contemporary music and jazz represented a valid approach.¹³

Whereas Rooney had received some early formal training on piano, Syd Clayton arrived in Melbourne from country Victoria in 1957 with very little musical experience beyond being virtually self-taught on drums. In Melbourne, Clayton took lessons on

saxophone, but finally turned to double bass, which he began to study formally with orchestral bassist, Marion Brajsa, shortly before teaming up with McKimm and Rooney. Recordings by American bassist, Charles Mingus, were a particular influence on Clayton. The Mingus groups placed special emphasis on contrapuntal textures and this type of texture subsequently became an important characteristic of the ensemble style of McKimm, Rooney and Clayton.

By late 1963, Clayton's jazz experience had included both traditional and modern jazz, but his belated musical training had left him with some severe technical shortcomings, particularly in relation to timekeeping and jazz harmony. These shortcomings, coupled with his idiosyncratic personality, eventually led him to develop a very individual style of improvisation. For example, he compiled a chart which catalogued every sound that he could produce on the bass. This collection of sounds became, in effect, a personalised timbral language, replacing to some extent the conventional tonal language which was somewhat problematic for him. 'It was Syd's nature to avoid conventionality. It just drove him mad – he couldn't stand doing things that were clichés – he actually experimented with various techniques and developed all sorts of unusual ways of playing the bass (which were) very much suited to free improvisation'.¹⁴

Various musicians, including Mendelson, collaborated with McKimm, Rooney and Clayton during 1963/4; however, they worked principally as a quintet with the inclusion of Barry Quinn (percussion) and Peter Webster (reeds).¹⁵ Quinn was not strongly identified with jazz in Melbourne, but his very diverse amateur and professional musical background provided the adaptability needed for this music. Webster, on the other hand, was much further entrenched in the mainstream modern jazz of the period; nevertheless he approached the musical experimentation of the group in a very serious way.¹⁶

By early 1964, this new group was beginning to gain recognition on the Melbourne jazz scene and on July 13 the Quintet was broadcast nationally on the ABC Jazz-Club program; this broadcast received several good reviews. Ironically for McKimm, Rooney and Clayton, this event marked what was almost the end of their serious interest in jazz. Although they had gained a strong following for their music, notably from young visual arts students, they were never really accepted by the core of the local jazz-playing community, principally because their approach was too progressive. There were also other reasons; they were prepared to take musical risks at live performances – risks which didn't always work out – and they were sometimes iconoclastic towards what they perceived to be jazz dogma, such as the idea that jazz must always be played a certain way. Their bohemian social context (avant-garde visual arts, theatre and literature) also tended to place them as outsiders in relation to the jazz community.

In any case, the Quintet concept had not been a total success from a purely musical standpoint. Improvisation with five instruments sometimes resulted in textures which lacked the space required for individual expression or skilfully shaped, spontaneous changes of musical direction. When McKimm

became seriously ill in late 1964, and was unable to perform for several months, McKimm, Rooney and Clayton used this time to re-evaluate the future direction of their music – from here on they would function basically as a trio.

Available recordings of the 1963-4 Quintet generally comprise extended improvisations which explore seemingly countless varieties of textures. Ensemble and solo playing, idiomatic of modern jazz of the period, is combined or abruptly juxtaposed with melodic lines, rhythms and textures which relate directly to contemporary 'art music'. However, the listener is soon able to note the constant reappearance of certain musical elements which are idiomatic of the individual or ensemble styles of McKimm, Rooney and Clayton. (One that often infuriated jazz musicians was the tendency of Rooney and Clayton to deliberately avoid this propulsive, accented, 'swing' feel characteristic of jazz, in favour of a 'pushing and pulling' at the regular accent to create a 'timeless' or 'floating' effect.) The improvisation is sometimes based on tone-rows, unsupported single line themes, or two part symmetrical structures, and in one example it develops spontaneously from a single stack of intervals presented by the piano. Reference to George Russell's modal theory can be found in at least one piece,¹⁷ but more conventional modern jazz harmony is sometimes used.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CONTEXT

By 1965, there was a small community of people in Melbourne who were seriously interested in contemporary 'art music'. This new music movement had begun in the late forties with the *Society of New Music*, founded by Kevin McBeath, but subsequently new music activity became centred around the Melbourne Conservatorium and a small coterie of fairly well established local composers. Amongst these was George Dreyfus, whose *New Music Ensemble* often presented works by local composers. Through the efforts of George Dreyfus and James Murdoch and others, a Melbourne branch of the *International Society For Contemporary Music (ISCM)* was established in early 1965 and immediately began presenting a series of new music concerts and seminars. Some members of this community were also interested in indeterminacy and the works of composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage and Morton Feldman.

Yet, at the time Rooney, McKimm and Clayton began formulating their ideas about indeterminacy, they did not belong to this centralised new music community. Rooney had independently developed an interest in contemporary music (e.g. Satie, Stravinsky, Berg, Schoenberg) during the fifties through recordings and radio broadcasts. By 1964 he had discovered the music of Cage, Feldman, Earle Brown and other exponents of indeterminacy, and was an avid listener to Richard Meale's ABC (Sydney) radio broadcasts which initially featured the music of these and other so-called experimental composers. It was Rooney who subsequently directed McKimm and Clayton towards this type of music. In late 1964, Rooney wrote his first graphic score, *Synops*; this piece clearly indicates what would become Rooney's general approach to indeterminacy; scores that allowed for freedom within a tightly notated framework (Fig. 1).

THE MCKIMM/ROONEY/CLAYTON TRIO

Throughout early 1965 Rooney and Clayton continued to record and play together while McKimm was recovering from his illness. In July 1965 the three musicians performed McKimm's indeterminate work, *One Or Two Thunders* at the newly formed ISCM's second concert;¹⁸ however, their live performance still contained explicit jazz elements, and was not well received by the more conservative present at this concert. Some verbal and published criticism from prominent members of the local contemporary music community eventually followed. No doubt, this discouragement helped to ensure that McKimm and the others would remain on the periphery of the community which considered itself to be the promoter of contemporary music in Melbourne.

Fortunately, many recordings survive this period. The example I will briefly discuss here (*Duo 1 2 3* by Robert Rooney) was recorded for the ABC Jazz Club in August 1965; however it was



Robert Rooney, Barry McKimm and Syd Clayton c. 1964 – 65. Photograph: Bill Sykes

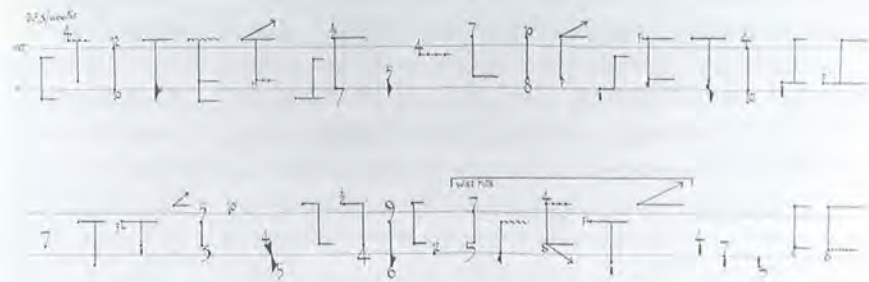
apparently considered too progressive to broadcast that program.

The score for this work (Fig. 2) is a system of exists and entries, and is divided into three sections, or 'duos'; each 'duo' is scored on a separate page. Two players read from the score while a third improvises by feeding off the musical material provided by the two reading players.

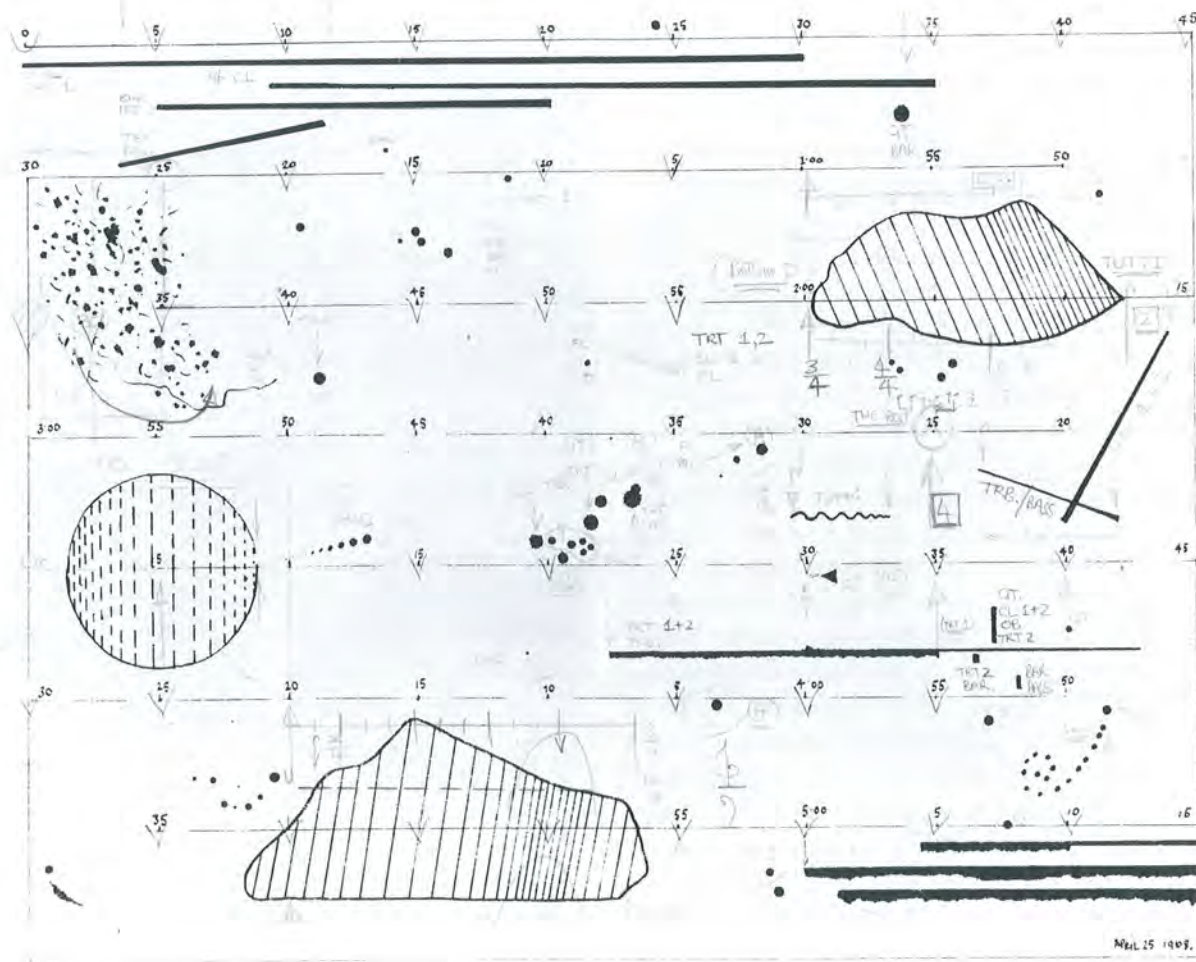
Fig. 1: Synops, score sheet, 1965



Fig. 2: Duo 3, score sheet, 1965



Below:
detail, Score: Parts / Second Landscapes for instruments
April 25, 1968 1968, photocopy with performers'
annotations, 31.2 x 39.0. Collection: the artist



The recording of *Duo 1 2 3* provides a hint of how the three distinctly different creative approaches, outlined earlier, are combined in a complementary way. Obvious jazz elements are missing, the piece being shaped principally by pitch space, contrasting dynamics, timbral variety and textural activity and density. Yet, this is highly expressive music, presenting the sparse angular language of contemporary 'art music' played in a 'hot' or abandoned style, characteristic, not of 'serious' music, but of jazz.

The scores produced by members of the Trio during this period often employ methods derived or synthesised from various imported scores they had been able to examine. However, McKimm explained that their scores were not intended as musical monuments to their compositional skill; nor were they an attempt to identify with the philosophies of John Cage and others. These scores were simply 'take-off points' for improvisation; a means of obtaining new levels of improvisational freedom. An example of the level of freedom they obtained can be observed by comparing the dense complexity of the last few seconds of *Duo 3* with the relatively sparse notation of the corresponding section of the score.

DIVERGING ARTISTIC DIRECTIONS

Early in 1966, expatriate composer Keith Humble returned home to Australia to take up a position at the Melbourne Conservatorium. This followed years of artistic interaction with leading international figures in indeterminacy at the *Centre De Musique*, Paris, which he had personally established in the late fifties. Soon after his arrival in Melbourne, he established the *Society For The Private Performance Of New Music (SPPNM)* at the Grainger Museum as an outlet for the frustrations of young innovative local musicians.¹⁹ McKimm, Rooney and Clayton played for, and had their works performed at, various SPPNM concerts²⁰. However, by this time, the diversity of their individual approaches was leading them in very separate artistic directions, and during the late sixties they gradually ceased to function as a performing trio.

BARRY MCKIMM

By the end of the sixties, McKimm had explored a variety of ways of controlling improvisation and had also produced a series of enigmatic scores intended for interpretation by improvising musicians; the latter were visual art works in their own right. In 1970, several of these were interpreted by Humble's colleague, Jean-Charles Francois, for a large improvising group of jazz and non-jazz musicians and were performed at the experimental theatre, *La Mama*, in Carlton.²¹ McKimm saw the above methods as a means of avoiding the types of clichés inherent in jazz improvisation. His increasing collaboration with large groups of improvising performers throughout this period represented a final working-out of notions regarding intuitive group response, which he had been considering since his experiences with the 1963 McKimm/Mendelson Quartet.

He had also begun to turn from graphic notation to full scoring so that he could take more personal responsibility for the musical outcome of his works and avoid the 'blemishes' he felt were an

unavoidable aspect of improvised music. McKimm was becoming increasingly interested in the expressive potential of the melodic line and was now less inclined to use texture and timbre as principal musical shaping forces. Today McKimm is a recognised Australian composer with a particular commitment to the idea of community-based composition projects. His strong conviction that contemporary music should be expressive and meaningful to all sections of the community which provides its context – not just an artistic elite – places him in the position of a voluntary exile from local new music circles.

SYD CLAYTON

At the same time that McKimm was beginning to score for large improvising ensembles, Clayton was developing his own style of chance-based music. For example, *Snakes And Ladders* (1966) is based on dice-throwing, while *Yehudi* (1969) uses processes determined by a miniature roulette wheel. Clayton's involvement with the visual arts related in particular to assemblage; the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated found objects. Assemblage, or collage, was often a feature of the scores he produced and the nature of the improvisation they prescribed. Towards the end of the sixties, he became very involved with writing for performance at *La Mama*, where he began to juxtapose and combine musical and theatre improvisation in a unique way. 'His music was living theatre which dramatised all too clearly the fumbings at drama by the majority of *La Mama* playwrights... Syd created an extra dimension. Perhaps ritual was the basis of his music – maybe it was humour – or silence. Whatever the basis the effect was magic'²². Clayton has recently returned to Melbourne experimental theatre as a director, playwright and musician.²³

ROBERT ROONEY

By the late sixties, some aspects of Rooney's personal philosophy were beginning to deeply influence his visual art and would subsequently influence his music. One of these was the concept of repetition. For example, he studied, and was genuinely intrigued by, seemingly banal, mass-produced objects from his immediate suburban environment; this, in turn, was tied to a strong awareness of the effect of mass production and mass media on society. From an artistic point of view, this focus eventually manifested itself in an interest in the complex relationships (e.g. phasing) which can be perceived when repeated but slightly varied shapes (or sound shapes) are grouped symmetrically. By 1968 this approach had brought him into line with Op Art and so-called Hard-Edge art.

The relationship between Rooney's visual art and his music is most audible in some of his later, fully scored works; however, an example can be found in his earlier 'Landscape' compositions, *Second Landscape* (1968) is intended for interpretation by a large improvising ensemble²⁴ and utilises the seal shape from his 1967 *Slippery Seal* series of paintings (the seal is taken from a Kellogg's cereal packet – a reference to his own daily routine and to mass production).²⁵ Musicians reading along the duration lines of the score must find a way of dealing with the contour of the objects they encounter, which in turn creates an audible 'landscape'. The

sudden unexpected manifestation of a sound object, after very long periods of silence, creates an effect that seems, in some respects, analogous to the object/space/object design often found in hard-edge painting. A less specific analogy between his painting and music exists in the sparse, angular and symmetrical aspects of his piano improvisations.

During the seventies, Rooney, for similar reasons to McKimm, lost interest in improvisation and turned to full scoring. He eventually more or less abandoned composition to concentrate on establishing the reputation he now enjoys as painter and art critic. It is interesting to consider that, by accepting, observing, and making use of so-called banal objects of everyday Australian suburban life in a serious way, instead of sending them up as Barry Humphries and other Australian Dadaists have done,²⁶ Rooney may have unconsciously touched on one way that Australian composers can relate to what is probably the real Australian environment – suburbia.

THE LEGACY

Rooney, McKimm and Clayton's collaboration as improvising performers only lasted several years; a very short segment of their respective artistic careers. Also, in the twelve months that this collaboration formed part of the local jazz scene, their work was often met with misunderstanding and distrust. However, from a historical perspective of local jazz style synthesis, they represent an outstanding cutting edge in a jazz environment which, up to that particular time, all too often comprised unashamed and direct style imitation. In the early seventies, a Melbourne jazz writer stated: '...the tendency in Australia would very legitimately be towards a cross fertilisation of the avant-garde of the European conservatorium tradition with the most creative innovations of the jazz traditions...'.²⁷ He was totally unaware that a group of Melbourne musicians had begun to achieve something comparable almost a decade earlier.

As for their later collaboration as a contemporary improvising trio, there is no doubt of their importance in relation to the general history of improvisation in Melbourne.²⁸ There were others who dabbled with similar improvisational concepts during the mid-sixties, but none, to my knowledge, who became so closely identified with live performance based on these concepts during this early period. Without the benefit of overseas experience, institutional training or support, or even the continuing moral support of the contemporary music establishment, they experimented and exhaustively worked through their individual philosophies and approaches to improvisation – in the process, they left a small but important legacy of recordings and scores.

In a recent international music conference held in Melbourne, the three musicians were mentioned by composer Warren Burt in relation to the beginnings of experimental music in Melbourne.²⁹ The highly individual nature of their respective approaches, the cross-media character of their experiments with improvisation, and their status as outsiders in relation to the musical establishment of the time, appear to link them historically with the type of present day, non-institutionally based composer/performers which John Jenkins has loosely grouped together in 22

Contemporary Australian Composers.³⁰ But, regardless of the profile they eventually obtain in Melbourne's cultural history, this examination of their activities during the sixties as improvising composer/performers places them indisputably amongst the local avant-garde of this period. It also suggests that the Melbourne Improvisers Association, the Pipeline Ensemble and similar past and present collectives of local improvising musicians all belong to a tradition which has historical continuity extending back, at least, to the early sixties and Rooney, McKimm and Clayton.

NOTES

- 1 This article is based on a paper entitled, 'Beyond Jazz Improvisation: Melbourne 1963', which was presented at the 1988 Symposium of the International Musicological Society (SIMS 88).
- 2 By indeterminacy, I am referring to the John Cage/Morton Feldman school of musical thought dating from the early fifties in which the composer purposely relinquishes control over various parameters of the music. For further definition of this term see, for example; ch. 1 of M. Nyman, *Experimental Music*, Studio Vista, London, 1974 or R.S. Brindle, *The New Music*, Oxford University Press, London, 1975.
- 3 To Roger Covell's credit, Rooney and McKimm are given two lines in his *Australia's Music*, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1967 p.234. Barry McKimm's free jazz activities are mentioned in both Andrew Bisset, *Black Roots White Flowers*, Oxford University Press, Goblin Press, Sydney 1979 and Bruce Johnson, *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1989.
- 4 The term 'controlling processes' signifies various devices used to control the outcome of an improvisation. For example, see the score for *Duo 1, 2, 3*.
- 5 The Melbourne University student newspaper, *Farrago*, provides excellent contemporary commentary on this upheaval.
- 6 After 1965, Brown went on to become a very high profile figure in Melbourne avant-garde jazz and was principally responsible for the establishment of the current improvisation course at the Victorian College Of The Arts.
- 7 Listen to, for example: *Kama Sutra Feeling*, recorded 14/9/63 on *Lookin' Back*, Cumquat CQR12-02b.
- 8 For further reading on Clarke, Smith and Brown and more detailed discussion of the Melbourne jazz context of the fifties and sixties, see B. Johnson, *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*, op.cit.
- 9 Mendelson had apparently played alongside American trumpeter, Chet Baker, in a pianoless quartet, similar to the Gerry Mulligan Quartet.
- 10 See entries on Woods, Fagan and the *Fat Black Pussy Cat* in: B. Johnson, *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*.
- 11 The McKimm/Mendelson Quartet was reviewed relatively frequently in the *Young Sun* section of *The Sun*, which was oriented towards the progressive, arts-minded teenage student.
- 12 Only two recorded examples survive this period: *Neddy Nod* (Mendelson) and *Inta Something Else* (McKimm), both recorded in May 1963.
- 13 Cecil Taylor Quartet, recorded 9/6/1958, Contemporary (M3562).
- 14 From the transcription of my 1986 interview with Barry McKimm
- 15 In late December, 1963, Mendelson established his own pianoless rehearsal group, which frequently included Peter De Vissor (trombone), Brian Fraser (bass) and Barry Quinn. However, these players usually based their exploration of improvisation freedom on more fully notated themes and more pre-arranged formal structure. Amongst other jazz musicians who claim to have experimented with free jazz around this time were Graham Morgan and Alan Turnbull (drums) and Dave Tolley (bass). Tolley (also a visual artist), later became a leading Melbourne figure in experimental jazz and electronic music.
- 16 See Webster's entry in Bruce Johnson, *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*, op.cit.
- 17 McKimm apparently had a copy of George Russell, *The Lydian Concept Of Tonal Organization for Improvisation*, Concept Publishing.
- 18 Keith Humble subsequently arranged a performance of McKimm's, *One Or Two Thunders* at a new music concert in Paris.
- 19 See J. Whiteoak: 'An Interview With Keith Humble' in *NMA* (New Music Articles) no. 7 1989, pp.21–26.
- 20 1966 SPPNM Concerts: June 24 First SPPNM concert: *Snakes And Ladders* (Clayton), *Trio For Clarinet* (Rooney); July 10 Second SPPNM concert: *Duo 1, 2, 3* (Rooney); July 24 Third SPPNM concert: *End Of October* ('Landscape One') (Rooney); Oct 2 Fifth SPPNM concert: *Monotony For 8 Trumpets* (McKimm).
- 21 See listing of works by McKimm, Rooney and Clayton, performed at *La Mama* in L.Jones/B. Burstall, *La Mama: The Story Of A Theatre*, Melbourne, McPhee Gribble, 1988.
- 22 Kris Hemensley, 'Syd Clayton's Farewell To Melbourne', *Theatre 4* no. 4, Winter 1983, pp. 294–300.

- 23 For further discussion of Clayton's work see 'Syd Clayton' in John Jenkins (ed), *22 Australian Composers*, pp 51–57. Also see: Syd Clayton, 'How I Wrote How to Write a Chinese Poem which led me to the Great World' in *NMA*, no.5, 1987, pp.36–42.
- 24 Performed and recorded at *La Mama* in May 1968.
- 25 Discussed in: Robert Lindsay, 'Robert Rooney', in *Art and Australia*, vol.14, no. 1, July–Sept 1976, pp.50–59
- 26 See, for example: 'Barry Humphries' in Margaret Plant, *Irreverent Sculpture*, Monash University Gallery, Dept. of Visual Arts, Melbourne, 1985.
- 27 Stan Van Hooft, 'All That Jazz', in *MUM 7*, no7, 1974, pp.64–76.
- 28 This is the topic of my PhD in progress: 'Australian Approaches To Musical Improvisation; A Melbourne Perspective'.
- 29 1988 Symposium Of the International Musicological Society (SIMS 88).
- 30 John Jenkins (ed), *22 Australian Composers*, Melbourne, NMA Publications.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Burstall, Betty and Jones, Liz: *La Mama: The Story Of A Theatre*, Melbourne, McPhee Gribble, 1988.
- Burt, Warren: 'Musical and Sociological Aspects Of Australian Experimental Music', paper presented at the Symposium Of The International Musicological Society, Melbourne, 1988. To be published in a compilation of conference proceedings by Currency Press, Sydney.
- Brindle, Reginald Smith: *The New Music*, Oxford University Press, London, 1975.
- Clayton, Syd: 'How I Wrote How to Write a Chinese Poem which led me to the Great World' in *NMA5* (*New Music Articles*) no.5, 1987, p.36–42.
- Hemensley, Kris: 'Syd Clayton's Farewell To Melbourne', *Theatre 4*, no.4, winter 1983, p.293–300.
- Hoofst Stan, Van: 'All That Jazz', in *MUM 7* (*Melbourne University Magazine*), 1974, p.64–76.
- Jenkins, John (ed): *22 Contemporary Australian Composers*, Melbourne, NMA Publications.
- Johnson, Bruce: *The Oxford Companion To Australian Jazz*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987.
- Nyman, Michael: *Experimental Music*, Studio Vista, London, 1974.
- Lindsay, Robert: 'Robert Rooney', in *Art and Australia*, Vol.14, no. 1, July–Sept 1976, p.50–59.
- Plant, Margaret: 'Barry Humphries' in *Irreverent Sculpture*, Monash University Gallery, Dept. of Visual Arts, Melbourne, 1985.
- Russell, George: *The Lydian Concept Of Tonal Organization for Improvisation*, Concept Publishing (?).
- Whiteoak, John: The paper, 'Beyond Jazz Improvisation; Melbourne 1963', was presented at the Symposium Of The International Musicological Society, Melbourne, 1988. To be published in a compilation of conference proceedings by Currency Press, Sydney.
- Whiteoak, John: 'Australian Approaches to Musical Improvisation': A Melbourne Perspective', PhD thesis in progress, Department of Music, Latrobe University.

APPENDIX

Sketch of 1963/4 activities:

1963

- April 6 Opening of the *Fat Black Pussy Cat*: The McKimm Mendelson Quartet
Aug. McKimm, Rooney and Clayton begin to rehearse – McKimm and Mendelson finish at the 'Cat'.
Aug. 25 First Sunday session at Punt Road, Stih Yarra venue: McKimm, Rooney, Clayton, Mendelson, Quinn.
Dec. 11 The above players begin work at the *Downbeat Club*, Russell Street – Also rehearsing to provide partly improvised music for a science fiction satire by Jackie Beck, entitled *Who Are The Cats* (apparently never performed).

1964

- March 1 Peter Webster sits in with the McKimm group.
April 15 The McKimm Quintet records improvised music for the ABC TV contemporary ballet production, *Night Song*. The Quintet finishes at *Downbeat Club*.
April 22 A new club, 'Jazz At 19 Swanston St' opens to feature the McKimm Quintet (McKimm, Rooney, Clayton, Quinn, Webster) on a full-time basis.
May 17 'Jazz at 19 Swanston St' folds after two weeks and the quintet plays one job per week at the *Fat Black Pussy Cat* until June 21.
July 2 Quintet records *Nadsat*, *Night Song* and *Mologo* (Rooney) and *Puck* (McKimm), for the ABC Jazz Club broadcast.
July 26 McKimm, Rooney, Clayton, Webster record *Litso* (Rooney) and *Silverstar and Goldie* (McKimm).
Aug. ? McKimm, Rooney, Clayton, Webster record *Improvisation Using Tone Row* (Rooney).
Aug. 9 McKimm, Rooney, Clayton record *Improvisation* (spontaneous improvisation on *Messiah type* chord).
Sept. ? McKimm is hospitalised with, seemingly, no prospect of short term recovery.
Nov. 20 *Three pieces for One Quintet or More*, McKimm (also listed as *Fifth*).

PRIVATE TAPES CITED

- The McKimm/Mendelson Quartet (private studio)
Inta Something Else (McKimm), May 1956
Neddy Nod (Mendelson), May 1956
The McKimm/Rooney/Clayton Trio (rec. for ABC Jazz Club)
Duo 1, 2, 3 (Rooney), August 1965
Large Improvising Ensemble (rec. at La Mama)
Second Landscape (Rooney), May 1968

RELEASED RECORDINGS CITED

- Bruce Clarke
Kama Sutra Feeling (Clarke), rec. 14/8/1963, Lookin' Back, Cumquat, CQR12-02
Cecil Taylor rec 9/6/1958
Looking Ahead!, Contemporary (M3562)

TAPED INTERVIEWS

- Robert Rooney, Syd Clayton, Barry McKimm, Keith Humble, Barry Quinn, Adrian Rawlins, Helen Gifford, Ken White, Brian Fraser.

OTHER SOURCES:

- Humble Keith Collection of documents and photographs relating to the SPPNM
Robert Rooney Collection of scores, documents and photographs
Barry McKimm Collection of scores, documents and photographs
Barry Quinn Diary details 1963/4

Robert Rooney as Pop

BY PHILIP BROPHY

The *POPISM* show at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1982 brought together a number of artists whose work addressed the relationship between art and popular culture. Robert Rooney, selected for inclusion in *POPISM* by curator Paul Taylor, was the only one of these artists whose work dated back to the early Pop movement of the late 1950s.

One of Rooney's works in *POPISM* was a set of silkscreen prints entitled *Pilkington Predicts* (1982). These were in fact direct and unadulterated enlargements of advertisements he had designed for the Pilkington Glass Company in the early 1960s. Of all the works in the exhibition, *Pilkington Predicts* was perhaps the most 'popist' – that is, the most self-consciously aware of the multiple levels at which Pop art assimilates aspects of popular culture with art historical traditions of representation and figuration.

While Rooney's major painting in the exhibition, *The Red Card, Australia, 1944–45* (1982), heralded his return to painting after a twelve year excursion into other media, *Pilkington Predicts* functioned as a sign of what that return implied. After *POPISM*, Rooney's work was included in many group exhibitions and received greater critical, and public, attention. The 1980s saw three major exhibitions of paintings: *As You Were* (1983), *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture* (1985) and *Silly Symphonies, or At Last, the 1968 Show, Part One: New Paintings* (1988). In these exhibitions Rooney conceptually regenerated and formally reworked a number of key motifs, manoeuvres and methods he had established in his paintings prior to the 1970s. It is this reworking which locates him firmly within a Pop tradition that spans the last three decades. This essay will propose the concept of a Post-Pop environment, thus extending the notion of Pop Art beyond the traditionally accepted definitions. Robert Rooney's paintings will be considered in this context, with his conceptual approach and formal methods being seen as integral to the ways in which Pop Art continues to be generated.

Rooney's regeneration of content from his own past work parallels the practice of many Pop artists after the 1960s. A number of Pop artists started their careers in commercial illustration or graphic design, and many made reference in their work to the techniques used in these fields (for example, Andy Warhol's blotted line technique, James Rosenquist's billboard photo-realism, Robert Indiana's packing crate stencils, Peter Phillips's airbrush painting style, Ed Ruscha's functional, sans-serif typefaces). Much Pop Art of the 1970s made further allusion to these techniques and to earlier works in which they had been used. Roy Lichtenstein's *Artist's Studio – Look Mickey* (1973) is one of many works by Lichtenstein from the 1970s that refer to his own earlier paintings, in this case *Look Mickey* (1961). Another instance of self-referentiality occurs in Larry Rivers's *Golden Oldies* (1972–

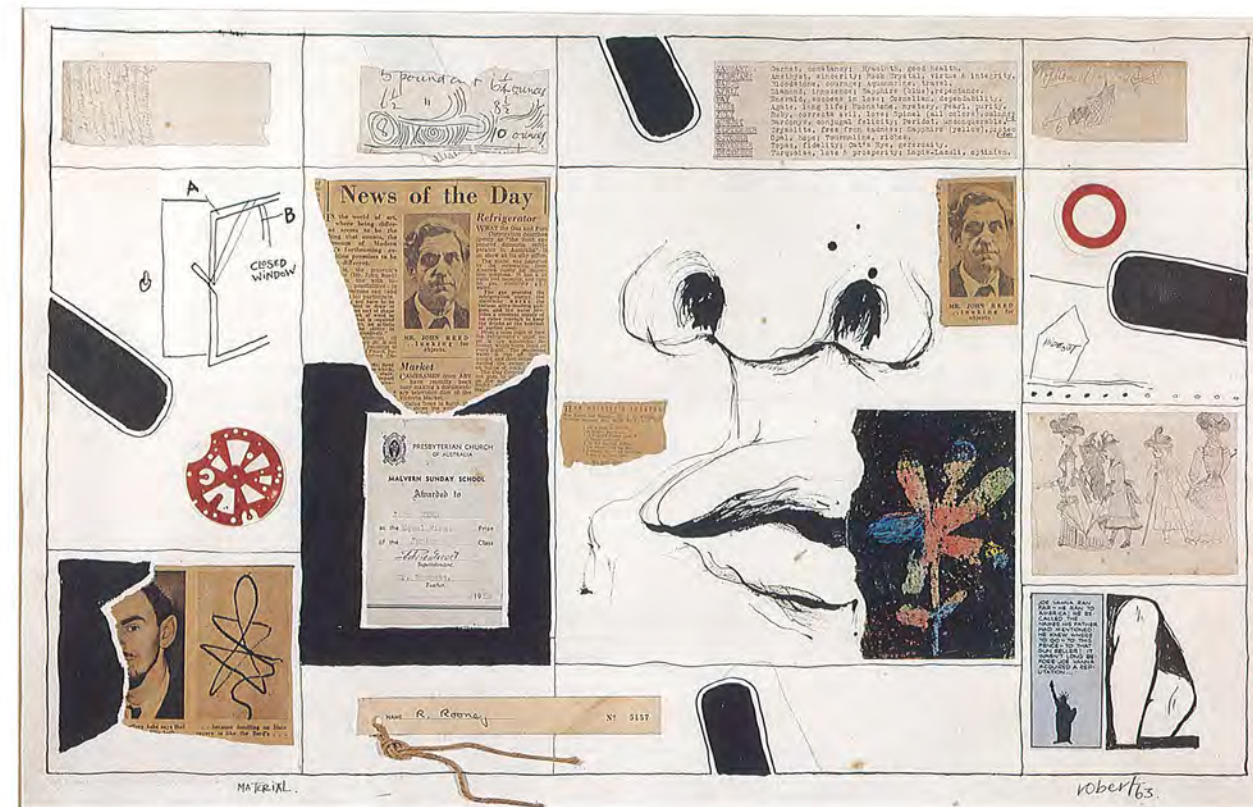
78). This series of collages of commercial images made famous by Rivers during the 1960s effectively parodies his own historical status as an 'elder' Pop artist. Andy Warhol's *Reversal Series* (1979) employs similar methods in reprinting a collection of his most representative works in negative. In *Pilkington Predicts*, Robert Rooney espouses the same notion of regeneration-as-creativity, and thus works within a similar conceptual framework to that which propelled the work of many international Pop artists.

A consideration of Pop activity throughout the 1970s reveals that once Pop Art had become part of popular culture, it was bound to cannibalise itself in this way. However this process, while seemingly unprogressive and uncreative, in fact embodied similar principles to those which had guided the achievements of the 1960s – namely, a kind of 'dynamic stasis'. Pop artists rejected the compulsive progressivism of twentieth century art; their recourse was to stand still and to work with what was available to them, rather than to invent an iconography for the sake of 'originality'.

Yet this apparent stasis had a dynamism and inventiveness of its own. As an art movement, Pop initiated formalist explorations into what could be done with subject matter apparently emptied of context. Pop artists focused on what could be called the 'abject contemporaneity' of the prevailing culture – a field emptied of romantic artistic discourse and governed by the mass media. Robert Rooney's paintings are quintessentially Pop as they formally explore issues and themes of domesticity, boredom, suburbanism and repetition – all of which connote the experience of living in the present.

Rooney's 'endless present' is measured by the many collections he has amassed of contemporary cultural artefacts – collections that simultaneously keep up with the present and methodically document its multiple, *ad hoc* beginnings. Obsessively self-informed of global art activity and cultural phenomena since the early 1950s, Rooney has a formidable number of magazines, slides, scrapbooks, and clipping files that contain fragments sighted on the run, gathered from ephemera or reflecting personal interests. Part diary, part library, part workbench, these fragments are kept for his own pleasure with many being used in his collages, publications, and paintings¹.

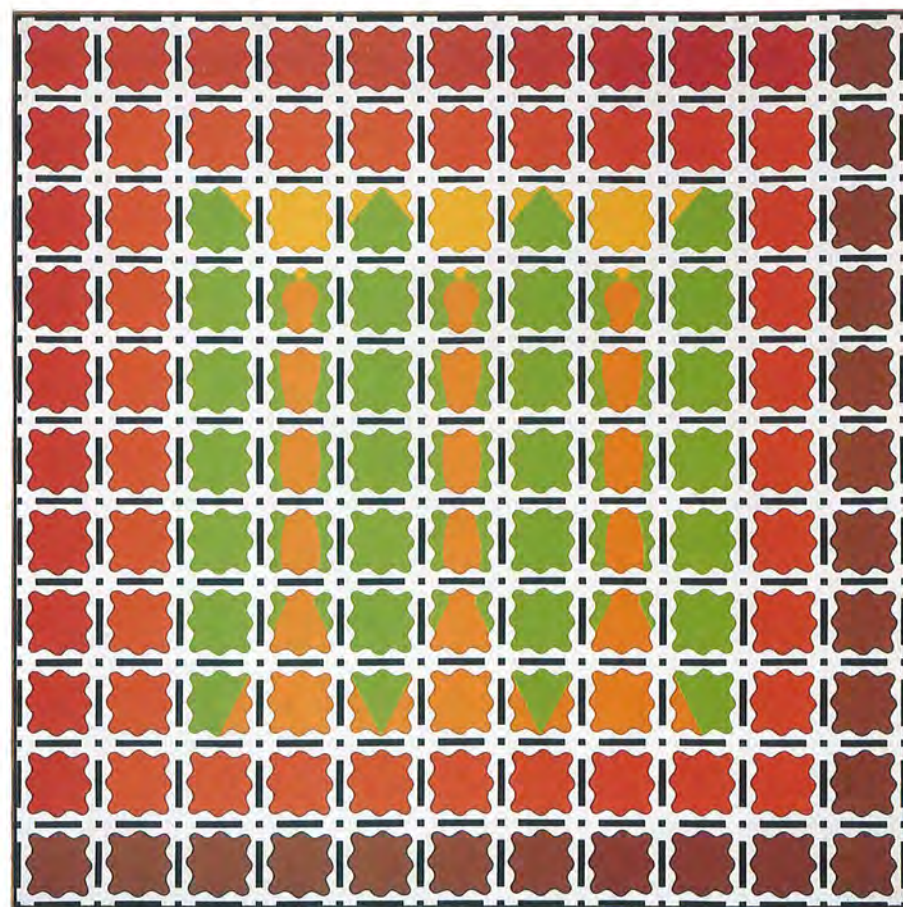
In this respect, some of Rooney's earliest work parallels the early work of Andy Warhol. Among Warhol's set of black and white, pseudo-abstract-expressionist renderings of newspaper advertisements, dated 1960, there are a few works titled *Untitled*, which are simply selections of small newspaper advertisements cut out and pasted on paper. Essentially, these 'works' are source material sheets, filed away for future reference and/or application. Much Pop source material was catalogued in this way, starting in the mid-1950s with 'diary/library/workbenches' such as Robert



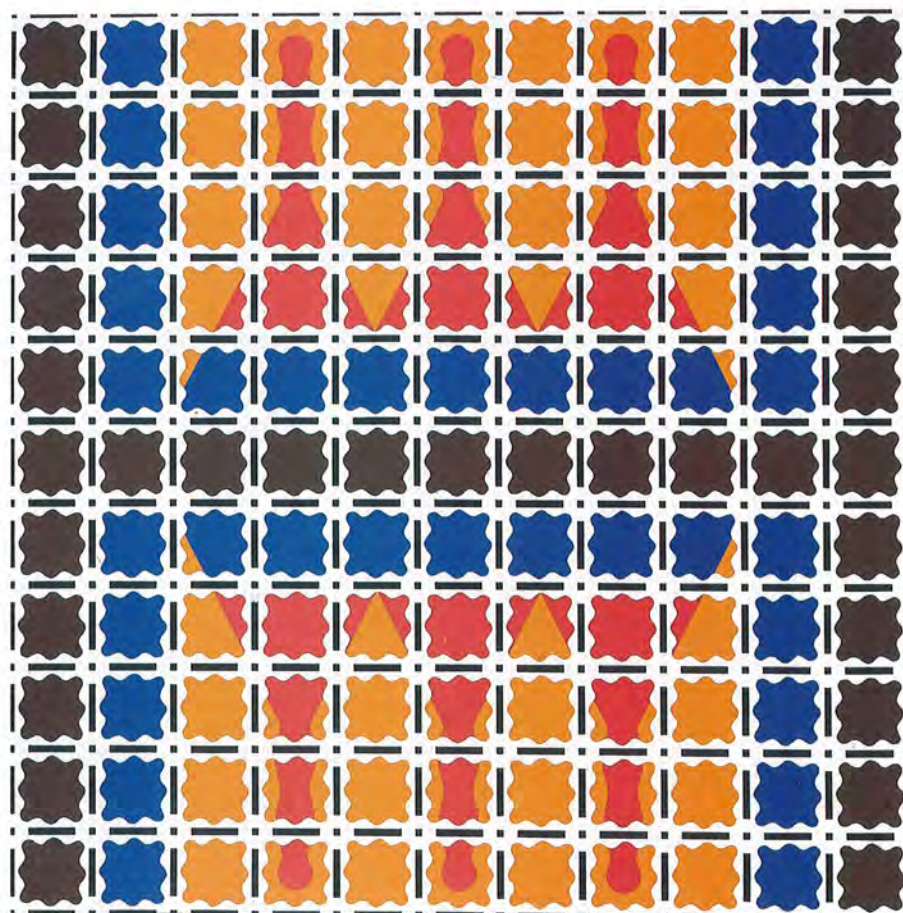
Material 1963, collage and ink on paper, sight 44.0 x 69.5 (Collection: the artist)



Documentation I May 19 1963, collage and ink on paper, sight 54.0 x 73.5 (Collection: the artist)



Kind-Hearted Kitchen Garden II
1967, synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
167.9 x 168.1 (Collection: Australian National Gallery)



Kind-Hearted Kitchen Garden III
1968, synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
160.8 x 167.0 (Collection: National Gallery of Victoria)

Rauschenberg's photographs of commercial shop signs and Eduardo Paolozzi's suitcases of American leisure and entertainment magazines. An early interest of Rooney's was the sub-culture of juvenile delinquents – a new phenomenon which was pictorially splattered across many family journals of the late 1950s. Coverage of this sub-culture in *Life* and *Time* magazines ended up in one of Rooney's many files, images from which came the source material for a set of paintings made between 1958 and 1959.

Adolescents (1958) and *Hero* (1959) demonstrate a social realist tendency and show groups of crew-cut adolescents standing around, ritually sipping Coke and regularly taunting each other. The banality of Rooney's execution (an almost text-book approach to juxtaposing and combining reds and blues) echoes the uneventfulness of the figures' existence. A mock-mythical quality pervades another set of paintings – *I Rise in Flame, Implication* and *Mortality Play* (all 1958). These works rendered are similarly rendered, but their scenarios posit the adolescents as melodramatic photo-journalistic representations of sweet birds of youth. Youthful energy – incapable of distinguishing between passion, aggression and frustration – is evoked in these symbolic tableaux, yet a strange ambivalence haunts these James Dean lookalikes; an ambivalence possibly derived from their being sourced from *Life* magazine rather than from 'everyday life'.

The sourcing of newspaper and magazine articles in this unemotional, bland way becomes more localised and focused in a series of car crash paintings that Rooney made between 1958 and 1960. *Sunday* (1958) links cruising adolescents to derelict car wrecks. The title verges on the sarcastic, with its reference to the great Australian 'Sunday drive', which was the ultimate torture to any aspiring delinquent. The painting shows a group of delinquents – 'outsiders' who routinely escaped the Sunday drive – impassively looking out over their own Sunday playground: gutted and rusting car wrecks that have been dumped behind a children's play area. Solitary contemplation is transformed into morbid voyeurism in *Crash Victim* (1959) and *Accident* and *Red Death* (both 1960), the latter uncannily prefiguring Warhol's titling of car crash works like *Five Red Deaths on Red* in 1962. These paintings evoke the delinquents' impassive perspective on the spectacle of death, and thus run tandem to the increasing detachment and so-called objectivity of photo-journalism of the time, which was also influential on both Rauschenberg's and Warhol's treatment of such imagery. Rooney's car crashes also relate to a strong undercurrent in much work of the early 1960s, which fixed on the compacted automobile as symbolising the violent breakdown of America's main postwar boom industry (many Pop paintings and sculptures feature car parts, chassis, attachments etc.). Australia was caught up in the same propagation of the 'ultimate leisure vehicle' with the advent of the patriotic GMH², and Rooney's car crashes – as conservative as they may at first appear – are his terse contribution to late 1950s traditional landscape painting with their ghost gums. Rooney's ghosts are the car wrecks.

An interesting feature of the car crash paintings is that the more they featured twisted metal, the more they appeared like

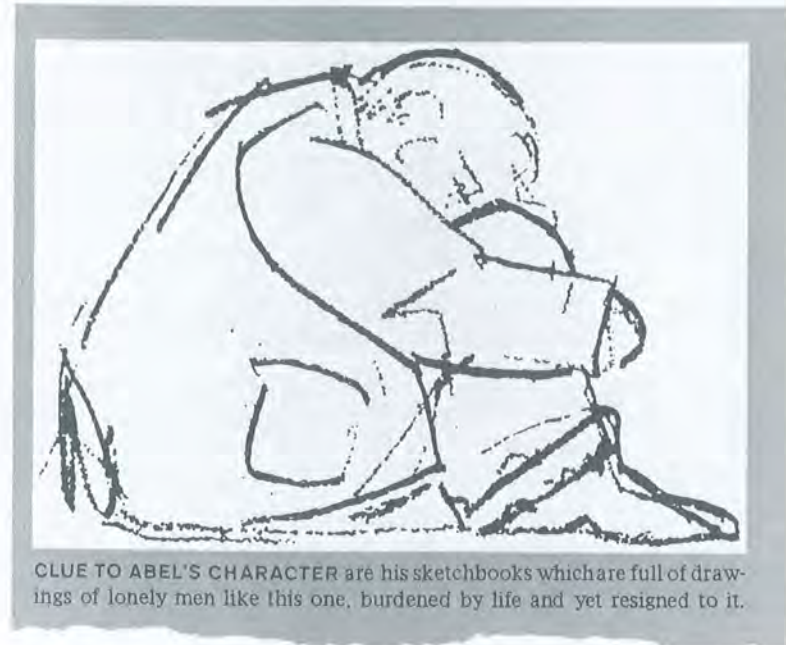
abstract expressionist paintings – an irony not lost on Rooney. In this respect, they form a bridge between his early work and his 'abstract' paintings the 1960s, works that explore the perceptual boundaries between representation and abstraction.

Available Form and *Two* (both 1966) are the earliest examples of this approach. The main figure in both these paintings is just that: a figure of representation and abstraction; a 'figure of vision' in the same sense as we refer to a 'figure of speech' as denoting the ability of language to displace and transform meaning. *Available Form* and *Two* each create a visual ambiguity with the subject of the work being at one moment an alien hieroglyph at the next a human form, the result of a constant perceptual shift between foreground and background. At the same time, one can see the Playboy Bunny logo, barbed-wire, lips, an optical film soundtrack, breasts, buttocks, cheap curtain patterns, Arp, Moore, Giacometti and Tony Curtis in *The Great Houdini*. *Two* in particular, pokes fun at the visual associations evoked by the work, as we find ourselves asking: two what?

Having used a cut-out stencil to generate the figures in these two paintings, Rooney went on to use the pre-designed shapes that children cut-out from the backs of Kellogg's Corn Flakes packets to make up funny masks and animal assemblages. Here was a more succinct way of colliding abstraction and representation, and of bringing the utterly banal into the domain of the 'artistic'. These templates – perfect tools for serialisation – became the main means of production in series of works that outwardly mocked the preciousness with which Australia tackled the hard-edge revolution of the late 1960s'. While a Duchampian pun can be detected in the play between 'cereal' and 'serial', the supreme irony is to be found in the innate abstraction of the cereal box shapes, marking Rooney's works as even more hard-edged than the 'real thing'. The first two series – *Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden*, Nos. 1–4 and *Slippery Seal*, Nos. 1–5 (both 1967) – are centred on illusionistic notions depth. *Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden* employs meta-grids through which one perceives interlocking shapes, thus structurally reinforcing – and endowing with irony – the dimensional relationship between the cut-out commodity and hard-edged art. The *Slippery Seal* series extends this play by creating an Op Art effect that dissolves the meta-grid of *Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden*. Both clearly replay the strategy of *Available Form* and *Two* – particularly when the viewer tries to distinguish the shapes mentioned in the titles. Collectively, these paintings of 1966 and 1967 testify to the emergence of a strong conceptual strain in Rooney's hyper-formalism, in that they are as much about the perceptions involved in defining hard-edge abstraction as they are about the practical means and methods employed in the production of this kind of painting.

Canine Capers, Nos. 1–7 (1968) testify further to this conceptual strain, with the paintings in this series more directly eliciting a hard-edge aesthetic. Viewed as a sequential series, these paintings work through a complex set of rhythms by establishing a meta-grid made up of a repeated motif aligned vertically and horizontally. Each successive painting simply alters the angle of either all the motifs, or some of them in alternate sequence, with the slight deviations engineered by quite complex internal structuring – cre-

Clue to Abel's Character (1983), synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 152.0 x 179.0. Private Collection.



CLUE TO ABEL'S CHARACTER are his sketchbooks which are full of drawings of lonely men like this one, burdened by life and yet resigned to it.

What Price Victory (1983), synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 4 panels, each 92.0 x 91.2. Collection: University of Melbourne Art Collection



Robert Rooney in front of *The Red Card*, Australia, 1944–1945 1982. Photograph: Jeremy Bannister



ating an effect analogous to that of cinematic animation. Visible through the lattice holes created by the meta-grid, a contrapuntal series of secondary shapes spreads in and out of spatial synchronisation with the main motif, thereby creating a constant interplay of shapes, motifs and their interlocking grids. *Cereal Bird Beaks*, Nos. 1–3 (1969) continues this approach to complex spatial relationships. Comparing *Cereal Bird Beaks* with *Canine Capers*, one can observe that the internal placement of secondary shapes against the main grid motifs in both series of paintings appears illogical and anti-geometric, while nonetheless generating a feeling of extreme spatial logic. The *Cereal Bird Beak* series suggests the modification of tightly structured frameworks by the apparently random placement of micro-structures. The implicit irony in this arises from juxtaposing the high plane of structural/spatial logic with random distribution, with the result that the latter appears to have its own (relative) logic. Both *Canine Capers* and *Cereal Bird Beaks* thus make ironic comment on the preoccupations of the hard-edge aesthetic.

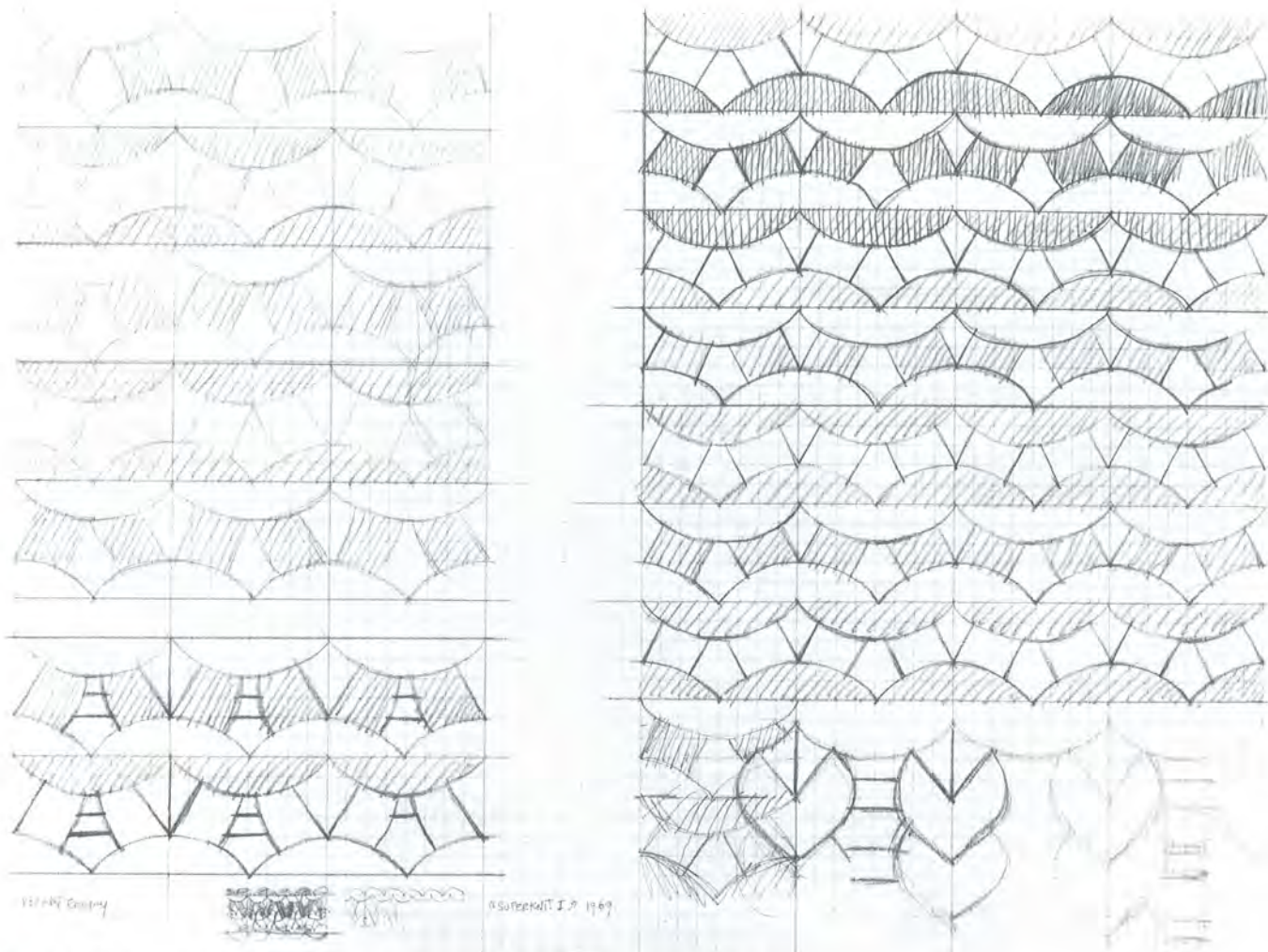
Rooney's final series of hard-edged abstract paintings, *Superknit*, Nos. 1–6 (1970), posits the knitting pattern as the sublime production of structuralist abstraction. The most conceptual of Rooney's paintings up to that point, the *Superknit* series suggests that painting can be reduced to an activity that fills in time in much the same way as knitting. Pop's 'abject contemporaneity' here becomes exquisite boredom, as if the time had come for the artist, reduced to this kind of subject matter, to give up painting altogether. This terse subtext is woven through the *Superknit* series, making it no surprise that these were to be the last major paintings Rooney would execute for twelve years'.

Yet through its implicit negation of the importance of painting, the *Superknit* series links Rooney to the Dada legacy carried by Pop Art. It was Marcel Duchamp who first seriously contemplated the rejection of painting as a means of dealing with the 'abject contemporaneity' he found so inspiring. Working with chocolate grinders, snow shovels, hat racks, coat racks, bottle racks, bicycle wheels, twine balls and urinals, Duchamp took the decision to reject the icons and practices of 'high art', to collapse into the present, and to create art merely by existing. No past, no future; simply chess, spaghetti, and a job in a library: the individual artist's own 'dynamic stasis'. Duchamp's most 'negative' work, *Dust Breeding* (1920, documented in a photograph by Man Ray) shows his work *The Large Glass* neglected and gathering dust in his New York studio; an object that does nothing but carry the material evidence of the passage of time. Pop was to formalise this legacy of the emptiness of the 'everyday' by making manifest and explicit what Duchamp had conceptually projected. Pop artists were thus inevitably engaged in intricate conceptual flows in their realisation of much of what Duchamp and the Dadaists had forecast as the end of art. In this sense, Pop can be viewed as the impulsive sound ("POP!") of modernism becoming postmodernism. Just as much Pop Art regenerated Dada's views on the collapse of the art/culture distinction, it also prefigured much of what was to occur in postmodern art throughout the 1980s. Broadly speaking, this postmodern period might equally be termed the 'Post-Pop environment'. Just as it has witnessed critical re-investigation of

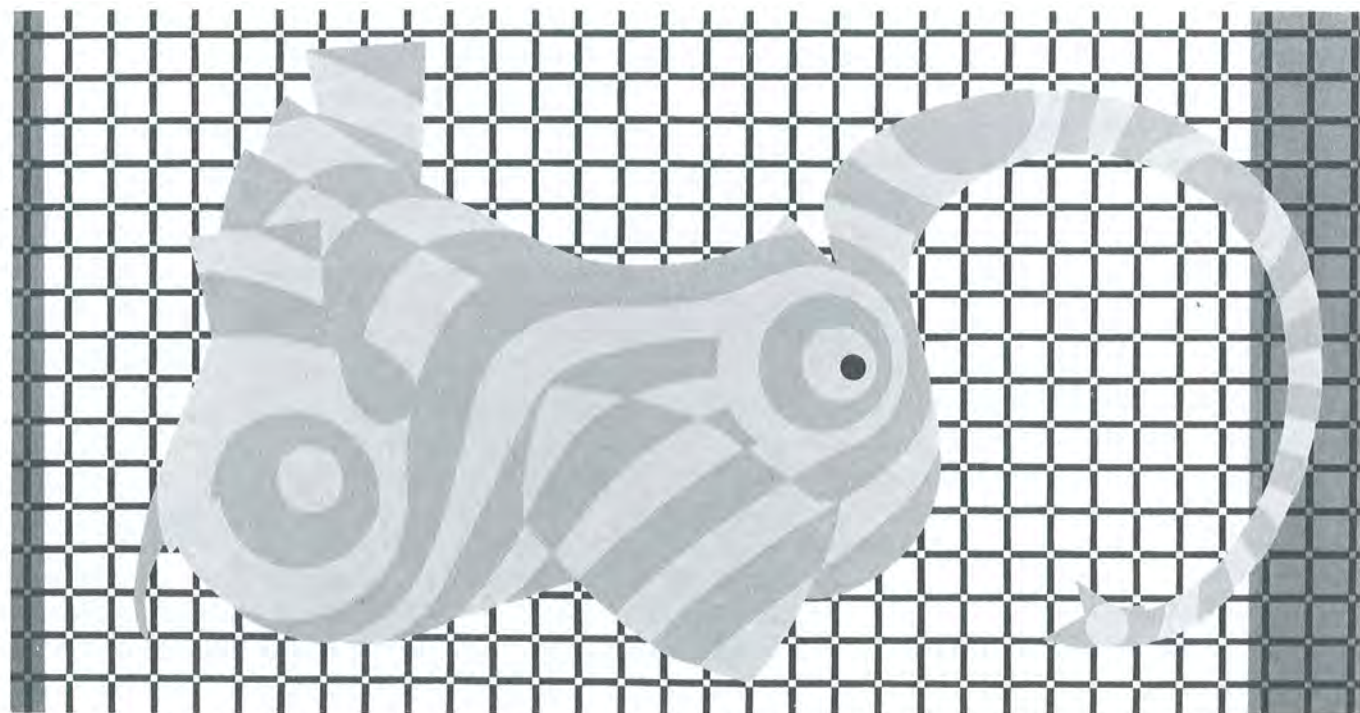
Pop Art, so has it nurtured a new generation of artists with new perspectives on the relationship between art and culture. The *POPISM* exhibition was one of many exhibitions around the world during the 1980s that explored this relationship, and Robert Rooney is one of very few Pop artists in Australia who has produced a large enough body of work throughout the 1980s to allow us to open up these issues for critical discussion.

Three important paintings signal the start of Rooney's regeneration: *The Death of James Dean*, Nos. 1–2 and *Clue to Abel's Character* (all 1983). Together, they rework the subject matter of his early 'adolescent' paintings of the late 1950s. *The Death of James Dean* is a perverse, lyrical ode to hip iconography, expressed through references to El Lissitzky, James Dean, Kurt Schwitters and Lana Turner. This pastiche, assembled by an illustrator for *Esquire* magazine in the 1950s, was equally appropriate to the early 1980s, when not only was popular culture invading the gallery, but art was also invading the advertising agency. Rooney thus plays on his own past – both as teenager and as artist – and on the way in which images from that past have entered the iconography of the Post-Pop era. Both paintings contain magazine headlines and intro-lines which at the time were clustered around announcements of the tragic death of James Dean. Just as the James Dean Foundation deploys the Jimmy Dean mythology to economic advantage⁸, Rooney employs the same mythology within an art framework. *Clue to Abel's Character* (1983) – a strange painting outside the artist's customary series – similarly returns to 1950s delinquent/rebel mythology, this time by enlarging a fragment visibly torn from a magazine of the time. An illustration of a forlorn figure (rendered in a style reminiscent of Warhol's early blotted line technique), sitting with head in arms and angry at the world, is captioned with a text that clearly recalls Rooney's own mock-mythical 'adolescent' paintings: 'Clue to Abel's character are [sic] his sketchbooks which are full of drawings of lonely men like this one, burdened by life and yet resigned to it.' Seen within the context of Rooney's early 'adolescent' paintings, what at first appears a relatively detached image in fact acquires a range of nostalgic, even melancholy, associations.

Rooney's first solo exhibition of paintings after *POPISM* was held in 1983 and titled *As You Were*. Tinged with the artist's new Post-Pop self-referentiality, the title is lifted from and refers to Australia's patriotic feelings during World War II, as represented in popular magazines of the time. In this exhibition, a few black and white paintings applied the method of direct enlargement, first used in *Pilkington Predicts*, to grossly enlarge iconic wartime illustrations of subjects such as fighting and flying planes. In *What Price Victory?* and *Speed Victory* (both 1983), the rough outlines, exaggerated by the magnification of cheaply printed source images, elicit a nostalgic impulse which throws the viewer back into an era that can never be recaptured. This impossibility of re-experiencing the past (hinted at previously in the early 'adolescent' series) becomes even more apparent through the compaction of similarly sourced images in a set of paintings (most of which were shown in the *As You Were* exhibition) whose titles are inspired by wartime editorial copy: *As You Were*, *The Way to the Stars*, *Functional Dress for Men*, *The Home Front*, *The Art of*



Superknit 1 1969, pencil on graph paper, 32.0 x 41.5. Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane



Silly Symphony 2 (Psychedelephant) 1988, liquitex on canvas, 126.0 x 244.0. Collection: Western Mining Corporation

Illustration and Child's Journey (all 1983) and *The Second Front* and *The Setting Sun* (both 1984).

These paintings restage the collapse of the representational into the abstract, seen previously in *Available Form* and *Two*, by foregrounding an array of images that obviously represents specific objects, while at the same time, to some extent, rendering those very objects abstract. Rooney's eye for detail makes these paintings fascinating because he has selected from hundreds of possible images only those that resonate with this kind of visual duality; and those replete with an overwhelming amateurism and awkwardness. Taken together, these paintings strongly evoke an era of rationing, not only in their wartime subject matter but also in the off-white backgrounds, simulating pulp paper, which are economically printed with black and one colour⁶. While the paintings achieve a dense effect through careful and streamlined juxtaposition, a nostalgic impulse enlivens what would otherwise have been a clinical postmodern exercise in 'image pirating'.

The 'compacted' approach to the collage of found imagery that typifies the *As You Were* collection announces Rooney's 1980s work and positions it in line with the work of other Post-Pop artists. Compaction in this context is a regeneration and re-evaluation of the original precepts of collage as propounded by the Dadaists, with the Post-Pop collages being distinguished by the erasure of dimensional demarcation within the pictorial plane. While Rauschenberg introduced his 'combines' as an extension of Schwitters's 'merzbaue', overlaying torn image fragments so that they violently ruptured each other's homogeneous textures and surfaces, much Pop and Post-Pop collage has applied what is now recognised as a postmodern technique: the cancellation of any material or dimensional differences between items collaged. The pictorial plane in some of the Post-Pop work of, for example, Komar & Melamid and Thomas Lawson (American-based artists whose multi-planed collages of visual references bear certain relations to Rooney's work), and Imants Tillers, Peter Tyndall and Maria Kozic (Australian artists who exhibited with Rooney in *POPISM*), is composed of detached yet faithful reproductions. These artists' found imagery is treated impassively, confronting the viewer with a marked absence of the artist's personal identify. This type of compaction (where the found is fixed), as opposed to collage (where the found is fractured) represents neither a frivolous trend nor a 'movement' embracing the artists mentioned; instead it relates to the twentieth-century tradition of de-constructing popular culture.

Rooney's 1985 solo exhibition carried a title that made flagrantly ironic reference to issues of visual and conceptual ambiguity: *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture*. This collection of works openly addressed a number of Rooney's key themes. Also drawn from wartime images, it made use of material with a harder propaganda edge and specified the 'Asian Invasion' (World War II and the Korean War) as the prime energiser in the mythology of patriotic hysteria expressed in the media of the 1940s and early 1950s. *Understand the Weapon* and *The Missing Man* (both 1985) employ the basic processes of the 1983-84 paintings, but rather than merely evoking an era, their scenarios suggest a form of visual narrative. *Understand the*

Weapon, for example, evokes a sense of victory through collaging a child's war-toy pop gun; blitzkrieg spotlights (or are they Hollywood arc lamps?); a group of singing military personnel; and strewn confetti (or is it demoralising propaganda dropped by the enemy?). These paintings do not confront the viewer with alien imagery, but rather use recognisable, 'naturalised' images to tell a story of international conflict.

A dominant motif establishes a visual link between the paintings in the *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture* exhibition: camouflage. Three of these paintings feature dog-fight explosions – *Born to Die*, *Tumult in the Clouds* and *Against the Sun* (all 1985). The latter two works in particular blend flames and smoke, camouflage paint and material, and military maps and charts, all at once in a dizzying swirl of shapes. The pictorial frame becomes awash in wartime imagery, as Rooney undermines the seriousness of his subject matter by reducing it to the status of a collection of bland visual icons. The remaining paintings – *With Intent to Deceive*, *Beans and Bushido* and *Juke Box Jungle* (all 1985) – take the camouflage motif even further. *With Intent to Deceive* is a tale of a seductive Mata Hari figure depicted naked on top of a camouflaged plane whose door half-conceals a symbol of the Italian Fascist airforce. *Beans and Bushido* also carries a veiled threat, as it shows a handful of contaminated beans against what appears to be either a military map or an abstract background, but which in fact is a grossly enlarged and distorted image of two Japanese Kamikaze pilots. *Juke Box Jungle* is a crazy clash of 1950s juke-box stencilled figures dancing against a vibrating enlargement of an illustration of jungle growth; it recalls the tension between those that went to the Korean War and the 'spivs' who stayed at home; the jungle beat (from swing to be-bop) that played while 'loose lips sank ships' in juke joints; and the big bands that tried to make everyone march to the same drum. One complete story hidden in every abstract painting.

The title of Rooney's next solo exhibition (in 1988) makes it impossible not to recognise a reference to his duplicitous involvement in hard-edged abstraction. Titled *Silly Symphonies, or At Last the 1968 Show, Part One: New Paintings*, the show sardonically referred to *The Field*, an exhibition of hard-edged abstract painting held in 1968 at the National Gallery of Victoria. Far from being nostalgic, Rooney's 1988 series is questioning his involvement in that show, to which he was probably as relevant as it is to the current Post-Pop environment.

The seven paintings in the *Silly Symphonies* series (all 1988) provide us with Rooney's most recent regenerative Post-Pop work. The motif of camouflage once again dominates, working to perversely conceal some of the artist's early abstract works in a self-reflexive, Duchampian manner. Whereas Rooney had earlier used the cut-out cereal box shapes as templates in the construction of his hard-edged abstractions, in the *Silly Symphonies* series he uses the whole of the cereal box animal rather than its individual components as a template. *Psychedelephant*, *Zebra Special* and *Morocco Bound* each feature the animal of their titles, not only painted in wonderfully 'off' colours, the use of which renders their formal contours almost invisible, but also positioned either

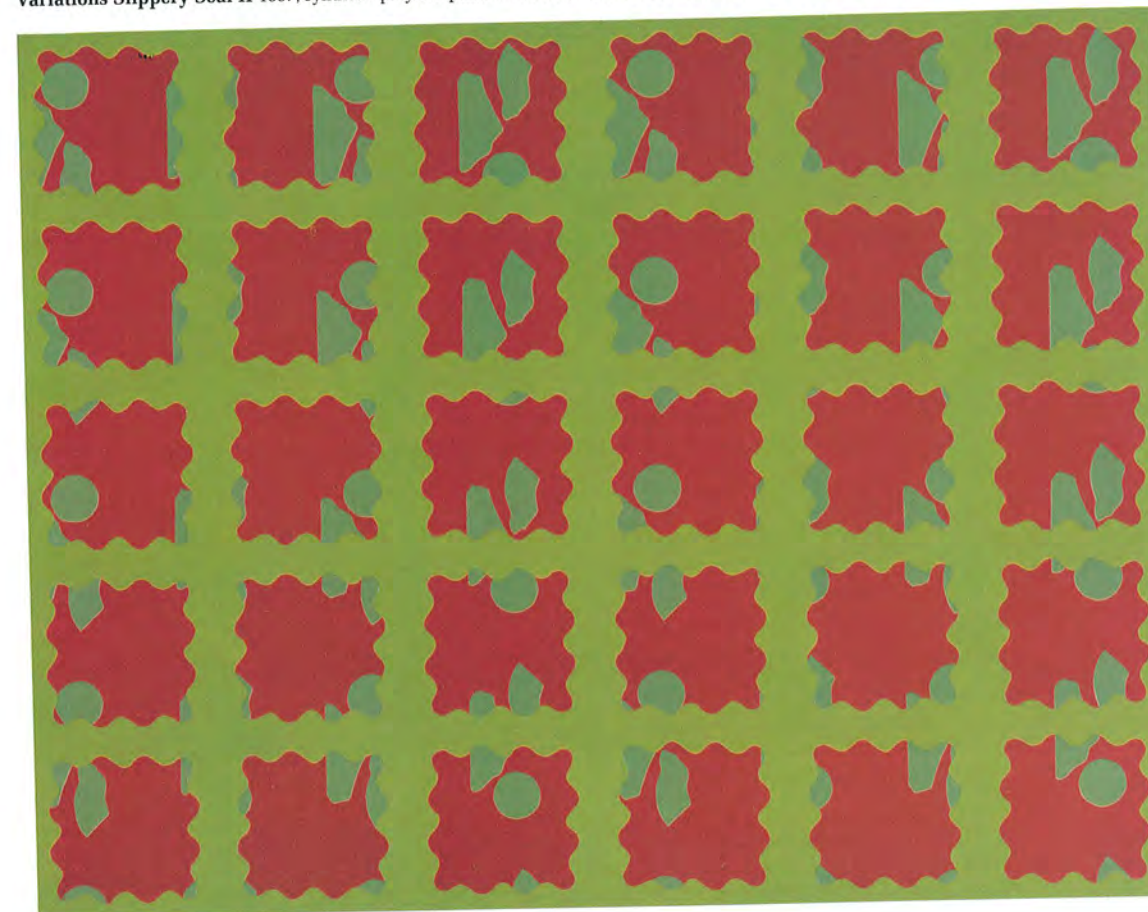
on their sides, or upside-down so that one has to at first look hard to decipher the figure. While the crazy, Op-kitsch backgrounds clearly clash with the central figures, supposedly de-camouflaging them, one in fact has difficulty distinguishing the shape from its surroundings. Other paintings in the *Silly Symphonies* series – *Jumbo Jumble*, *Camel Cuts* and *Zebra Special* – feature the same animal figures cut up into jigsaw segments and thrown against a wash of flat, bright colour, creating an even greater perceptual problem for the viewer.

The works from 1985 on, construct a critical 'play space' within which Rooney looks back at his source material of the past, and at the ways in which he used that material, thereby undertaking a self-referential exercise in deconstruction. He approaches his own earlier work in the same, detached way he originally approached that work's subject matter, indicating how tightly fused 'diary', 'library', and 'workbench' have become. This type of fusion, of closed circuitry and replayed figures, marks Rooney as a Pop artist who has successfully passed into the Post-Pop environment – a transition that aids the clearer critical evaluation of Pop as theory, practice and legacy and as a vital creative force today. A study in motion of Pop's integral dynamic stasis, Robert Rooney is as he was and was as he is.

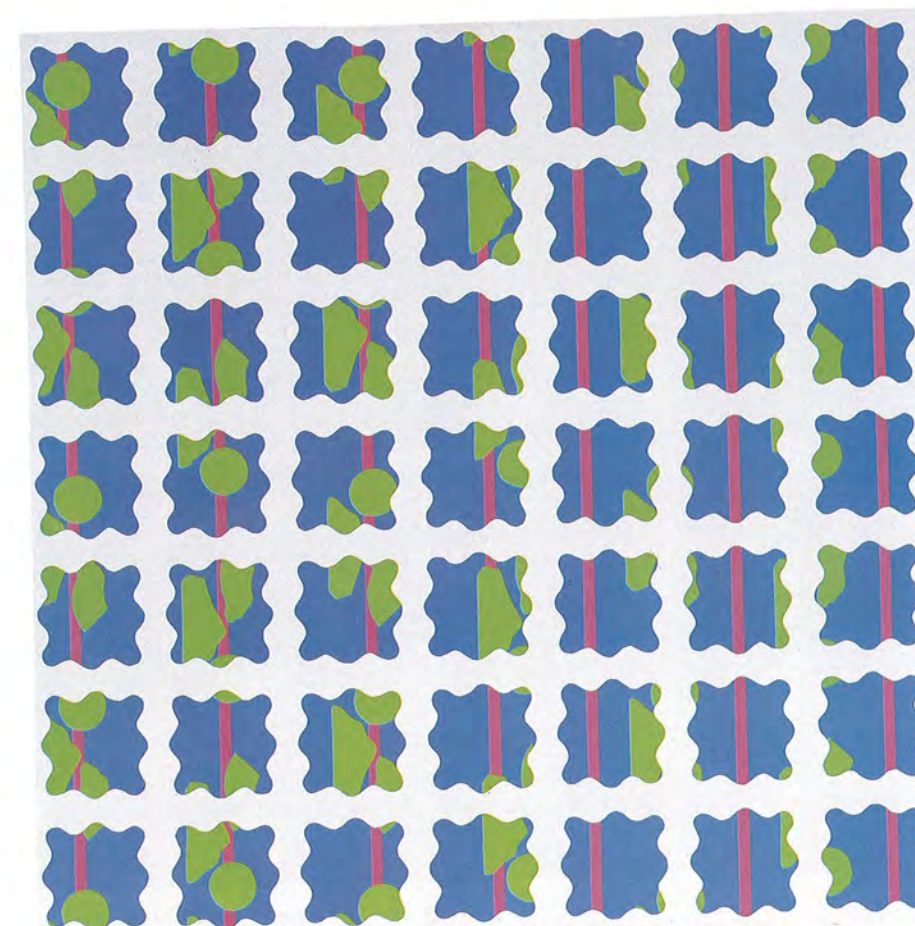
NOTES

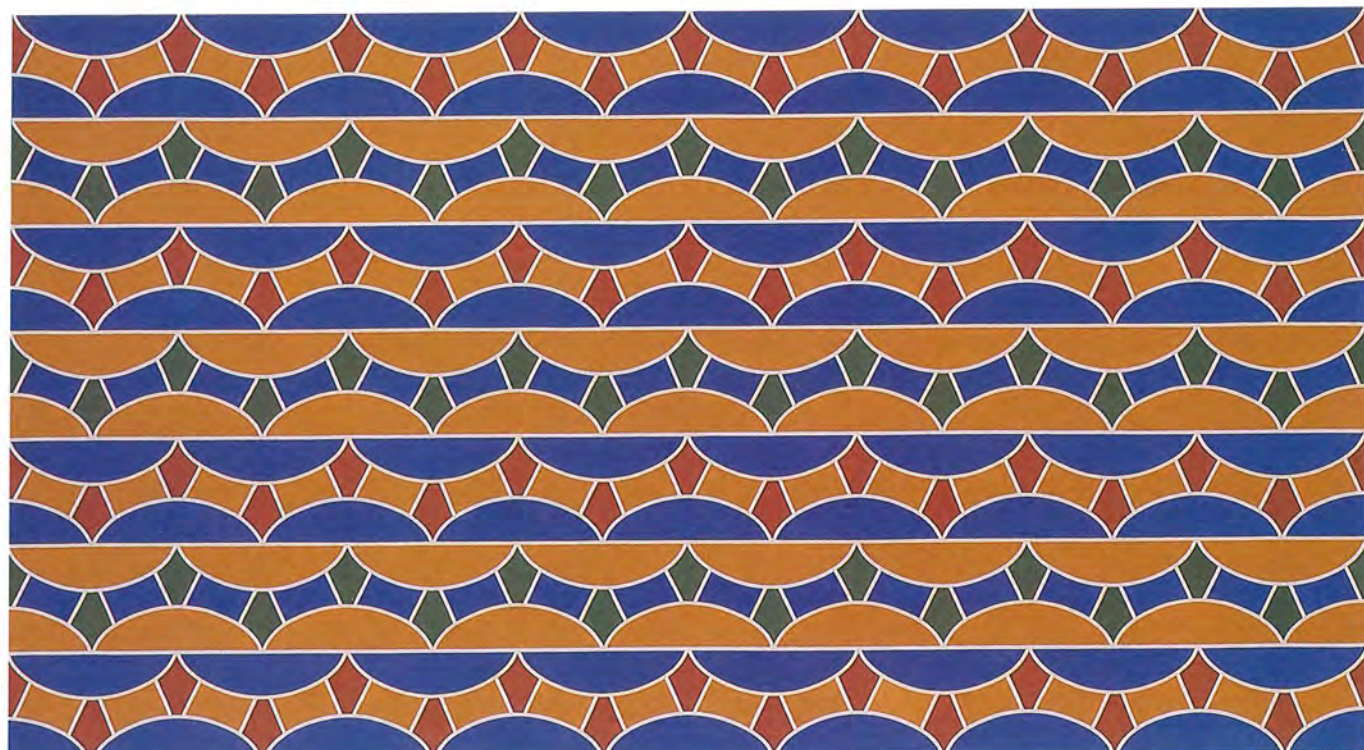
1. See *Spons, Documentation I, May 19 1963*, and *Material*, 1963.
1. See *Holden Park 1 & 2, May 1970*, 1970.
3. Hard-edged abstraction – including some of Rooney's 'parodies' of the genre – was showcased in the exhibition *The Field* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1968.
4. See the Biography for a listing of the photographic projects and works which Rooney mostly produced during this period.
5. The James Dean Foundation has gained/profited an estimated US\$50–75 million annually worldwide since 1984 from licensing the use of images of Dean.
6. Some of the original source material for this exhibition was displayed uncredited as such in the exhibition *Innocence & Danger – An Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987, curated by Robert Rooney, and in *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1986.

Variations Slippery Seal II 1967, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 105.0 x 135.0 (Collection: Mr Bruce Pollard)



Variations Slippery Seal III
1967, synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
106.7 x 106.7 (Collection: Monash University)





Superknit 1 1969, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 134.0 x 245.0 (Collection: National Gallery of Victoria)



Superknit 5 1970, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 152.5 x 244.0 (Collection: Australian National Gallery)

Artist's Statements

LESS THAN FIVE HUNDRED WORDS IN RETROSPECT - ROBERT ROONEY

PAINT:

The only time I enjoyed using paint was when I was putting on the white undercoat. The preparation was laborious - up to two weeks to prepare the canvas and a few hours to paint it. I used to watch television while I painted.

CAMERA:

The camera is a dumb recording device. It's not the same as seeing. The camera often seems to organise the material itself.

LOCATION:

Only the places I visit. Organised from experience rather than having the idea and looking for the appropriate example.

CHOICE:

Something outside style, nostalgia and beautiful views.

BANAL:

Means familiar rather than boring. I don't think of boredom. The only time I think of boredom is when I can't do what I want to do. I had a madness for breakfast cereal - used to live on it.

REPETITION:

The more you repeat a thing the more variety you have. If something is monotonous it's all right.

ROUTINES:

Different people have different routines. Things are taken for granted. No matter how you free yourself you fall back into a routine.

HUMOUR:

It can be humorous and horrifying at the same time.

IDENTIFY:

A work as the other person is a curious hybrid. It is neither yours nor theirs.

OBJECTS:

Any work that I am seen in fails. Objects are usually part of a situation or routine. Stein-Objects, Food, and Rooms.

THEORY:

The theory of my work came after I did it.

from *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have always preferred to work from secondary sources, particularly mass-media ones, rather than paint or draw from the actual subject. As a student (1954-57), following the example of Ben Shahn, I based my paintings and drawings on childhood snaps and photos I had taken with a Brownie box camera.

The sources for the paintings of car accidents and proto-Pop images of teenage subculture in my first exhibition (1960) were more varied, being derived from photographs in 'Life' magazine, local newspapers and TV shows such as Six O'Clock Rock.

Documentation 1 (1963) was compiled at the end of my 'Bacon' period and presents some of the photos I used in a series of paintings of single figures. Among these were my first works with war themes, such as those based on shots of Mussolini hanging, Korean War images, casts of figures and a dog from Pompeii, which were sometimes combined with Malevich-like abstract bars and layers of hard-edge stripes.

My abstract paintings (1967-70) were based on my large collection of breakfast cereal cut-outs and other found material such as knitting patterns.

When I returned to painting in 1982, I rediscovered a lot of the old material while cleaning out my studio. Since then my collection has grown larger and I have made about 500 slides of images. However, the primary sources for my recent paintings have been linocuts in 'A Comment', illustrations in various armed service annuals and post-war volumes of 'As You Were', advertisements in 'Fortune' magazines and 'Esquire' (mostly from the 40s and 50s) and an illustrated prospectus for the 'Art Training Institute' correspondence course.

The image in *Speed Victory* (1983) is an enlargement of one of the four canvases in the painting *What Price Victory?* (1983), which also included a copy of the same tiny lineblock found in a 'War Savings' stamp folder.

from *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1986

ROBERT ROONEY

'It is true of my 'Faux-Monnayeurs' as it is of piano-practice: it is not always by plugging away at a difficulty and sticking at it that one overcomes it; but rather, often by working on the one next to it. Certain people and certain things require to be approached on an angle.'

Andre Gide, '1924 Journal'.

REPORT

*Diploma of Art Course
Half year ending June 30th 1957*

Name: Robert Rooney
Year of Course: Fourth year
Folio Assessment: Work lacks strength and precision
Remarks: General improvement shown over the last six months. Not yet up to Diploma standard.
Concentration on specific commercial illustration is advised.
Head of Art School
Director

THE ARGONAUTS CLUB

Before the sun and the night and the blue sea, I vow to stand faithful by all that is brave and beautiful; to seek adventure, and having discovered aught - of wonder, or delight, or merriment or liveliness, - to share it freely with my comrades, the band of Happy Rowers.

Signed: R. Rooney
Number: Alonta 20

from *The Readymade Boomerang, Certain Relations in 20th Century Art*, The Eighth Biennale of Sydney, 1990, p.266.

ers of pulp magazines and paperbacks. To counteract suggestions that such 'explosive' material was likely to corrupt, the producers and publishers often hid their true intentions behind the flimsy veil of public education. There were cycles of delinquency films in the 20s, but it was in the 30s and 40s, despite the strong influence of the Hays office, that crime became popular "as long as the bad guys got it in the last reel".

The movie 'crime wave' set the scene for the teen exploitation explosion in the 50s. Among the forerunners were *Dead End Kids*, whose socially motivated themes became a bridge between the adult crime films of Bogie and Co. And the rising interest in juvenile delinquency.

In 1943 Val Lewton directed *Are These Our Children?*, which examined juvenile delinquency. It received much publicity – some thought it a danger to show America in a weak light during wartime – and was quickly imitated. By the late 40s the climate was right for *Gun Crazy*, *Knock on Any Door* (with its slogan "Live fast, die young and leave a pretty corpse") and *City Across the River* (based on the best-seller *The Amboy Dukes*). Many of the themes and images in all three films were to be the basis of the teen crime-oriented films of the next decade. With them, a new breed of anti-hero was born.

Betrock has attempted "to meld together the fun and the important history", yet his guide to teen films is thankfully without the sort of smart-alecky superiority of, say, *The Golden Turkey Awards*.

Sure, there is a lot of crazy and absurd material here – the plots and titles of some films (such as *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Crazy Mixed-Up Zombies*) and the antics of exploitation kings Sam Katzman, Albert Zugsmith and Roger Corman, for example – but it is seen in the context of a brief critical assessment of each film and how it was received when first released.

As the chances of seeing these rarities is remote, even on late night TV, we are left with the details of some 200 films and a choice selection of posters and lobby cards. What they reveal is that many of today's actors made their screen debuts in teen films. Among them, Jack Nicholson in *Cry Baby Killer*, James Franciscus in *Four Boys and a Gun*, Robert Vaughn and Horst Buchholz of whom it was said "nothing like him has hit the screen since James Dean".

Other actors, particularly John Saxon, Richard Bakalyan and Mamie van Doren, made their careers in teen flicks. Directors, too, such as Tom Laughlin (of Bill Jack fame), Robert Altman, John Frankenheimer, Irwin (The Empire Strikes Back), Kerschner and Roger Corman made significant contributions to the genre.

As mentioned earlier, posters and other publicity materials were essential in attracting the attention of the targeted teen audience. There is a tendency to dismiss them as trash, but within the context of teen exploitation they serve their purpose better than any arty Polish film poster.

The Australian 17/1/1987

THE BLUE FLOCKS OF FANCY

If you are old enough to have vowed "before the sun and the night and the blue sea, to stand faithfully by all that is brave and beautiful, to seek adventure, and having discovered aught of wonder, or delight, of merriment or liveliness, to share it freely with your comrades, the band of happy rowers" in ABC radio's long-gone but not forgotten *Argonauts' Club*, you will remember that just before Christmas each year, the regular program would give way to a series of festive plays and pantomimes.

Of all these perennial entertainments – such as home-grown pantos about Old King Cole and other nursery characters and a horrific dramatisation of animals trapped in bush fires – the one that always held me spellbound was *The Blue Bird*, Maurice Maeterlinck's rather spooky play about two children searching for the Blue Bird of Happiness.

The idea of a blue bird of happiness, which Maeterlinck seems to have originated, was also made popular by a song of that name, sung by Jan Peerce. As a child, I could never understand why the song's offending line about "the shop girl, the actress, the woman of the street" had been changed to protect my innocence (and presumably that of every adult

Australian).

The vogue for Maeterlinck's writings has passed, but in the early years of this century his plays, with their strong connections with symbolism and the aesthetic of dramatic silence, inspired composers and artists.

The most successful and lasting musical example is Debussy's opera, *Pelleas and Melisande* (1902), which is virtually a setting of Maeterlinck's play with a few minor excisions.

Although falling slightly short of Pelleas' timeless perfection, Dukas' *Ariadne and Blue-Beard*, (1907), from a play which was conceived from the start as a libretto, is still well worth listening to. Albert Louis Wolff's *The Blue Bird*, (1919), on the other hand seems to have vanished into obscurity.

There are, to my knowledge, three American film versions of *The Blue Bird*. The earliest, a silent, was made in 1919 and directed by Maurice Tourner while the most recent, made in 1976, was directed by George Cukor. Despite a star-studded cast, including Elizabeth Taylor, this Russian-US co-production was an artistic and financial disaster. It was, to quote one critic, "unbelievably daggy".

The best known, though not too successful attempt to bring Maeterlinck's fantasy drama to the screen is the 1940 version directed by Walter Lang, which starred Shirley Temple. In an obvious attempt to cash in on the popularity of *The Wizard of Oz*, the film also starts in black and white before exploding into bright technicolour.

However, unlike its ageless model (which has survived countless viewings since I first saw it as a child) and because of the presence of Temple, Lang's version of *The Blue Bird* is at best cloyingly sentimental. It is best during the animated sequences.

Some parts of the play have always seemed a bit rickety, particularly when Mytyl and Tytyl visit The Kingdom of the Future and meet children who are waiting to be born. In a recent French TV adaption the children of the future wear pale blue leotards and jump into a womb-like slipper-slide when Time commands. Hollywood's vision of their kingdom is a classical paradise with Greek columns. The idea of grown children playing the part of unborn babies is odd to say the least, but when an adolescent boy with distinctly Aryan looks (it was made in wartime) says he is destined to be a leader, we think less of a future US president than a certain German dictator.

Although many of the women in Symbolist paintings (literary heroines such as Melisande and personifications of Spring, Sin and Night, for example) could have stepped out of Maeterlinck's plays, I can think of no artist belonging to the movement who was inspired by *The Blue Bird*.

It has been said that Edward Burne-Jones would have been the perfect illustrator of Maeterlinck's works. The nearest we can get to Burne-Jones is Frederick Cayley Robinson, an illustrator whose style was derived from the artists of the Italian Quattrocento.

However, Robinson's pictures in the large illustrated edition of *The Blue Bird* are closer to the classical vision of Puvis de Chavannes than the medievalism of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Until a few months ago, my memories of *The Blue Bird* had been coloured by the pale blue and pink images of Robinson's delicate illustrations. This changed when I came across an old and rather drab looking copy of *The Childrens' Blue Bird* by Georgette Leblanc (Maeterlinck's wife) published in 1913.

Between the pages of the text I discovered the marvellous illustrations of Albert Rothenstein, an artist of whom I can tell you nothing except that he has stripped away Robinson's Symbolist gloom and replaced it with a series of lively yet appropriate folk-art-like images.

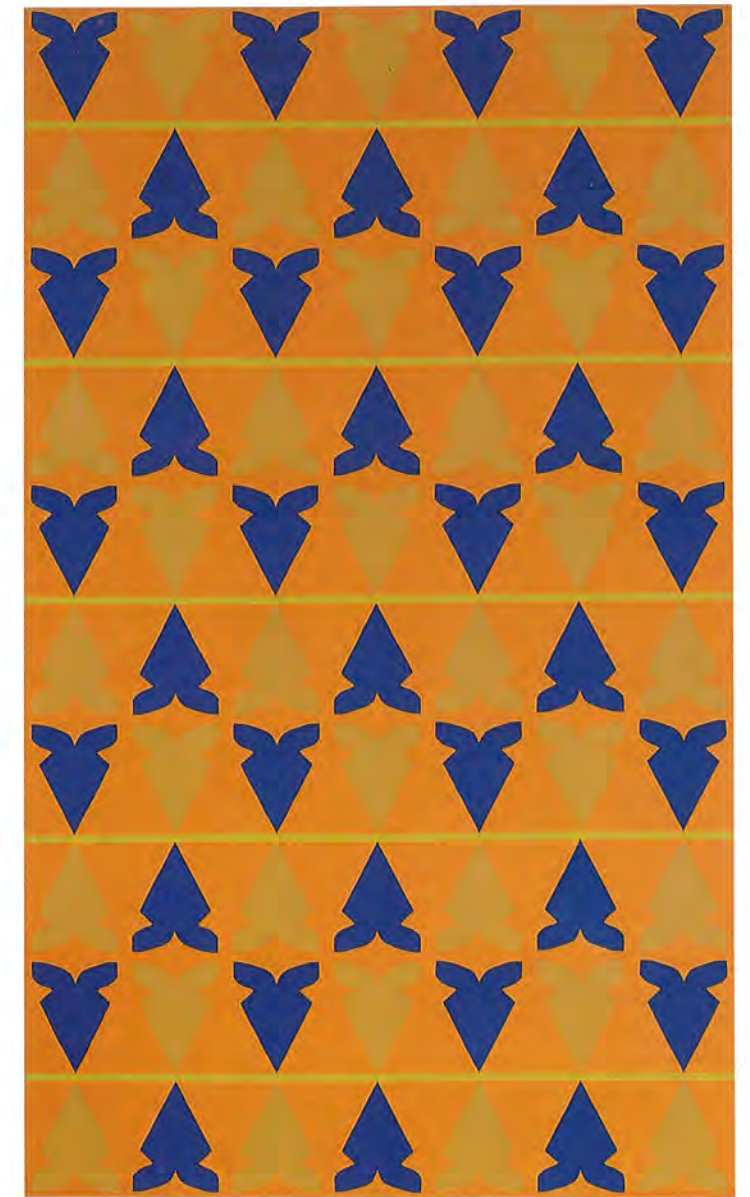
The Australian 7/2/1987

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A TV CHARACTER

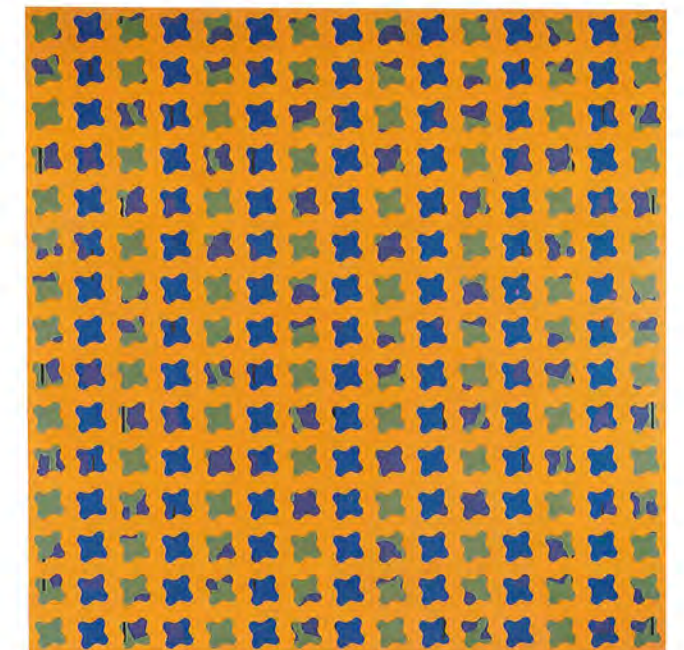
How has popular culture portrayed art and artists? ROBERT ROONEY takes a look back at *Leave it to Beaver*, *Mr Ed* and *Bikini Beach*.

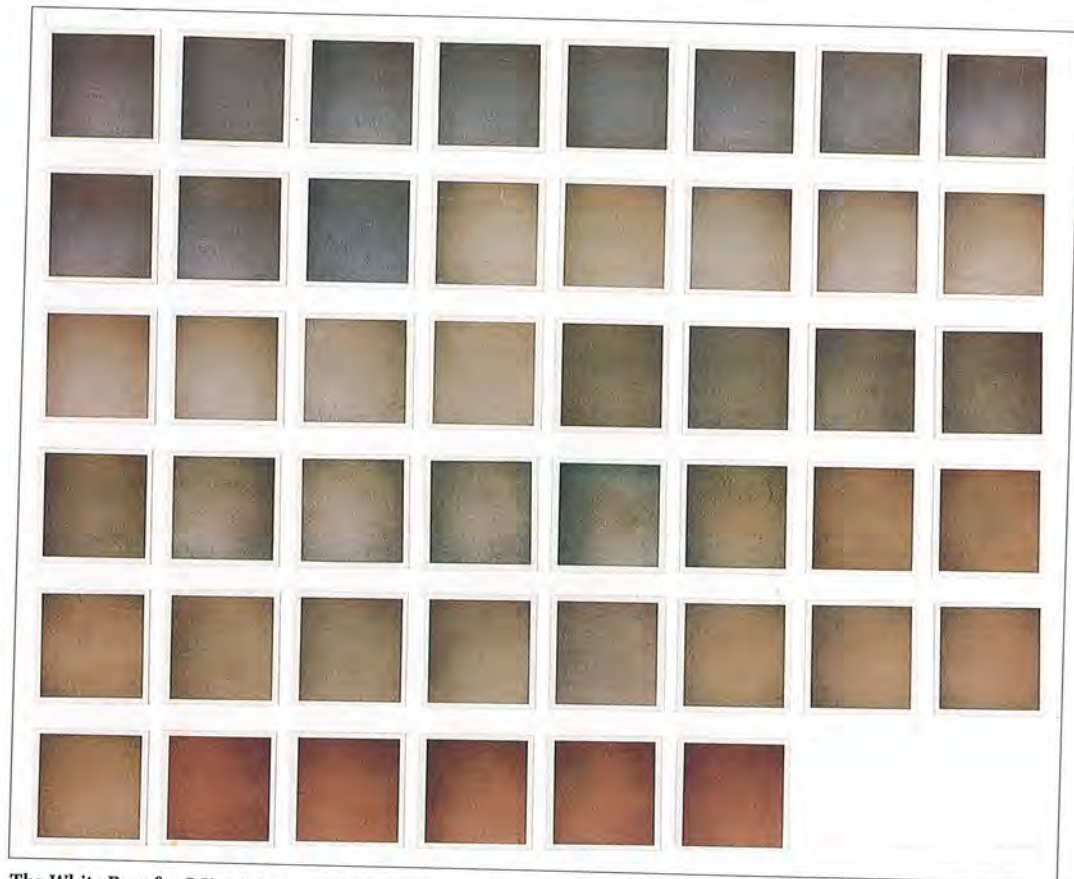
If Beaver hadn't been playing Pirates in the attic and found his father's old sketchbook, we would not have known that Ward Cleaver was "quite an

Cereal Bird Beaks II 1969, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 250.0 x 132.0 (Collection: Mr Clinton Tweedie)



Canine Capers IV 1969, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 152.0 x 152.0 (Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia)





The White Rug: for S.K. 13 Aug – 27 Sept 1974 1974, 46 colour photographs mounted on card, each 8.9 x 8.9; sheet 76.2 x 102.4 (Collection: the artist)



Luna Park: St Kilda 8 Jan 1975 1975, 56 colour photographs, each 8.8 x 8.8, sheet 77.0 x 102.5 (Collection: Dr Ann Galbally and Dr Neville Quinn)

artist when he was at school".

As June told Beaver when he showed her Ward's sketches of the ocean, mountains and an old aeroplane with four wings like they used to have in the olden days, "he did all those cute cartoons for the school yearbook. He could have been a commercial artist. He was actually very good".

Beaver was surprised. "A guy doesn't think his father can do anything except go to work, come back and stuff like that," he said. Later, in this vintage episode of *Leave It To Beaver*, he finds a way of "using dad being an artist", when he volunteers to do a poster of Paul Revere in a classroom project.

His brother Wally is not impressed. He knows it's going to be a mess. "They've got monkeys in the zoo who can paint better than you." But Beaver perseveres and wins the first prize because he was not helped by his father. Incidentally, his painting is remarkably modern and looks just like a piece of eighties neo-expressionism.

I was not surprised at Ward Cleaver's hidden artistic talent, because during the 234 episodes of this great series I took particular notice of the large number of paintings on the walls of the Cleavers' Mayfield residence. Most of the pictures consist of little more than the sort of blurred, patchy TV images the American artist Alan McCollum likes to rephotograph, but a few are recognisable as prints of Constable, Monet and the most often seen reproductions of 'Pinkie' and 'The Blue Boy', which are by the front door.

I seem to recall that with the arrival of colour TV, such middle-class taste gave way to prints of Picasso (the Blue and Pink periods and cubism) and Paul Klee in fantastic households of Maxwell Smart and 99, and Samantha and Darin Stevens, while Jeannie and Major Anthony Nelson preferred to decorate their living room with Arabian Nights-style kitsch.

Paul Revere is also the subject of one of *Mr Ed's* several art-oriented episodes. Put simply, the plot revolves on the commissioning and execution of a statue of Paul Revere which is to be unveiled in a public park, and the choice of Wilbur Post or his stingy neighbour Roger Addison as the model. Mr Ed, naturally enough, is to be Revere's horse.

With the entry of the sculptor Igor Korzak (played in typical fashion by Hans Conreid) we are introduced to a character who conforms to TV comedy's idea of the artist. When at work, Korzak, like all TV artists, wears a big floppy Rembrandt-like beret and a smock. Nobody, as far as I know, wears this outfit today except ageing Meldrumites and society portraitists.

When the statue is at last unveiled before the Mayor, its distinguished creator announces: "Now the moment you've all been waiting for, my work of genius". The statue, as you've guessed, is a work of 'modern art'. Offended by the laughter, Korzak shouts: "Silence! This is a masterpiece. It represents the pure essence of Paul Revere."

In another episode of *Mr Ed*, Roger wants to evict a group of young artists from the vacant beachside property. Later, two of these 'beachniks', Buzz and Zelda, decide to visit the Addisons and put their case to Roger in person.

"We'd like to put up some lean-tos like on your property so we can make it like an art colony." When Roger replies with a definite "Like no!", Zelda recites a poem she has just written about the plight of the young artist - Rejected, Neglected. Kay Addison, who had earlier been given 'an original abstract' which looks suspiciously like a Kandinsky, is more sympathetic, but thinks they are a bit young to be so negative. "But we dig being negative... Rejection, rejection. There's no place in the world for us kids today."

Inspired into action by Zelda's words, Mr Ed dons the obligatory straw hat and dark glasses and runs away to join the kids as a model.

Another of my favourite *Leave It To Beaver* episodes is one that has unintentional associations with Pop art, mainly because it reminds me of those photographs of James Rosenquist working on blown-up details of gigantic advertising hoardings. On the way to Whitey Whitney's place, Beaver and his friend stop to look at a new billboard for 'Testro Soup', in which a 'discerning hostess' holds up a giant bowl of steaming soup.

Whitey reckons it's filled with real soup and dares Beaver to climb to the top and find out. Beaver accepts the challenge and falls into the bowl

while trying to get a better look inside. He can't get out.

Leaving him to be rescued by the fire department, we now turn to the 1967 episode of *Batman* entitled 'Pop Goes the Joker'. In it, the famous Gotham City artist Oliver Muzzy, whose 'exhibit' at the Park Gallery has just opened, did not consider himself a Pop artist. But when the Joker sprayed paint over all his works, he was delighted by the Pop art effects achieved by this dastardly deed.

Soon after, the Joker wins an art contest sponsored by Baby Jane Towser, a rich heiress, and decides to open an art school for millionaires. Among the wealthy students is playboy Bruce Wayne. The Joker kidnaps the entire class and hold them for ransom. However, his plan is foiled by Robin, the boy wonder, but even he is soon overpowered in a fight and is tied to a giant mobile with rotating palette knives. The plot thickens in part two, 'Flop Goes the Joker', but eventually goodness triumphs over evil.

The art in 'Pop Goes the Joker' is less Pop than 'action painting'. Although *Life* magazine had immortalised Jackson Pollock as 'Jack the Dripper' some years before, throwing paint around was still good for a laugh in the 60s. For instance, in the movie *Bikini Beach*, Big Drag (Don Rickles), the dragster club owner and 'authority on youth today', also dabbles in a bit of Hollywood-style Abstract Expressionism. When he's not explaining the principles of 'motoricity' to Frankie Avalon, he throws paint at blank canvases. Every now and then he is visited by a tall, mysterious figure in a big hat. "He's a famous art dealer," Drag explains. "He's been after my stuff for a long time." The paintings are not for sale. "There's a part of me on those canvases. It hurts me to see anybody look at them like they might buy them."

After a few more appearances, the mysterious art dealer's identity is revealed during a brawl in which fists and paint are really flying. He is none other than Boris Karloff, who proclaims an action painting executed by Clyde the monkey as a masterpiece, just in time for the end and the promised number by Little Stevie Wonder.

In *Danger - Marmalade At Work*, the only children's TV series I know in which crime constantly pays, Marmalade Atkins upsets her father by painting a moustache on a copy of the Mona Lisa he is hoping to sell to a wealthy sheikh. However, Wendy Woolley, Marmalade's tireless social worker, thinks it is "ace and jolly original". "By this little act of girlish vandalism, Marmalade is telling us about her frustrated artistic talent". Instead of throwing her out of the window, Wendy suggests that Marmalade should work with "the greatest genius of all" - Salvador Balmy, at the Balmy School of Art.

Balmy, who is the spitting image of a certain Spanish surrealist, loathes the young. "There'll be no mucking about in my school, my little 'objet trouvé'," he informs Marmalade. "Here art is all about discipline, obedience and toil. You'll be taught to paint masterpieces by number". She asks him: "What about modern art? Geezers with two noses and bare ladies with holes you can see right through". He, of course, also detests modern art. "There isn't any money in it for me".

Balmy's school is run like a slave camp. The students are chained to one another and forced to paint to the beat of a metronome. They are all wearing big, floppy hats and paint-splattered smocks.

An inquisitive Marmalade discovers that the students are producing copies of old masters which Balmy flogs to greedy visitors to his Masterpiece Market out the back. In the end he is exposed after going modern. He flips, and is carried away while attempting an action painting. 'Marmalade's Masterpiece' is an amusing satire on the art world. In most of the shows I have mentioned (and there are lots of others) we are presented with a stereotyped view of art and the artist which many people still believe. I used to think that nobody laughs at modern art anymore, except when it's in movies and TV comedies. That is, until I attended a Joel's Art Auction in Melbourne a few years ago. I can assure you that the roars of laughter at the sight of an original lithograph by Joan Miro were not canned.

Cinema Papers July 1987, pp.26-27

Robert Rooney: Biography

BY JENEPPER DUNCAN

1937

Born Robert James. 24 September in Melbourne. Lived in Northcote until 1939, then moved to Broomfield Road, East Hawthorn in December 1939.

1943-49

Attended Auburn South State School. Encouraged by his mother to cut-up photographs in *The Australian Women's Weekly* and paste different heads on bodies. Music however was of greater significance than art during his childhood.

1939-45

Remembers images of war as prominent in films, newspapers, comic strips, animated cartoons and games and in real life, there were the air raid shelters and aeroplanes. His father was in the airforce. (In 1974, Rooney would write a short story 'The Pantry: A child's journey', an excerpt of which recounts:

You found you were in a vacant lot, and in the darkness could make out the silhouette of a high fence. A bussing insect became a Tiger Moth in the south, looping and diving in a display of aerobatics. You held your breath and dared not look away—even when it swooped so low that you fell back into the muddy grass. Then it began to climb again. When only a speck it began another dive—a dive that only ended when the plane plunged into the ground. Then six Spitfires fell from the sky, missing your head by inches, and you ran to the safety of a nearby shed...') (*Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987, p. 21)

Joins the Australian Broadcasting Commission's, The Argonauts Club, membership number Alonta 20. Favourite radio serial was *The Search for the Golden Boomerang* which ran from 1941 to 1951 and the stories, written by Lorna Bingham, with colour illustrations by Hottie Lahm. Another favourite on ABC radio was the yearly dramatisation of Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*.

Introduction to comic-strips through the colour comics supplements in Melbourne's newspapers, especially those in the *Sun News Pictorial* which featured Bib and Bub, Brick Bradford and Ginger Meggs.

1943

'One of the earliest events to instil in me the desire to become an artist, happened on September 24 ...It was on this day that I was given a copy of Mary and Elizabeth Durack's *The Way of the Whirlwind*...The book's marvellous colour plates (and end-paper illustrations...) were to leave a lasting impression and must be counted among my most formative influences.' (*Innocence and Danger*, ibid. p. 15)

'When I was eight years old I began to take an interest in comic books, and from then onwards I would eagerly collect the latest issue of my favourites as they appeared in the local newsagents. Among these were Walt Disney Comics, Felix the Cat, Captain Marvel, Kokey Koala, and The Bosum and Choelit, which I liked best of all.' (ibid. p. 16) Favourite books included *Wind in the Willows*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Doctor Dolittle*, *Babar's Travels*, the William books, D.H. Gilmore's books and Biggles.

1949

Joins Hawthorn Municipal Library (Children's) but soon is allowed to borrow books from the adult Library. Discovers modern music, especially ballet music by Stravinsky. Given portable wind-up gramophone and piano for Christmas which revives an early desire to be a composer. Interest in ballet further stimulated by the film, *The Red Shoes*. Visits to the National Gallery of Victoria and the Museum usually combined.

1950-53

Attends Boys Junior School, Swinburne Technical College. Studies classical piano and makes his first compositions. Given box of coloured pencils

and conte crayons and sketchbook. Early drawings influenced by *The Way of the Whirlwind*. Does watercolours and gouaches around 1952, although not encouraged by art teachers at Junior Technical College but has discovered modern art books in the Library, especially *History of Modern Painting* in 3 volumes, 'From Baudelaire to Bonnard', 'Munch, Matisse, Rouault', 'From Picasso to Surrealism'.

Attends ballet performances, sees photographs of Nijinsky, Serge Lifar (in *Icare*) and Jean Babilée (in *Le Jeune Homme* and *La Morte*) which inspires his interest in dance and choreography.

Discovers copy of the 'Ern Malley' poems and pamphlet on the court case at the Hawthorn Library which along with Bernard Smith's *Place, Taste and Tradition*, arouses interest in Australian art other than landscapes by Drysdale. Has begun collecting postcards of work by such as artists as Paul Klee, Joan Miro, Picasso, Max Ernst, Ben Nicholson, Carlo Carra, de Chirico, Modigliani, Soutine. By 1952, he has decided on a career as an artist.

1953

Rooney wags school sports to visit some art shows including Charles Blackman's exhibition of 'Schoolgirl' paintings at the Peter Bray Gallery which was situated on the first floor of a shop selling curtains and home furnishings in Melbourne. Rooney 'immediately identified with these paintings. It was like entering a complete world that was strange, haunting, and yet somehow familiar.' (*Innocence and Danger*, ibid. p. 4)

Rooney is allowed thereafter to visit art galleries every Wednesday instead of sports. Attends Swinburne Art School in 4th form. Most influential teacher was James Meldrum (only 6 years older than Rooney) who fuels Rooney's interest in Surrealism and introduces him to Gertrude Stein's writings. Makes his first collages (out of *The Australian Women's Weekly* and *Home Beautiful*) and drawings influenced by Ben Nicholson.

Wins fourth year art prize (a year's subscription to *Studio* magazine) on the year's work. Does his first etchings and sees works by John Brack and the exhibition of *Modern French Painting* at the National Gallery of Victoria. Buys *Penguin Modern Painters* Series books on Paul Klee, Ben Nicholson and Ben Shahn.

1954

'I went to the Swinburne Art School full-time, joined the recently reformed Melbourne branch of the Contemporary Art Society and met Charles Blackman through Barbara, who happened to be our life model. Between 1954 and 1957 I often visited their coach-house studio in Hawthorn...Having become an unofficial Charles Blackman disciple, I also made drawings and prints of the children in the streets and paintings of myself as a child in the Gippsland setting of distant school holidays.' (*Innocence and Danger*, ibid. p. 4)

Rooney picked Swinburne Art School because it was just across the Junior Boys School quadrangle. Dale Hickey is a student in the same year, as well as Rosemary Adam, Bill Sykes and Julian Rabl. James Meldrum teaches first year design.

Joins the Contemporary Art Society and exhibits in its first annual exhibition at Tye's Gallery in the basement of a furniture store. Exhibits a collage *Still Life* and a painting *Eros 433* (destroyed) and, as one of the Society's youngest Victorian members, exhibits thereafter in all CAS Annual exhibitions until 1961. The CAS would eventually find a permanent place in the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Tavistock Place, which became the Museum of Modern Art of Australia in 1958.

Attends etching classes at night, first etchings being influenced by Joan Miro and Paul Klee. Studies jazz piano with Ron Rosenberg. At art school, Rooney is told by one of his teachers, L.S. Pendlebury, that Charles

Blackman and Sidney Nolan cannot draw.

Makes etchings after buying John Buckland-Wright's *Etching & Engraving and the Modern Trend* and reading S.W. Hayton's *New Ways of Gravure*, since only traditional techniques are taught at Swinburne.

Becomes a 'Goon Show' devotee. Blackman gives him a copy of Andre Gide's *The Coiners* which remains a favourite book. Other influential books include Max Ernst's *Beyond Painting*, and Rollo Myers, and Erik Satie.

1955

Exhibits *The Bed* and *The Brothers* in the CAS Annual Exhibition at Preston Motors City Showroom.

At Blackman's suggestion, visits Arthur Boyd at Murrumbidgee with the intention of becoming Boyd's apprentice. Rooney uncovers Boyd's early paintings of the 1930s and 1940s rolled up under a bench. The trial run as Boyd's apprentice ceases.

Visits Blackman and sees stack of paintings in ripolin enamel on heavy lithographic paper in his studio. Blackman encourages Rooney to paint from his own experience. Paints works on paper of which only *The Rifle* survives.

In the State Library of Victoria Art section, looks up every item listed under 'Modern Art' and 'Abstract Art' and is particularly taken with Thomas B. Hess' *Abstract Painting: Background and American Phase*, which features works by the abstract expressionists. Is most impressed by Robert Motherwell's work and this artist remains a favourite with Rooney, even while the influence of Blackman dominates his own work. Buys *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*. Makes frottages and rayographs and more collages. His teachers are not impressed with his Blackman-influenced works.



Charles Blackman, *Portrait of Robert Rooney* 1956
gouache and oil based medium on paper, 114.5 x 88.5
Collection: Heide Park and Art Gallery, Gift of the artist
Photograph: John Brash

1956

Applies, without success, for teaching Bursary with Education Department. In the interview, Rooney says he wanted to be a teacher because of all the holidays, which would give him more time to paint.

Chooses as his main subject, 'The Art of the Book', rather than 'Painting', since this was taught by a Max Meldrumite. 'The Art of the Book' is taught by Ron Edwards who helps him print and bind 15 copies of *Australian Skipping Rhymes*, now a collector's item. Began work on a dictionary of children's language.

Blackman paints Rooney's portrait in ripolin on lithographic paper now in the Heide Collection. Meets Danila Vassiliev at the Blackman's. John Brack does etchings at Swinburne while Robert Grieve is the lithography teacher. Rooney does lithographs *The Hill* and *Black Boys*, one of his few landscapes. Rooney's country subjects are based on memories and photographs taken at Gippsland. Using a Brownie Box camera, he takes photographs of junior boys playing in the quadrangle. At this time, he is also influenced by the book illustrations of John Minton, Keith Vaughan and other British Neo-Romantics.

1957

'Illustration and Graphic Design' is now Rooney's main subject. Ben Shahn's influence grows stronger but he is also interested in artists who do commercial illustration whose work he sees in *American Art Director's Annual*, *Graphis* and *Gebrauchgraphik*. Also draws on material in *Life* and *Fortune* magazines, especially illustrations by Bernard Perlin, Philip Evergood, Philip Guston, Ben Shahn and Gregoria Prostopino. Favourite commercial illustrators are Andy Warhol and Robert Weaver. Rooney is accused by Swinburne College Principal of depicting 'juvenile delinquents' in a design for the cover of the Swinburne School Magazine 'The Open Book' which was rejected.

Fails Diploma exams. His School report for mid-year is subsequently used as part of Rooney's standard Artist's Statement. Although Rooney is interested in other than figurative art, this remains a dominating influence. Does silkscreen works with Ray Cooke as instructor.

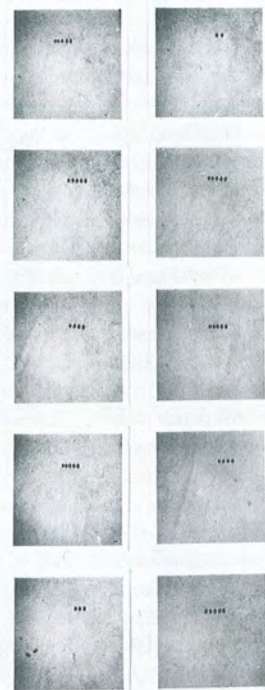
Linocut of child with handkerchief (similar to *The Handkerchief*) appears on front cover of CAS Broadsheet September 1957 (Georges Mora is the current President).

1958

Has no success looking for work as a commercial artist. 'When I eventually did leave art school, it took me three months to get a job. In desperation, I had answered an advertisement for a junior salesman at Hall's Bookstore in Prahran...This time, to my relief, the interview was a success. And so began my 20 years in the book trade. During my years at Hall's, I was fortunate in having Jack Bradstreet, a highly respected identity in the book trade, as my boss...Jack's memory was phenomenal, and his knowledge of books was everything a willing apprentice just out of art school could wish for...Before the shop's inevitable decline in the 1970s, one of the pleasures of working at Hall's in Prahran was having access to such an incredible selection of second-hand books. The great thing about dealing in used books is that you never know what surprises each day will bring—or, as I soon discovered, the sort of things people leave in the old books they sell...I was always on the lookout for old publications with comic potential. The best source for these was the sixpenny (or 10c, with the introduction of decimal currency) tables. There you were likely to find books on physical activities such as Swedish Club Swinging, *Exercising In the Bath*, *The Walking Stick Method of Self-Defence*...'(Weekend Australian, July 7-8, 1990). Starts collecting these things left by people in secondhand books with the intention of making collages. These would provide the raw material for Rooney's 'Spon' booklets for 'Stove' people, friends from art school who met on Sundays at the 'Stove', a studio in Balwyn shared by John Adam and Dale Hickey and the later 'SPON' and 'Sponde Review' booklets which were influenced by Dada collages, the Goon Show and Surrealism. (see Rosemary Adam, 'Spons I have Seen'.)

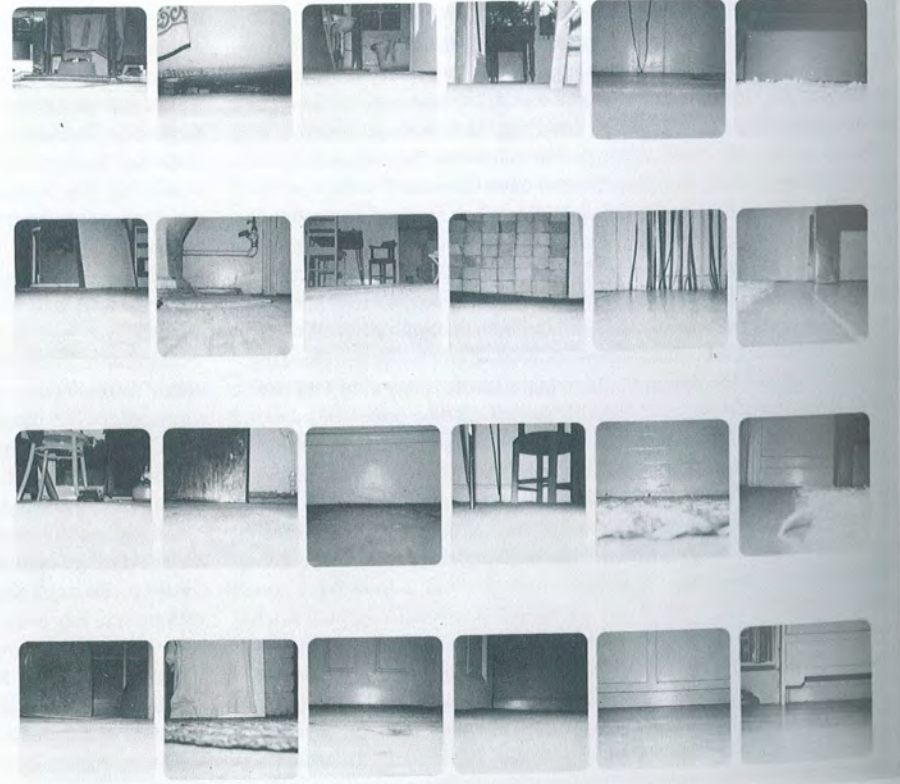
Blackman's influence begins to wane in Rooney's paintings. Rooney now paints landscapes inspired by Gippsland and Healesville, with Fred Williams-type 'lollipop' trees (destroyed). (see *Baby Goat, Healesville*). Visits Charles Blackman for the last time and shows him the first of a new series of figurative paintings on teenage themes, influenced by Ben Shahn, Bernard Perlin, Philip Guston and the late work of Yasuo Kuniyoshi. These paintings are based on his own photographs and selections from *Life* and *Time* magazines with such subjects as Milk Bars, 'Six o'clock Rock', etc, but are also influenced by early Renaissance painters such as

Scorched Almonds Jul - Aug 1970
 1970, 10 black and white photographs, each 8.9 x 8.9, sheet 52.5 x 70.0. Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne



SCORCHED ALMONDS
 JULY - AUGUST 1970
 1. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 2. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 3. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 4. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 5. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 6. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 7. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 8. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 9. SCORCHED ALMONDS
 10. SCORCHED ALMONDS

N.E.W.S. 1975, 32 colour photographs on cardboard, each 8.9 x 8.9, sheet 75.0 x 100.0.
 Collection: National Gallery of Victoria



Portrait of Maria Kozic and Philip Brophy 2
 1981, cibachrome, 20 x 30
 (Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne)



Portrait of Jennifer Phipps July 1978
 1978, cibachrome, 20 x 30
 (Private collection)



Portrait of Howard Arkley
 1980, cibachrome, 20 x 30
 (Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne)





The Death of James Dean 2 1983, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 106.5 x 183.0 (Collection: the artist)



The Mighty Saw 1984, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.3 x 198.4 (Collection: Geelong Art Gallery)

es an overly decorative construction of repeated pattern-making elements towards an effect that is hard, joyless and anti-decorative...The range of this art may be limited but within its limits, Rooney is unendearingly impressive.' (*The Age*, July 16). Alan McCulloch remarks that 'Rooney's paintings would make very attractive fabric designs for table-cloths or kitchen wall-papers'. (*The Herald*, July 9, 1969) However, in a later account for *Art International*, McCulloch considers Rooney one of the most 'impressive one-man exhibitors...whose "kitchen-garden" themes reveal a quite delightful thematic simplicity mixed with the passions of a developed and perhaps dedicated colourist...one thinks back to late Victorian ceramic garden paths and porches, and beyond these to Dutch domestic architecture.' (*Art International*, March 1971)

Buys an instamatic camera. In December he begins photographing *War Savings Street* (60 black and white photographs) 100 copies of which are published as a photo-map folder in 1970. The photographic work of *Holden Park 1* and *2* (March 1970) develops out of seeing Barry McKimm's Holden in the *War Savings* photographs. Begins to document these projects as 'Notes After/Before Work/Projects.'

1970

Documents an event, *Over One Hundred yards of paper unrolled on Smith's Hill, Eltham, 31 May*, with instamatic. This hill was behind the properties of John and Rosemary Adam, and Dale and Rosemary Hickey.

Holden Park 1, March (11 colour photographs) and *Holden Park 2*, May (8 colour photographs) developed from a transparent overlay with dots placed over Hawthorn area of street directory. The Holden car (Australia's car) was parked as near to the position of dot as possible.

March, receives a reply and catalogues of work from American artist Ed Ruscha, to whom he has written 'a sort of fan letter'.

July - August, *Scorched Almonds*, ten black and white photographs with typed text by Rooney. These were photographs of 8 oz. of almonds Rooney ate each night over 10 nights each one measured, with the dates and measurements with mounted photographs. Also, *Meals*, 28 black and white photographs of seven meals, itemised and eaten in a friend's Hawthorn East kitchen by four people. These instamatics are arranged on a grid system and are conceived as a whole divided into parts. A file on every artist born in 1937 is also begun. Other projects not realized were floor drawings with tape and dust or flour/sugar/salt.

September, *Superknits and Snaps*, Pinacotheca, Richmond. Drawn from patterns in a found second-hand booklet, *Easy Knitting for Babies and Toddlers* by Ruth H. O'Mara, Pocket Books. *The Herald* review sees the 'Snaps' (including *War Savings Street*, *Meals* and *Over One Hundred Yards...*) as an extension of Rooney's 'wry humour'—'both are stunts: they shouldn't be taken any more seriously than the question mark that automatically arises from them, which is, after all the object of this type of exercise.' (*The Herald*, September 9)

G.R. Lansell in *Nation* compares Rooney with Barry Humphries' brand of satire. 'Rooney, less flamboyant, more deadpan, and arguably more pungent, isn't the taxidermist of Menzies' values but their subverter...Rooney is a Marcusean martyr, a repressed anarchist. In a nutshell, he is whacky.' The *Superknit* paintings are described as 'crisply executed, optically intimidating, eventually visually bludgeoning patterns derived from a knitting book but seemingly made up out of not fluffy wool but steel girders.' Rooney's photoworks 'will tell you more about local life than any social historian: this is contemporary ritualism, both rigid and hilarious...' (*Nation*, September 19)

Season of Experimental Music, Programme 3, Music of Rooney (Cushion Kiss Canon, De Brecento Nagyvarad, Trio, Knitting Rounds) Barry McKimm, director, at *La Mama*.

1971

Takes up weight-lifting and converts studio into a gym, installing weight lifting equipment, and exercise bike. Intends to document changes in his physique, biceps: weight-lifting/training as art activity which he notes as 'repetition, sets, routines, monotony. Artist altered physically by art process.' Project abandoned. The only works to result from this are *10.8 miles in 44 minutes* (May) performed by Robert Hunter on his exercise bike and *Pullovers* consisting of Rooney in studio performing straight arm pullovers (January 1972). Reads Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*.

At Dale Hickey's suggestion, Rooney writes to Roger Cutforth, an English conceptual artist who uses photography, whom Hickey had met in New York. Cutforth had exhibited (with Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden) at Pinacotheca in 1969. Rooney corresponds with Cutforth until 1978.

June, *Four Pinacotheca Artists Using Photography*, Inhibadress, Sydney, (with Klose, Hickey and Cutforth). Review by Terry Smith remarks of Rooney's photographic works: 'Rooney doesn't invite us to share the experience he records—their content is unspecial, they are presented without comment, they are as bland as his paintings were.' (*The Sunday Australian*, June 6)

Edits the first issue of *Pinacotheca Magazine* with articles by Ian Burn, Mel Ramsden, Joseph Kosuth and Rooney. Buys a copy of Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden's *Complete Works*.

September, Dale Hickey's *90 White Walls*, Pinacotheca, consisting of ninety photographs of white walls (in a small box) with an accompanying text listing their locations.

December, Simon Klose, another artist Rooney has met through Dale Hickey, suggests a joint exhibition in which each does the work as though the other. For Klose, 'one thing was as good to make art out of as another.' (J.Sweet, *Pinacotheca*, op. cit. p. 23)

1972

Reads George H. Szanto, *Narrative Consciousness*. Beckett's notions about 'the expression that there is nothing to express' which has affected the contemporary intellectual climate, is also influential around this time.

Rooney is persuaded by Simon Klose to enrol in Diploma Course for established artists at the Preston Institute of Technology where Dale Hickey is teaching. Attends one afternoon (Wednesday) each week until mid-1973. Others in the class are Robert Hunter and Peter Davidson. Roger Cutforth who organises Rooney's Brighton Polytechnic show, *Information*, in Brighton, England.

August, collaborative exhibition with Simon Klose at Pinacotheca, which includes 'several rows of bluestone cobblestones on the floor and a string or two of small, abstract photographs on the walls'. (*The Herald*, August 9). The process of interaction between the two is systematically set out with diagrams in Rooney's Notes book. *The Herald's* Alan McCulloch laments that Rooney 'a former hard-edge painter of serialised geometry, has apparently opted out in favor of the conceptualist theory of "art as anti-object" or, more simply, art as nothing but ideas.' (*The Herald*, August 9). Patrick McCaughey considered the show as 'the sad demise of the self-conscious avant-garde into the easy, the predictable and the familiar.' (*The Age*, August 16).

Various photoworks result from friendship with Klose including *N.E.W.S. 73 Queens Lane City South, Interior 15 Dec 1971/Exterior 31 Jan 1972*, 20 black and white photographs covering north, east, west, south views; *31 Bluestone Pitchers*, 31 Jan 1972, 31 black and white photographs of white painted bluestone pitchers in driveway of Klose's place.

Rooney is one of about 15 artists involved in running an artists' cooperative at Pinacotheca during Bruce Pollard's absence overseas during 1972. It was 'by no means a unified group.' (Sweet, op. cit. p. 21) The defunct Central Street Gallery and the Inhibadress Gallery in Sydney are precedents.

1973

July, Joint exhibition with Dale Hickey and Simon Klose, arising from a project initiated by Hickey to conduct an extensive documentation and enquiry into 'The Cup' or the notion that 'Painting is about the way you look at a cup'. (Klose had also thought of documenting a cup according to human or cultural criteria. The show results from conversations between the three artists about these ideas.) Hickey had just returned from a trip to America where he had hoped to meet the American conceptual artists, Sol Le Witt, Mel Bochner, Carl Andre, but did not. This exhibition and his 'Cup' series, still-lives, mark his radical return to painting—radical because of their apparent conventionality. Each artist exhibits one foot square canvases on thick stretchers: Hickey's are of cups; Rooney's are entitled *Coats* and consist of 10 paintings in two series 0-5 in coats of white house paint and 0-5 in coats of black which are based on samples seen at Art Stretchers. Klose's series of ten paintings included sets of blank canvases and black and white paintings. All were variations on one



Yarra Bank, October 1977 1977, nine colour photographs on cardboard, 41.5 x 59.7. Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia



Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 3. July 1977 1977, cibachrome, 20.0 x 30.0, courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne



Factory Landscape: Eltham: Landscape Factory 3. 3. July 1977 1977, cibachrome, 20.0 x 30.0. Collection: the artist



Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 2. July 1977 1977, cibachrome, 20.0 x 30.0. Collection: the artist

theme. Reviews in *The Sun* and *The Age* are dismissive of the work except for Hickey's.

While at Philip Institute, Rooney attends Ian Burn's classes on Conceptual Art, an experience which leads him to consider it as too restrictive for his own practice. (John Nixon is also in this class).



Dale Hickey (left), Robert Rooney (centre), Simon Klose (right), with one of Hickey's 'Cup' paintings in background, Pinacotheca, July 1973. Photograph: Rosemary Adam



Dale Hickey, Simon Klose, Robert Rooney, Installation View, Pinacotheca, July 1973. Rooney's Coats, 1973 (foreground)

1975

Rooney revives music activities, as a composer not a performer. Makes his last instamatic photoworks which have become too restrictive. Has become interested in new colour photography and also decides to return to painting. Considers making portraits. Makes colour photoworks while living for six months in St. Kilda in Klose's flat, corner of Marine Parade and Shakespeare Grove: *The White Rug: For S.K.* 13 August - 27 September 1974, 46 colour photographs; *Luna Park: St. Kilda* 8 January 1975, 51 colour photographs; *N.E.W.S. Flat 1/2 Marine Parade St. Kilda* 17 April 1975, 32 colour photographs; *Two Views: St.Kilda* 12 January 1975, 2 colour photographs.

Leaves Hall's Book Store to work at the *Source* Bookshop to build up Art Section.

July, Selected Works 1970-75, Pinacotheca.

October, Project show, Art Gallery of New South Wales, includes a selection of each painting series and his photographic work to date. His first Artist's Statement appears in the modest catalogue, 'Less Than Five Hundred Words in Retrospect' where he describes the camera as 'a dumb

recording device', which 'often seems to organise the material itself.' Review by W.E. Pidgeon describes Rooney as "'with-it" with the systems age who likes to work within the limits of a self-imposed program of possibilities...If this form of art appears somewhat esoteric, take comfort in what Rooney says— "the banal means familiar rather than boring" and "the more you repeat a thing the more variety you have". So be it!' (*Sunday Telegraph*, October 12)

1976

Borrows Pentax SLR camera with fast lens then buys an identical camera and lenses. Rosemary Adam teaches Rooney how to use the new camera while photographing Eltham factory landscapes. Rooney documents the *Factory Landscape, Eltham* series, first in small cibachromes then repeats these later on larger cibachrome format through to 1981. Rooney considers his photographic excursions through the suburbs to be in the 18th century Grand Tour tradition and compares contemporary conventions of good photography with Gilpin's formulations of the 'Picturesque'.

First comprehensive article by Robert Lindsay on Rooney's work to date appears in September issue of *Art and Australia*.

Rooney involved in the early stages of the formation of Barry McKimm's 'Composers Ensemble'.

1977

Rooney's 'Stein--For Voice and Instruments' and '...Are Calm and Composed' performed by the Composers Ensemble in CBA Prom concert at the National Gallery of Victoria.

1978

A chance meeting with Mary Eagle in Webbers Bookshop results in Rooney filling in for her as art reviewer for *The Age* while she is overseas. Starts to take cibachrome portraits of artists, friends and gallery directors during his visits to studios and galleries while acting as *The Age* art critic which continues until 1981. When these social portraits are exhibited in 1981, they are wrongly described as originating from Andy Warhol who turned to society portraiture in 1970. Began project on 'The Image of the Child in Australian Art' which also leads him to portraits. Rooney's portraits are conceived as individual works which make up an open series.

July, Survey show, National Gallery of Victoria. Reviews in *The Sun* and *The Australian*. Memory Holloway considers that Rooney's 'only signature is that he has always been fascinated with routine and ordinary life, with living in the suburbs, and repetition as a way of structuring his work.. The result is a direct assault on the heroic style of the '60s.' She quotes Bruce Pollard from the accompanying video: "'Rooney's work shows how it's more heroic to deal with how one is lumped into existence than to invent myths...although these works are low key, there is a profound existential angst.'" Holloway sees in his most recent colour photographic work, the *Factory Landscapes, Eltham*, 'a continual play between the language and the image seen: Cedar Village is made of brick, and there is nothing creative about Creatus Industries. The camera tells the truth, works deceive. In these last images, Rooney's camera is far from the "dumb instrument" of earlier work.' (*The Australian*, June 23)

Mary Eagle considers Rooney's early 1970s serial photographic work to be the exhibition's 'high spots'. The more recent colour landscape 'art-Photography continues the paradox of his career. He makes plain statements of everyday life while also making esoteric art of the rules and forms of contemporary style.' (*The Age*, June 4)

'The Poetics of Waiting' by Gary Catalano, essay on Rooney for *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, describes Rooney's art as 'an obstinate and naked art, quite bereft of 'impressive' or consoling ideas, and one in which the cry of pain is pitched so low that most people will probably fail to hear it.'

1979

May, *Portraits 1978-79*, Pinacotheca. Alan McCulloch believes that they 'betray a totally unexpected poetic and romantic streak in Victoria's noted "cerealists"'. (*The Herald*, May 24) Mary Eagle considers the portraits show Rooney's 'skill, amounting to brilliance, of appropriating and making completely and idiosyncratically his own whatever he takes up. In contrast to what he would have done six years ago, he did not select his subjects to suit an objective system, but photographed people of the art world who crossed his path...They were free to strike a pose or adopt a mask. Some

Portrait of Peter Booth 1 September 1978 1978.
 photograph – direct positive colour, 20.0 x 30.0.
 Collection: Australian National Gallery



Portrait of Peter Booth 4 September 1978 1978.
 photograph – direct positive colour, 20.0 x 30.0.
 Collection: Australian National Gallery



Portrait of Robert Hunter July 1978 1978.
 photograph – direct positive colour, 20.0 x 30.0.
 Collection: Australian National Gallery



did so literally...Rooney does not pretend to have seen everything that turned up in the photos. Details such as Peter Booth's feet resting on two lines of hose--as if plugging together an electric circuit--were sheer bonus...Technically, the photographs are simple but not amateurish. Rooney's role as artist is reduced to seeing...While deliberately schooling himself to a backseat role, giving over as much as possible to photography's "objective" recording, Rooney has nevertheless proved the opposite. Everything about the photos--the settings, the quality of the wit, and the attitude of subjects to the camera and the man behind it--is strikingly personal. These portraits of others are also a self-portrait.' (*The Age*, June 4)

December, Mary Eagle resigns from *The Age* and recommends Rooney to take her position.

1980

Rooney becomes the art critic for *The Age*.

1981

Exhibition of complete instamatic photoworks and coloured photographs, Pinacotheca, a deliberate summing up of his work of the last decade in preparation for long-planned return to painting. Mary Eagle considers 'If Rooney's Factory Landscapes in Eltham suggest irony it is by contrast to another type of Eltham landscape such as the graceful depiction of scrubby heath which won David Armfield the Eltham Art Prize this year.' (*Bulletin*, National Gallery of Victoria, January/February).

Paul Taylor writing a special account for *The Age* considers that 'Rooney's type of pop relates more to photography than to common and easily recognisable social icons like Campbell's soup cans. So it is fitting that since 1970 his sole tool has been the camera as it seems to let one avoid making artistic decisions...After the examples of Californian photographer Ed Ruscha and composer John Cage, the works involve a type of perceptual unfocusing. Suggesting that the everyday event or image is as rich and meaningful as the grandiose and heroic, they imply that artistic experience is more a state of mind than an effect produced by beautiful objects. Consequently, Rooney's camera has recorded the banal and everyday, impressing us with the repetitive structure of daily life. His chosen subject has been his own environment...' Taylor considers that compared to his earlier photography, Rooney's new works 'are a disappointment. Series like "A Fete Worse Than Death" and "Eltham Factory Landscapes" rely on visual and verbal puns and fail to match his previous work's inventiveness. The portraits, too, are by and large dull, a condition which was not helped by his choice of subjects...' (*The Age*, October 31)

Taylor seeks Rooney's AM/PM in an exhibition he is mounting at the National Gallery of Victoria. When Rooney describes the new paintings he is about to do and the reasons behind doing them, Taylor affirms that they are just what POPISM is all about. To get started again, Rooney uses the laborious masking tape and scalpel method of the late 1960s serial paintings.

1982

First new painting, *The Red Card*, (a Communist Party membership card found in a book 20 years before) exhibited in POPISM at the National Gallery of Victoria, with a younger generation of artists including Maria Kozic, Richard Dunn, Howard Arkley, Juan Davila, Imants Tillers, Peter Tyndall, Jenny Watson and others. Rooney describes himself as a 'surviving relic' while Paul Taylor describes him as having a 'youthful sensibility'. (Susan Tate, *The Virgin Press*, June 1982). Rooney's representation in the show includes silkscreen versions of his 1961 advertisements, *Pilkington Predicts*, which thus recontextualises his own commercial art. Two super-8 films are also included. Rooney, as *The Age* art critic, reviews the show. On 5 July, he is dismissed by telephone from his position at *The Age*. Rooney writes his last article which appears on July 7, a defence of the artist/critic with quotes from the *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*.

October, Rooney accepts second offer by Andrew McKay to join *The Australian* as its Melbourne art critic. His first review appears on October 30.

1983

October, *As You Were, New Paintings*, at Pinacotheca. The show's title makes references to Rooney's return to painting, his interest in military history/images and his student years. Many of the images derive from reference material already in Rooney's collection of found images and some

had been previously used in early 1960s paintings (e.g. *Clue to Abel's Character*,) and left-over 'SPON' material (e.g. the Art Training Institute brochure). These replicate the faded cream background of old paper cuttings with graphic images in black and red, e.g. *Death of James Dean 2* which is taken from an *Esquire* magazine article where the illustrator used typography as a design. The edges of these works are now painted by hand rather than masked and source material is put on slide and projected on to the canvas.

Memory Holloway sees 'the key to understanding' the show 'is the recognition that behind every move, every title, every mark is an ironical stance which dissects the subject at hand. Those subjects turn out to be the wartime propaganda, the myth of the lone artist, childhood nostalgia and the loss of popular heroes such as James Dean...The mechanical look which Rooney cultivates...and his attempts to efface the self' still result in 'an intensely autobiographical' show. (*The Age*, October 26)

Rooney is quoted in an article by fellow artist and friend, Chris van der Craats: 'To me creativity is a matter of choosing something and structuring it. Originality is something talked about by people with nothing in their heads. Choosing and structuring is the creative process...There is no manipulation of paint as such. I am not a cuisine painter. I'm not interested in painting as an equivalent of fine food and drink...I wanted something which was both abstract and figurative. Such categories don't interest me and never have.' (*Farrago*, 61, October 21)

1984

March, *As You Were*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, where Rooney has not held an exhibition since 1964. Paul Taylor writes an Introduction to the work, remarking 'Supplementing their photorhetoric (in this series, superimposition and layering collaborate with the earlier paintings' more straightforward borrowings from photography), there is a sense of the artist as a kind of writer, or storyteller, making myths with chains of associations, with images, typographies, memories, formats.' Sandra McGrath finds that 'Rooney's attitude seems to be pitched somewhere between that of the Jamesian observer and that of a blase advertising executive.' (*The Australian* October 3).

1985

November, *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture*, Pinacotheca. Concentrates on Second World War themes, although these do not include images derived from recruiting posters or war comics as some reviewers believe. 'Abstract' elements in *Against the Sun* and others are from the explosions in the Japanese animated cartoon, *Star Blazers*. *The Mighty Saw* represents the first painting in which Rooney uses an overlay or layering method of structuring images rather than a juxtaposition of images. Colours are intensified and as one reviewer remarks, 'this emphasis, together with his sharply delineated forms and clean sense of composition, produces an almost "Op Art" effect.' (John Burbour, *Art Network*, Winter/Spring, 1986) Gary Catalano observes that 'Much of their humor derives from a clear understanding of the way in which their chosen images, through their denial or evasion of the real, finally form a self-enclosed system.' (*The Age*, November 21).

1986

Artist's statement in *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania. Rooney makes hundreds of slides of flying saucers and space imagery with the intention of using them in a new series of paintings.

1987

Curator of exhibition, *Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood*, at Heide Park and Art Gallery, which concentrates on the aggressive or sinister aspects of childhood, rather than the sentimental and cute.

1988

Five months before the planned exhibition at Pinacotheca in November, Rooney decides to do paintings based on cereal packet cut-outs of jig-saw animals collected in the 1960s. 'Silly Symphonies' would have been the series after *Variations Slippery Seal*, had Rooney not stopped painting at that time, hence the title, *Silly Symphonies, or At Last, the 1968 Show, Part One: New Paintings*. One of these paintings, *Buzzy Bee*, is included in the Biennale of Sydney, *The Readymade Boomerang*, 1990.

Exhibitions and Bibliography

BY MERRYN GATES

STUDIES:

- 1954-57 Swinburne Technical College
1972-73 Preston Institute of Technology

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITIONS:

- 1960 *I Rise in Flame*, Richman Galleries, Melbourne (September)
1963 South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne (27 August - 6 September)
1964 Terry Clune Galleries, Sydney (26 August - 15 September)
1966 South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne (May)
1968 *New Paintings: Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Gardens and Slippery Seals*, Strines Gallery, Melbourne (18 April - 4 May)
1969 *Canine Capers and Cereal Bird Beaks*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (7 - 25 July)
1970 *Superknits and Snaps*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (June)
1972 *Information: Robert Rooney*, Brighton Polytechnic, Brighton, England
Robert Rooney/Simon Klose (Collaboration), Pinacotheca, Melbourne (August)
1973 *Dale Hickey/Simon Klose/Robert Rooney* (Collaboration), Pinacotheca, Melbourne (12 - 29 July)
1975 *Selected Works 1970-75*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (30 July - 9 August)
Project 8: Robert Rooney, Art Gallery of New South Wales (4 October - 9 November)
1978 *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria (10 - 16 July)
1979 *Portraits 1978-79*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (23 May - 9 June)
1981 *Eltham Factory Landscape, A Fete Worse than Death, Portraits: Complete Photographic Works 1970-81*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (14 - 31 October)
1983 *As You Were (New Paintings)*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (12 - 29 October)
1984 *As You Were*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney (7 - 24 March)
1985 *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (13 - 30 November)
1988 *Silly Symphonies, or At Last, the 1968 Show, Part One: New Paintings*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (9 - 26 November)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 1954 *Contemporary Art Society Commemorative Exhibition*, Tye's Gallery, Melbourne
1955 *Annual Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Preston Motors Showrooms, Melbourne
1956 *Inaugural Gift Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Melbourne
Olympic Exhibition, Contemporary Art Society, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Melbourne
1957 *Annual Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Melbourne
1958 *Annual Interstate Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Museum of Modern Art of Australia, Melbourne
1959 *Annual Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Museum of Modern Art of Australia, Melbourne
1960 *Annual Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Museum of Modern Art of Australia, Melbourne
1961 *Annual Interstate Exhibition*, Contemporary Art Society, Argus Gallery, Melbourne
Young Painters Exhibition, Contemporary Art Society, Eastside

- Gallery, Melbourne
1963 *Survey 63*, Museum of Modern Art and Design, Melbourne
1964 *Survey 64*, Museum of Modern Art and Design, Melbourne
1965 *New Generation 1965*, Museum of Modern Art and Design, Melbourne
1966 *Contemporary Australian Drawing*, Newcastle City Art Gallery, New South Wales
1967 *Australian Young Contemporaries*, Argus Gallery, Melbourne
1967 *The Perth Prize for Drawing*, The Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth
1968 *The Field*, National Gallery of Victoria and Art Gallery of New South Wales
Georges Art Prize Exhibition, Georges Gallery, Melbourne
1968 *The Transfield Art Prize*, Bonython Art Gallery, Sydney
1970 *Group Show*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne
1971 *Four Pinacotheca Artists Using Photography* (with Klose, Hickey and Cutforth), Inhibodress, Sydney
The Situation Now: Object or Post-Object Art?, Contemporary Art Society Gallery, Sydney
1971 *Georges Invitation Art Prize*, Georges Gallery, Melbourne
1973 *Recent Australian Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales
1975 *Artist's Artists*, National Gallery of Victoria
1975 *Selected Paintings from the Monash University Collection*, Exhibition Gallery, Department of Visual Arts, Monash University
Performance, Documents, Film, Video, National Gallery of Victoria
The Crouch Prize, City of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
1976 *1st Pan Pacific Biennale: Colour Photography and its Derivatives*, Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand
The Road Show: Attitudes to the Car, Shepparton Arts Centre, Victoria
1977 *Acquisitions 1976 and 1977*, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria
1978 *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, Regional Development Program, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1978
Artist's Books: Book Works, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
1980 *Self-Portrait/Self-Image*, Victorian College of the Arts Gallery, Melbourne
1981 *Pinacotheca Artists at Watters*, Watters Gallery, Sydney
Some Recent Acquisitions, National Gallery of Victoria
1982 *POPISM*, National Gallery of Victoria
Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
Australian Art of the Last Ten Years: The Philip Morris Collection, Australian National Gallery, Canberra
A Photographer's Choice, School of Arts, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Toowoomba, Queensland
Preston to Phillip: A Survey, 10 Years of Art Education, Reconnaissance Gallery, Melbourne
Hawthorn Artists, Hawthorn City Art Gallery
1983 *A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra
Recent Australian Painting: A Survey 1970-1983, Art Gallery of South Australia
1984 *A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne
The Field Now, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne
Meaning and Excellence, ANZART, Australian and New Zealand Artists in Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh,

I RISE IN FLAME



I Rise in Flame, exhibition invitation, Richman Art Galleries, 1960

Canine Capers and cereal bird-beaks: paintings by Robert Rooney, exhibition poster, Pinacotheca, 1969



Canine capers and cereal bird-beaks: paintings by Robert Rooney, exhibition poster, Pinacotheca, 1969



Robert Rooney: *One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture*, exhibition poster, Pinacotheca, 1985

Robert Rooney *Eltham Factory Landscape*, exhibition poster, Pinacotheca, 1981



ROBERT ROONEY ELTHAM FACTORY LANDSCAPE

A Fete Worse Than Death
Portraits
Complete Photographic Works 1970-77

PINACOTHECA OCT. 14-31

10 WALTHAM PLACE, RICHMOND. Ph. 428 3066
Gallery Hours: Wed. Thurs. Fri. 12-7, Sat. 11-3

Scotland

- 1985 *Meaning and Excellence*, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
Photostats, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
Visual Tension, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne and Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Queensland
Thirty Years On: Survey of Works on Paper, Pinacotheca, Melbourne
Selected Works from the Last Two Decades, Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 1986 33 *Men Painters (The Male Sensibility)*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne
The Source, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania
Origins, Originality and Beyond, The Sixth Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales
Paintings 1955-1985, 312 Lennox Street Gallery, Melbourne
Fears and Scruples, Melbourne University Gallery, Melbourne
MIMA (Modern Image Makers Association) September Exhibition, Glasshouse Theatre, RMIT Union House, Melbourne
- 1987 *Australian Art 1960-1986: Field to Figuration*, National Gallery of Victoria
In Print Vol.1: Artist's Books, Power Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sydney University, Sydney
Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood, Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne
Contemporary Australian Painting, Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria
What is this Thing Called Science?, Melbourne University Gallery, Melbourne
Contemporary Art in Australia: A Review, Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Queensland
The Monash University Collection: Selected Paintings and Sculptures, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne
Australian Painting: 1960 to the Present, 312 Lennox Street Gallery, Melbourne
- 1988 *1968-1988: Selected Works*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
Contemporary Works from the University Collection, Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania
Australian Art of the Last 20 Years, Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Queensland
Australian Art Post-1960, Deutscher Gertrude Street Gallery, Melbourne
Suburbanism, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne
Form Within Form, Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne
Group Exhibition, *Pinacotheca, Melbourne*
The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788-1988, Australian Bicentennial Authority
- 1989 *Freestyle: Australian Art: 60s to Now*, National Gallery of Victoria
Annotations, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne
Sets and Series: Recent Australian Prints from the Collection, National Gallery of Victoria
Acquisitions 1988-89, Newcastle Region Art Gallery
Inhibodress 1970-1972, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Queensland
- 1990 *The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in 20th Century Art*, The Eighth Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales and Bond Stores, Sydney
The Complex Picture: Australian Painting in the 1980s, The College Gallery, South Australian College of Advanced Education
'Defective Models': Australian Portraiture, 19th & 20th Centuries, Monash University Gallery
Crouch Prize Winners, City of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
Aquisitions 1984-1990, The University Art Museum, The University of Queensland, 1990

LIST OF WORKS IN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITIONS:

1960 *I Rise in Flame*, Richman Galleries, Melbourne (September)**Paintings:**

1. Trouble
 2. Adolescents
 3. Sunday
 4. I Rise in Flame
 5. Mortality Play
 6. Implication
 7. Moloch
 8. Shook Up
 9. Hero
 10. Man with Artichokes
 11. Mad Girl
 12. Accident
 13. Yellow Wreck
 14. Crash Victim
 15. Victim
 16. Red Death
 17. First Spring
- Drawings:**
1. Hate
 2. The Elder
 3. Balaam
 4. Old Woman
 5. Midcentury Mask
 6. Cry
 7. War Head
 8. Cain and Abel
 9. Church Ahead
 10. Woman

1963 South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne (27 August - 6 September)

1. Figure on Red and Blue
 2. Woman Between Stripes
 3. Excavated Man
 4. Unknown Singing Man
 5. No Message
 6. Hanging Man
 7. Mandog
 8. Flying Man
 9. Person in Red and Blue
 10. Dancing Fat Man
 11. Woman
 12. Excavated Figure
 13. The Shadow
 14. The Fall
- and a folio of drawings

1964 Terry Clune Galleries, Sydney (26 August - 15 September)

1. Excavated Figure
2. Figure on Red and Blue
3. Woman Between Stripes
4. Diagonal Man Fossil
5. Excavated Woman
6. Diagonal Woman
7. Primordial Woman
8. Stratum I
9. Stratum II
10. Woman
11. No Message
12. Running Man
13. Flying Man
14. The Fall

1966 South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne (May)

1. Ripple
 2. Variant
 3. Tenth of June
 4. Matrix
 5. Extension
 6. Swimmer
 7. Through
 8. Projection I
 9. Available Form
 10. Between
 11. Projection II
 12. Two
- and a folio of drawings

1968 *New Paintings: Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Gardens and Slippery Seals*, Strines Gallery,

Melbourne (18 April - 4 May)

1. Kind-hearted Kitchen-garden I
2. Kind-hearted Kitchen-garden II
3. Kind-hearted Kitchen-garden III
4. Kind-hearted Kitchen-garden IV
5. Variations Slippery Seal I
6. Variations Slippery Seal II
7. Variations Slippery Seal III
8. Variations Slippery Seal IV
9. Last and First Painting

1969 *Canine Capers and Cereal Bird Beaks*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (7 - 25 July)

- Canine Capers 1
 Canine Capers 2
 Canine Capers 3
 Canine Capers 4
 Canine Capers 5
 Canine Capers 6
 Canine Capers 7
 Canine Capers 8
 Cereal Bird Beaks 1
 Cereal Bird Beaks 2
 Cereal Bird Beaks 3

1970 *Superknits and Snaps*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (September)

- Superknit 1 Holden Park 1 & 2 May 1970
 Superknit 2 Meals Jul - Aug 1970
 Superknit 3 Scorched Almonds Jul - Aug 1970
 Superknit 4 War Savings Streets 1970
 Superknit 5 Over 100 Yards of Paper Unrolled
 Superknit 6 on "Smith's Hill", Eltham: 31 May 1970
 Superknit 7
 Superknit 8
 Superknit 9

1972 *Information: Robert Rooney*, Brighton Polytechnic, Brighton, England*Robert Rooney/Simon Klose (Collaboration)*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (August)

'...several rows of bluestone cobblestones on the floor and a string or two of small, abstract photographs on the walls'. Alan McCulloch, 'Everything or perhaps nothing', *The Herald*, August 9, 1972.

1973 *Dale Hickey/Simon Klose/Robert Rooney (Collaboration)*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (12 - 29 July)

Coats (black 0-5), (white 0-5)

1975 *Selected Works 1970-75*, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (30 July - 9

August)

- Garments
 AM/PM
 Luna Park: St Kilda
 N.E.W.S.
 The White Rug: For S.K.
 10.8 miles in 44 minutes
 Every artist born in 1937 so far located

Project 8: Robert Rooney, Art Gallery of New South Wales (4 October - 9 November)**Paintings:**

1. Slippery Seal 1 1967
2. Slippery Seal 2 1967
3. Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden 2 1967
4. Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden 3 1968
5. Canine Capers I 1968
6. Canine Capers II 1969
7. Canine Capers VI 1969
8. Superknit 2 1970
9. Superknit 6 1970

Photographic Works:

10. Holden Park 1 Mar 1970
Holden Park 2 May 1970
11. Scorched Almonds Jul-Aug 1970
12. Meals Jul-Aug 1970
13. Variety May 1971
14. Corners April 1972
15. Garments 3 Dec 1972-19 Mar 1973
16. Am-Pm 2 Dec 1973-28 Feb 1974
17. The White Rug: For S.K. 13 Aug-27 Sept 1974
18. Luna Park: St Kilda 8 Jan 1975
19. N.E.W.S. Flat 1/2 Marine Parade, St Kilda 17 April 1975
20. War Saving Street 1970
21. Score: Parts/Second Landscape for Instruments (slippery seals) April 25 1968

1978 Survey 3: Robert Rooney, National Gallery of Victoria (10 - 16 July)**Paintings:**

1. Hero 1959
2. Available Form 1 March 1966
3. Squared Drawing 1966
4. Slippery Seal 1 1967
5. Slippery Seal 2 1967
6. Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden 2 1967
7. Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden 3 1968
8. Canine Capers 1 1968
9. Canine Capers II 1969
10. Canine Capers VI 1969
11. Superknit 2 1970
12. Superknit 4 1970

Photographic Works:

13. Holden Park 1 Mar. 1970
Holden Park 2 May 1970
14. Scorched Almonds Jul-Aug 1970
15. Meals Jul-Aug 1970
16. Corners April 1972
17. Garments 3 Dec 1972-19 Mar 1973
18. AM-PM 2 Dec 1973-28 Feb 1974
19. The White Rug: For S.K. 13 Aug-27 Sept 1974
20. Luna Park: St Kilda 8 Jan 1975
21. N.E.W.S. Flat 1/2 Marine Parade, St Kilda 17 April 1975
22. Two Views: St Kilda 12 Jan 1975
23. Stumps: Smith's Hill, Eltham Dec 1977
24. Yarra Bank Oct 1977
25. Factory Landscape: Eltham

- 25.1 Landscape Factory July 1977
- 25.2 Cedar Village: Doll's House March 1978
- 25.3 Chequered Flag July 1977
- 25.4 Anteater July 1977
- 25.5 Donburn Hire 1 July 1977
- 25.6 Donburn Hire 2 July 1977
- 25.7 Donburn Hire 3 July 1977
- 25.8 Cedar Village: 13 March 1978
- 25.9 Bargain Bazaar March 1978
- 25.10 Creatus Industries July 1977
- 26. Yarra Park Feb 1978
- 27. Fenced Off Service Station: Hawthorn July 1977

1979 Portraits 1978-79, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (23 May - 9 June)

1981 Eltham Factory Landscape, A Fete Worse than Death, Portraits: Complete Photographic Works 1970-81, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (14 - 31 October)

1983 As You Were (New Paintings), Pinacotheca, Melbourne (12 - 29 October)

- 1. March of Time and Life
- 2. What Price Victory?
- 3. Clue to Abel's Character
- 4. The Art of Illustration
- 5. Death of James Dean 1.
- 6. Death of James Dean 2.
- 7. A Child's Journey 1944 - 1954
- 8. As You Were
- 9. Functional Dress for Men
- 10. Speed Victory
- 11. The Second Front

Pilkington Prints:

- 12. Pilkington Predicts In Years To Come...
- 13. Pilkington Predicts The Progress of Your Firm Will Be Symbolized This Way...
- 14. Pilkington Predicts More Family Security Through Safety Glass Doors...

1984 As You Were, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney (7 - 24 March)

- 1. March of Time and Life
- 2. What Price Victory?
- 3. Clue to Abel's Character
- 4. The Art of Illustration
- 5. Death of James Dean 1.
- 6. Death of James Dean 2.
- 7. A Child's Journey 1944 - 1954
- 8. As You Were
- 9. Functional Dress for Men
- 10. Speed Victory
- 11. The Second Front

Pilkington Prints:

- 12. Pilkington Predicts In Years To Come...
- 13. Pilkington Predicts The Progress of Your Firm Will Be Symbolized This Way...
- 14. Pilkington Predicts More Family Security Through Safety Glass Doors...

1985 One Complete Abstract Painting Included in Every Picture, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (13 - 30 November)

- 1. The Way to the Stars
- 2. The Home Front
- 3. The Setting Sun
- 4. The Mighty Saw
- 5. With Intent to Deceive
- 6. The Missing Man

- 7. Understand the Weapon
- 8. Born to Die
- 9. Tumult in the Clouds
- 10. Against the Sun
- 11. Beans and Bushido
- 12. Juke Box Jungle

1988 Silly Symphonies, or At Last, the 1968 Show, Part One: New Paintings, Pinacotheca, Melbourne (9 - 26 November)

- 1. Silly Symphony 1 (Buzzy Bee)
- 2. Silly Symphony 2 (Psychedelephant)
- 3. Silly Symphony 3 (Morocco Bound)
- 4. Silly Symphony 4 (Zebra Special)
- 5. Silly Symphony 5 (Jumbo Jumble)
- 6. Silly Symphony 6 (Zebra Slices)
- 7. Silly Symphony 7 (Camel Cuts)

FILMOGRAPHY:

- 1973 *Anzacs*, March 1973, Super-8, silent
- 1975 *Inside/Outside, St Kilda*, April 1975, Super-8, silent
- Datsun Drive: Day (Hawthorn to Eltham)*, November 1975, Super-8, silent
- Datsun Drive: Night (Eltham to Hawthorn)*, November 1975, Super-8, silent
- 1982 *Repeat Performance*, March 1982, Super-8, silent
- Superman*, April 1982, Super-8, silent

AWARDS:

1975 Co-winner of The Crouch Prize, City of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery with Imants Tillers, Aleksander Danko and Peter Booth. Judge: Daniel Thomas

COLLECTIONS:

The Araluen Centre, Alice Springs
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Art Gallery of South Australia
 Art Gallery of Western Australia
 Australian National Gallery, Canberra
 City of Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
 Flinders University, South Australia
 Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia
 Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria
 High Court Collection, Canberra
 Melbourne University, Victoria
 Monash University, Victoria
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Naracoorte Art Gallery
 Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales
 Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville, Queensland
 Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania
 Queensland University
 The Smorgon Collection
 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
 University of Tasmania
 Visual Arts Board
 Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery, New South Wales
 Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria

BOOKS & CATALOGUES:

Elwyn Lynn, *Robert Rooney*, (catalogue/broadsheet), Terry Clune Galleries, Sydney, 1964
 Elwyn Lynn, *Australian Art Monographs: Drawing*, Longmans, Green, 1963
 Alan McCulloch, *Encyclopaedia of Australian Art*, Hutchinson Group, 1968
4 Conceptual Artists, Pinacotheca, 1:4, 1971



The Home Front (1983), synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 123.2 x 198.5 (Collection: Kings Park Secondary College)



The Setting Sun (1984), synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 x 198.0 (Collection: National Gallery of Victoria)



Beans and Banzai 1987, silkscreen, image 36.5 x 54.5; sheet 57.0 x 76.5 (Collection: the artist)



Juke Box Jungle 1985, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.2 x 198.0 (Collection: the artist)

Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting 1788 - 1970*, Oxford University Press, 1971

Brian Finemore, *Freedom From Prejudice*, (catalogue), National Gallery of Victoria, 1977

Gary Catalano, *The Years of Hope: Australian Art and Criticism 1959 - 1968*, Oxford University Press, 1981

Gary Catalano, *The Bandaged Years: A Study of Australian Artist's Books*, Hale and Iremonger, 1983

Gary Catalano, 'Robert Rooney: The Poetics of Waiting', in *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, (catalogue), Visual Arts Board Regional Development Programme No.2, Australia Council, 1978

Margaret Plant, 'Quattrocento Melbourne: Aspects of Finish 1973 - 77', *Studies in Australian Art*, Department of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne, 1978

Janine Burke, *Self-Portrait/Self-Image 1980 - 81*, (catalogue), Victorian College of the Arts Gallery, 1981

Paul Taylor, *POPISM*, (catalogue), National Gallery of Victoria, 1981

Judy Annear, *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, (catalogue), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1982

Daniel Thomas, *A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art*, (catalogue), Australian National Gallery, 1983

Ron Radford, *Recent Australian Painting: A Survey 1970 - 1983*, (catalogue), Art Gallery of South Australia, 1983

Sue Cramer, *The Field Now*, (catalogue), Heide Park & Art Gallery, 1984

Denise Robinson, *Meaning and Excellence*, (catalogue), ANZART, 1984

Paul Taylor, *As You Were*, (catalogue/broadsheet), Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney, 1984

Paul Taylor (ed.) *Anything Goes: Art in Australia 1970 - 1980*, Art & Text, Melbourne, 1984

Christopher van der Craats, *Photostats*, (catalogue), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985

Elizabeth Gower, *The Source*, (catalogue), Centre For the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1986

Naomi Cass, *Fears and Scruples*, (catalogue), University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1986

Naomi Cass, *What is this thing called science?*, (catalogue), University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1987

Jenepher Duncan, *The Monash University Collection: Selected Paintings and Sculptures*, (catalogue), Monash University Gallery, 1987

Robert Lindsay, *Field to Figuration: Australian Art 1960 - 1986*, (catalogue), National Gallery of Victoria, 1987

Juliana Engberg, *Suburbanism*, (catalogue), George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1988

Roger Butler, *Prints by Twenty-five Australian Artists: The Bicentennial Folio*, (catalogue), Australian National Gallery & Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988

Helen Ennis and Isobel Crombie, *Australian Photographs: A Souvenir Book of Australian Photography in the Australian National Gallery*, Australian National Gallery, 1988

Jonathon Holmes, *Contemporary Works from the University Collection*, (catalogue), Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1988

John McPhee, *Australian Art in the Australian National Gallery*, Australian National Gallery, 1988

Donald Richardson, *Art in Australia*, Longman Cheshire, 1988

Daniel Thomas and Ron Radford, *Creating Australia: 200 Years of Art 1788 - 1988*, ICCA, Art Gallery of South Australia, 1988

Daniel Thomas, *Outlines of Australian Art: The Joseph Brown Collection*, Third Edition, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1989

Sue Cramer, *Inhibodress 1970 - 72*, (catalogue), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1989

Jonathon Sweet, *Pinacotheca 1967 - 1973*, Prendergast Publishers, Melbourne, 1989

Virginia Trioli and Rose Lang, *Annotations*, (catalogue), 200 Gertrude Street, 1989

Rene Block, *The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in 29th*

Century Art, The Eighth Biennale of Sydney, 1990

MUSIC:

Roger Cavell, *Australia's Music: Themes of a society*, Sun Books, 1967

James Murdoch, *Australia's Contemporary Composers*, MacMillan Australia, 1972

John Jenkins, *22 Contemporary Australian Composers*, NMA Publications, 1988

John Whiteoak, *Beyond Jazz Improvisation*, Melbourne, 1963

Liz Jones and Betty Burstall, *La Mama: The Story of a Theatre*, McPhee Gribble/Penguin Books, 1988

Jeff Wells, 'New Revival Song? Pied Piper Barry McKimm', *The Sun*, April 21, 1964

Geoff Miller, 'a.b.c. jazz is class', *Pelican*, July 30, 1964

Adrian Rawlins, 'Melbourne's Jazz', *Farrago*, May 24, 1965

Felix Werder, 'Mixed promise at concert', *The Age*, July 27, 1966

John Sinclair, 'Well done Miss Gifford!', *The Herald*, July 27, 1966

JOURNALS:

Bill Hannan, 'Out of the Past', *The Bulletin*, September 14, 1963

Bill Hannan, *The Bulletin*, December 28, 1963

Bill Hannan, 'Full Acceptance', *The Bulletin*, December 5, 1964

Leonard Hensing, 'Things we hate', *The Bulletin*, September, 1964

G.R. Lansell, 'First and Last', *Nation*, May 11, 1968

Terry Smith, 'Pinacotheca Group Exhibition, June, Melbourne', *Other Voices*, August/September, 1970, pp.45-6

G.R. Lansell, 'Subversive Rooney', *Nation*, September 19, 1970

Alan McCulloch, *Art International*, 14:8, October 20, 1970

Ann Galbally, 'Conceptual Art', *MUM*, Melbourne, 1971, pp.65-68 (illustration p.68, *Scorched Almonds*, 1970)

Alan McCulloch, *Art International*, 15:3 March 1971

Robert Lindsay, 'Robert Rooney', *Art and Australia*, 14:1, July/September 1976, pp. 50-59 (illustrated)

Gary Catalano, 'The Ancestry of Anything Goes: Australian Art since 1968', *Meanjin*, 35:4, 1976, pp.394-404

Mary Eagle, 'Year's Survey of Art - 1980', *Bulletin*, National Gallery of Victoria, January/February 1981, pp.4-5

Susan Tate, 'The Mediated Image: "Something in the air"', *The Virgin Press*, June, 1982, pp.4-6 (illustration p.5, *The Red Card* 1982)

Paul Taylor, 'Angst in my pants', *Art & Text*, 7, September 1982

Suzanne Davies, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Art Network*, Spring 1982, pp.18-19 (illustration p.19, *Pilkington Predicts: More Family Security Through Safety Glass Doors* 1982)

Paul Taylor, 'Popism', *Real Life Magazine*, New York, 9, Winter, 1982

Martin Armiger, 'Pushing the Art of Pop', *The National Times*, July 11 - 17, 1982

Margaret Wertheim, 'The Shape of things to come', *Pol*, August, 1983

Francis Lindsay, 'A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art', *Art & Text*, 11, Spring 1983

Terry Smith, 'The Field Then and The Field Now: A Fragment', *Stuff, March*, 1984

Philip Brophy, 'A Face Without a Place', *Art & Text*, 16, Summer 1984

John Barbour, 'Robert Rooney', *Art Network*, Winter/Spring, 1986

Teresa Zolnierkiewicz, 'The Unpainterly Painter', *Follow me Gentlemen*, September/November, 1986, pp.267-271 (illustrated p.267, *Born To Die* 1985; p.268 *The Mighty Saw*, 1984, *With Intent to Deceive* 1985; p.271, *The Missing Man* 1985, *The Setting Sun* 1984, *Understand the Weapon* 1985)

Christopher Heathcote, 'Exhibition Criticism and its Makers', *Art Monthly*, November 1988

Chris McAuliffe, 'Suburbanism', *Art & Text*, 31, Dec - Feb 1989

Ken Bolton, Review of 'The Complex Picture', *Art & Text*, 36, May, 1990

Mary Eagle, 'Review of the 8th Biennale of Sydney', *Art Monthly* (Australia), June, 1990

Nancy Underhill, *Acquisitions 1984 – 1990*, The University Art Museum, The University of Queensland, 1990

PUBLICATIONS BY ROBERT ROONEY:

Australian Skipping Rhymes, Moonflower Press, 1956
Spons (see Sponic Archives), 1960–62
War Savings Streets, (photo-map in folder), Pinacotheca, 1970
'Words and Phrases in Inverted Commas from the Complete Works of IBMR', *Pinacotheca*, 1, 4 Conceptual Artists, 1971
Words and Phrases in 'Inverted' Commas from the Collected Works of IBMR, xerox book, Revised Version, January 1972
Folds, xerox book, self-published, 1972
'Book Notes', *Arts Melbourne*, 1:2, June 1976
'Booknotes', *Arts Melbourne*, 1:3, September 1976
'Booknotes', *Arts Melbourne*, 1:4, December 1976
'Worrals on the Warpath, Biggles Replies', Letters, *Arts Melbourne* 1:4, December 1976
'With Sensitivity, Affection, Understanding and a Keen Eye on the Market', *Arts Melbourne*, 2:1, August 1977
'Storm in a Teacup: Some Scenes from a Vorticist Life', *Arts Melbourne*, 2:1, August 1977
'Books', *Light Vision*, 6 & 7, July – October 1978
'Choice Quality Bacon: Paul Partos, Past and Present', *Art and Australia*, 17:4, Winter 1980
'Thomas Lawson, interview', *Art & Text*, 8, Summer 1982/83
'Tall Poppies', review, *Flash Art*, 114, November 1983
'Don't Dare Breathe', *Art & Text*, 12 & 13, Summer 1983 – Autumn 1984
'Philip Evergood: Art on the Beach', Artist's Choice No.22, *Art and Australia*, 22:3, Autumn 1985
'Artists and Models', *Art & Text*, 19, October – December 1985
'On the Prowl: Gareth Sansom Talks', *Gareth Sansom: He Sees Himself*, (catalogue), University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1986
'Portrait of the Artist as a TV Character', *Cinema Papers*, July, 1987
Christopher van der Craats: Recent Paintings, (catalogue), Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney, 1987
Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood, (catalogue), Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987
'Edward Ruscha: Soldiering On, an Outpost Position', *Stuffing* 3: Art Graphics, 1990

The Age Art Critic, 1980 – July 1982
The Australian Art Critic October 1982 –

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

– INDIVIDUAL AND COLLABORATIVE EXHIBITIONS:
Alan McCulloch, 'Judging art by craftsmanship', *The Herald*, September 28, 1960 (illustrated Catalogue Cover)
Arnold Shore, 'Week Rich in Exhibitions', *The Age*, September 27, 1960
Alan Warren, 'Cattle 'show' at art gallery', *The Sun*, September 27, 1960
Bernard Smith, 'The Accent is on Youth in This Week's Shows', *The Age*, August 27, 1963
'250 at art show opening', *The Sun*, August 28, 1963
'Out went the twin beds', *The Truth*, September 7, 1963
Alan McCulloch, 'A cliché – and a crash', *The Herald*, August 28, 1963 (illustrated *Dancing Fat Man*, 1963)
W.T., 'Young Painters Show', *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 16, 1964
Elwyn Lynn, 'Figure of Youth', *The Australian*, September 26, 1964
Daniel Thomas, 'New Art blooms in the Spring', *Sunday Telegraph*, September 20, 1964
Bernard Smith, 'Greco gives renewal to the past', *The Age*, May 18, 1966
Patrick McCaughey, 'Mainstream and the Province', *The Age*, April 24, 1968
Lawrence Money, 'A Seal of Quality', *The Sun*, April 30, 1968
Alan McCulloch, 'Will they last?', *The Herald*, May 8, 1968
Patrick McCaughey, 'Balson – Best of a decade', *The Age*, April 17, 1968
Patrick McCaughey, 'A visual gone for highbrows', *The Age*, July 16, 1969
Alan Warren, 'Wide Variations in these art works', *The Sun*, July 16, 1969
Alan McCulloch, 'Changes in abstraction', *The Herald*, July 9, 1969

Alan McCulloch, 'New Trends in scale', *The Herald*, September 9, 1970
Alan McCulloch, 'Everything or perhaps nothing', *The Herald*, August 9, 1972
Patrick McCaughey, 'His brilliance breaks Edwardian cocoon', *The Age*, August 16, 1972
Jeffrey Makin, 'Hot air is winner at art show', *The Sun*, July 25, 1973
Alan McCulloch, 'Obviously an inferior Turner', *The Herald*, July 18, 1973
W.E. Pidgeon, 'Rooney just clicks away', *Sunday Telegraph*, October 12, 1975
Rod Carmichael, 'All this... and culture too', *The Sun*, June 14, 1978
Gerard Vaughan, 'A catalogue of social routines', *The Melbourne Times*, June 12, 1978
Alan McCulloch, *The Herald*, June 15, 1978
Memory Holloway, 'With a little bit of angst...', *The Australian*, June 23, 1978
Rosemary Flanders, 'Carpet patterns, life patterns', *Farrago*, July 14, 1978 (illustrated)
Mary Eagle, 'Rooney on another departure', *The Age*, June 4, 1978
Mary Eagle and Tony Perry, 'Reprieve from self-conscious art', *The Age*, June 4, 1979
Alan McCulloch, 'The Paradox of Durrant', *The Herald*, May 24, 1979
Paul Taylor, 'A Portrait of an artist', *The Age*, October 31, 1981 (illustrated *Holden Park 1*, 1970)
Memory Holloway, 'Ironic look at style and stylishness', *The Age*, October 26, 1983 (illustrated *Clue to Abel's Character* 1983)
Ronald Millar, *The Herald*, October 10, 1983
Chris van der Craats, 'As you were: recent paintings by Robert Rooney', *Farrago*, October 21, 1983, (illustrated)
Sandra McGrath, 'Artists await the big news', *The Australian*, March 10, 1984 (illustrated *The Art of Illustration* 1983)
Gary Catalano, 'Both sides of the gulf', *The Age*, November 21, 1985 (illustrated *Juke Box Jungle* 1985)
Gary Catalano, 'Hope is seen in the silence of artists', *The Age*, November 23, 1988

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES – GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

Alan McCulloch, 'Variety At Six Shows', *The Herald*, October 15, 1958
Arnold Shore, 'Artists with an eye for Christmas', *The Age*, November 24, 1959
Alan McCulloch, 'A Sketch for Christmas? An Artist's sketch is often better than his finished work', *The Herald*, November 25, 1959
Arnold Shore, 'Ernest Effort and Fine Talent', *The Age*, November 7, 1961
Alan McCulloch, 'Hall was all for discipline', *The Herald*, November 8, 1961
Elwyn Lynn, 'Trend Diviners are out in force', *The Australian*, February 27, 1965
The Age, February 17, 1965
Elwyn Lynn, *The Australian*, June 5, 1965
Tony Tripp, 'Drawings from the Nation', *Newcastle Sun*, July 7, 1966
Alan McCulloch, 'Verve and Passion', *The Herald*, March 15, 1967
Alan McCulloch, 'New Trends in size', *The Herald*, June 9, 1970
Ann Galbally, 'Avant-Garde in new HQ', *The Age*, June 10, 1970
Ann Galbally, 'Show's accent was on the negatives', *The Age*, April 24, 1971
Terry Smith, 'Hidden message of a blank wall portfolio', *The Sunday Australian*, June 6, 1971
Alan McCulloch, 'A couch and a corpse', *The Herald*, April 28, 1971
Ronald Millar, 'A marriage of wood and metal', *The Herald*, June 24, 1982
Suzanne Davies, 'A certain je ne sais quack?', *The Australian*, July 3, 1982
Elwyn Lynn, 'A field of creatures and kitch', *The Australian*, September 8-9, 1984
Victoria Thieberger, 'Childhood without cuteness', *The Age Entertainment Guide*, June 12, 1987
Terry Smith, 'Artists of the play school', *Times on Sunday*, June 14, 1987
Gary Catalano, 'Childhood self a fount of richness and integrity', *The Age*, June 17, 1987
Gary Catalano, 'Science is not yet alien to art', *The Age*, November 27, 1987

Catalogue of Works

- 1 Still Life (Firth)** 1953
collage on paper
11.5 x 17.8
signed l.r., pencil "RR"
Collection: the artist
- 2 Abstract (Ernst)** (1953)
collage on paper
16.3 x 14.5
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
- 3 Still Life** 1953
ink on paper
15.2 x 13.3
signed l.r., (hidden), "R Rooney 3B"
Collection: the artist
- 4 Child Away** c1955
etching
18.0 x 13.0
signed l.r., "ROBERT ROONEY";
signed and titled in plate l.l., "Robert - Child Away"; titled, dated and
editioned l.l., pencil "CHILD AWAY."
ARTISTS PROOF. CIRCA 1955"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987
- 5 The Hill** 1955
gouache and crayon on paper
30.0 x 22.6
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; titled and dated l.l.,
pencil "THE HILL 1955"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987
- 6 The Rifle** 1955
enamel on paper on board
67.0 x 92.0
signed and dated l.l., pencil "robert 1955"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Innocence and Danger: An Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987
- 7 The Mask** c1956
linocut
23.0 x 13.7
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; titled, dated and
editioned l.l., pencil "THE MASK ARTISTS PROOF 1. CIRCA 1956"
Collection: the artist
- 8 The Handkerchief** c1956
linocut
32.8 x 23.3
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; titled, dated and
editioned l.l., pencil "THE HANDKERCHIEF ARTIST'S PROOF CIRCA 1956"
Collection: the artist
- 9 Baby Goat, Healesville** (1958)
oil on composition board
45.5 x 61.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
- 10 Sunday** 1958
oil on composition board
68.5 x 91.5
signed and dated l.r., blue paint
"robert 58"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Innocence and Danger: A Artist's View of Childhood*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1987
- 11 I rise in flame** 1958
oil on composition board
68.5 x 91.3
signed and dated u.l., black paint
"Robert 58"
Private Collection
- 12 Mortality Play** 1958
oil on composition board
68.5 x 91.0
signed and dated l.r., red paint
"Robert 58"
Collection: the artist
- 13 Implication** 1958
oil on composition board
68.6 x 91.5
signed and dated l.r., blue paint
"robert 58"
Collection: the artist
- 14 Hero** 1959
oil on composition board
68.5 x 91.5
signed and dated l.r., black paint
"Robert 1959"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 15 Accident** 1960
oil on composition board
61.0 x 122.0
signed and dated l.r., red paint
"robert 60"
Collection: the artist
- 16 Cain and Abel** 1960
pen and ink, pencil
57.7 x 75.6
signed and dated l.r., ink "robert 60/ September 1960"
Collection: Ballaarat Fine Art Gallery
Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1981
- 17 Red Death** 1960
oil on composition board
81.2 x 133.3
signed and dated l.r., red paint
"robert 60"
Collection: the artist
- 18 Pilkington Predicts: transportation will become safer** 1961
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.r., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 19 Pilkington Predicts: unlimited power** 1961
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.r., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 20 Pilkington Predicts: emblems on door will soon replace brass plates** 1961
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.l., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 21 Pilkington Predicts: this counter will sell** 1961
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.l., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 22 Pilkington Predicts: safer road transport will come through improved visibility** 1961
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.r., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 23 Pilkington Predicts: the progress of your firm will be symbolized this way** n.d.
Collection: the artist

- colour offset print
36.5 x 27.0
signed in print l.r., "robert"
Collection: the artist
- 24 **Pilkington Predicts: in 50 years time** 1961
colour offset print
30.0 x 20.0
signed and dated in print l.l., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 25 **Pilkington Predicts: in years to come** n.d.
colour offset print
36.5 x 27.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
- 26 **Pilkington Predicts: more family security** 1961
colour offset print
19.0 x 14.0
signed and dated in print l.l., "robert 61"
Collection: the artist
- 27 **Pilkington Predicts: more windscreen area in transportation** 1962
offset print
38.0 x 25.0
signed and dated in print l.r., "robert 62"
Collection: the artist
- 28 **Art Union** 1962
collage and oil on composition board
30.8 x 23.0
signed and dated 1.1, ink, "robert 62"
Collection: Helen and Alex Morton
- 29 **The Fall** 1962
oil on composition board
136.0 x 91.0
signed and dated l.l., green paint "robert 62"; inscribed l.r., green paint "2-6"
Collection: the artist
- 30 **Flying Man** 1962
oil on composition board
91.0 x 137.0
signed and dated l.r., red paint "robert 62"; inscribed l.l., red paint "16-12"
Collection: the artist
- 31 **Message** 1962
collage and oil on composition board
30.8 x 23.5
signed and dated u.l., ink "robert 62"
Collection: the artist
- 32 **Spontage** 1962
collage, enamel and oil on composition board
57.0 x 77.5
signed and dated l.l., black paint "robert 62"
Collection: the artist
- 33 **Material** 1963
collage and ink on paper
sight 44.0 x 69.5
signed and dated l.r., ink "robert 63"; titled l.l., ink "MATERIAL"
Collection: the artist
- 34 **Documentation I** May 19 1963
collage and ink on paper
sight 54.0 x 73.5
signed and dated l.r., ink "robert 63"; titled l.l., ink "DOCUMENTATION I MAY 19"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1986
- 35 **Available Form I** March 1966
crayon on paper on composition board
71.0 x 94.0
signed and dated u.l., pencil "robert 66"; titled l.l., pencil "AVAILABLE FORM I"
Private Collection
Exhibited: *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 36 **Available Form** 1966
oil on composition board
63.5 x 91.5
signed and dated l.r., black paint "robert 66"
Private Collection
- 37 **Over Available Form** 1966
crayon on paper on composition board
66.5 x 95.0
signed and dated l.l., pencil "robert 66"; titled l.r., pencil "OVER AVAILABLE FORM"
Private Collection
- 38 **Squared Drawing** 1966
crayon on paper on composition board
69.0 x 94.0
signed and dated l.l., pencil "robert 66"; titled l.r., pencil "SQUARED DRAWING"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 39 **Thru** 1966
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
106.5 x 137.0
signed and dated l.l., red paint "robert 66"; titled l.r., red paint "THRU"
Collection: Rosemary Adam
- 40 **Two** April 30 1966
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
66.0 x 91.5
signed and dated l.r., black paint "robert 66"
Collection: the artist
- 41 **Pegs** 1967
pencil on graph paper
sight 32.0 x 42.0
signed, dated and titled l.r., pencil "'Pegs'/1967/Robert Rooney"
Collection: Bruce Pollard
- 42 **Kellogg's Cereal Packet** cut-out used as stencil for **Slippery Seals**
cardboard
Collection: the artist
- 43 **Variations Slippery Seal II** 1967
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
40.2 x 53.2
signed, dated and titled on reverse, brown paint "ROBERT ROONEY/VARIATIONS SLIPPERY SEAL II/1967"
Collection: Mr Bruce Pollard
- 44 **Variations Slippery Seal III** 1967
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
106.7 x 106.7
signed, dated and titled on reverse c., brown paint, "ROBERT ROONEY/VARIATIONS SLIPPERY SEAL III/1967"
Collection: Monash University
Exhibited: (as Variations Slippery Seal II) *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 45 **Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden II** 1967
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
167.9 x 168.1
not signed, not dated
Collection: Australian National Gallery
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art*, Australian National Gallery, 1983; *Monash University Gallery, 1983; Creating Australia: 200 Years of Art 1788 - 1988*, Art Gallery of South Australia and National tour, 1988
- 46 **Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden III** 1968
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
160.8 x 167.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse l.l., brown paint "Robert Rooney/Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden/66 x 66/ acrylic 1968 III"
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *Field to Figuration: Australian Art 1960 - 1986*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1987
- 47 **Kind-Hearted Kitchen-Garden IV** 1968
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
168.0 x 168.0
signed and dated on reverse u.l., brown paint "ROBERT ROONEY/MARCH 1968"
Collection: University of Melbourne
Purchased with assistance from the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council
Exhibited: *The Field*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1968
- 48 **Score: Parts/Second Landscape for Instruments April 25, 1968** 1968
4 photocopies of score with performers' annotations
each 31.2 x 39.0
sheet 72.6 x 87.5
not signed; dated on each sheet l.l., ink "APRIL 25 1968"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975
- 49 **Superknit 1** 1969
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
134.0 x 245.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse u.l., "ROBERT ROONEY/ 'SUPERKNIT I' December 1969"
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
- 50 **Superknit 4** 1970
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.4 x 299.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse u.l., brown paint "Robert Rooney/SUPERKNIT 4 1970"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane
Exhibited: *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 51 **Superknit 5** 1970
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.5 x 244.0
Collection: Australian National Gallery
Exhibited: *A Melbourne Mood: Cool Contemporary Art*, Australian National Gallery, 1983; *Monash University Gallery, 1983*
- 52 **Superknit 6** (1970)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
diptych, panels numbered 1 & 2
1: 152.5 x 152.0; 2: 152.5 x 167.5
each signed, dated and titled on reverse u.l., brown paint "ROBERT ROONEY/ SUPERKNIT 6 1970"
Private Collection
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975
- 53 **Kellogg's Cereal Packet** cut-out used as stencil for **Canine Capers**
cardboard
Collection: the artist
- 54 **Canine capers I** 1968
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.4 x 152.4
signed, dated and titled on reverse u.l., red paint "ROBERT ROONEY/CANINE CAPERS I 1968."
Private Collection
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 55 **Canine Capers IV** 1969
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.0 x 152.0
signed and dated on reverse, red paint " ROBERT ROONEY/ 1969"
Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia
d'Auverne Bowall Bequest Fund, 1981
- 56 **Canine Capers V** 1969
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
153.0 x 153.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse, red paint "ROBERT ROONEY/ CANINE CAPERS V/ 1969"
Collection: Mr Clinton Tweedie
- 57 **Canine Capers VI** 1969
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
153.0 x 153.5
signed and dated on reverse u.l., red paint "Robert Rooney/...1969"
Collection: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery
Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Art Board, Australia Council, 1977
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 58 **Kellogg's Cereal Packet** cut-out used as stencil for **Cereal Bird Beaks**
cardboard
Collection: the artist
- 59 **Cereal Bird Beaks II** 1969
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
250.0 x 132.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse u.l., red paint "ROBERT ROONEY/ CEREAL BIRD-BEAKS II/ 1969"
Collection: Mr Clinton Tweedie
- 60 **Cereal Bird Beaks III** 1969
4 panels each 151.2 x 75.9
each panel numbered on reverse u.l., red paint 1 - 4
signed, dated and titled on reverse panel no.2, u.l., red paint "ROBERT ROONEY/CEREAL BIRD-BEAKS III/ 1969"
Collection: Dr Ann Galbally and Dr Neville Quinn
- 61 **Superknit 1** 1969
pencil on graph paper
32.0 x 41.5
signed l.l., "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled c., pencil "SUPERKNIT 1 1969"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane
- 62 **Grid** 1970
pencil on graph paper
23.0 x 40.5
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "GRID 1970"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane
- 63 **Superknit** 1970
pencil on graph paper
31.5 x 41.5
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "SUPERKNIT 1970"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane
- 64 **Holden Park 1 & 2 May 1970** 1970
1: 11 colour photographs
2: 8 colour photographs
each 8.9 x 8.9
sheet 76.0 x 102.0
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *The Road Show*, Shepparton Art Gallery, 1976; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 65 **Over 100 Yards of Paper Unrolled on "Smith's Hill", Eltham: 31 May 1970** 1970
33 black and white photographs
mounted on card
each 8.9 x 8.9
sheet 51.0 x 106.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., in type "OVER 100 YARDS OF PAPER UNROLLED ON 'SMITH'S HILL', ELTHAM: 31 MAY 1970/ AN EVENT (with Rosemary, John, Julie & David Adam, Annie & Peter Jeffs)."
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 66 **Meals Jul - Aug 1970** 1970
28 black and white photographs,
mounted with typed text
each 8.9 x 8.9
sheet 95.0 x 60.0
signed, dated and titled in type l.r., "MEALS Robert Rooney 1970"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 67 **Scorched Almonds Jul - Aug 1970** 1970
10 black and white photographs,
mounted with typed text
each 8.9 x 8.9
sheet 52.5 x 70.0
signed, dated and titled in type l.r.,

- "Scorched Almonds/Robert Rooney/1970"
 Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 68 **Every artist born in 1937 so far located** 1970 - 1990
 file box and cards
 Collection: the artist
- 69 **War Savings Streets** 1970
 photomontage offset sheet, mounted with folded sheet and booklet cover
 sheet 50.5 x 80.6
 cover 26.5 x 19.0
 not signed, dated in print on title page, 1970
 Collection: Mr Bruce Pollard
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975
- 70 **10.8 Miles in 44 minutes** 1971
 23 black and white photographs, mounted with inscription in pencil under each photograph (l.l., time; l.c., distance; l.r., MPH)
 each 8.9 x 8.5
 sheet 46.0 x 102.0
 signed, dated and titled l.l., pencil "10.8 Miles in 44 Minutes: May 1971. Robert Rooney"
 inscribed l.l., pencil "Bike Rider: Robert Hunter"
 Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 71 **Corners** 1972
 36 black and white photographs with diagram on card
 each 8.9 x 8.9
 sheet 59.5 x 106.4
 signed, dated and titled l.r., pencil "CORNERS APRIL 1972 ROBERT ROONEY"
 Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
 Purchased 1981
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *Field to Figuration: Australian Art 1960 - 1986*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1987
- 72 **Coats** 1973
 flat enamel on canvas
 12 panels each 33.0 x 33.0
 not signed, not dated
 numbered on reverse of each stretcher, ball-point pen (black "0-5"); (white "0-5")
 Collection: the artist
- 73 **Garments: 3 December - 19 March 1973** 1973
 110 black & white photographs on cardboard
 each 8.0 x 7.8
 sheet 101.0 x 124.0
 Collection: The University of Melbourne Art Collection
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *What is this thing called Science?*, University Gallery, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1987
- 74 **AM/PM** 1974
 176 black and white photographs
 each 8.9 x 8.9
 sheet 101.7 x 101.7
 not signed, not dated
 Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
 Purchased 1981
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *POPISM*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1982
- 75 **The White Rug: for S.K. 13 Aug - 27 Sept 1974** 1974
 46 colour photographs mounted on card
 each 8.9 x 8.9
 sheet 76.2 x 102.4
 signed, dated and titled l.r., pencil "THE WHITE RUG: FOR S.K. 13 AUG - 27 SEPT 1974 ROBERT ROONEY"
 Collection: the artist
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 76 **Two views: St Kilda 12 Jan 1975** 1975
 2 colour photographs
 each 12.6 x 12.4
 sheet 28.0 x 40.5
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "TWO VIEWS: ST.KILDA ... JAN 12 1975"
 Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
 Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
 Exhibited: *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978
- 77 **Luna Park: St Kilda 8 Jan 1975** 1975
 51 colour photographs
 each 8.8 x 8.8
 sheet 77.0 x 102.5
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.c., pencil "LUNA PARK: ST. KILDA 8 JAN 1975"
 Collection: Dr Ann Galbally and Dr Neville Quinn
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *Suburbanism*, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne,
- 78 **N.E.W.S.** 1975
 32 colour photographs mounted on card
 sheet 75.0 x 100.0
 inscribed l.r., pencil "N.E.W.S./ Flat 1/2 MARINE PARADE ST KILDA/ ROBERT ROONEY 17 APRIL 1975"
 Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
 Exhibited: *Project 8: Robert Rooney*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1975; *Survey 3: Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978
- 79 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Anteater** 1977
 colour photograph
 11.6 x 17.2
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: ANTEATER 1977"
 Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
 Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
 Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978
- 80 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Chequered Flag** 1977 1977
 cibachrome
 11.5 x 17.5
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: CHEQUER-ED FLAG 1977"
 Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
 Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
 Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978
- 81 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Wall** 1977
 colour photograph
 12.1 x 16.7
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: WALL 1977"
 Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
 Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
 Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978
- 82 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Landscape Factory** 1977 1977
 colour photograph
 12.0 x 17.0
 signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: LAND-SCAPE FACTORY 1977"
 Collection: Geelong Art Gallery



Understand the Weapon 1985, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 x 198.0 (Collection: Mr Bruce Pollard)



With Intent to Decieve 1985, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 x 198.0 Collection: The Baillieu Myer Collection of Art of the Eighties.



Silly Symphony 4 (Zebra Special) 1988, liquitex on canvas, 126.0 x 244.0 (Collection: Monash University)



Silly Symphony 6 (Zebra Slices) 1988, liquitex on canvas, 140.0 x 183.2 (Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane)

Gift of the Visual Arts Board,
Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1:
Works on Paper*, 1978

83 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Creatus Industries I** 1977 1977
colour photograph
12.3 x 16.9
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: CREATUS INDUSTRIES I 1977"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978

84 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Creatus Industries II** 1977 1977
colour photograph
11.8 x 16.6
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: CREATUS INDUSTRIES 1977"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978

85 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Brunson Plumbing Supplies** 1977
colour photograph
12.1 x 16.7
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: BRUNSDON PLUMBING SUPPLIES 1977"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978

86 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire** 1977
cibachrome
12.0 x 17.5
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM: DONBURN HIRE 1977"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
Gift of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978

87 **Fenced off service station: Hawthorn** 1977 1977
colour photograph
11.5 x 17.4
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FENCED OFF SERVICE STATION: HAWTHORN 1977"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery

Gift of the Visual Arts Board,
Australia Council, 1984
Exhibited: *Roadshow Exhibition 1:
Works on Paper*, 1978

88 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: De Neefe: Wall** (1977)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne

89 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Verna Doll** (1977)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist

90 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Anteater July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM ANTEATER JULY 1977"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

91 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Creatus Industries 3 July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM CREATUS INDUSTRIES 3 JULY 1977"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

92 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Chequered Flag July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM CHEQUERED FLAG JULY 1977"
Collection: the artist

93 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Landscape Factory 3. July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM LANDSCAPE FACTORY 3. JULY 1977"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

94 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 1.** (1977)
cibachrome

20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

95 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 2. July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM DONBURN HIRE 2. JULY 1977"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

96 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 3. July** 1977 1977
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM DONBURN HIRE 3. JULY 1977"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978

97 **Yarra Bank, October** 1977 1977
9 cibachromes mounted on card
each 11.5 x 17.5
sheet 41.2 x 59.7
Collection: Art Gallery of South Australia
d'Auvergne Boxall Bequest Fund
Exhibited: *Survey 3 : Robert Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1978; *Roadshow Exhibition 1: Works on Paper*, 1978

98 **Meter in Park: Eltham 1978** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist

99 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Donburn Hire 4** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne

100 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Cedar Village: Fred Williams Water Skis** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne

101 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Rubbish Tip: Kangaroo Ground** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne

- 102 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Bargain Bazaar March 1978** 1978
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "FACTORY LANDSCAPE: ELTHAM BARGAIN BAZAAR MARCH 1978"
Collection: the artist
- 103 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Universal Tits 'n Tats** (May 1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 104 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Walter Withers Reserve: Eltham** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 105 **Yarra Park: February 1978** 1978
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "YARRA PARK: FEBRUARY 1978"
Collection: the artist
- 106 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Genuine Pop Rivets** (1979)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 107 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Heating/Cooling** (c1979-80)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 108 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Eltham Water House** (1980)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 109 **Factory Landscape: Eltham: Eltham Car Cleaning Centre** (1981)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 110 **Portrait of Jennifer Phipps July 1978** 1978
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "JENNIFER PHIPPS JULY 1978"
Private Collection
- 111 **Portrait of Nani Pollard** (July 1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF JENNY WATSON FEBRUARY 1979"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 112 **Portrait of Robert Hunter July 1978** 1978
photograph - direct positive colour
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF ROBERT HUNTER JULY 1978"
Collection: Australian National Gallery
- 113 **Portrait of Peter Booth 1 September 1978** 1978
photograph - direct positive colour
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF PETER BOOTH 1 SEPTEMBER 1978"
Collection: Australian National Gallery
- 114 **Portrait of Peter Booth 4 September 1978** 1978
photograph - direct positive colour
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF PETER BOOTH 4 SEPTEMBER 1978"
Collection: Australian National Gallery
- 115 **Portrait of Gary Catalano** (September 1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 116 **Portrait of Kiffy Rubbo** (1978)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Private collection
- 117 **Portrait of John Adam January 1979** 1979
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF JOHN ADAM JANUARY 1979"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 118 **Portrait of John Nixon January 1979** 1979
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF JOHN NIXON JANUARY 1979"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 119 **Portrait of Jenny Watson February 1979** 1979
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 .3."
Collection: the artist
- 120 **Portrait of Dale Hickey 2** (March 1979)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 121 **Portrait of Grazia Gunn April 1979** 1979
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF GRAZIA GUNN APRIL 1979"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 122 **Portrait of Fred Williams 2** April 1979
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "PORTRAIT OF FRED WILLIAMS 2 APRIL 1979"
Collection: Fuller Family
- 123 **Portrait of Howard Arkley** (1980)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 124 **Portrait of Chris van der Craats** (1980)
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 125 **Portrait of Maria Kozic and Philip Brophy 2** 1981
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
not signed, not dated
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne
- 126 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 3.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 .3."
Collection: the artist
- 127 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 5.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 .5."
Collection: the artist
- 128 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 6.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 6."
Collection: the artist
- 129 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 7.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 7."
Collection: the artist
- 130 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 8.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 8."
Collection: the artist
- 131 **A Fete Worse Than Death: 29 Nov 1980 11.** 1980
cibachrome
20.0 x 30.0
signed l.r., pencil "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled l.l., pencil "A FETE WORSE THAN DEATH: 29 NOV 1980 .11."
Collection: the artist
- 132 **The Red Card, Australia, 1944-45** 1982
synthetic polymer paint and letaset on canvas
triptych
137.0 x 366.0
Collection: the artist
Exhibition: *POPISM*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1982; Recent Australian Painting: A survey 1970 - 1983, Art Gallery of South Australia, 1983
- 133 **Pilkington Predicts: In Years to Come** 1982
silkscreen on yellow paper
64.5 x 48.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *POPISM*, National Gallery of Victoria, 1982
- 134 **Pilkington Predicts: the progress of your firm will be symbolized this way** 1982
silkscreen on tan paper
64.5 x 48.0
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
- 135 **Pilkington Predicts: more family security through safety glass** 1982
silkscreen on pink paper
64.5 x 48.3
not signed, not dated
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, George Paton Gallery, 1982
- 136 **The Art of Illustration** (1983)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
140.5 x 168.0
signed and titled on reverse u.l., "THE ART OF ILLUSTRATION/ ROBERT ROONEY";
not dated
Courtesy Deutscher Brunswick Street, Melbourne
- 137 **The Home Front** (1983)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
123.2 x 198.5
not signed, not dated
titled on reverse, brown paint "THE HOME FRONT"
Collection: Kings Park Secondary College
Exhibited: (under the titled *The Second Front*) *Meaning And Excellence*, ANZART, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, 1984, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985
- 138 **The Death of James Dean 2** (1983)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
106.5 x 183.0
signed and titled on reverse u.l., brown paint "THE DEATH OF JAMES DEAN 2/ ROBERT ROONEY"
Collection: the artist
Exhibited: *Annotations*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne, 1989
- 139 **As you were** 1983
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.0 x 198.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse u.c., "AS YOU WERE/ ROBERT ROONEY/ 1983"
Collection: The University of Tasmania
Exhibited: *Meaning and Excellence*, ANZART, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, 1984, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985; *The Source*, Centre for the Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, 1986
- 140 **Clue to Abel's Character** (1983)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.0 x 179.0
signed and titled on reverse u.l., brown paint "CLUE TO ABEL'S CHARACTER/ROBERT ROONEY"
Private Collection
Exhibited: *Meaning and Excellence*, ANZART, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, 1984, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985
- 141 **What Price Victory?** (1983)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
4 panels each 92.0 x 91.2
signed and titled on reverse of each panel, brown paint "WHAT PRICE VICTORY?/ ROBERT ROONEY"; n.d.; panels numbered 1-4
Collection: The University of Melbourne Art Collection
Exhibited: *Meaning and Excellence*, ANZART, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland 1984, George Paton Gallery, Melbourne, 1985; *Fears and Scruples*, University Gallery, University of Melbourne, 1986
- 142 **The Mighty Saw** 1984
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.3 x 198.4
signed on reverse u.l., brown paint "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled on reverse u.r., brown paint "THE MIGHTY SAW OCT 1984"
Collection: Geelong Art Gallery
Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, 1985
- 143 **The Setting Sun** (1984)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.0 x 198.0
signed on reverse u.l., yellow paint "ROBERT ROONEY"; titled on reverse u.r., yellow paint "THE SETTING SUN"
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria
Exhibited: *The Field Now*, Heide Park and Art Gallery, 1984
- 144 **Juke Box Jungle** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.2 x 198.0
signed on reverse u.l., orange paint "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled on reverse u.r., orange paint "JUKE BOX JUNGLE 1985"
Collection: the artist
- 145 **With Intent to Deceive** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.0 x 198.0
signed on reverse u.l., orange paint "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled on reverse u.r., orange paint "WITH INTENT TO DECEIVE 1985"
Collection: The Baillieu Myer Collection of Art of the Eighties
- 146 **The Missing Man** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.0 x 197.0
signed on reverse u.l., orange paint "ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled on reverse u.r., orange paint "THE MISSING MAN 1985"
Private Collection
- 147 **Beans and Bushido** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

126.5 x 183.0
signed on reverse u.l., orange paint
"ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and
titled on reverse u.r., orange paint
"BEANS AND BUSHIDO 1985"
Private Collection

148 **Understand the Weapon** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122.0 x 198.0
signed on reverse u.l., "ROBERT
ROONEY"; dated and titled on
reverse u.r., orange paint
"UNDERSTAND THE WEAPON/1985"
Collection: Mr Bruce Pollard

149 **Against the Sun** 1985
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
127.3 x 198.3
signed on reverse u.l., orange paint
"ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and titled on
reverse u.r., orange paint
"AGAINST THE SUN 1985"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary
Art, Brisbane
Exhibited: *Contemporary Art in
Australia - A Review*, Museum of
Contemporary Art, Brisbane, 1987

150 **Beans and Banzai** 1987
silkscreen
image 36.5 x 54.5
sheet 57.0 x 76.5
signed and dated l.r., pencil
"ROBERT ROONEY '87"; titled and
editioned l.l., pencil "AP BEANS
AND BANZAI"
Collection: the artist

151 **Silly Symphony 2 (Psychedelephant)**
1988

liquitex on canvas
126.0 X 244.0
signed on reverse u.l., brown paint
"ROBERT ROONEY"; dated and
titled on reverse u.c., brown paint
"SILLY SYMPHONY 2
(PSYCHEDELEPHANT)/ 1988"
Collection: Western Mining
Corporation

152 **Silly Symphony 4 (Zebra Special)**
1988
liquitex on canvas
126.0 x 244.0
signed, dated and titled on reverse
u.r., brown paint "ROBERT
ROONEY/ SILLY SYMPHONY 4
(ZEBRA SPECIAL)/1988"
Collection: Monash University
Purchased with the assistance of the
Visual Arts/Crafts Board of the
Australia Council, 1988

153 **Silly Symphony 6 (Zebra Slices)**
1988
liquitex on canvas
140.0 x 183.2
signed, dated and titled on reverse
u.l., brown paint "ROBERT
ROONEY/ SILLY SYMPHONY 6
(ZEBRA SLICES)/1988"
Collection: Museum of Contemporary
Art, Brisbane

154 **Silly Symphony 7 (Camel Cuts)** 1988
liquitex on canvas
129.8 x 183.1
signed, dated and titled on reverse
u.l., brown paint "SILLY SYMPHONY 7
(CAMEL CUTS) / ROBERT ROONEY/1988"
Courtesy Pinacotheca, Melbourne

155 Charles Blackman
Portrait of Robert Rooney 1956
gouache and oil based medium on
paper
114.0 x 88.5
signed l.r., Charles Blackman
Collection: Heide Park & Art Gallery
Gift of the artist, 1987

Selected Artist's Publications

FILMS

Anzacs (1973) Super-8, silent
Super-8, colour, silent,
duration: 3 mins. 20 secs.

Inside/Outside: St Kilda April 1975
Super-8, silent
Super-8, colour, silent,
duration: 6mins.

Repeat Performance 1982
Super-8, colour, silent,
duration: 3 mins.

Superman April 1982
Super-8, colour, silent,
duration: 6mins.

VIDEO

*Robert Rooney from Survey: Robert
Rooney*, National Gallery of Victoria,
1978 duration 19 mins.

Details of when works were first exhibited
are listed under 'Exhibitions and
Bibliography', above.

Acknowledgements

The Monash University Gallery gratefully acknowledges the invaluable assistance and unflinching co-operation of Robert Rooney during the organisation of this exhibition. Mr. Bruce Pollard, Director, Pinacotheca, has also generously provided assistance and advice.

The financial assistance of the Visual Arts Craft Board of the Australia Council is gratefully acknowledged.

Thanks are due to the private collectors who have loaned works to this exhibition including Ms. Rosemary Adam, Mr. D. Adam, Ms. Elly Fink, Mr. Trevor Fuller, Dr. Ann Galbally and Dr. Neville Quinn, Mr. Barry McKimm, Helen and Alex Morton, Mr. Clinton Tweedie and others who wish to remain anonymous.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the Directors and staff of the following galleries: the Australian National Gallery; the National Gallery of Victoria; the Art Gallery of South Australia; the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery; Deutscher Brunswick Street; the Geelong Art Gallery; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane; Heide Park and Art Gallery, Melbourne; the University of Melbourne Museum of Art; the University of Tasmania Centre

for the Arts Gallery; and to the Baillieu Myer Collection of Art of the Eighties, Western Mining Corporation and Kings Park Secondary College for works loaned to the exhibition.

Thanks are due to the institutions and private collectors who have granted permission to reproduce works in the catalogue and special thanks to Ms. Dana Rowan and Ms. Giacomina Pradolini for their assistance with the catalogue.

The following individuals have provided particular assistance during the organisation of the exhibition: Ms. Judy Annear, Ms. Pat Brassington, Ms. Rosanna Cameron, Mr. Simon Klose, Ms. Karyn Lovegrove, Mr. Georges Mora and Ms. Susie Shears.

The work of the contributors to the catalogue is gratefully acknowledged: Ms. Rosemary Adam, Mr. Charles Green, Mr. Philip Brophy and Mr. John Whiteoak.

Particular thanks are due to Ms. Merryn Gates for her assistance with the exhibition and the catalogue and to Ms. Sandra Ellemor for her typing of the catalogue text.

Jenepher Duncan

Abbreviations:

l.r. lower right
u.r. upper right
u.c. upper centre
u.l. upper left
l.l. lower left
l.c. lower centre

All measurements in centimetres, height
before width
All reproduced works by Robert Rooney,
unless otherwise stated



Robert Rooney with toy robots 1990 Photograph: Jamie Davies Courtesy The Australian

