



FOREWORD

Newcastle Art Gallery is proud to present **MAZIE KAREN TURNER:** *Between dream and earth*, a tribute exhibition celebrating the life and practice of highly respected local artist Mazie Karen Turner (1954-2014). With a career spanning over 30 years, Turner's distinctive and highly attuned practice explored feminist, political, social and spiritual genres.

Represented in private and public collections nationally, Turner previously exhibited at Newcastle Art Gallery in the 2010 group exhibition *Painters and Perception: four artists of the Hunter*.

This new exhibition encompasses works of art from 1977-2014 that reflect the artist's acute sense of detail and precision in the handling and application of diverse mediums such as drawing, collage, cyanotype, painting, photography and sculpture.

Between dream and earth provides another opportunity to develop a project that showcases a local artist from the collection. Drawn from the Gallery's holdings for inclusion is the abstract painting *Soft Walls* 2009-10, a testament to Turner's deft understanding and mastery of colour and composition.

Our sincere thanks must go to Mazie's family, the private lenders and the University of Newcastle for their enthusiasm and generosity in supporting the Gallery's vision for this inspirational exhibition.

Lauretta Morton
Manager
Newcastle Art Gallery

LIST OF WORKS

All works The Estate of Mazie Karen Turner unless noted

Richard TIPPING
Mazie Turner with Camera 1979
black and white photograph
hand coloured by Mazie Karen Turner
silver halide print and paints
16.5 x 12.5cm

Mazie TURNER
Encroachments Oct 1977
drypoint etching, Edition 1/2
30.0 x 30.0cm

Untitled Nov 1977
drypoint etching with colour pencil
15.0 x 15.0cm

Art School Polaroids 1978
7 polaroids scratched and abstracted
22.5 x 67.0cm

Roadside to Qld 1979
cut colour photograph
41.5 x 45.0cm

John Stokes Adelaide Music
Week 1978-79
black and white photographs with hand
coloured dots
45.0 x 65.0cm

AUSTRALIA: SCENES SEEN
Sunflower Field, Queensland 1979
hand coloured silver halide print
12.3 x 18.8cm

Dancers 1978-79
series of three silver halide prints
10.0 x 16.0cm each print

Cars 1978-79
silver halide prints
12.0 x 18.0cm each print

Movie Museum Nambour QLD 1979
silver halide print
17.0 x 21.0cm

Merry Christmas Tumut Caravan
Park NSW 1979
silver halide print
17.0 x 21.0cm

Wilcannia NSW 1979
series of three silver halide prints
16.5 x 21.0cm each print

Warrumbungles NSW 1979
silver halide print
13.0 x 19.0cm

Country NSW 1979
silver halide print
13.0 x 19.0cm

Scape NSW 1979
silver halide print
13.0 x 19.0cm

Papunya NT 1981
series of black and white prints
11.0 x 17.0cm each print

Kata Tjuta 1981
hand coloured silver halide prints
12.0 x 17.0cm each print

EUROPE

Moscow 1984
silver halide print
15.0 x 23.0cm

To Take In Hand to Transform 4
Generations 1984
silver halide print
15.0 x 23.0cm

Disguise Venezia figures 1984
silver halide print
14.5 x 21.5cm

Venezia Shadow 1984
silver halide print
14.5 x 21.5cm

Family Shadows Italy 1984
silver halide print
15.0 x 23.0cm

New York 1985
silver halide print
15.0 x 21.5cm

Untitled (MKT in NYC) 1985
silver halide print
15.0 x 21.5cm

BONDI IMAGES

Things You Cannot See 1982
35 x colour photos on board
56.0 x 100.0cm

Wind in Mind - On the Line 1982
series of 20 black and white photographs
50.0 x 85.0cm

Body Blue Prints and Family 1982
series of 9 coloured photographs
6.5 x 13.0cm each print

Bondi Rooftop Blue Prints 1982
coloured photograph
20.0 x 25.0cm

Body Drawing with Kai 'Starfish
Fingers' 1980
series of 10 hand coloured photographs,
original photographs by Robert McFarlane
14.0 x 23.0cm

BLUE PRINTS

Trans-Parent 1979-80
cyanotype on calico cloth support
159.0 x 120.0cm

The Motherhood Manuscript
Tri-Pregnancy 1979-80
series of three cyanotypes on calico
180.0 x 87.0cm each panel

Family Profile 1979-80
cyanotype on calico cloth
43.0 x 43.0cm

Everyday Life in the Modern World
Falling into TV 1979-80
cyanotype on calico
270.0 x 110.0cm

Map & Tools 1979-80
cyanotype on calico
104.0 x 90.0cm

COLLAGES

A Brush with Monuments and
Maidens 1984-85
original collage
52.0 x 28.0cm

Brush for Maidens & Monuments
reconstructed photograph 1984-86
pastel coloured photocopy of
original collage
84.1 x 59.4cm

Drinking with Our Eyes 1984-85
pastel coloured photocopy of
original collage
42.0 x 56.0cm

To Service on Masse, We Move 1984-85
pastel coloured photocopy of original
collage, Edition 3/20
48.0 x 76.0cm

Without Speech: An Image, A Ghost,
A Figure 1984-85
original collage
42.0 x 30.0cm

Without Speech 1986
pastel coloured photocopy of original
collage, Edition 3/20
76.0 x 59.0cm

PAINTINGS

(17 Leaping Pulbah) 27 in a Chorus of
Litterances 1994-97
oil paint and wax on canvas
30.0 x 30.0cm

Tunnel Weaving 1995
oil on linen
51.0 x 51.0cm

Wangli Wangli 1999
oil on linen
39.5 x 34.5cm

Eraving Towers 1999-2000
oil on linen
51.0 x 51.0cm

Wangli Pulbah Island 2000
oil on linen
30.5 x 30.5cm

Wangli - Venetian Red, Ultra Blue + White
After Scully not dated
oil on linen
50.5 x 50.5cm

Space Dark Matter 2000-03
oil on linen
76.0 x 61.0cm

Above and Below Wangli 2001-02
oil on linen
76.5 x 84.0cm

Wangli 2002-4
oil on linen
28.0 x 40.5cm

Scarlet Becalmed (Colour Sweeps)
2002-03
oil on linen
61.0 x 61.0cm

Peeling Cool Dawn Wangli Wangli 2003
oil on linen
61.0 x 46.0cm

Untitled 2003
oil on linen
61.0 x 46.0cm

Untitled 2006
oil on linen
35.5 x 45.5cm

Untitled 2006
gesso on canvas
36.0 x 36.0cm

Emerald Landing 2007
oil on linen
91.0 x 46.0cm

Untitled 2007
oil on linen
71.0 x 71.0cm
Jane Barrow collection

Out of Darkness - Violet Cloud 2008
oil on linen
152.0 x 183.0cm
Donated to the University Collection
by the Artist under the Cultural Gifts
Program, 2010

Prism Arise (Olive and Amber Greens) 2008
oil on linen
76.0 x 76.0cm

Burnished Watermark 2008-13
oil on linen
137.0 x 122.0cm

Marigold 2009-10
oil and paint on loom state linen
130.0 x 130.0cm

E Pluribus Unum (From Many,
One) not dated
oil and paint on loom state linen
137.0 x 122.0cm

Crossover into Scaped Wrappings -
Facets and Floats series 2008-10
oil on linen
130.0 x 130.0cm

Soft Walls 2009-10
oil on Safari Belgian linen
137.5 x 152.5cm
Purchased 2010
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

After India Veils 9-10 2009-10
oil on linen
76.0 x 61.0cm

For Grace - Travelling With You a Blessing
Udaipur India 2011
oil on linen
50.0 x 60.0cm

Untitled 2011
oil on linen
40.8 x 40.6cm

Mountains on Iran Plateau 2011-12
oil on linen
84.0 x 56.0cm

Landscape Colours Iran 2011-12
oil on linen
84.0 x 65.5cm

Colour Square 2011-13
oil on linen
46.0 x 46.0cm

Untitled 2011-13
oil on linen
60cm diameter

Untitled 2012
oil on linen
80.0 x 80.0cm
Madeleine Kelman Snow collection

Persian Patterns 2012-13
oil on linen
137.5 x 152.5cm

Landscape Between Dream
and Earth 2013
oil on linen
137.5 x 183.0cm

Rhapsody in Blue 2013
oil on linen
153.0 x 122.0cm

Untitled 2014
oil on linen
100.0 x 100.0cm

Untitled 2014
oil on linen
61.0 x 61.0cm

COLOURED CONES

Cones Unseen c2008
series of 18 hand painted repurposed
casting patterns
dimensions variable

WALL SCULPTURAL

PAINTINGS

For Landscape a Cover Curtain Shield
or Bark 2012
unstretched painted linen panels
dimensions variable

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL IN
VITRINES

Series of photographs, art materials
and archival material 1979-2014

CATALOGUE CAPTIONS

Front cover image:
Mazie Karen TURNER
Soft Walls 2009-10
oil on Safari Belgian linen
137.5 x 152.5cm
Purchased 2010
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

1. Richard TIPPING
Mazie Turner with Camera 1979
black and white photograph
hand coloured by Mazie Karen Turner
silver halide print and paints
16.5 x 12.5cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner

2. Mazie Karen TURNER
Portrait, Mivia Station, Queensland 1979
silver halide print
12.2 x 18.7cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner

3. Mazie Karen TURNER
Sunflower Field, Queensland 1979
hand coloured silver halide print
12.3 x 18.8cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner

4. Mazie Karen TURNER
Without Speech 1986
pastel coloured photocopy of original
collage, Edition 3/20
76.0 x 59.0cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner

5. Mazie Karen TURNER
The Motherhood Manuscript
Tri-Pregnancy 1979-80
series of three cyanotypes on calico
180.0 x 87.0cm each panel
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner
Image courtesy Conor Ashleigh

6. Mazie Karen TURNER
For Grace - Travelling With You a Blessing
Udaipur India 2011
oil on linen
50.0 x 60.0cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner

7. Mazie Karen TURNER
Marigold (detail) 2009-10
oil and paint on loom state linen
130.0 x 130.0cm
Collection: Estate of Mazie Karen Turner



MAZIE KAREN TURNER

Between dream and earth

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1.

INTRODUCTION

*'We live in an environment composed of contrasts, slanting light, colours, a tapestry from phenomena of light and nature, and configurations of the visual brain. Though it can be plotted, examined and measured, most importantly it can also be imagined.'*¹

Mazie Karen Turner had a unique eye as an artist no matter what medium she handled, exploring possibilities others had not. Her long-standing practice was always innovative, conceptual and highly experimental. Of key interest is the twenty years in which Turner worked as a painter, experimenting with colour and abstraction for which she became renowned.

As a highly respected artist based in Newcastle, Turner's over three decade career traversed printmaking, photography (including documentary images, blueprints and collage), sculpture, drawing and painting. Her paintings explore the dynamism of colour, reflecting highly studied techniques, intuitive skills and the power of colour as a catalyst for abstraction and exploration of the spiritual.

Turner's practice moved through various settings and countries over successive decades. This includes early prints and photography from her Adelaide art school years from 1977-79, road trip images throughout Australia in the summer of 1978-79, to travel to the Aboriginal community of Papunya in the early 1980s. Also documented is her first pregnancy and domestic life through large cyanotype 'blueprints' of the 'Bondi years' 1980-84. Travel experiences in England and Europe from 1984-86 are documented through collage and drawing; in Sydney from 1987-88, her painting began and evolved from the figurative to the abstract in Newcastle 1989-91, Lake Macquarie 1992-2006 and Newcastle from 2007 until her death in 2014.

Turner's broad and multi-faceted art career demonstrated a constant drive for experimentation and the power of place to produce innovative work - both personal and political, also referencing art history and theory without being bound by convention. Such passage through diverse media over three decades may result in works of art both unrelated and disparate, but foundations in photography gave Turner what she called 'aperture', an eye for detail and unity of narrative that bound together her practice. In 2003 Turner had, '...reconnected into what photographic technology and colour exercises had taught me, that to see 'colour' is to isolate it from its surroundings - to see through 'aperture mode', also a term in neurology.'²

FOUNDATIONS IN PRINT AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Turner was determined to forge her own pathway of art practice, demonstrated during her Bachelor of Arts degree at the South Australian School of Art (1979), majoring in photography and printmaking. Early works from 1977 include collage, etching and dry-point, indicators of mark-making and



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manipulation of imagery that would be a common motif of her later work. Reclaiming photography through performative elements, hand colouring, wordplay and collage were popular aspects of photographic practice in the 1970s and important devices Turner used into the 1980s.³

ROAD TRIP 1978-9

The summer of 1978-79 saw Turner and partner Richard Tipping embark on a road trip from Adelaide to Queensland via regional and western New South Wales including stops in country towns, remote stations in Queensland and metro locations such as Sydney. The resulting series of photographs, *Australia: Scenes Seen* captured overlooked aspects of Australia outside of the city. These images give subjects a voice ranging from Aboriginal communities in Wilcannia, cattle station owners in south eastern Queensland to children caravanning in the Riverina. These reportage photographs connect with their subjects and reveal many aspects of Australia through the lens of the 'classic road trip.'

Turner's images carry on a fine tradition of photographers such as South Australia's Robert McFarlane, Diane Arbus' edgy documentation and Henri Cartier Bresson's spontaneous imagery of the everyday, transformed into the exceptional. Later photographs in the Aboriginal community of Papunya in 1981 reinforced Turner's continued interest in Aboriginal culture, communities and the land rights movement.



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BLUEPRINTS AS AN AFFIRMATION OF LIFE

In 1980 the move to Sydney's clifftops of North Bondi with Tipping provided a creative environment for Turner to expand her skills with cyanotype, where she created two distinct series of works. Often referred to as 'drawing with sunlight' cyanotype printing was a natural extension from her photographic origins at art school and a flat rooftop at Bondi provided the perfect outdoor 'studio' to create the works overlooking the ocean. Turner later said that, 'The act of making art was an affirmation of life in the early 1980s and for me the most immediate representation of life was with a photographic process known as

cyanotype.'⁴ Titled *Pregnancy in Trimesters* 1979-80, this series of large format corporeal prints explored themes of feminism, maternity and domesticity. These double-sided prints charted the stages of Turner's trimesters, with the final cyanotype in this series including new-born son Kai.⁵ The second series, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* 1981-1984 charted her post pregnancy period where domesticity and beach life began to infiltrate her art practice. Of this series Turner wrote, 'The idea was to capture the scatter of 'things' introduced into my space by the arrival of a child, quickly growing and adding to my life. Mainly these things were found on the floor, to be picked up, out into order, overwhelmed at times by this scatter, my work attempted to bridge the gap between art and life.'⁶

COLLAGES - THE EUROPEAN PERIOD

Following four years in Bondi, Turner, Tipping and Kai moved to Europe where they lived in Italy and England and travelled widely from 1984-86. During this period Turner brought her creative focus back to her photographic origins to manipulate images through collage, with interests in the representation of the female body and global politics. The resulting series of powerful collages and prints referenced the all-pervasive forces of Thatcherism and Reagan era politics at the time in the UK and US.

It was also at this period that we begin to see Turner's focus on abstraction - where, through the action of collage, selecting and cutting up mass media images of women, the body becomes abstracted and loaded with cultural and aesthetic metaphors.

Of these works Turner said; 'In our everyday experience the use of feminine forms, consumed and carrying meanings of identity and value of someone or something else, passes over pages in magazines. Recomposing parts of the body, to fragments of an ongoing past, delivering another verse. A calling for a new language and different appearance, changing expression but still signifying the same thing, in the feminine form...'⁷



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Turner had created collages from locations such as Milan, Venice, Moscow, London, Oxford and New York with images gathered from magazines and found sources, photocopy enlarged and hand coloured with oil pastels to create editions. Her subsequent exhibition in 1986 at Somerville College in Oxford *An Image, A Ghost, A Figure* was one of the first public showings of these key works. Three decades on, these still resonate with their astute political and gender focused commentary.

WORKS ON PAPER - TRANSITION TO PAINTING

On return to Australia in 1987, Mazie and family moved to Glebe in inner western Sydney where her experimentation with drawing began, taking up classes at East Sydney Technical College and teaching in exchange for access to a substantial studio at the local school. Turner remained in Sydney until moving to Newcastle in 1989 with Tipping, sons Kai, Jasper and soon to be born daughter Grace. The Newcastle period announced a movement into painting and the foundations of her journey into abstraction with the environs of Lake Macquarie, Wangi Wangi and Newcastle a major influence at this time.

PROGRESS OF PAINTING

*'Within the painting process something is given and something is taken away at the same time'*⁸

In 1998 Turner sought to push her painting further with enrolment in a master's degree at the University of Western Sydney exploring feminism and surrealism in painting.⁹ The series of resulting paintings and three dimensional installation pieces were a natural progression from Turner's experimentation in sculptural form and an enduring interest in feminism in art history.

The period of the late 1990s into the 2000s saw Turner's representational and figurative paintings evolve into abstracted explorations of colour as a primary subject also referencing theoretical frameworks and philosophies of colour. The body of works from 2003 when Turner began her PhD studies announced a period interrogating colour theory and translation into highly evolved and unique paintings. Never contained by the limitations of such theories, Turner instead used these frameworks to push further into new ways of seeing colour. She asserted that, 'Colour need no longer serve to represent things seen but may exist as subject matter in its own right. Colour in painting has many modes of operation apparent when looking at the role colour plays in contemporary artistic practice... I am interested in the intuitive and reasoned choices of colour and how my theoretical work and the journeys into the phenomenon of vision and perceptions have informed the development of my studio practice.'¹⁰

These early exegesis paintings also explored the capacity of black and dark colours as ground to create depth, dimension and light as evidenced in works such as *Emerald Landing* 2007. Turner said, 'I was seeking in paint that moment when a glance is arrested by movement or light, apprehended through the intersecting construction of the composition. *Emerald Landing* comes close to this sense of fleeting feeling capturing the light.'¹¹

Throughout her PhD research, Turner returned to the three dimensional form with a series of coloured cones to translate colour theory and play upon the very nature of retinal cones, the biological structures by which humans capture and read colour. Turner stated, '... In the Cones, colour is with reason, the eighteen units making up this work display a different face of colour circles and diagrams, they chart a range of colour ideas and theories, beginning with Isaac Newton and ending with Josef Albers.'¹² Following the completion of her PhD in 2008, Turner's paintings became visceral explorations of colour and texture, her methodology of paint application was studious and measured. As two dimensional objects, these paintings became larger in scale, brimming with colour and energetic brushwork as abstractions and also landscapes in a literal and allegorical sense. Coinciding with this period are travels to Iran and India, where the colours, textures and visceral experiences on the ground and from



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the air extended into the colour palette of these energised canvases that also serve as an abstract travelogue.

SUMMARY

In her final years, Mazie's prolific output of abstract paintings exploded with vitality and potency, with multi-dimensional, highly textured surfaces. She referred to artist James Turrell's momentous colour light installations, 'with the unreal quality of illusion from light and colour to induce a dreamlike state that coexists with the awakened state [where you] become aware of the workings of internal and external vision. It is a reward.'¹³

Mazie's diverse art practice reflected her experiences of travel and place, a mastery of medium and her unbridled use of colour. In 2014 she said: 'My passion for colour grows from a lifelong spiritual search for the unknowable. How do we perceive the visual in a world filled with the mind? Our eyes engage with what they find intimately and deeply, and we feel what and how we see.'¹⁴

With Mazie Turner's exceptional body of work as her legacy, we witness an artist's output that continues to excite, engage and connect with us visually and emotionally.

I wish to thank the following people for their support in making this exhibition possible. Mazie's family - Grace Turner, Jasper Tipping, Kai Tipping and Richard Tipping for access to Mazie's extensive archive and locating key works and documents. The University Gallery, private lenders and especially Mazie, for the time we spent meeting over tea at her NAS studio in 2013 discussing art, life, colour and painting.

Sarah Johnson
Curator, Newcastle Art Gallery
July 2017

FOOTNOTES

¹Mazie Karen Turner, PhD (Fine Art) 2008, The University of Newcastle: *Through Colour, A Poetic Mapping of Colour Material in Painting and The Sensory Effect of Colour*, p5.
²Ibid.
³Robert Nelson, Review of the exhibition *Photography meets feminism: Australian women photographers 1970s-80s* - 'Visual arts review: photography of the 1970s and '80s through women's eyes' in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 4 2014, located at <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/visual-arts-review-photography-of-the-1970s-and-80s-through-womens-eyes-20141104-11glt2.html>
⁴Op.cit. p77.
⁵Mazie had produced #1 of the pregnancy body prints in Adelaide.
⁶Op.cit. p77.
⁷Mazie Turner, Artist statement, *An Image, A Ghost, A Figure*, Somerville College Oxford, 1985-6.
⁸Op.cit. p88.
⁹M.K Turner, Master of Arts (Honours) 1998, University of Western Sydney, Nepean - Thesis: *Representation and Women's Art*.
¹⁰Mazie Karen Turner, PhD (Fine Art) 2008, The University of Newcastle: *Through Colour, A Poetic Mapping of Colour Material in Painting and The Sensory Effect of Colour*, p79.
¹¹Ibid., p104.
¹²Ibid., p88.
¹³Ibid., p17.
¹⁴Mazie Turner 2014.