



Diploma Lecture Series 2011
Art and Australia II: European Preludes and Parallels
Cubism and Australian art from 1940

Lesley Harding

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Lecture summary:

This lecture will consider the impact of the revolutionary and transformative movement of Cubism on Australian art from the 1940s to the present day.

Described in 1912 by French poet and commentator Guillaume Apollinaire as 'not an art of imitation, but one of conception', Cubism irreversibly altered art's relationship to visual reality. 'I paint things as I think them, not as see them', Picasso said.

By its very nature, Cubism is characterised by variation and change. Although there was no cubist movement in Australia per se, its appearance in Australian art parallels its uptake and re-interpretation by artists internationally. By viewing Cubism as a set of stylistic and conceptual discoveries, rather than as a style defined by a particular period, we can trace the adaptation and evolution of cubist ideas and influences over successive decades and uncover its ongoing relevance to Australian art.

In the early years, an interest in Cubism signaled a desire to *be* modern, a vanguard position taken against the parochial predominance of landscape painting in Australia at that time. While early Cubism broke down the pictorial subject, resulting in fragmentary images with multiple viewpoints and overlapping planes, the later inclusion of collage elements such as newsprint and wallpaper into paintings (often referred to as Synthetic Cubism) was the beginning of the idea that real objects could be incorporated into artworks, which opened up new possibilities for the treatment of reality in art.

In the postwar years and through to the 1960s, Cubism's fracturing of the pictorial surface was utilised by artists as a means to uncover the inner meaning of form; or as Sydney artist Godfrey Miller said, 'to pierce beneath mere aspect of the world'. In painting, cubist ideas provided an underlying point of reference in the development of abstract pictorial structures, though they merged with other imperatives current at the time, such as colour, form, musicality and the metaphysical. In recent decades, when the global context of art is more accepted, some artists have looked back to earlier, localised versions of Cubism, reflecting on Australian culture's place in the world. The influence of Cubism on Australian art from the 1980s to 2000s is varied and diffuse, as contemporary artists variously adapt, develop, quote and critique aspects of cubist practice.

Slide list:

*1. Robert Rooney *After Colonial Cubism*, 1993, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

2. Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with a Bottle of Rum*, 1911, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York /
Georges Braque, *Glass of Absinthe*, 1911, oil on canvas, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

3. Fernand Léger, *Mother and Child*, oil on canvas, Kunstmuseum, Basel / Albert Gleizes, *Acrobats*, 1916, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
4. Pablo Picasso, *The Architect's Table*, 1912, oil on canvas on panel, Museum of Modern Art, New York
5. Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912, oil on canvas, Musée Picasso, Paris / Juan Gris, *Checkerboard and Playing Cards*, 1915, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
6. Amédée Ozenfant, *Still Life*, (1920), oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
7. Grace Crowley, *Sailors and Models*, c.1928, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
8. André Lhote, *The Port of Bordeaux*, c.1914, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
9. Albert Gleizes, *Ecuyère*, 1920-23, oil on canvas, Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne, Paris
10. Anne Dangar, *Untitled*, 1936, gouache, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Anne Dangar, *Virgin with Child Surrounded by Angels*, c.1947, glazed earthenware, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
11. Advertisement for Dorrit Black's Modern Art Centre, *The Home*, 1 March 1932 / Dorrit Black, *Study with Two Figures*, 1929, gouache, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
12. Clipping from the *Sun*, Sydney, 4 May 1913 / Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2)*, 1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
13. Gino Severini, *The Milliner*, 1910-11, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia / Francis Picabia, *Dances at the Spring*, 1912, oil on canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
14. Margaret Preston, *Still Life*, 1925, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
15. Margaret Preston, *Still Life*, 1927, location unknown (as reproduced in *Art in Australia*, 3rd series, no. 22, December 1927) / Fernand Léger, *Tray with Pears*, 1923, oil on canvas, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo
16. Mary Cecil Allen, *Sea, Studio: Winter*, 1949, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne / Russell Drysdale, *Shipboard Still Life*, 1937, gouache, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
17. Eveline Syme, *Fish Salad*, c.1939, oil on canvas, private collection, Melbourne
18. Sam Atyeo, *Cigarette*, 1934, oil on plywood, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne / Sam Atyeo, *The Thinker*, c.1933, oil on burlap on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
19. Moya Dyring, *Melanctha*, c.1934, oil on canvas on plywood, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
20. Eleonore Lange, *Seraph of Light*, 1934, plaster, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, photograph from Eleonore Lange papers, AGNSW Research Library and Archive, Sydney / Frank Hinder, *Dog Gymkhana*, 1939, tempera and pencil on paper on hardboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
21. Ralph Balson, *Painting*, 1941, oil on paperboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney / Jacques Villon, *Colour Perspective (Vertical)*, 1922, oil on canvas, Yale University Art Museum, New Haven / Ralph Balson, *Painting No. 17*, 1941, oil and metallic paint on cardboard, Hassall Collection, Sydney
22. Ralph Balson, *Constructive Painting*, 1945, oil on composition board, Whitworth/Bruce Collection, Sydney / Ralph Balson, *Constructive Painting*, 1951, oil on composition board, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- * 23. Grace Crowley, *Abstract Painting*, 1947, oil on cardboard, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
24. Grace Crowley, *(Abstract)*, 1951, oil on cardboard, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

25. Frank Hinder, *Trains Passing*, 1940, oil on composition board, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
26. Frank Hinder, *Painting*, 1946, tempera on hardboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
27. Frank Hinder, *Subway Escalator*, 1953, tempera and oil on canvas on composition board, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide / Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2)*, 1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
28. Frank Hinder, *Four-In-One-Bird (Moving)*, 1937, motor added 1980, oil, collage, aluminium, synthetic polymer paint, composition board, electric motor, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
29. Frank Hinder, *Blue Arcs*, 1967, aluminium, plywood, glass, plastics, tungsten lighting, motorised parts, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales
30. Sidney Nolan, *Boy and the Moon*, c.1939-40, oil on canvas on composition board, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
31. Sidney Nolan, *Collage from 'The Disciple'*, c.1939, collage of prints from steel engravings, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
32. Sidney Nolan, *Head of Rimbaud*, 1938-39, oil, boot polish and pencil on cardboard, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
33. Sidney Nolan, *Head of Rimbaud*, 1938-39, oil, boot polish and pencil on cardboard, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne (rotated) / Frédéric-August Cazals, *Arthur Rimbaud*, 1871, pencil on paper, location unknown
34. Sidney Nolan, *Rimbaud Royalty*, 1942, synthetic polymer paint on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
35. Sidney Nolan, *Bathers*, 1943, Ripolin enamel on canvas, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
36. Sidney Nolan, *Water Wheel, Luna Park*, 1942, synthetic polymer paint on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne / Sidney Nolan, *Factory*, 1942, synthetic polymer paint on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
37. Albert Tucker, *Self Portrait*, 1941, oil on paperboard, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
38. Albert Tucker, *Luna Park*, 1945, oil on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
39. Albert Tucker, *(Four Abstract Studies)*, 1949, gouache, watercolour, crayon, pencil on paper, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne / Pablo Picasso, *Seated Woman*, 1938, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart
40. Albert Tucker, *Head*, 1948, gouache, pastel, brush and ink on paper, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne / Pablo Picasso, *(Head of a Woman)*, 1939, oil on canvas, Musée Picasso, Paris
41. Jean Appleton, *Still Life*, 1937, oil on canvas, private collection, Canberra
42. Jean Appleton, *Painting IX*, 1937, oil on canvas, Whitworth/Bruce Collection, Sydney
43. Eric Wilson, *(Abstract – Still Life)*, 1939, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
44. Paul Haeffliger, *Abstract with Violin*, 1938, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Paul Haeffliger, *Untitled (Still Life)*, 1937, oil on canvas, private collection, Sydney
45. Eric Wilson, *Hot Feed, Cold Feed, Steam*, 1942, oil on composition board, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane / Eric Wilson, *Hospital Theme – the Sterilizer*, 1942, oil on hardboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- * 46. John Passmore, *Orange Dot*, 1953, oil on hardboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

47. Godfrey Miller, *Forest*, c.1939-45, oil and pencil on canvas, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane / Godfrey Miller, *Landscape with Orange Cliffs*, 1949-53, oil on canvas, State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
48. Ian Fairweather, *Woman at Window*, 1955, gouache on cardboard, Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales
49. William Rose, *Construction*, 1956, oil on hardboard, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
50. Robert Klippel, *No. 550*, 1985, wood assemblage, private collection
51. Carl Plate, *Night Passage 1*, 1974, magazine-paper collage on card, estate of Carl Plate / Daniel Crooks, *Static No. 9 (A Small Section of Something Larger)*, 2005, video still, courtesy the artist
52. George Johnson, *Downbeat*, 1956, enamel on board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
53. Len Crawford, *Cadenza*, 1957, oil and pen and ink on composition board, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne / James Meldrum, *Light Play (Flow Past II)*, 1961, enamel on composition board, courtesy the artist
54. Dick Watkins, *The Fall No. 2*, 1968, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, private collection
55. Robert Jacks, *Compelling Vesture*, 1965, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria / Robert Jacks, *Suite Española*, 1996, enamel on wood, Lowesteins Arts Management Collection, Melbourne
- * 56. Ron Robertson Swann, *Turnpike Mountain*, 1972, welded steel, automotive lacquer, Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales
57. Mike Brown, *Folding Pictorial*, 1964, enamel and synthetic polymer paint on composition board, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
58. John Dunkley-Smith, *Pale Ale*, 1975, remade 2009, scanned from original 35 mm colour slides, courtesy the artist
59. Daniel Crooks, *Portrait #2 (Chris)*, 2007, lambda photographic print, courtesy the artist / Jean Metzinger, *Portrait of Albert Gleizes*, 1911, oil on canvas, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island
60. Robert Rooney, *After Colonial Cubism*, 1993, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne / Stuart Davis, *American Landscape*, 1932, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
61. Gordon Bennett, *Self Portrait # 9*, 15 April 2003, digital print on photo lustre paper, courtesy the artist / Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, 1907, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York
62. A.D.S. Donaldson, *Untitled (For John Power)*, 2002-09, oil on linen, courtesy the artist / Cover of John Power's book, *Éléments de la Construction Picturale*, Antoine Roche, Paris, 1932
63. Diena Georgetti, *CE / Black Sheet Steel Frame on Apricot Terrace with Emerald Green Zigzag Mural*, 2009, synthetic polymer paint on wood panel, courtesy Michael Lett, Auckland / Fernand Léger, *The Railway Crossing* (preliminary version), oil on canvas, The Art Institute of Chicago
64. Eugene Carchesio, *Untitled (Guitar)*, 2004-5, cardboard on canvas, courtesy the artist / Pablo Picasso, *Maquette for Guitar*, 1912, cardboard, string and wire, Museum of Modern Art, New York
65. Jacky Redgate, *Untitled from Anonymous (Probably Daguerre or Niepce de Saint Victor)*, 'Table Prepared for a Meal' c. 1829, 1990, library buckram, glass, ceramic, cardboard and coated timber, Monash University Collection, Melbourne
- * 66. Raafat Ishak, *Ascent, Descent and Congratulations no. 3*, 2009, oil on canvas, private collection / Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase (no. 2)*, 1912, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
67. Installation view, with works by John Power, Contanze Zikos and Diena Georgetti, *Cubism & Australian Art* exhibition, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2009

68. Installation view, with works by Mike Brown and Masato Takasaka, Cubism & Australian Art exhibition, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2009

69. Installation view, with works by George Johnson, Gemma Smith and Ralph Balson, Cubism & Australian Art exhibition, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2009

* 70. Dorrit Black, *The Bridge*, 1930, oil on canvas on board, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

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