

Photographer: Tristan Sharp Philip Wolfhagen studio in Tasmania (2012)

ABOUT THESE PAGES

This webpage supports the exhibition, Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen A Newcastle Art Gallery and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery travelling exhibition.

Designed in conjunction with the Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen Education kit, this webpage provides insight into the materials, artists, music and places that are important to Wolfhagen, and is recommended as an additional resource for teachers and students or for general public use.

Surveying the twenty five year career of Australian painter Philip Wolfhagen, Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen explores the artist's enchantment with the Australian landscape, the tactility and intimacy of his painting process, his command of colour and use of signature devices such as the split picture plane.

Wolfhagen's work is held in major public and corporate collections in Australia and in private collections nationally and internationally, with the largest national public collection of his work currently owned by the Newcastle Art Gallery.

Newcastle Art Gallery strongly supports experience-based learning and advises that this webpage be used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition.

FOR EXHIBITION DATES PLEASE SEE THE TOUR SCHEDULE BELOW.

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY, NSW 22 June - 11 August 2013

TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, TAS 13 September - 1 December 2013

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY DRILL HALL GAL-LERY, ACT 20 February - 6 April 2014

CAIRNS REGIONAL GALLERY, QLD 9 May - 6 July 2014

TWEED RIVER ART GALLERY, NSW 8 August - 12 October 2014

HAMILTON ART GALLERY, VIC 15 November 2014 - 1 February 2015

GIPPSLAND ART GALLERY, VIC 14 February - 12 April 2015



Photographer: Tristan Sharp Philip Wolfhagen studio in Tasmania (2012)

ARTIST'S STUDIO & PRACTICE

Longford is a Georgian era town, a short drive from the centre of Launceston in northern Tasmania- the architecture of the village centre resonating a time gone by. Tucked next to the bakery is an unassuming colonial era building, a former flour mill, painted white and convict built as most structures are in this part of Tasmania. The downstairs is a scattered, maze like appliance repair workshop. Winding your way through the cavernous downstairs, heading up a precarious set of steep wooden stairs, you enter into a discrete light filled space- you enter Philip Wolfhagen's studio.

Newcastle Art Gallery Curator Sarah Johnson

Considered a 'painter's painter' Philip Wolfhagen is a dedicated and in many ways traditional studio painter. Committed five hours a day, six days a week, his studio is the basis for Wolfhagen's almost ritualistic art making process. The large studio space is pungent with smells of paint, linseed oil and beeswax – materials Wolfhagen has become renowned for.

In October 2012 Newcastle Art Gallery's Assistant Director Tristan Sharp and Curator Sarah Johnson traveled to Tasmania to meet with Wolfhagen. After flying from Sydney to Launceston and driving a further 15 minutes to Longford, their hopes to discuss exhibition logistics and catalogue details were surpassed when they were invited into Wolfhagen's studio and then his home.

These images were taken during this trip and are a unique glimpse of the artist's usually private world.

This slideshow contains photographs of Philip Wolfhagen's studio in Longford, Tasmania 2012.

http://www.slideshare.net/Newcastle-Art-Gallery/ wolfhagen?ref=http://www.nag.org.au/learning/ wolfhagen/artists_studio_and_practice

This slideshow contains photographs of Philip Wolfhagen's journals. Images include drawings, small studies for larger works and writings describing his process, emotions, ideas, and triggers or cues for later reference in his art making process.

http://www.slideshare.net/Newcastle-Art-Gallery/philipwolfhagen-journals?ref=http://www.nag.org.au/learning/ wolfhagen/artists_studio_and_practice Read below as Newcastle Art Gallery staff (NAG) ask Philip Wolfhagen (PW) questions about the process of his art making practice.

Q & A WITH PHILIP WOLFHAGEN: PROCESS & MATERIALS

NAG: What is the most important stage of your art making process?

PW: The most important part of the process is the 'end' stage – the act of painting. Up to this point there is a lot of tedious work; making stretcher bars, stretching linen, priming and sanding and generally anticipating the time when I can concentrate on painting. When I start to paint everything has to be prepared carefully; I have usually spent days mixing colour and rehearsing the painting. When the moment finally arrives, however, there are many paths to failure – one's concentration can be easily broken by a difficult phone call, a power failure, the sudden loss of light if heavy cloud moves in, or most likely a pall of doubt rolls in, then all may be lost. I have learned not to despair in these circumstances; tomorrow things may improve!

NAG: What benefits do you get from keeping journals?

PW: I use my journal to record the processes at work in the studio. Often I make very detailed colour notes that prove invaluable if I need to return to a painting after an extended period of time. The journal is a map of my progress. If I feel lost I can refer to the journal to help me find my way out of the maze of ideas I carry around in my head. The journals are also a pragmatic reference manual. I make exact records of the paintings as they are finished, so the journals are a definitive record of titles, dimensions, medium and any information that is relevant to the evolution of a painting. I am trying to make it easier for future research, whether it is my own or that of a curator or historian.

EXHIBITION VIDEO

This 8 minute short film was created for national tour with the exhibition *Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen* a Newcastle Art Gallery and Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery travelling exhibition.

Produced by Greg Appel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URV2b80GPkw



Photographer: Sarah Johnson Wolfhagen's Tasmania (2012)

INFLUENCES - TASMANIA

In October 2012 Newcastle Art Gallery's Assistant Director Tristan Sharp and Curator Sarah Johnson travelled to Tasmania to meet with Wolfhagen. After a long day in Wolfhagen's studio and home, Johnson travelled through the nearby midlands landscape by car. Describing what happened next as a light bulb moment, Johnson recalls the realization that she was seeing Wolfhagen's paintings in the landscape before her. The land, the trees and the light were all reminiscent of Wolfhagen's work. These images were taken through the car window in those moments.

INFLUENCES - TASMANIA LINKS

Click on the following links to view articles that explore themes found in Philip Wolfhagen's work. For more information about these themes go to the Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen Education kit.

The webpage Australian Government Department of

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency is a reliable source for factual information about the effects of climate change on Australia. Philip Wolfhagen often paints clouds that are ominous, presenting as the dark looming moment before a thunderstorm. Wolfhagen acknowledges that environmental awareness is a global concern and as a result his cloud paintings can be seen as warnings against past and future environmental disasters. The National Geographic article Species Revival: Should We Bring Back Extinct Animals? features a controversial debate about whether it is appropriate to bring animal species back to life after long periods of extinction. It is thought that Wolfhagen's often empty landscapes express an absence of what was once in Tasmania - the original home of the now extinct Tasmanian Tiger.

The article Vandalism of the Lea Tree describes a divisive episode in Australian history when a proposal was forwarded to construct a dam on the Gordon River below Franklin in Tasmania. A suite of photographs by Peter Dombrovskis - an artist whose work has influenced Philip Wolfhagen - was one of the contributing factors that led to the end of the damming at that time.



Photographer: Sarah Johnson Wolfhagen's Tasmania (2012)

Q & A WITH PHILIP WOLFHAGEN: INFLUENCES - TASMANIA

NAG: How is your local environment different now to when you were young?

PW: The most noticeable difference is the agricultural land use. The main driver of this change has been the development of irrigation into what was once a dry landscape that was traditionally used for grazing – mainly sheep for wool. In the 17 years since I returned to live in this area an industrial revolution has taken place. A rural landscape of square-hedged paddocks has given way to the big circles of centre pivot irrigators!

When I was young we used to be able to ski every winter in Tasmania - that has changed because of the warming climate. **NAG:** What experiences in your life led you to having a heightened awareness of the environment?

PW: I grew up in a relatively isolated valley in a family obsessed with the natural world, and although this included a passion for hunting, it did not seem at odds with our love for every living thing in our environment. As a child it was the arrival of the migratory birds in spring that made me feel connected to place, but it also made me wonder about other places – where had these birds been since I last heard them in the autumn? I still get a thrill when I hear the first Striated Pardalote call around the third week in August, and then I know that the cuckoos will arrive, and that the cycle goes on as it has for untold seasons before.



Philip Wolfhagen Longford studio (2011)

INFLUENCES - ARTISTS

Philip Wolfhagen acknowledges references to almost all periods of art history from the 17th century to the present, suggesting his paintings can be seen as a "synthesis of time".

Wolfhagen's classical themes and strict linear design can be seen as referencing the enlightenment movement (1600 - 1700's), his conjuring of mood and concomitant emotion references early romanticism (late1700's), the flattening of his landscape references modernism (1900 -1950), and his split horizon lines have been described as post-modern (post 1950).

Discover the work of artists who have inspired Wolfhagen stylistically, historically, and conceptually.

Q & A WITH PHILIP WOLFHAGEN: ARTISTIC INFLUENCES

NAG: How important is understanding the work of Artist's who have come before you to your own art making practice?

PW: I think it is critically important to interpret the art of the past in the process of making art in the present. This is why the language of Painting is so full of ripe possibility; each generation builds upon the achievements of the previous one, and the lexicon only broadens. My interpretation of art history evolves with every book I read and every exhibition I see - it is a constantly expanding realm of understanding, and it is natural that this knowledge feeds into processes in the studio.

NAG: It has been said that your paintings could be seen as a synthesis of time. What does this mean?

PW: This is a more difficult question to answer. You could say that my work is a synthesis - or a condensation – of time in a literal sense because the paintings make reference to the past through quotation of art history, yet they are firmly anchored in the present by their physical presence.

My repeated use of multi panel formats and the split image are metaphors for the passage of time.



John Constable *Clouds* 1822 oil on paper on cardboard National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Felton Bequest 1938



W B Gould Flowers and fruit c1840 oil on canvas Purchased 1961 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



National Library of Australia

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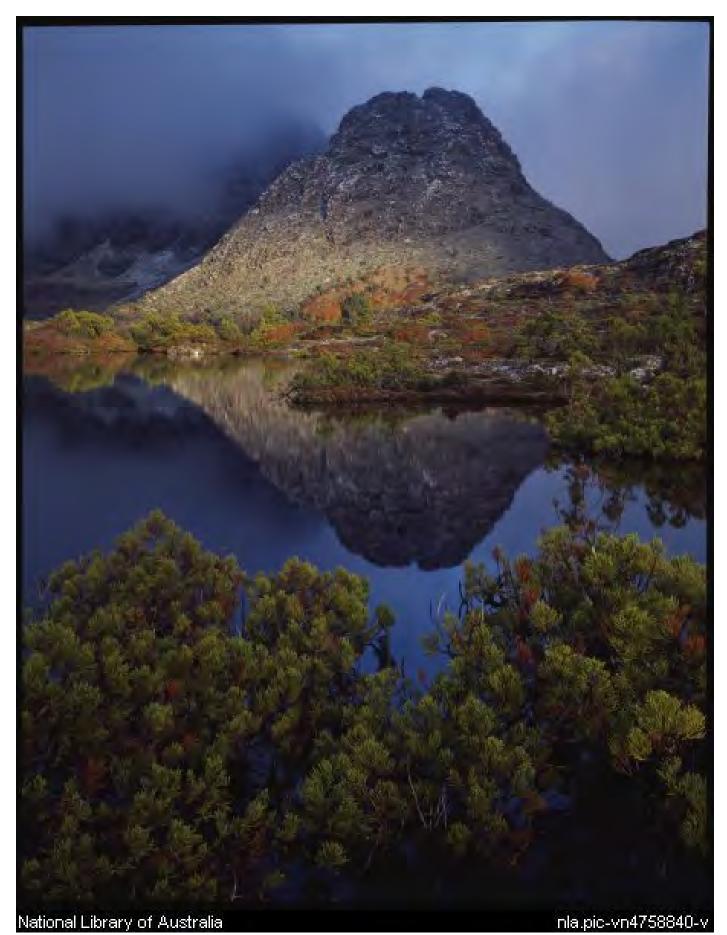
Dombrovskis, Peter, 1945-1996. Native pigface, Tarkine Wilderness, Tasmania 1995 [picture] 1995. 1 photograph : col. ; 64.2 x 51.4 cm. Part of Dombrovskis collection of Tasmanian wilderness photographs, 1978-1995



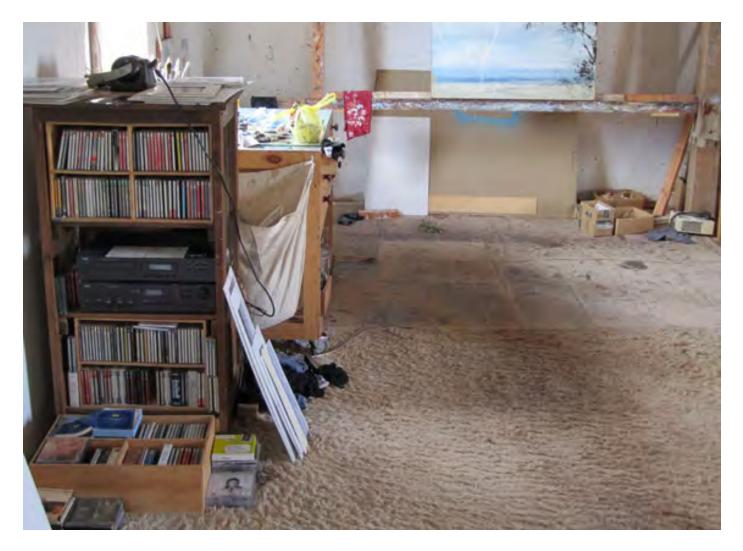
National Library of Australia

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Dombrovskis, Peter, 1945-1996. Morning mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River, Tasmania, 1979 [picture] 1979. 1 photograph : col. ; 51.4 x 64.2 cm. Part of Dombrovskis collection of Tasmanian wilderness photographs, 1978-1995



Dombrovskis, Peter, 1945-1996. Morning light on Little Horn, Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Clair National Park, Tasmania, 1995 [picture] 1995. 1 photograph : col. ; 64.2 x 51.4 cm. Part of Dombrovskis collection of Tasmanian wilderness photographs, 1978-1995



Photographer: Tristan Sharp Philip Wolfhagen studio in Tasmania (2012)

INFLUENCES - MUSIC AND LITERATURE

For Philip Wolfhagen the role of music is extraordinarily important in the production of his work. Amongst others the sounds of George Frideric Handel - a British Baroque composer, famous for his operas, anthems, and organ concertos, Ludwig van Beethoven - a German composer and pianist who remains one of the most famous and influential of all composers, and Edward Benjamin Britten - an English composer, conductor, and pianist, all echo throughout the studio.

Wolfhagen explains that classical music in the studio re-focuses his consciousness on painting. He is drawn to music which mimics the fluid troughs and peaks of nature, as well as dark and melancholic compositions. Nature and melancholy are two prevalent themes in Wolfhagen's body of work.

Wolfhagen is equally inspired by literature, with books ranging from John Gage's seminal book on colour to a publication on Claude Lorrain piled up in his studio. Wolfhagen acknowledges that his interpretation of art history evolves with every book he reads and that this knowledge naturally feeds into his art making process. View the clips below to see performances of classical musicians playing compositions similar to those that inspire Philip Wolfhagen.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 "Pastorale" / Abbado · Berliner Philharmoniker: https://youtu.be/m6iKHI5vVZE

Valentina Lisitsa -- "Moonlight" Sonata - Live at WQXR's Beethoven Piano Sonata Marathon https://youtu.be/DjFpnjU1eCQ

Benjamin Britten- Phantasy op. 2 for Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Cello https://youtu.be/vfNYKGokqE0

INFLUENCES - MUSIC AND LITERATURE

Throughout his years, film, poetry and books have played important roles for Philip Wolfhagen. He acknowledges the list below as having made lasting impressions on him during the different stages of his life.

BOOKS

Metamorphoses by Ovid An Imaginary Life by David Malouf Steppenwolf by Herman Hesse Colour and Culture by John Gage Landscape and Memory by Simon Schama Dirt Music by Tim Winton The Gormenghast Trilogy by Mervyn Peake 50 Great Curries of India by Camellia Panjabi Fishes of Tasmania by Last, Scott and Talbot

FILMS

The Deerhunter by Michael Cimino 1978 The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser by Werner Herzog 1974 Jean de Florette and Manon des Sources, 1986 Claude Berri

Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner, 2001

Read below as Newcastle Art Gallery staff (NAG) ask Philip Wolfhagen (PW) about the influence of music on his art making practice.

Q & A WITH PHILIP WOLFHAGEN: INSPIRING MUSIC

NAG: What is your favourite moment in your art making process?

PW: My favourite moment is the one outlined above; the make or break moment! This part of my process usually involves an intense engagement with a piece of music, and often I am not really conscious of the act of painting. I think my best work comes out of this engagement with listening, so that actually I am not thinking about painting - I think only about sound and colour, about the texture of the music and of the tonality of light and shade, about the materials in my hands, and the rhythms inherent in both mediums.



Philip Wolfhagen 'Waiting for trade winds' journal entry

WOLFHAGEN FROM THE COLLECTION

Wolfhagen's work is held in major public and corporate collections in Australia and in private collections nationally and internationally, with the largest national public collection of his work currently owned by Newcastle Art Gallery. View Philip Wolfhagen's works of art in the Newcastle Art Gallery collection below.

WOLFHAGEN FROM THE COLLECTION





The Newcastle Chest

Misplaced endemic 2010 oil and beeswax on Australian red cedar 42.5 x 32 cm x 1.2 cm

Waiting for the trade winds 2010 oil and beeswax on Australian red cedar $41 \times 66 \times 1.2$ cm

Homage to JL 2010 oil and beeswax on Australian red cedar 42.5 x 32 x 1.2 cm Commissioned by Newcastle Region Art Gallery, purchased with the assistance of James and Judy Hart, Robert and Lindy Henderson, Valerie Ryan, Newcastle Gallery Society and Newcastle Region Art Gallery Foundation 2010 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



Vanishing point no 1 1995 oil and beeswax on canvas 143 x 231 cm Gift of the Newcastle Region Art Gallery Foundation 2010 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



Study for 'Shifting light' 2002 oil on plywood 3 panels 30 x 37 cm (each), 30 x 112.5 cm (overall) Purchased 2010 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



View to the past 2010 oil and beeswax on linen 200 x 214 cm Purchased by Newcastle Region Art Gallery Foundation 2011 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



Memento I 2010 colour lithograph on paper 30 x 35 cm (image), 38 x 45.5 cm (sheet) Purchased 2011 Newcastle Art Gallery collection

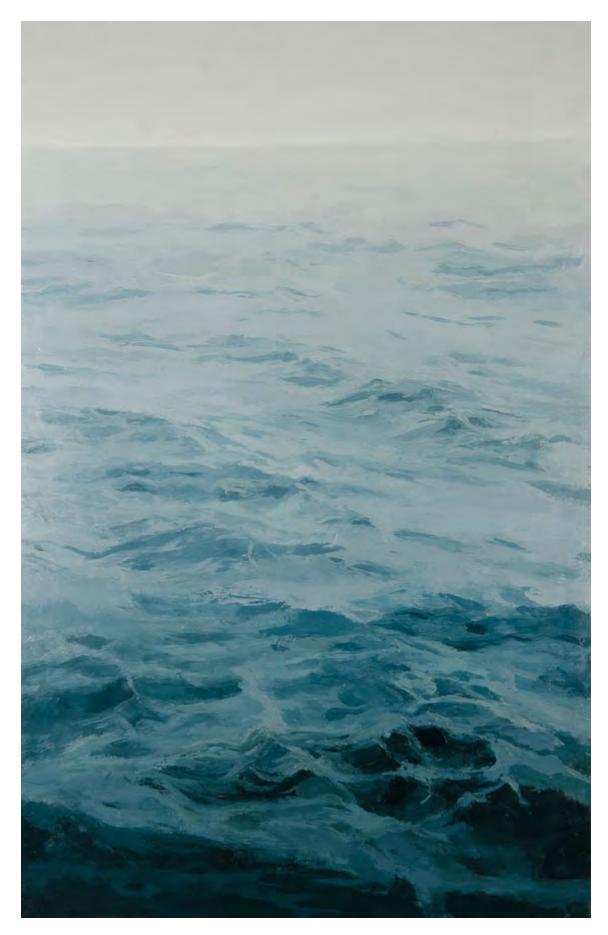


Memento II 2010 colour lithograph on paper 30 x 35 cm (image), 38 x 45.5 cm (sheet) Purchased 2011 Newcastle Art Gallery collection

WOLFHAGEN FROM THE COLLECTION



Memento III 2010 colour lithograph on paper 31 x 35 cm (image), 38 x 45.5 cm (sheet) Purchased 2011 Newcastle Art Gallery collection



Surface tension no 3 1998 oil and beeswax on linen 214 x 136 cm Purchased 1998 Newcastle Art Gallery collection

Photographer: Tristan Sharp Philip Wolfhagen's studio in Tasmania (2012)

WOLFHAGEN RESOURCES

EDUCATION RESOURCES

Download the education kit and art trail for Illumination The art of Philip Wolfhagen.

WOLFHAGEN'S GALLERISTS

Philip Wolfhagen is represented by four commercial galleries across Australia. View his work at the following galleries by visiting the links below.

Philip Bacon: http://www.philipbacongalleries.com.au/ artists_and_stockroom?id=452556 Bett Gallery: http://www.bettgallery.com.au/artists/ wolfhagen/index.htm Dominik Mersch Gallery: http://www.dominikmerschgallery. com/artist/philip-wolfhagen/ Karen Woodbury Gallery: http://kwgallery.com/artist/ philip-wolfhagen/27

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