

LINO

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND'S PREMIER DESIGN LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
ISSUE No.16 2006/07

ART
MIXED MEDIA
FOOD
TRAVEL

DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE
PHOTOGRAPHY
FASHION

16

Member - ICGRRDA International Council
of Graphic Design Associations
AUSTRALIA \$9.95 incl GST
NEW ZEALAND \$10.00 incl GST



Australian honoured at prestigious international photography competition
Ruth Allen - The Woman who writes on glass
Dutch architect Hans van Heeswijk - Practice makes perfect
WOW! New Zealand's World of WearableArt
Jonathon Goodman on Australian artist Steve Woodbury
South African designer - Heath Nash sheds light

Steve Woodbury is an Australian abstract painter, whose powerful compositions suggest a painterly prophecy in regard to the world around him.

The atmospheric expressiveness of his work is experienced through different series, which, when seen together, amount to interpretations and readings of the sublime, in a language made more beautiful by being connected to the history of abstract art. While abstract expressionism is no longer the only, or even the preferred, means of expression on the map, it is clear that Woodbury has aligned himself with a language still capable of subtle mysteries; the atmospheric effects of his earlier art suggest an awareness of colour and form that would tie his sense of composition to the New York school.

Internationalism in contemporary art has reached a point where the similarities seem to be thematically oriented rather than geographically tied, with the result that Woodbury can achieve remarkable effects that connect across history, in a way that does justice to those artists working similarly who have preceded him. So it happens that Woodbury balances his achievement within a sense of historical accomplishment, which lends it gravity and weight.

The question facing Woodbury is not how much historical awareness he can bear, but rather to what extent can the 'made of time' support the complex elegance of his painting. He owes a lot to gestural flair, which offers his audience a kind of controlled extravagance and a painterly justification for his search for the sublime.



EXPRESSION ISM
SEARCH FOR THE SUBLIME

STEVE WOODBURY

Omnipotent Shadow

2003

Photograph, 80 x 120cm Edition of 5

Photograph, 60 x 90cm Edition of 20

Pigment Archival Print, 36 x 52cm Edition of 5

I see him as coming out of a tradition that best includes painters such as Franz Kline and Cy Twombly, artists for whom the gesture is made to be as transparent and far-reaching as possible, so that the viewer feels the painting as a kind of mediation between humanity and some higher plane. As Woodbury has said, "If we wait until a painting speaks to us as Goethe suggests, then surely the experience is more rewarding than looking for familiar imagery that makes a 'safe' and 'nice' picture ordinary." What follows from Woodbury's art, as he asserts, is a "reality on a finer scale." The structural universalism of abstract painting, in which colour and composition and brushstroke are impressive for being representative of themselves alone, is handled extremely well in Woodbury's paintings, whose hues cast a glow, or second light, over his aesthetic decisions.

So the brilliant residuals of Woodbury's paintings do not reflect nature so much as they subsume it, calling upon colour and volume to speak in their own terms to his audience. Art does not become an excuse for representation as much as it stands in for intellectual and emotional ways of being that enhance our feeling for art and also for nature, even if we cannot decide on what exactly the artist is rendering. Abstraction is not necessarily more demonstrative of reality than figuration; however, what it does do is to ensure us of the inherent substantiality of the imagination, which tends to be solely what this kind of painting is about. Woodbury titles one extensive series of paintings *In the Shadows*, suggesting mystery and indefinite morphology above the relatively more pedestrian task of likeness.



Story_Jonathan Goodman

Dying from Birth

Acrylic & pigment on handmade paper
76 x 56cm

In addition to the influence of abstract expressionism, there is some reference to Asian painting, most specifically the effects of Chinese art. In a recent example from the series Dying from Birth, Woodbury has created a long vertical field, essentially a scroll, in which black and pink flow down the expanse of canvas in thick and thin lines.

In another suite of paintings from the same group, Woodbury offers black patches on white paper, the areas of black pulsing with energy bordering in its intensity on the erotic. The artist's point of view here, as in most of his work, is that the composition is an open field, meant to startle the viewer and results in an awakened state of being. Woodbury's sharp technique and fine sense of purpose enable him to do so on a regular basis. www.stevewoodbury.com

COLLECTIONS:

Ballarat Regional Gallery, Business Central Coast, Coffs Harbour City Collection, Colourstock - The Netherlands, Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service - Gosford, Newcastle & Wyong, Downey Group, Edogawa Art Association, Edogawa City Tokyo Japan, Edogawa International Friendship Association (EIFA), Edogawa Welfare Association for the Blind, Elcom Credit Union, Future School, Fuji Xerox Australia, Goldwater Memorial Hospital - New York, Hoofdoorp City - The Netherlands, Hill St Sports Medicine Centre, Krone Australia, Maitland Regional Gallery, Manning Regional Art Gallery, Matsudaira Family Collection, Newcastle Regional Gallery, NSW State Parliament, Octopus Fulfilment, Original Concepts - The Netherlands, Port Macquarie - Hastings Regional Art Gallery, Premiers Department (Department of State

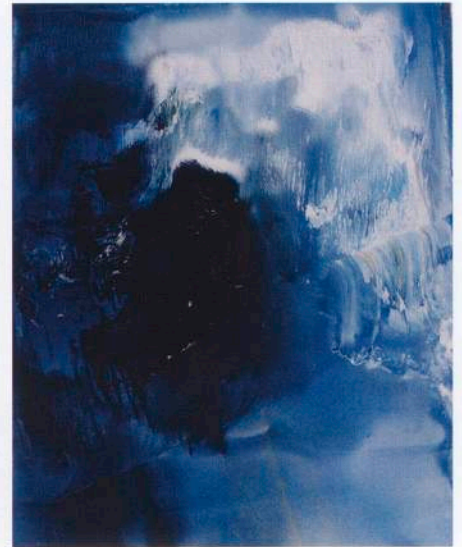


China Book Installation 2004

From the 'Photographs of God' exhibition Tokyo, Japan

and Regional Development) Gosford, Soul Pattinson Telecommunications, Staff Force, Tama City, Japan, Taylor Financial Group, Utrecht City Hall, The Netherlands, University of Newcastle - (Central Coast Campus), Wright Advertising, Wyong City Council & Private collections in America, Australia, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore.

Jonathan Goodman is a poet and writer who specialises in modern and contemporary art. He has published reviews and articles for such magazines as Art in America, Sculpture and Art Asia Pacific. He currently teaches at Pratt Institute and the Parsons School of Design in New York City.



Shadows Where Thoughts Go
Oil/acrylic/pigment on linen
Each panel 76 x 60cm