Auction target points to a bargain Boyd

MICHAELA BOLAND

IN a sign of just how far the art market has fallen, an Arthur Boyd painting offered for sale in 2008 for $1.25 million will be auctioned next Monday with expectations of selling for half that amount.

Boyd’s The Prodigal Son was painted in 1946-47, a couple of years before the artist rendered another, more famous Prodigal Son scene, on the wall of a house owned by his uncle, novelist Martin Boyd.

That Prodigal Son was recently displayed for the first time as the centrepiece of a Boyd retrospective at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. The Boyds and the Murrumbeena Artists exhibition is currently being staged at the National Gallery of Victoria. And the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Bulleen, Melbourne, will stage a Boyd exhibition from November 29.

All of which means it should be a great time to offer for sale a major work by the painter, who died in 1999.

But Mark Fraser, the Australian chairman of auctioneers Bonhams, says the sale of The Prodigal Son is a matter of coincidence rather than opportunism.

The Prodigal Son for sale, with an estimate of $600,000 to $800,000, is the property of artist Ceci Cairns and her brother and sister, the siblings having inherited it from their parents in 2004. They offered it for sale through dealer Bridget McDonnell in 2008 but could not find a buyer in a rapidly cooling market.

“It’s a very unusual painting; I think that’s why it hasn’t sold,” Ceci Cairns said. “Arthur used to paint in our orchard and our families were often at Murrumbeena beach together. It’s a beloved part of our family but we’ve come to terms with this.”

Forty-two works will be offered at the Bonhams auction in Sydney.

ARTS P 14-15
Boyd family's Rumurumba gatherings a fountain of inspiration for Australian artists

December 19, 2014

It was called the Dreamt River and it was just about upstream of the 20th century river of a different nature. The Boyd family would have been called the river of inspiration. Sometimes, though, the 19th and 20th centuries had to be gone with the wind. This was the story of the Boyd family and how they found inspiration in the small dairy farm and dairy products. People would pour into the Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba quite regularly to see how they were doing and to get a glimpse of the success they had. They would be inspired by the Boyd family's success and the way they were living.

It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.

The Boyd family's Dairy Farm of Rumurumba was an inspiration to many people. It was inspiring to see the Boyd family's dairy farm and dairy products. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well. They were always the first to try new things and they always did it well.
Arthur Boyd's Brides at Heide

BY KATE HACHTEL, 14th December 2014

The legendary Australian artist's seminal Brides paintings will be shown in the most expansive exhibition of the famous and controversial series to date.

Long before he had become a household name, Arthur Boyd traveled to Central Australia. It was 1931, and the young artist was appalled by what he saw: an impoverished Aboriginal community, segregated and diminished by an oppressive white population.

He was equally distressed by the situation of those of mixed descent, isolated from both the indigenous and white communities, suspected in a no-win kind of exclusion and destitute enforced by the government.

Boyd made hundreds of sketches of his experiences, which would lead to the seminal series, Love, Marriage and Death of a Woomera, more commonly known as the Brides, which are on show at the Heide Museum of Modern Art until March 9.

Boyd is a giant of Australian modernist art. Known for his figurative expressionist style across a variety of media, he represented Australia in not one but two Venice Biennales, and is considered to be one of the nation's most important 20th-century artists.

Between 1930 and 1961 he painted more than 40 Brides, but the works quickly scattered into institutional and private collections around the country and the world. The Heide show is the most comprehensive exhibition of the series to date.

A comment on indigenous and racial issues in mid-20th century Australia in the form of an allegorical love story, the narrative and abstract paintings are considered a watershed not only in Boyd's career, but also in the history of Australian art.

"I took a course in Australian art when I was studying art history in New Zealand and I remember seeing reproductions of several of the paintings in a book," says Heide curator Kimberly Morgan, about the first time she saw the Brides. "I was struck by how they seemed completely unlike anything else in Australian art of that period, and also by the political aspects of their subject matter."

"In terms of Boyd's attempt to raise awareness of discrimination against Indigenous people and highlight social issues, the series is a milestone in the advancement of local modernism ... and in the development of a home-grown visual vocabulary."

Throughout the series, Boyd's imposing protagonists are an Aboriginal man and his mixed-race bride. There is no specific narrative. Rather, it's a collection of dramatic, dramatic and ambiguous moments in the pair's journey. Motifs and themes that Boyd would explore throughout his career – dislocated subjects, consumed loves, beauty, fear, injustice, conflict and alienation – are all present in his ambitious cycle.

Boyd's later, more abstract Brides are the work of Heide's fifth main gallery. They are vivid, powerful likenesses of those and men and women. There are an uneasy and unsatisfactory edge of much of them: somberness and darkness pervades. The later Brides evoke less fearful apprehensions and more hope and resolved – the earlier pessimism giving way to a surreal frustration, Morgan says.

The historical and personal context in which Boyd created the paintings is an intriguing one – Morgan's essay in the exhibition catalogue delves into this, as does a fascinating personal collection by Aboriginal scholar Marcia Langton, which, incredibly, supports the first (Indigenous reading of Boyd's approach and position to his subject.

Arthur Boyd's Brides runs from November 29 2014 until the March 9 2015.

Brochure is a proud media partner of the Heide Museum of Modern Art.
11am | Media arts organisation Experimenta joins RMIT Gallery to present Experimenta Recharge: Sixth International Biennial of Media Art. Features photography, installation, robotics, 3D printing and more. Today, take a curator’s tour and meet the contributing artists (12.30pm), attend video artist Matthew Perkins’ book launch (5pm) and check out a film screening (6pm).
RMIT GALLERY, 344 SWANSTON STREET, CITY, FREE, 9925 1717, EXPERIMENTA.ORG

11.15pm | You’ll need nerves of steel to go the distance at the Friday the 13th marathon, part of Cinema Nova’s Monster Fest program. Take a trip to Camp Crystal Lake and watch Jason Voorhees slash his way through the first eight films, from Friday the 13th to Friday the 13th Part VIII. Jason Takes Manhattan.
CINEMA NOVA, 380 LYON STREET, CARLTON, $30-$35, 9347 5331, CINEMANOVA.COM.AU

7pm | Fresh from a US tour, Dick Diver perform for a hometown audience. The jangle-pop quartet have been working on their third album, recorded with producer Mikey Young. In support will be Holy Balm, The Native Cats and Hierophants.
THE HI-FI, 125 SWANSTON STREET, CITY, $21.50, 1300 843 443, THEHIFI.COM.AU

8pm | Rock veteran Kim Salmon, of The Scientists and Beasts of Bourbon, is the focus of tonight’s show at Yah Yahs. Salmon is in his 37th year of performing music, beginning with some early punk bands in Perth and, notably, with influential band The Scientists in the late ’70s. Support from Drunk Mums and Dumb Punts.
YAH YAHS, 99 SMITH STREET, FITZROY, $15, 9419 4920, YAHYAHS.COM.AU

7.30pm | Talk show host and scribe Chelsea Handler recently published her new book, Uganda Be Kidding Me. A collection of travel essays, complete with tongue-in-cheek tips and suggestions, the book also inspired her latest live show, which she performs in Melbourne tonight.
PALAS THEATRE, LOWER ESPLANADE, ST KILDA, $80, 136 100, TICKETMASTER.COM.AU

8pm | Jumpers for Goalposts continues at Red Stitch Actors Theatre. It’s off to the amateur leagues with Barely Athletic, a team in the gay, lesbian and transsexual football league in northern England city Hull. Directed by Tom Healey. Runs until December 20.
RED STITCH ACTORS THEATRE, REAR 2 CHAPEL STREET, ST KILDA, $20-$39, 9533 8083, REDSTITCH.NET
10am | The Australian Print Workshop cuts the ribbon on its major fundraising exhibition this weekend. Impressions 2014 celebrates the art of printmaking with limited-edition prints from more than 150 prominent and emerging Australian artists, including Reg Mombassa, Rick Amor and Vicki Couzens. The works reflect the processes available at the workshop, including etching, lithography and relief printing.

AUSTRALIAN PRINT WORKSHOP, 210 GERTRUDE STREET, FITZROY, FREE, 9419 5466, AUSTRALIANPRINTWORKSHOP.COM

2pm/7.30pm | With narration by Billy Connolly and dancing by an acclaimed Brazilian dance troupe, Brazouka shares the story of freestyle lambazouk dancer Braz Dos Santos. Dos Santos began his life in a small village, and eventually made his way to the international stage. The performance is led by Dos Santos himself and concludes its Melbourne run on Saturday.

THE PALMS AT CROWN, 8 WHITEMAN STREET, SOUTHBANK, $51-$102, 1300 795 012, TICKETEK.COM.AU

Various | Until December 7, the 2014 Japanese Film Festival will screen films at several Melbourne cinemas. Some showing this weekend include The Chart of Love, a romance and sequel to the 2011 film, In His Chart; the family friendly The Round Table; and little forest – summer/autumn, a story about a girl who lives off the land.

VARIOUS VENUES, $15-$18, JAPANESEFILMFESTIVAL.NET
7pm | Them Swoops have saved their only headline show of 2014 for the end of the year, having spent much of the year on their follow-up to last year's *Glimmers* EP. Supporting will be The Worriers, Singing For Humans and Pretty City.

**THE TOFF IN TOWN, 252 SWANSTON STREET, CITY, $7-$10, 9639 8770, THETOFFINTOWN.COM**

7pm | Fractures plays at the Abbotsford Convent as part of the Hallowed Ground tour, following shows in the US and Europe. The solo project of Melbourne musician Mark Zito, Fractures released a debut self-titled EP earlier this year.

**SHADOW ELECTRIC BANDROOM, INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT, 1 ST HELIERS STREET, ABBOTSFORD, $15, 9415 3600, ABBOTSFORDCONVENT.COM.AU**

7pm | Drone and electronica outfit Black Cab released their fourth studio album, *Games Of The Xxi Olympiad*, this month. They’re marking the accomplishment with a launch show. Support acts include Lowtide and Queens Head.

**HOWLER, 7-11 DAWSON STREET, BRUNSWICK, $15, 9077 5572, H-W-L-R.COM**

8pm | Illy plays a hometown show in the middle of his One For The Cities national tour. The Frankston rapper is supported by Tkay Maidza and special guests.

**FORUM THEATRE, CORNER FLINDERS AND RUSSELL STREETS, CITY, $48, 136 100, TICKETMASTER.COM.AU**

8pm | Portugal The Man continue their Australian tour with free shows in Brunswick and Frankston today. Originating from Alaska, the band moved down to the warmer climes of Portland, Oregon, to play their brand of indie psychedelic music, before moving on to the big stages of Coachella, Bonnaroo and Lollapalooza.

**4PM THE PENNY BLACK, 420 SYDNEY RD, BRUNSWICK; 8.30PM THE DECK, 2-4 DAVEY STREET, FRANKSTON, FREE, CORONAEXTRA.COM.AU**

10am | The National Gallery of Victoria’s olfactory art installation, *Hyper-Natural*, curated by *New York Times* perfume critic and author Chandler Burr, closes this weekend. In the gallery’s sculpture garden, the exhibition explores how designers select synthetic fragrances when creating scent art.

**NGV INTERNATIONAL, 180 ST KILDA ROAD, CITY, FREE, 9620 2222, NGV.VIC.GOV.AU**

10am | Works by painter Arthur Boyd are being exhibited at the former home of John and Sunday Reed, opening this weekend. *Brides* is an exhibit based on Boyd’s *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half Caste* series, painted between 1957 and 1960. Open until March 9 2015.

**HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 7 TEMPLESTOWE ROAD, BULLEEN, FREE-$16, 9850 1500, HEIDE.COM.AU**

Noon | The Bridge Hotel presents its Bridge Caribbean LaneWay Festival. The afternoon street market is part of Good Food Month. Enjoy the likes of jerk chicken, tostones and pina coladas from the pop-up stalls, while listening to live entertainment.

**THE BRIDGE HOTEL, 642 BRIDGE ROAD, RICHMOND, FREE ENTRY, 9429 5734, MELBOURNE.GOODFOODMONTH.COM**

2pm | You Beauty play an “arvo” show to celebrate the release of their album *Jersey Flegg* on vinyl. The quartet mine Australian culture for song material. Supported by Tim Richmond, Monnone Alone and Magic Steven.

**THE EVELYN HOTEL, 351 BRUNSWICK STREET, FITZROY, $12, 9419 5500, EVELYNHOTEL.COM.AU**

5pm | Calpurnia Descending, the story of a faded screen goddess, bids audiences adieu on Sunday with a final performance. Created by Ash Flanders and Declan Greene and presented by Sisters Grimm, the play stars Paul Capsis as Beverly Dumont, a reclusive has-been offered a final shot at stardom.

**THE COOPERS MALTHOUSE, 113 STURT STREET, SOUTHBRANK, $30-$60, 9685 5111, MALTHOUSETHEATRE.COM.AU**

8pm | Terry Mann’s bedroom project Coach Bombay has grown into a band of five. The group’s most recent single is *Girls*, a summery, bubble-gum-bright electro-pop song with vocals by Mann and fellow band mates Luci Hodgson, Cynthia Sear, Andrew Congues and Ed Sharp-Paul. Coach Bombay perform at Boney with special guests Lanks.

**BONEY, 68 LITTLE COLLINS STREET, CITY, $8-$12, 9663 8268, BONEY.NET.AU**
Heide launches biggest exhibition of Arthur Boyd's Bride paintings ever seen

Heide Museum of Modern Art has just launched the most comprehensive exhibition of Arthur Boyd's Bride paintings ever seen.

The series, which is called Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-caste, depicts an Aboriginal man who's very dark, often painted in rich blue hues, and his mixed race, much fairer bride.

The paintings were sparked by a trip to Central Australia in 1953 and are credited with launching Boyd's international career.

There are 66 paintings in the Bride series altogether, and 40 of them make up the powerful exhibition at Heide.
Arthur Boyd’s Brides at Heide

The legendary Australian artist’s seminal Brides paintings will be shown in the most expansive exhibition of the famous and controversial series to date.

Long before he had become a household name, Arthur Boyd travelled to Central Australia in 1939, and the young artist was appalled by what he saw: an impoverished Aboriginal community, segregated and determinedly by an oppressive white population.

He was equally dismayed by the situation of those of mixed decent, isolated from both the indigenous and white communities, suspended in a no-man’s-land of evolution and destruction enforced by the government.

Boyd made hundreds of sketches of these experiences, which would lead to the seminal series, Love, Marriage and Boyd of a Half-caste, more commonly known as the Brides, which are on show at the Heide Museum of Modern Art until March 8.

Boyd was a giant of Australian modernist art. Known for his figurative expressionist style across a variety of media, he represented Australia in art council tours to France, Victoria, Basque, and is considered to be one of the nation’s most important 20th-century artists. 

Between 1957 and 1960 he painted more than 40 Brides, but the works quickly ascended into institutional and private collections around the country and the world. The Heide show is the most comprehensive exhibition of the series to date.

A comment on indigenous and racial issues in mid-century, Australia in focus of an allegorical love story, theво-intonoic paintings are considered a watershed not only in Boyd’s career, but also in the history of Australian art.

“The exhibition is the first major survey to explore the significance and impact of the Brides series on Australian art and the ongoing debate about race, identity and social justice,”

Throughout the series, Boyd’s imposing protagonists are all Aboriginal and his mixed-race bride. There are no specific narratives, instead, it’s a collection of poignant, dramatic and ambiguous moments in the pair’s lives, which are meant to challenge the viewer to consider the complexities of race and identity. The final images evoke a feeling of sorrow, frustration and hope.

Boyd’s work, featuring Brides like the walls of Heide’s main gallery. They are vivid, powerful tableaux of love and loss and grief. There’s an unspoken and unspoken edge to many of them: somberness and darkness pervade. The later Bride images evoke less powerful apprehension and less hope and renewal: the outline of a woman’s face as a surreal study.

The historical and personal content in which Boyd created the paintings is an intriguing one: Weeks’s essay in the exhibition catalogue is an evocative, descriptive and informative piece, one that provides an engaging and informative piece of text. It’s an insightful and engrossing piece that will undoubtedly be read by many.

The exhibition is on show at Heide Museum of Modern Art until March 8, a must-see for art lovers and enthusiasts. The Heide Museum of Modern Art is open from 10am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday and 11am to 5pm on Sundays.

Arthur Boyd’s Brides runs from November 25, 2014 until the March 8, 2015.

Heide is a proud partner of the Heide Museum of Modern Art.

heide.com.au
WHAT'S ON

EASTERN DANCE

ACADEMY OF DANCE VICTORIA
This Doncaster-based dance academy will hold its two annual concerts in December. Students from the school's junior and senior classes will interpret classic story books and tales, including Peter Rabbit, The Secret Garden and Alice In Wonderland. The budding young dancers are trained in a range of genres, such as ballet, jazz, hip hop and song and dance, making for a varied and exciting show.
- December 7 (4.30pm) and December 12 (6.30pm), Whitehorse Centre, 397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. Cost: $29.50; concession $25. Bookings: tickets@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or 9262 6555

THEATRE

OTHER PEOPLE’S MONEY
Set in the cut-throat business world, Jerry Sterner’s award-winning play features key players on opposing sides battling it out during a corporate takeover. Directed by theatre, film and television veteran John Gauci, the production, from Tangled Web Theatre Productions, features actors Greg Pandelidis, Michael Bate, Emma Officer, Edward Kennett and Gillian Holley.
- Until December 14, December 10-13, 8pm; matinées December 13 and 14, 2pm. Doncaster Playhouse, 679 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Cost: $25; concession $22; group of 15, $18 each. www.tangledweb.com.au Bookings: tickets@tangledweb.com.au, phone 9748 1468 or 0404 942 143 or www.trybooking.com/FPXB

MARKET

THE FINE DESIGN MARKET
Explore independent design, art, boutique craft, fine food and music at the Fine Design Market. The aim of the market is to support emerging and established designers and artists by providing a platform to showcase their quality works and connect them with their audience.
- December 7, 10am-3pm, Manningham City Square, 687 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Entry: gold coin donation. www.thefinedesignmarket.com.au

ROUND SHE GOES
This pre-loved fashion market allows women to sell their unwanted quality items, with the option to donate any unsold items to the Red Cross. There will be Christmas party frocks and one-of-a-kind gifts to browse. The market has more than 60 stalls, an indoor café and a food truck will stop by at lunchtime.
- December 7, 10am-3pm, Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill. Cost: $2 entry. Inquiries and to book a stall: info@roundshegoes.com.au www.roundshegoes.com.au

MUSIC

THE AMICI STRING QUARTET
Local musicians Anne and Zsolt Martonyi, and Christine and Keith Johnson – the Amici Quartet – will play an assortment of light classical and popular music at this event. They have performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Symphony and Theatre Orchestras, and have toured extensively overseas. RSVP required by December 6.
- December 7, 2pm. All Saints’ Anglican Church, corner of Whitehorse Road and Edward Street, Mitcham. Cost: $21 (includes afternoon tea). Inquiries: 9878 3463 or alsaintsmitcham@bigpond.com

FIT TO MUSIC
This exercise and dance program forms part of this year’s International Day of People with a Disability celebrations. It is a fun fitness class using music and some equipment to improve self-esteem, strength and co-ordination, and is open to people of all abilities and fitness levels. Carers and support workers are welcome.

COMMUNITY

NUNAWADING MEN’S PROBUS CLUB
The group helps retired and semi-retired men make the transition from their working life by keeping them active and broadening their outlook. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, with speakers at each meeting.
- December 9, 10am, Willis Room, Whitehorse Council chambers, 379 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. Inquiries: 9877 3452. www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au

CLASS

COLOUR MAGIC
Style guru Fiona Etty-Leal will use her image skills to help participants boost their image by wearing matching correct colours. A personalised swatch with 50 shades can be bought for an additional $77 at the workshop. Participants are asked to wear little or no makeup on the day.
- December 6, 9am-noon. Cost: $60. Mitcham Community House, 19 Brunswick Road, Mitcham. Inquiries: 9873 4587 or mitcham@connexus.net.au www.mitchamcommunityhouse.org

COMPILED BY BRENDAN BALE
EXHIBITION \ BRIDES

Arthur Boyd’s iconic Brides series of paintings was created between 1957 and 1960 after the artist travelled to central Australia. It represents a defining achievement in his career and in Australian art of the 20th century, and offers a critique of Australia’s racial divide through the use of an invented love story.

- Until March 9, Tuesday-Sunday 10am-5pm. Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen. Cost: adult $16; seniors $14; concession $12; children under 12 and members free. Inquiries: 9850 1500. www.heide.com.au
A fantastic new exhibition has opened at the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Bulleen. Arthur Boyd's Brides is on show at the museum until March 9.

Also known as Love, Marriage and Death of a Half Caste, the series was painted between 1957 and 1960 after the famed artist travelled to central Australia. The works represents a defining achievement in both the artist's career and in Australian art of the twentieth century.

A milestone in the advancement of local modernism and its humanist themes, the series offers a critique of Australia's racial divide in the form of an invented love story. The series earned Arthur critical acclaim but was gradually dispersed across public and private collections around the world.

In recent years many of the works have returned to Australia, providing an opportunity to bring much of the collection together. Heide's exhibition presents a number of the Brides, along with related drawings and ceramic pieces.

Heide is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am – 5pm.

Fiona Byrne is a former journalist and is the Public Relations Manager at Sofitel Melbourne On Collins. Fiona@fionabyrne.com.au
IT’S SHOW TIME

It’s the time of the year when galleries pull out their big guns, the blockbusters, writes Christopher Allen

This is the season when the galleries put up their summer blockbusters as fishermen put out their nets, then leave and wait to see what kind of haul they pull in. The existences of art world professionals and of the general public are thus counter-cyclical, the former gratefully escaping the grind of exhibitions and gallery life just as the holiday crowds look for something to do with the family on a rainy day.

In Sydney, one of the most highly publicised attractions is the Art Gallery of NSW’s Pop to Popism blockbuster, which brings together important works by figures such as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol as well as many things of lesser but complementary interest, and a large sample of the art made in Australia more or less under the impulse of pop.

If you feel the need for a more extreme experience, the Australian Museum’s Aztecs is an introduction to a society dominated by warfare and the capturing of prisoners to be offered up as sacrifices to appease bloodthirsty and seeming insatiable gods; the exhibition offers a striking picture of one of the most unappealing civilisations that has existed on earth. Recommended and thought-provoking holiday reading afterwards is Ruth Benedict’s classic Patterns of Culture (1934) in which she shows how radically a culture can affect the temperament of its individual members.

After this, any metaphysical anxieties about the nature of identity raised by the MCA’s Chuck Close exhibition will seem, quite literally, First World problems. This is, however, an absorbing show in which we see how the artist develops from his photorealist beginnings, which cast doubt on the veracity of the photographic image, into a deeper inquiry that is all the more penetrating for being grounded in the meticulous practice of such printmaking techniques as etching and mezzotint.

Another Sydney exhibition that promises to be of interest is Sydney Buddha by Zhang Huan at Carriageworks. Two enormous figures of Buddha will face each other, one the metal mould in which the other was shaped; the latter, compounded of incense ash gathered from temples and shrines and thus representing the physical but ephemeral remains of myriad prayers, will gradually collapse in the course of the exhibition, demonstrating the transitory nature of all form according to Buddhist doctrine.

Finally, in a completely different vein, Manly Art Gallery has an exhibition of 19th-century or possibly earlier copies from old master paintings — the sort of works that would have been common in the grander homes of the colonial period and thus have a place in the history of art in Australia, yet that largely have been consigned to the reserves of museums for the past century or so.

In Canberra, the principal summer exhibition is a retrospective of James Turrell, an American artist who is concerned with light and space and structures that frame and shape our perception of light, most often chambers open to the sky, such as Within Without, a permanent structure commissioned by the National Gallery of Australia and built in 2010. Impressions of Paris, meanwhile, is a survey of prints and works on paper by Honore Daumier, Edgar Degas and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. All are of great interest, but as we have seen many of the works by the last two quite recently, it is the extensive collection of prints by Daumier that is particularly fascinating, casting a sometimes bitterly satirical and sometimes gently humorous but always acutely perceptive eye over the realities of everyday life in the emerging modern metropolis of Paris.

At the National Portrait Gallery, there is a small but rewarding exhibition of portraits by Rick Amor, spanning a range of media from drawing and prints to painting, but always inviting us to follow the process of artistic thought in the specificity of each medium. At the National Museum, Spirited celebrates the place of the horse in Australian society since the late 18th century, from the period when it was the principal source of energy in rural work or city transport, to its role in war and finally, after the loss of most of its practical functions, to its continued place in recreation and sport.

In the other capitals, there has been an extraordinary capitulation to fashion shows: this
The reality has been a tendency to dilute and fashionable and appeals to corporate money. It has largely because the contemporary itself is made to contemporary art, even though this has been largely because the contemporary itself is fashionable and appeals to corporate money. The reality has been a tendency to dilute and degrade the concept of art by including design in various forms, thus opening the door to assimilation with a commercial culture whose values are antithetical to those of art.

As for the frocks, they are essentially a cynical way of tapping into an enormous potential audience of women who would not otherwise come through the gallery doors, and who care for art, as the old French saying goes, as a fish does for an apple. It is disingenuous to imagine that after admiring the dresses they will stay for a careful look at the engravings or immerse themselves in Bill Viola’s, Without a Shore. But these worthless attendance figures will be used to impress the political masters.

Fortunately there are several other things on at the National Gallery of Victoria, including the whimsical and oddly engaging David Shrigley and a survey of the imagery of the Mambo group, Sacred and Profane, an exhibition of Renaissance prints, and there is Takahiro Iwasaki’s elaborate reconstruction of the shrine of Itsukushima floating on a still expanse of water.

Meanwhile, the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, not far from the NGV, has Menagerie, devoted to the role animals play in the imaginative lives of humans, and the Ian Potter Museum at the University of Melbourne has an exhibition of the portraits of Richard Avedon.

On the outskirts of Melbourne, Heide has a survey of Arthur Boyd’s Bride series, perhaps the artist’s single most important body of work. Farther out again, Ballarat Art Gallery has two shows: an impressive selection of prints from the Bailleul Library of the University of Melbourne, Radicals, Slayers and Villains, and the beautiful exhibition of Greek and Russian icons, mostly from a private collection, that was reviewed in this column last week. And farther afield still, Mildura has an exhibition that will be discussed next week, recalling the Mildura Sculpture exhibitions of the 1960s and 70s.

Still, even the capitals that have sold their souls to the fickle demons of fashion have exhibitions that deserve notice. In Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia has a survey of the work of Nicholas Folland as well an exhibition of contemporary calligraphy from Japan, China and Mongolia, and Rembrandt and the Etching Revival, focused on an important new acquisition by the Dutch master. In Brisbane, there are two exhibitions of modern and contemporary Japanese art, one devoted to the woodblock print since 1950, the other to art after 1989.

In Hobart, the Museum of Old and New Art is showing River of Fundament by American artist and filmmaker Matthew Barney, best known for the Cremaster Cycle film series (1994-2002); the present work is a loose, and operatic, interpretation of Norman Mailer’s novel set in Pharaonic Egypt, Ancient Evenings (1983).

In Perth, the Art Gallery of Western Australia will show Treasures of the Jewish Ghetto of Venice, precious ceremonial objects that were buried in 1943 by religious leaders who subsequently died in German concentration camps; the treasure was recovered during recent restoration work in the ghetto and is on tour before returning to permanent display in the Museo Ebraico in Venice.

Those travelling overseas will be spoiled for choice. In London, the most spectacular exhibition will undoubtedly be Rembrandt: The Late Work at the National Gallery. The British Museum has Germany: Memories of a Nation as well as a new exhibition devoted to the history of trade in the Indian Ocean — a route between East and West as important, since antiquity, as the Silk Road far to the north. The Tate Gallery, coincidentally, has Late Turner: Painting Set Free, while the Tate Liverpool has Transmitting Andy Warhol for anyone whose appetite has been whetted by the Sydney exhibition, of which Warhol was the star.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has Constable: The Making of a Master. It also has just reopened the Italian Cast Room, which includes among other remarkable things a full-scale cast of Michelangelo’s David, newly restored. The Royal Academy is showing the first scholarly survey of Giovanni Battista Moroni, a very able 16th-century portrait painter who used to be dismissed as superficial but is here reappraised.
Towards the end of January the RA will open an important new exhibition: Rubens and His Legacy: Van Dyck to Cézanne.

In Paris, there are exhibitions devoted to ancient Rhodes and medieval Morocco at the Louvre, to Hokusai and Niki de Saint-Phalle at the Grand Palais, and to Marcel Duchamp and his relation to painting at the Centre Pompidou.

In Rome, the Scuderie del Quirinale has Flemish master Hans Memling, and Palazzo Barberini is presenting an exhibition of baroque painting including works from the collection of art historian Denis Mahon — a rare example of an expert wealthy enough to own works by masters on whom he was the pre-eminent authority.

In New York, the Metropolitan Museum has an exhibition devoted to Cézanne’s portraits of his wife, a survey of the strange and often erotic German mannerist Bartholomeus Spranger, and Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age, dealing with the Mediterranean reach of Near Eastern and Phoenician civilisation before the rise and colonial expansion of Greece. At the Museum of Modern Art, there is an exhibition of the paper cut-outs that occupied the last years of Henri Matisse.

In Washington, the National Gallery of Art has an exhibition commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of El Greco, and from the beginning of February Piero di Cosimo: The Poetry of Painting, on the complex figure whose iconography is still debated. At the Freer and Sackler galleries, Nasta’liq shows how classic Persian calligraphy evolved from ornamental lettering into something more like a meditative practice in which word and meaning become one with the art of penmanship.

CONTEMPORARY ART IS FASHIONABLE AND APPEALS TO CORPORATE MONEY
*Wedding Group* (1958)
by Arthur Boyd, from his Bride series, on display at the Heide Museum of Modern Art until March 9
The blockbusters

Sydney
Pop to Popism, AGNSW to March 1
Aztecs, Australian Museum to February 1
Chuck Close, MCA to March 15
Sydney Buddha, Carriageworks to March 15
European copies, Manly to February 1

Canberra
James Turrell, NGA to June 8
Impressions of Paris, NGA to March 10
Spirited, National Museum to March 9
Rick Amor, NPG to March 1

Melbourne
Sacred & Profane, NGV to March 15
David Shrigley, NGV to March 1
Takahiro Iwasaki, NGV to April 6
EIKON: Icons of the Orthodox Christian World, Ballarat Art Gallery to January 26
Arthur Boyd, Brides, Heide to March 9
Menagerie, ACCA to March 1
Richard Avedon People, Ian Potter Museum to March 15

Adelaide
The Extreme Climate of Nicholas Folland, AGSA to January 26
Brush and Ink: Contemporary Asian Calligraphy, AGSA
Rembrandt and the Etching Revival, AGSA

Brisbane
Hanga: Modern Japanese prints, QAG to April 26

From the Spirited exhibition, National Museum of Australia, Canberra

"We Can Make Another future": Japanese Art after 1989, GOMA to September 20

Hobart
Matthew Barney’s River of Fundament, MONA to April 13

Perth
Treasures of the Jewish Ghetto of Venice, AGWA to March 16

London
Rembrandt: The Late Works, National Gallery to January 18, Peder Balke to April 12
Germany: Memories of a Nation, British Museum to January 25; Connecting Continents: Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange to May 31
Late Turner: Painting Set Free, Tate London to January 25; Transmitting Andy Warhol at Tate Liverpool to February 8

Constable: The Making of a Master at Victoria & Albert to January 11
Giovanni Battista Moroni at the Royal Academy to January 25; Rubens and His Legacy: Van Dyck to Cezanne from January 24

Paris
Rhodes: A Greek Island and Gateway to the East, the Louvre to February 10; Medieval Morocco: An Empire from Africa to Spain to January 19;
Hokusai at Grand Palais to January 18; Niki de Saint-Phalle to February 2
Marcel Duchamp: La Peinture, Meme, Centre Pompidou to January 5

Rome
Hans Memling at Scuderie del Quirinale to January 18
From Guercino to Caravaggio: Sir Denis Mahon and Italian 17th-Century Art at Palazzo Barberini to February 8

New York
Madame Cezanne at the Metropolitan Museum to March 15; Bartholomaeus Spranger: Splendour and Eroticism in Renaissance Prague to February 1; Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age to January 4
Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs at MOMA to February 8

Washington
Piero di Cosimo: The Poetry of Painting in Renaissance Florence at the National Gallery of Art from February 1; El Greco to February 16.
THIS WEEK: ON SCREEN

The Cameo Outdoor Cinema will return this week to kick off its 2014/2015 season. Over the season the program features cult classics such as *The Blues Brothers*, *Monty Python’s Life of Brian*, *Pulp Fiction* and *E.T.*, as well as new release arthouse, family and blockbuster titles, including *The Hobbit: The Battle of Five Armies*, *Fifty Shades of Grey* and *Chappie*. The Cameo Outdoor Cinema season will run from Thursday December 18 to Sunday April 5, and this week features *The Princess Bride*, *Paddington*, *The Water Diviner* and *Annie*. Head to cameocinemas.com.au for more information.

ON STAGE

*Lully Lullay: Songs For Christmas*, an intimate recital of beautiful Christmas music featuring mezzo soprano Lotte Betts-Dean and friends, will take place this weekend. The program includes an array of well known as well as lesser performed Christmas music: a collection of beautiful songs including Peter Cornelius’ *Weihnachtslieder Op 8*, Frank Martin’s *Trois Chants de Noël* for voice flute and piano, as well as songs by Britten, Grieg, Reger and Gounod among others, a selection of solo piano works by Percy Grainger, some yuletide favourites and carols and a special a capella performance of Bach’s masterwork *Motet BWV 227 Jesu Meine Freude*. Joining Lotte will be Konrad Olszewski (piano), Caitlin Ayers (flute), Daniel Thomson (tenor), Greta Williams (soprano), Niki Ebacioni (alto) and Matthew Tng (baritone). *Lully Lullay: Songs For Christmas* will take place from 3pm on Sunday December 21 at the Richmond Uniting Church.

ON DISPLAY

Arthur Boyd’s series *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste*, more commonly known as the *Brides*, was painted between 1957 and 1960 after Boyd travelled to central Australia. It represents a defining achievement in both the artist’s career and in Australian art of the twentieth century. A milestone in the advancement of local modernism and its humanist themes, the series offers a critique of Australia’s racial divide in the form of an invented love story. The two main protagonists in the allegory—an Aboriginal man and his mixed-race bride—face the trials of a love thwarted by both personal and cultural conflict. They embark on a metaphorical journey that is traced symbolically through complex imagery denoting cyclical growth, decay and renewal. It’s currently on display at the Heide Museum of Modern Art.

PICK OF THE WEEK

Jenny Lovell and Anna Renzenbrink are joining forces for a Charles Dickens infused Christmas show this week. *What the Dickens!* is improvised theatre carefully balancing cheeky audience participation, carol singing and story-telling to celebrate the classic themes of Dickens’ novels – moral dilemmas, lost fortunes, found love and orphans. Anna Renzenbrink and Jenny Lovell worked together in the Impro Melbourne Ensemble for over ten years before creating Bonnet Productions. Drawn together by their mutual passion for period romance and BBC bonnet dramas, over the last three years they have successfully performed *In the Parlour* in various festivals including Short & Sweet, Melbourne International Comedy Festival and most the recently New Zealand Improv Festival. *What The Dickens* will come to The Butterfly Club from Wednesday December 17 until Sunday December 21.
Museums honour for Boyd

SIMON PLANT

OPEN Country has long been shut.

The sprawling Murrumbeena plot which potter Merric Boyd established in 1913 was bulldozed in 1964, its pottery studio and weatherboard cottage cleared to make way for a block of flats. But 50 years on, the spirit of freedom which animated that fabled cultural site on the edge of a railway reservation has been reawakened in a National Gallery of Victoria exhibition.

Outer Circle: The Boyds and the Murrumbeena Artists, at NGV Australia, recounts the exuberant post-war production of paintings, drawings, ceramics, sculpture and furniture at Open Country by Merric’s son, Arthur, his good friend John Perceval and a host of other art makers.

“This property, on what was then the southeast fringe of Melbourne, saw the coming and going of some of the most important figures in 20th century Australian art,” co-curator David Hurlston says.

Black and white photographs convey the semi-rural atmosphere, but the most evocative image may be Perceval’s pencil sketch of Open Country’s ramshackle garden with its washing line, vegetable patch and mismatched chairs.

Arthur Boyd’s daughter, Polly, remembers the scene well and, visiting Outer Circle at Federation Square, she was delighted to find so many familiar objects on show. Not just paintings by her gifted dad from the 1940s and ’50s, but glazed earthenware tiles, ceramic angels and pots, most of them drawn from the NGV’s own collection.

“It’s quite wonderful seeing it all together, one thing alongside the next,” she says.

Another summer exhibition, at the Heide Museum of Modern Art, picks up where Outer Circle leaves off.

Arthur Boyd: Brides unites core paintings from a huge series of works that Boyd completed between 1954 and 1960 after visiting Central Australia. Deeply affected by the plight of indigenous Australians, he conceived a love story between an Aboriginal man and his mixed-race bride and the resulting cycle — titled Love, Marriage and Death of a Half Caste — was at once beautiful and disturbing, conveying a universal message about the human condition.

The Brides, as the series is commonly known, elevated Boyd to the front rank of Australian painting and the Heide show is a rare chance to re-evaluate the pictures that secured his reputation.

By chance, a third Boyd exhibition has landed at Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. An Active Witness, a touring show organised by the Bundanon Trust, shows how the artist’s political concerns (for social equity, for environmental protection) were played out on his canvases.

“Art for Boyd was a way to combine compassion,” the curators explain. And Polly Boyd — compelled to paint from an early age — sensed that empathy first-hand.

“I don’t remember being taught anything, really,” she says, “but Dad was always very encouraging. Was it ever intimidating having such a famous father?”

“No, it was never. Will I be good enough? It was always, ‘This will be OK, next time it might be better’,” she says.

“There was a very good workaday attitude (at Open Country). The memory I have is of being in the landscape, painting what was around me. It was such a terrific feeling.”

Polly Boyd — who contributed a family tree to the Outer Circle exhibition — continues to make art.

“I’ve got some ideas... a bit of painting, a bit of pottery. I love using clay. Always have. And when the urge to do it again came back a few years ago, I was determined to conquer it. Just like my father did.”

- Outer Circle: The Boyds and the Murrumbeena Artists, NGV Australia (Federation Square), until March 1. Free entry.


Arthur Boyd (second from right), a Boyd family koala jug (inset) and one of Boyd's works from the Brides series (bottom).
Acclaimed Australian artist Arthur Boyd is being honoured at three Melbourne exhibitions over summer

When: 30 June – 28 August
Where: Melbourne Museum of Modern Art, 60 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Arthur Boyd’s work is renowned for its bold use of colour and dynamic composition. This exhibition celebrates his life and legacy through a selection of his most iconic works.

Another summer exhibition, at the Heide Museum of Modern Art, will also showcase the work of other Australian artists.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) will also be hosting a major retrospective of the work of Australian artist Fred Williams, who is known for his landscape paintings that capture the essence of the Australian outback.

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) will feature a special exhibition on the work of Australian artist John Brack, who is known for his abstract and expressionistic paintings.

This summer, the Ray White Foundation has also announced that it will be funding the creation of a new permanent collection of contemporary Australian art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

For more information on these exhibitions and others, visit the websites of the respective art institutions.

---

Newspaper: Herald Sun
Author: Various
Date: 30 June

---

* Top 5 Exhibitions to visit in Melbourne this summer

1. Heide Museum of Modern Art
2. Melbourne Museum of Modern Art
3. National Gallery of Victoria
4. Art Gallery of New South Wales
5. Ray White Foundation Collection

---

* Top Events in Melbourne this summer

1. Victorian Wine Festival
2. Melbourne International Film Festival
3. Melbourne Cup Carnival
4. Melbourne Cup Day
5. Melbourne Winter Festival

---

* Top Destinations in Melbourne this summer

1. Fitzroy
2. Collingwood
3. South Yarra
4. St Kilda
5. Carlton

---

* Top Restaurants in Melbourne this summer

1. Maggie Jo’s
2. The Bird
3. Joni’s
4. Red Door
5. The Dandy

---

* Top Bars in Melbourne this summer

1. The Horse’s Head
2. The Bird’s Nest
3. The Astor
4. The Black Cat
5. The Illustrated Man

---

* Top Hotels in Melbourne this summer

1. The Langham
2. The Westin
3. The Melbourne
4. The Sebel
5. The Langham Camperdown

---

* Top Attractions in Melbourne this summer

1. Melbourne Aquarium
2. Melbourne Zoo
3. Luna Park
4. The Great Ocean Road
5. Phillip Island

---

* Top Activities in Melbourne this summer

1. Skiing at Mount Hotham
2. Horse riding in the Yarra Valley
3. Hiking in the Grampians
4. Kayaking on the Yarra River
5. Swimming in Port Phillip Bay
WHAT’S ON IN DECEMBER

THIS MONTH MELBOURNE IS FILLED WITH A WIDE RANGE OF EVENTS TO EXCITE AND INSPIRE.

Award winning photos on show
The works of some of Australia’s best press photographers are on display at the State Library of Victoria. The Nikon-Walkley Press Photography exhibition showcases 89 works by photojournalists shortlisted for the prestigious Nikon-Walkley awards. Heartbreak, triumph, jubilation, devastation, it's all on show. The annual awards are the pinnacle of achievement for Australian press photographers and are judged by a panel of senior photographers and picture editors. The exhibition includes images from finalists in such awards as Photo of the Year, Press Photographer of the Year, Sport Photography, News Photography, Feature/Photographic Essay, Portrait Prow and Community/Regional Prize.

Ongoing, State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne. 8664 7000. slv.vic.gov.au

Celebrate Xmas with the Brandenburg
Noël! Noël! The Christmas program of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra promises magical singing thanks to the Brandenburg Choir as well as music of yesteryear with the orchestra’s period instruments. Highlights of the program include a Gregorian chant, medieval carols, French and German hymns, English Christmas songs and many favourites such as Christmas Night, O Come All Ye Faithful, Once in Royal David’s City and Stille Nacht.

6 December, Melbourne Recital Centre, 31 Sturt Street, Southbank, 1300 782 856. brandenburg.com.au

Iconic Paris on show at Sofitel
To celebrate its 50th anniversary French hotel brand Sofitel Luxury Hotels commissioned Donald Williams of Global Arts Projects to curate an exhibition of compelling and evocative images of Paris by San Francisco-based, Melbourne born photographer, Jon Rendell. The results are on display at Sofitel Melbourne. Most of the Paris photographs in the exhibition, Iconic Paris, were taken by Rendell in January 1978 and 9 years later in January 1987 just after the opening of the Musée d’Orsay. Rendell’s subjects are the familiar iconic images of Paris and follow in the tradition of other photographers of that city including Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Brassai, and Eugene Atget.

From 9 December, Lobby, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, 25 Collins Street, Melbourne. 9653 0000. sofitel-melbourne.com

Mapping Melbourne
Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) is presenting Mapping Melbourne 2014, a four-day showcase of independent contemporary Asian arts celebrating the vibrant influence Asia continues to have on Melbourne.
to have on Melbourne’s cultural dynamism. With over 40 local and international artists, this multidisciplinary four-day festival spans art, theatre, music, spoken word, dance and film in the heart of Melbourne. Mapping Melbourne 2014 also features three major exhibitions and special projections featuring newly made works and some never shown before in Australia.

3-6 December, various locations around Melbourne. multiculturalarts.com.au/events2014/mapping.shtml

Mapping Melbourne 2014

NiCA’s Dreams

The National Institute of Circus Arts (NiCA) is presenting Dreams from the Second Floor, a new circus work featuring NiCA’s graduating artists. Dreams from the Second Floor explores different types of dreams – from those which come to us at night, sometimes so vivid that we can smell, taste and touch, rope, German wheel, hand balancing, hula hoops, roue cyr, dance trapeze, tightwre and tumbling;

Until 6 December; NiCA National Circus Centre, 41 Green Street, Prahran. 9214 6975. nica.com.au

NICA’s Dreams

Death of a Half Caste, more commonly known as the Brides. Painted between 1957 and 1960 after Boyd travelled to central Australia, it represents a defining achievement in both the artist’s career and in Australian art of the 20th century. A milestone in the advancement of local modernism and its humanist themes, the series offers a critique of Australia’s racial divide in the form of an invented love story.

Ongoing, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen. 9850 1500. heide.com.au

Arthur Boyd at Heide

Heide Museum of Modern Art is staging Arthur Boyd’s series Love, Marriage and humanist themes, the series offers a critique of Australia’s racial divide in the form of an invented love story.

Heide Museum of Modern Art.


St Kilda’s Openair Cinema

Ben and Jerry’s Openair Cinema features an assortment of the latest and greatest new releases, a selection of sci-fi thrillers, cult classics and family favourites. On Saturdays and Sundays entertainment also includes live music from an array of Melbourne’s best up-and-coming artists.

Until Sunday 21 December; South Beach Reserve, St Kilda Esplanade, St Kilda. openaircinemas.com.au/melbourne/home

School holiday fun at Sea Life

A new Art Aquarium is a special feature of SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium’s school holiday program. After seeing hundreds of amazing tropical fish visitors can use their imagination to create their very own sea creature and watch it come to life as it’s magically released into the huge nine-metre virtual aquarium where it moves like a real sea creature in the virtual underwater world. The experience is part of the all-new Coral Caves tropical wonderland. Other school holiday highlights include special presentations, interactive animal encounters and 12-zones of discovery where you can learn about how fish swim, what they like to eat and how they survive in the wild.

From 20 December, SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium, Corner King and Finders Streets, Melbourne. 1800 026 576. melbourneaquarium.com.au

Top cricket at MCG

Attending the Boxing Day Cricket Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground is a Melbourne tradition and this year’s match between India and Australia is set to be just as popular. There’s keen competition between players from both countries while fans can be equally as passionate.

26-30 December, Melbourne Cricket Ground, Brunton Avenue, Richmond. 9657 8888. cricket.com.au

Death of a Half Caste, more commonly known as the Brides. Painted between 1957 and 1960 after Boyd travelled to central Australia, it represents a defining achievement in both the artist’s career and in Australian art of the 20th century. A milestone in the advancement of local modernism and its
Arthur Boyd - Brides - Visual Arts Review
Friday, January 23, 2015 - 09:22

What Arthur Boyd - Brides
Where: Heide Museum of Modern Art
Curator: Kendrah Morgan

"Seeing the Aborigines in that state was depressing. At that stage the Aborigines the Aborigines wasn't known to most Australians... You suddenly come across it after imagining they are noble type savage living in this bush." Arthur Boyd, interview, BBC, 24 July 1963.

Arthur Boyd's series Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste, vividly known as the Brides, was born from the artist's encounter with Aborigenic life in Central Australia in the early 1950's. The violent contrast between the indigenous and non-indigenous in this period led to little contact between the inhabitants of these two worlds and the majority of non-Aboriginal Australians were ignorant of or indifferent to the difficulties faced by Indigenous Australians. The environment was harsh; the circumstances created the devastating effects of contentions that completely deserted the Indigenous cultures.

The effect of Boyd's psyche post-travels was extreme, generating a moral responsibility for the artist to address such calamitous neglect. As demonstrated by his oeuvre, Boyd was a passionate protagonist against indigenous treatment and acts of cruelty. What particularly distressed him was the predication of those labelled 'half-castes', who seemed to him starkly misremembered - stranded between black and white societies. The Brides series was painted between 1957 and 1963, six years after his return, and was first exhibited at Australian Galleries, Melbourne in April 1958. Further paintings followed and the series culminated in a major exhibition at Zenith Gallery, London, in 1962 launching Boyd's international career.

Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste is an invented love story told in allegorical form set deep in the heart of the bush. On the next to Alice Springs, Boyd passed a truck carrying a group of Indigenous tribes in white wedding apparel piled into a vehicle ordinarily used for transporting cattle. This memory was the catalyst for the series. Delving on the landscape paintings he was well known for, Boyd went further to introduce the juxtaposition of social forces of a black man and his half-caste bride - the protagonists. Their metaphorical journey is linked with both cultural and personal conflict, contrasting Australia's racial divide through modernist and humanitarian themes.

Interestingly, this too the series has not received the critical attention and evaluation it deserves. Curator Kendrah Morgan cites their troubling subject matter as the main reason hindering a contemporary re-appraisal as it "actively challenging questions about our collective values and conscience." The works in present context perhaps could perhaps be misconstrued as culturally insensitive given the imagery. Boyd's compassion and empathy for Indigenous Australians is clear however the use of the term 'half-caste'. In the title of the series as well, the titles of individual paintings is archaic and disconcerting.

There is no coherent narrative to the series - each painting presents us with an isolated, at times ambiguous and always dream-like incident. As a way of depicting the bride's paradoxic identity, Boyd often painted her with a white face and blue limits. However, the series progresses her identity and social make-up is often obscured. Her true self throughout the series, seemingly eludes her lover as well as the viewer. Her presence is often absent - a young girl perhaps symbolizing as an alter ego, or a dismembered body. Boyd consistently explores, or rather interrogates, the fear, anxiety and unease that saturate sexuality and differences.

The first scene in the exhibition consists of the earlier works. They possess a stark, crisp aesthetic the figures gliding in the depths of a menacing environment, the colours often violent and glaring. The lighting in the gallery space is dim. The optics on the paintings draw the floating figures from the canvas. There is a distinct theatrical element to these earlier paintings. The figures appear pronounced and positioned, as if on stage, their faces seemingly masked.

These works seem authentically Morgan describes the complex imagery as "developing cyclical growth, decay, and renewal or hope, anguish and release." At the far end of the first gallery space loops an award winning film made in 1959 by Tim Burstall (a friend of Boyd's) and Patrick Ryan, animating details of the Bride's paintings. The original soundtrack by Burstall runs for the duration. It begins with the following:

"Black man, why do you stand so sad
With tears in your eyes?

Tomorrow you marry your half-caste bride
Under the open skies.

And ends thus:

"As I lay sleeping in the bush
Dreaming of my bride
The best of death how love me
And settled by my side
And now I'm haunted by a dream
A dream where I am dead
A white man kills me like a dog.

Flowers grow from my head
A naked coffins where I am laid
My two arms on my side
And I see her come to kiss me for
Lily lovely, half-caste bride.

The bald wall encompasses the mood of the works beautifully. From the perspective of this room, which is filled with the aching sounds of the ballad, the first main gallery space appears sombre - sobering, gloomy, filled with floating ghosts and complexities.

The second main gallery space contains further works produced, culminating in a major exhibition at Zenith Gallery, London in 1962. These paintings leave behind the stage-like, static and somewhat contrived elements of the earlier works. The landscape is loose and expansive - the subject matter less emotional. The protagonists appear in a more virulent, often transparent form. In the earlier works they were haunted, heartrendingly, and wearily depicted. Here there is a sense of resignation and hope. They are on a transparent nature, as if dissolving through the landscape. Morgan describes the bride's and groom's journey at this stage as returning to nature, "thus the series' cycle of growth, decay and renewal is complete."

Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste was part of a triggering of a trend among artists and cultures of the period prompting to a morbid issue of the depressive plight of Indigenous Australians, improve conditions, raise awareness and instigate social change. The Brides addressed problems of discrimination, assimilation and Indigenous identity. Boyd's exploration of the issues faced by Indigenous Australians was one of the first examples of an Australian artist campaigning for change in this sphere. This exhibition reveals how paintings along with related drawings and studies once dispersed around the world. Slowly the works have returned to Australia and this exhibition retrieves them for the first time, providing an extraordinary opportunity for contemporary reappraisal.

For all the prevailing stylistically, the works speak of the metaphorical, bagging us to look beyond skin or genus, and beyond colour and form, to understand our connecting fears and desires. These paintings are not re-collections of the disheveled in the Central Desert but empathetic images from the desert of the heart.

Dशेजङ घरुङ, Arthur Boyd: A Life, p.203
It is a credit to the Heide Museum to be presenting this important exhibition devoted to Arthur Boyd’s Bride series, but also slightly puzzling, because one might have expected work of this significance to be shown at the National Gallery of Victoria. After all, the series is the one with which Boyd established himself as one of the handful of defining Australian painters of the postwar years, and it is one whose originality and evocative power was never surpassed and perhaps not equalled in his later oeuvre.

In this regard it is comparable to Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly series of a decade earlier: the Kelly pictures made Nolan’s reputation, and they remain arguably the most memorable works he produced; there was a vast output in the decades that followed, but of disturbingly variable quality.

Both series have always been recognised as outstanding contributions to the Australian art of their time, but the circumstances of their painting and subsequent ownership has meant Nolan’s Kelly series became better known. Most of them remained together in the collection of John and Sunday Reed until the latter gifted a set of 25 to the National Gallery of Australia in 1977 — confirming their place in the history of Australian art.

Boyd’s pictures did not have the good fortune of belonging to a single patron, but were sold to many collectors and scattered around the world, and have only in recent decades begun to make their way back to Australia. This made it hard to see them as a series, and many of them have rarely if ever been shown since their first commercial exhibitions. Outstanding individual pieces, such as Shearers playing for a bride (1957, NGV), Persecuted lovers (1957-58, Art Gallery of South Australia), or The Reflected bride (1957-58, NGA), are in public collections, but most remain in private hands.

It will be interesting to see how this situation evolves over the next decade or so. One would expect more works to come on to the market, and it would be a good thing if the NGV could acquire several more of the essential pictures in the series, such as Half-caste child (1957) and Bride running away (1957), as well as perhaps The Frightened bridegroom (1957-58) — this smaller version is much better painted than the larger one made in 1958. Bridegroom going to his wedding (1957-58) and one or two others from 1958. The subsequent pictures made in 1959 and 1960 generally lack the focus and intensity of the earlier ones.

We could eventually look forward to a room or bay at the NGV grouping the core of the Bride series, which would be given the prominence it deserves and become accessible as part of the narrative of Australian art in the decades after World War II. But the fact the show is on at Heide does not suggest the NGV has anything like this in mind. Perhaps it will take an enlightened gift or bequest to set something like this in train.

Part of the problem seems to be a reticence about the subject matter of the series, even a distinct angst about the artist’s treatment of Aboriginal themes. Boyd, who had hardly seen any Aborigines as he grew up, encountered the reality of their lives during a trip to the outback in 1951. He was struck by a number of things: the poverty, the exploitation and the constraints under which they lived. But as an artist, he was especially gripped by the image of brides riding to a wedding in the back of a ute, and he was moved by the pathos of half-caste children who seemed to belong neither to the indigenous nor to the white world.

There is a first picture in which some of these themes appear, but do not yet cohere into a po-
etic narrative: Half-caste wedding (1954). It was only in 1957 that the impressions of the trip matured in his imagination and produced two images that are fundamental to the series. In one, Half-caste child, we see what appears to be a white girl clinging to a black man; then we realise she has black legs and feet, a strikingly simple way of visually representing her mixed parentage. The narrative is clear: the weeping Aboriginal woman in the door of the hut behind is her mother, and she is the product of an adulterous relationship with a white man; the man from whom she seeks affection and who looks away so grimly is not her father.

The other remarkable early picture from the same year is Bride running away, in which the girl — here represented as all white — is shown fleeing from an older man who is presumably her father, or at least her mother's husband.

The third fundamental early picture in the series is Shearers playing for a bride, where the girl, on the right, seems to be waiting for fate to decide which of the three black shearsers will win her. The game of cards is played by moonlight, with moths gathering around a lamp above, just as the shearsers are drawn to her. Her role is deeply ambiguous: she is impassive but for a certain melancholy; she holds a bouquet of flowers, while Boyd's ramox — a dark horned beast symbolic of lust and base passions — is jumping up on her like a dog.

The reasons these pictures and themes have caused unease today is perhaps to do with what might be considered an exaggerated treatment of Aboriginal features, though any exaggerations need to be seen in the context of Boyd's expressionistic style in which figures from the visionary early pictures to the Nebuchadnezzar series are all violently distorted. Perhaps there is concern about the subject of the half-caste bride and the alienation entailed by her mixed-raced status, especially in light of what we now know about the removal of mixed-race children.

One can see how even Boyd himself, 20 years after the pictures had been painted, could be led by changing cultural attitudes to feel a little guilty about the series. He is reported to have said he could have been more explicit or forceful in his commentary on Aboriginal disadvantage. On the other hand some recent admirers of Boyd's work and of this series in particular have tried to argue for a politically engaged reading of his images.

But Boyd was a poet, not a political painter, and the truth is the series is not primarily about the plight of the Aborigines any more than the Nebuchadnezzar series is literally about the Biblical character. The figures of the shearsers and the brides and the half-caste children have all become, in Boyd's imagination, universal symbols of love, desire, loss, loneliness and pain; ultimately, images of the impossibility of wholeness and harmony.

Boyd was not an intellectual, a theorist or an ideologue; he followed his imagination in searching for images that could articulate his deepest instincts about the human condition. Here we can see that quite early in the series, he abandons the half-caste theme and emphasises instead the tension of black suitor and white bride. Time and again, he evokes longing, appetite, separation and despair: the bridegroom riding a horse that has the head of the bride; the bride weeping over the dead groom. These are not subjects that can be decoded into a political iconography, they are simply intuitive images of the impossibility of union.

The impossible conjunction is primarily that of man and woman, and commentators never fail to recall the painful memories he had of his mother refusing his father entry to her bedroom. Other pictures allude, as his recent biography has shown, to a difficult time in his own life, when his wife had suffered a nervous breakdown, and he was engaged in a secret liaison with another woman. It was typical of the way Boyd's imagination worked that whatever he was experiencing would become grist to the mill of his work.

The picture of lovers threatened by a man with a gun has been plausibly identified as reflecting his dread of being found out by his lover's husband. Here, Boyd is the black bridegroom and the bride is his lover. It is significant that the man with the rifle is represented with a black face; Boyd clearly wanted to exclude any superficial and distracting reading of him as a white man threatening a black man. By this time the white and black colours were almost nothing to do with their original Aboriginal referent, but primarily stood for the polar opposition of male and female.

This use of the colours black and white to signify the irreconcilable difference between the lovers is much less to do with any observation about the difficulties of relations between individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds than an archetypal symbol of what is antithetical and yet complementary, like male and female or the moon and the sun. Indeed the more we look at these pictures, the more we find the overt subject transforming into poetic ideas of more general connotation. The impossibility of the union or synthesis of male and female itself transcends the objective distinction between the sexes and seems to become a more universal principle within the human subject, something like
Jung’s idea of the animus and the anima.  

The pictures, ultimately, seem to speak of the irreconcilable duality within the human soul: the dark and the light, the masculine and the feminine, the assertive and the receptive. In a classical and humanist view of the world, these elements may come into a harmonious synthesis or rhythmic alternation. In Boyd’s bleak post-Christian vision of a world populated with suffering, guilty sinners, they are eternally at odds, eternally in tragic opposition.

So the Bride pictures, although initially inspired by glimpses of Aboriginal life, are far wider and more general in meaning. This certainly does not mean Boyd was indifferent to the suffering of Aborigines. In the end his greatest tribute to the Aboriginal people was not in making any superficial and tendentious statement about their social situation, but rather in adopting them as powerful symbols of universal human experience and suffering.

**International Round-up**

**NEW YORK**

*Museum of Modern Art*

*The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters*

MoMA is exhibiting the works of French artist, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The exhibition concludes on March 22.

**PARIS**

*The Louvre*

*Animals and Pharaohs — The Animal Kingdom in Ancient Egypt*

This show explores the bond between the Egyptians and the animal world. On display are more than 430 objects, most of which come from the Louvre collection. Runs until March 9.

**LONDON**

*The National Gallery*

*Monet: The Water Garden at Giverny*

This free exhibition displays the National Gallery’s holdings of Monet’s Giverny paintings. It is the first time in 17 years these pictures have been shown together.

**LONDON**

*The British Museum*

*Ancient Lives, New Discoveries*

Discover the hidden secrets of eight mummies at the British Museum’s latest exhibition. Ends April.
Half-caste child (1957), top; Bride running away (1957), left
Arthur Boyd's Brides paintings reunited at Melbourne's Heide Museum

January 30, 2015
Sasha Ostrov

The ARTERY Aboriginal Art
8 Bagge St, Naremburn, NSW 2070, Australia.
www.therertiary.com.au

Arthur Boyd: Brides
Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, Victoria
Closes March 9, Tues – Sun 10am – 5pm

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held an important Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy exhibition, which was largely drawn from Boys’ gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although Boys’ gift to the nation was outstanding in its size and depth, covering much of his work from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, an obvious gap was his Bride series of paintings. I recall Boyd telling me that the Bride series sold well and in those days he was not in a financial position to put aside works for his own collection, as he was too busy.

The Brides consists of thirty-six and forty paintings executed mainly between 1957 and 1960. "It was the series that firmly established Boys’ reputation as an artist notationally and internationally. The early paintings in the series were first shown in Melbourne at the Australian Galleries in 1954, and some of the paintings were included in the notorious Armory Show of the following year, and then the supplemented series was exhibited to considerable critical acclaim in London at the Zwinger Galleries in 1960.

This exhibition at Heide, John and Sunday Reed’s original property on the outskirts of Melbourne, is the most comprehensive attempt to date to bring together the key paintings of the Brides for a timely reassessment.

The Bride series is the most overtly political of Boyd’s output. The notable presence of the black and indigenous figures in the paintings, particularly the black bride, is a frequent feature of the series. The bride figure is often depicted in a state of distress, or in a position of vulnerability, which emphasizes the theme of the series. The paintings are not merely a depiction of a group of individuals, but a commentary on the political and social issues of the time. Boyd’s use of the figure of the bride as a symbol of the indigenous population and their struggle for recognition and rights.

In a key painting in this series, "Shavonna playing for the bride", 1957, we see the half-child bride in her wedding dress, with the bridal train pinned down by the feet of the sheared. The brushwork is a sign of celebration, of joy and marriage, but Boyd’s bride and the flowers are a sign of mourning. The exaggerated size, which appears on the figure, such as the beetle on the foot of the left hand bride or the butter life in her hair, are motifs that can be traced back to Flemish art, which Boyd had studied in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. The exaggerated size of the feet and hands, and the curious dislocation of the features of the face are all reminiscent of early Flemish art.

The effective power of the Brides paintings lies in the fact that they transcend mere commentary on the suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, and serve as a broader comment on humanity. In a way, the torment of the brides of these paintings are no different from the tormented whites, both suffer through their attempt to survive, and the series can be interpreted as a broad existentialist comment on the "everyman".

The Brides are not without a doubt a great group of paintings in the history of Australian art, and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art? In them there is a combination of lyricism and drama, intensity, but this is seen through the prism of appropriations from Chagall and Picasso. The brushwork is bold and rough in places, the draughtsmanship uneven. In the strongest pieces, including "Shavonna playing for the bride", 1957, Bridegroom going to the wedding, 1957-58, there is a sense of a darker mood. Other paintings appear as overstated, somewhat repetitive and a little hollow in their pictorial rhetoric.

Among the Brides are great paintings, but they are very much of the 1950s and Boyd was to develop into a much more literate artist later in life. Unlike Nelson’s early Kelly series, with which the Brides are so frequently compared, Boyd’s Brides do not transcend the period of their creation.
ART from NZ

Melita Hall's Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, Victoria

Closes March 9, Tues – Sun 10am – 5pm

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held its magnificent Arthur Boyd: Agony and Elation exhibition, which was largely drawn from Boyd’s gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although Boyd’s gift to the nation was outstanding in its size and scope, covering much of his work from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, an obvious gap was his series of paintings. I recall Boyd telling me that the Bridget series was very important to him and he was in financial distress to put aside works for his own collection, as he was to do later.

The Bridget series consists of thirty and twenty-three paintings created mainly between 1957 and 1960, and includes Bridget’s self-portraits. The Bridget series, which is in the early stages, included the paintings in the show. In Melbourne, the Australian Galleries, 1959, then some of the paintings were included in the notorious Anapalas show of the following year, and the London-based supplement was held at the Galleria in 1960.

This exhibition at Heide, John and Sunday Rowl’s original property on the outskirts of Melbourne, is the most comprehensive attempt to date to bring together the key paintings of the Bridget series for a timely reassessment.

The Bridget series suffers from the problem of attempts made to read the series as a narrative or a personal reflection with the continuous narrative principle as found in Nolan’s Kelly’s series. As in Boyd’s preceding works, although the figurative and narrative aspects are always strong, there exists no literary equivalent, only a series of lyrical digressions on a theme, in the words of the art historian, Frank Philp, a “dream-play.” The leading theme of the series is an existentialist notion of frustration—the figures are endless and changing, but they are conscious of their own mortality. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Australian Aborigines he came into contact with: “They are forced into this position and it has a serious effect on you, when you are not used to it... you suddenly come against it after imagining that they are noble savage types living in the bush. In their ahem and their dances... there is a sort of rhythm but if there isn’t any fire in the same way as the Africans. It is on Australian subject— I suppose— because they are, as far as I know, the only aboriginal race that has this remarkable capacity for dancing.”

In a key painting in this series, Sheehan playing for the Jingles 1957, she weep the half-caste child in her wedding dress, with the bridal train pinned down by the feet of the sheakers, who are trampling on her dress together with the beast. The bunch of flowers held by the bride is a potent hallucination by the Russian artist Marc Chagall. In Chagall’s art, flowers are a sign of celebration, as in marriage, and the happiness of lovers, but for Boyd the bride’s flowers are a sign of loneliness and ennui. The exaggerated insects, which appear on the figure, such as the snail on the foot of the extreme left-hand sheaker or the butterfly in his beard, are motifs that are traced back to Derain art, which Boyd had studied in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. The exaggerated size of the feet and hands, and the curious dislocation of the features is reminiscent of early Picasso.

The effective power of the bridal paintings lies in the fact that they transact more commentary on the suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, and serve as a broader comment on humanity. In a way, the formless half-castes are different from the formless whites, both suffer through their attempts to survive, and the series can be re-interpreted as a broader existentialist comment on the ‘everyman’.

The Bridges are without doubt a key group of paintings in the history of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art? In them there is a combination of lyrical and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of appropriations from Chagall and Picasso. The brushwork is bold and rough in places, the draughtsmanship unrefined. In the strongest pieces, including Sheehan playing for the Jingles 1957, one appreciates his work in the 1957-59, Postcard series, 1957-58 and Phantom bride, 1957-58, there is a pure and intense power. Other paintings appear as overstated, somewhat repetitive and a little hollow in their pictorial narrative.

Among the Aborigines are great paintings, but they are very much the 1950s and Boyd was developing, as a much finer artist 30 years later. Unlike Nolan’s early Kelly series, with which the Bridget series is so frequently compared, Boyd’s Bridget do not outlive the period of their creation.
Arthur Boyd's Brides reimagined at Melbourne's Heide Museum

January 30, 2015
Sarah Gates

Arthur Boyd: Brides

Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, Victoria
Closes March 9, Tues – Sun 10am – 5pm

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held a magnificent Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy exhibition, which was largely drawn from Boyd's gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although Boyd's gift to the nation was outstanding in its size and depth, much of his work from the late 1960s through to the early 1970s, an obvious gap in Boyd's series of paintings. I recall Boyd telling me that the bride sold well and in those days he was not in a financial position to put aside works for his own collection, as he was to do later.

The Brides consists of thirty and forty paintings executed roughly between 1967 and 1971. It was the series which firmly established Boyd's reputation as an artist nationally and internationally. The early paintings in the series were first shown in Melbourne at the Australian Galleries in 1968, then some of the paintings were included in the notorious Artprobe exhibition of the following year, and then the supplemented series was exhibited to critical acclaim in London at the Zwemer Gallery in 1969. This exhibition at Heide, Hilton and Sunday Roads' original property on the outskirts of Melbourne, is the most comprehensive attempt to date to bring together the key paintings of the Brides for a timely reassessment.

The Brides suffer from the problem of attempts made to read the series as a narrative on par with the continuous narrative principal as found in Islander's Kelly series. As in Boyd's preceding works, although the figurative and narrative aspects are always strong, there exists no literary equivalent, only a series of lyrical digressions on a theme, or in the words of the art historian, Franz Philip, a "stream play". The leading theme of the series is an existentialist notion of fiction - the figures are endlessly waiting, but are self-conscious of their own futility. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Aboriginal peoples he interacted with: "They are forced into this position and it has a serious effect on you, when you are not used to it ... you suddenly come against it after imagining that they are noble savages living in the wild. In their fields, and in their dances ... there is a sort of rhythm but there isn't any fire in the same way as the Africans. It is an Australian subject - I suppose - because they are, as far as I know, the only true, aboriginal race that has this ever changing web in the series. In a key painting in this series, Shoewing for the bride, 1967, we see the half caste child in her wedding dress, with the bridal train pressed down by the feet of the shower, who are tamping on her dress together with the bride. The bunch of flowers held by the bride is a potent totem for the German artist Marc Chagall. In Chagall's art, flowers are a sign of celebration, of joy in marriage or the happiness of others, but for Boyd the bride's flowers are a sign of lunatic beflagment. The exaggerated insects, which appear on the figures, such as the bat, in the field of the left hand者s on the butterfly in his beard, are motifs that are traced back to Flemish art, which Boyd had studied in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. This exaggerated size of the feet and hands, and the curious distortion of the features of the two women, is a feature of the "everywoman".

The effective power of the Brides lies not in the fact that they tend not to comment on the suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, but to serve as a broader comment on humanity. In a way, the tortured half-castes are different from the tortured whites, both suffer through their attempt to survive, and the series can be interpreted as a broad satirical comment on the "everyman".

The Brides are without doubt a key group of paintings in the history of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd's development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art? In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of appreciations from Chagall and Picasso. The brushwork is bold and rough in places, the draughtsmanship unique. In the strongest pieces, including: Shoewing for the bride, 1967, Bridgeman going to his wedding, 1957-58; Persuaded Arvers, 1957-58 and Phantasm Bride, 1957-58, there is a pure and intense power. Other paintings appear as overstated, somewhat repetitive and a little hollow in their pictorial quality.

Among the Brides are great paintings, but they are very much of the 1960s and Boyd was to develop into a much finer artist later in life. Unlike Islander's early Kelly series, with which the Brides are so frequently compared, Boyd's Brides do not transcend the period of their creation.

Most popular
1. Super Bowl XLIX halftime show: Katy Perry dazzles but ...
2. Hot Girls Wanted's look at grabbing world of amateur...
3. I'm a Celebrity Australia: 2015 episode 2 recap:
4. QAQ returns with a new blood red art set and ...
5. I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Australia: Strong...
**Arthur Boyd: Brides**

Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, Victoria

Closes March 5, Tues – Sun 10am – 5pm

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held a major retrospective exhibition, a survey and a boxed set, which was largely drawn from Boyd’s gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although the collection was dispersed, it was outstanding in its size and depth, covering much of his work from the late 1930s through to the early 1970s, on obvious gap was his Brides series of paintings. I recall Boyd telling me that the Brides sold well and in those days he was not in a financial position to put aside works for his own collection, as he was to do later.

The Brides consists of thirty and forty paintings executed mainly between 1957 and 1961. It is the series which firmly established Boyd’s reputation as an artist nationally and internationally. The early paintings in the series were shown in Melbourne at the Heide Museum in 1958, then some of the paintings were included in the notorious Antipodean show of the following year, and then the supplementary series was exhibited to considerable critical acclaim in London at the Zwemmer Gallery in 1959. This exhibition at Heide, John and Sunday Gordon’s estate, provides the context for the current show. Heide, now the most comprehensive attempt to date to bring together the key paintings of the Brides for a timely reexamination.

The Brides suffer from the problem of attempts made to read the series as a narrative arc with the continuous narrative principle as found in Nolter’s Kelly series. As in Boyd’s preceding works, although the figurative and narrative aspects are always strong, there exists no literal equivalent, only a series of lyrical expressions on a theme, or in the words of the art historian, Franz Philip’s, “a stream play.” The leading themes of the series is the existentialist notion of frustration – the figures are endlessly waiting, but are self-conscious of their own futility. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Aborigines who he came into contact with. “They are forced into this position and it has a serious effect on you, when you are not used to it...you suddenly come against it after imagining that they are noble savage types living in the bush. In their mien and in their dance...there is a sort of rhythm but there isn’t any fire in the same way as the Africans. It is an Australian subject – the suppressed, the slow and passive, as far as I know, the only native, aboriginal race that has this tremendous softness and passivity.”

In a key painting in this series, Sheerers playing for the bride, 1957, we see the half-caste child in her wedding dress, with the bridal train pinned down by the feet of the shearers, who are tramping on her dress together with the beast. The bunch of flowers held by the bride is a hatpin embroidered by the Russian artist Ina Visch, in Cathlap’s art, flowers are a sign of celebration, of joy in marriage or the happiness of lovers, but for Boyd the bride’s flowers are a sign of lunatic bereavement. The exaggerated insects, which appear on the figures, such as the red ants on the foot of the extreme left-hand shearer or the butterfly in his beard, are motifs that can be traced back to Flemish art, which Boyd had studied in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. The exaggerated size of the feet and hands, and the curious dislocation of the features of the face are all reminiscent of early Pre-Raphaelite.

The effective power of the Brides paintings lies in the fact that they transcend more commentary on the suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, and serves as a broader comment on humanity. In a way, the tormented half-castes are no different from the tormented whites, both suffer through their attempts to survive, and the series can be interpreted as a broad existentialitarian comment on the sweepstakes.

The Brides are without doubt a key group of paintings in the history of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art? In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity; but this is seen through the prism of appropriations from Chang and Pissarro. The brushwork is bold and rough in places, the draughtsmanship uneven. In the strongest pieces, including Sheerers playing for the bride, 1957, Bridge Gate going to his wedding, 1957-58, Parted lovers, 1957-58 and Phantom bride, 1957-58, there is a pure and intense power.

Other paintings appear as overstated, somewhat repetitive and a little hollow in their pictorial rhetoric. Among the Brides are great paintings, but they are very much of the 1950s and Boyd was to develop into a much more artist later in life. Unlike Nolter’s early Kelly series, with which the Brides are so frequently compared, Boyd’s Brides do not transcend the period of their creation.
Arthur Boyd’s Brides paintings re-united at Melbourne’s Heide Museum

January 30, 2016
Brisbane Cultural

The ARTERY Aboriginal Art

Most popular
1. I'm a Celebrity... report card: Toilet humour and 
2. I'm a Celebrity Australia szyep episode 2 recipe ...
3. Super Bowl XLIX halftime show: Katy Perry dances but ...
4. From Middle-earth to Salem: The Hobbit's Richard ...
5. My Kitchen Rules 2015 episode 1 recap: Jar and Shiz ...

Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen, Victoria
Closes March 9, Tues – Sun 10am – 5pm

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held its magnificent Arthur Boyd: Agency and Ecstasy exhibition, which was largely drawn from Boyd’s gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although Boyd’s gift to the nation was outstanding in its size and depth, covering much of his work from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, an obvious gap was the Bridies series of paintings. I recall Boyd telling me that the Bridies sold well and in those days he was not in a financial position to put aside works for his own collection, as he was to do to later.

The Bridies consists of thirty and forty paintings executed mainly between 1957 and 1962. It is the series which firmly established Boyd’s reputation as an artist nationally and internationally. The early paintings in the series were first shown in Melbourne at the Australian Galleries in 1960, though some of the paintings were included in the notorious Antipodean show of the following year, and then the supplemented series was exhibited to considerable critical acclaim in London at the Zwemmer Gallery in 1963. This exhibition at Heide, John and Sunday Reed’s original property on the outskirts of Melbourne, is the most comprehensive attempt to date to bring together the key paintings of the Bridies for a timely reassessment.

The Bridies suffers from the problem of attempts made to read the series as a narrative on par with the continuous narrative principle as found in Nolan’s Kelye series. As in Boyd’s preceding works, although the figurative and narrative aspects are always strong, there exists no literary equivalent, only a series of lyrical digressions on a theme, as in the works of the art historian, Franz Philipp. A “stream play”. The leading theme of the series is an existential notion of frustration — the figures are endlessly waiting, but are self conscious of their own futility. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Aboriginal peoples he came into contact with: “They are forced into this position and it has a serious effect on you, when you are not used to it ... you suddenly come against it after imagining that they are noble savage types living in the bush. In their rites and in their dances ... there is a sort of rhythm but there isn’t any fire in the same way as the Africans. It is an Australian subject — I suppose because they are, as far as I know, the only native, aboriginal race that has this tremendous softness and passivity.”

In a key painting in this series, Shearers playing for the bride, 1957, we see the half-child in her wedding dress, with the bridal train pinned down by the feet of the shearers, who are trampling on her dress to tear it, with the bride in a cuffed half-Coat by the Russian artist Marc Chagall. In Chagall’s art, flowers are a sign of celebration, of joy in marriage or the happiness of lovers, but for Boyd the bride the flowers are a sign of funereal banality. The excavated insects, which appear on the figures, such as the beetles on the foot of the cotemporary left-hand shearer or the butterfly in his beard, are motifs that are traced back to Flemish art, which Boyd had studied in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. The exaggerated size of the feet and hands, and the curious dislocation of the features of the face are all reminiscent of early Picassos.

The effective power of the Bridies paintings lies in the fact that they transcendent more commentary on the suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, and serve as a broader comment on humanity. In a way, the tornated half-coats are different from the tornated whites, both suffer through their attempt to survive, and the series can be interpreted as a broad existentialist comment on the “humanity”.

The Bridies are without doubt a key group of paintings in the history of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, do they how appear works as series of art? In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of appreciations from Chagall and Picasso. The brushwork is bold and rough in places, the draughtsmanship unerring. In the strongest pieces, including, Shearers playing for the bride, 1957, Bridgroom going to his wedding, 1957-58,Parasited lovers, 1957-58 and Phantom birds, 1957-58, there is a pure and intense power. Other paintings appear as overacted, somewhat repetitive and a little hollow in their pictorial rhetoric.

Among the Bridies are great paintings, but they are very much of the 1960s and Boyd was to develop into a much finer artist later in life. Unlike Nolan’s early Kelye series, with which the Bridies are so frequently compared, Boyd’s Bridies do not transcend the period of their creation.
STATE OF THE UNION

Christopher Allen
Arthur Boyd: Brides
Heide Museum of Modern Art. Until March 9

It is a credit to the Heide Museum to be presenting this important exhibition devoted to Arthur Boyd’s Bride series, but also slightly puzzling, because one might have expected work of this significance to be shown at the National Gallery of Victoria. After all, the series is the one with which Boyd established himself as one of the handful of defining Australian painters of the postwar years, and it is one whose originality and evocative power was never surpassed and perhaps not equalled in his later oeuvre.

In this regard it is comparable to Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly series of a decade earlier: the Kelly pictures made Nolan’s reputation, and they remain arguably the most memorable works he produced; there was a vast output in the decades that followed, but of disturbingly variable quality.

Both series have always been recognised as outstanding contributions to the Australian art of their time, but the circumstances of their painting and subsequent ownership has meant Nolan’s Kelly series became better known. Most of them remained together in the collection of John and Sunday Reed until the latter gifted a set of 25 to the National Gallery of Australia in 1977 — confirming their place in the history of Australian art.

Boyd’s pictures did not have the good fortune of belonging to a single patron, but were sold to many collectors and scattered around the world, and have only in recent decades begun to make their way back to Australia. This made it hard to see them as a series, and many of them have rarely if ever been shown since their first commercial exhibitions. Outstanding individual pieces, such as Shearers playing for a bride (1957, NGV), Persecuted lovers (1957-58, Art Gallery of South Australia), or The Reflected bride (1957-58, NGA), are in public collections, but most remain in private hands.

It will be interesting to see how this situation evolves over the next decade or so. One would expect more works to come on to the market, and it would be a good thing if the NGV could acquire several more of the essential pictures in the series, such as Half-caste child (1957) and Bride running away (1957), as well as perhaps The Frightened bridegroom (1957-58) — this smaller version is much better painted than the larger one made in 1958, Bridegroom going to his wedding (1957-58) and one or two others from 1958. The subsequent pictures made in 1959 and 1960 generally lack the focus and intensity of the earlier ones.

We could eventually look forward to a room or bay at the NGV grouping the core of the Bride series, which would be given the prominence it deserves and become accessible as part of the narrative of Australian art in the decades after World War II. But the fact the show is on at Heide does not suggest the NGV has anything like this in mind. Perhaps it will take an enlightened gift or bequest to set something like this in train.

Part of the problem seems to be a reticence about the subject matter of the series, even a distinct angst about the artist’s treatment of Aboriginal themes. Boyd, who had hardly seen any Aborigines as he grew up, encountered the reality of their lives during a trip to the outback in 1951. He was struck by a number of things: the poverty, the exploitation and the constraints under which they lived. But as an artist, he was especially gripped by the image of brides riding to a wedding in the back of a ute, and he was moved by the pathos of half-caste children who seemed to belong neither to the indigenous nor to the white world.

There is a first picture in which some of these themes appear, but do not yet cohere into a po-
etnic narrative: Half-caste wedding (1954). It was only in 1957 that the impressions of the trip matured in his imagination and produced two images that are fundamental to the series. In one, Half-caste child, we see what appears to be a white girl clinging to a black man; then we realise she has black legs and feet, a strikingly simple way of visually representing her mixed parentage. The narrative is clear: the weeping Aboriginal woman in the door of the hut behind is her mother, and she is the product of an adulterous relationship with a white man; the man from whom she seeks affection and who looks away so grimly is not her father.

The other remarkable early picture from the same year is Bride running away, in which the girl — here represented as all white — is shown fleeing from an older man who is presumably her father, or at least her mother’s brother.

The third fundamental early picture in the series is Shearers playing for a bride, where the girl, on the right, seems to be waiting for fate to decide which of the three black shearers will win her. The game of cards is played by moonlight, with moths gathering around a lamp above, just as the shearers are drawn to her. Her role is deeply ambiguous: she is impassive but for a certain melancholy; she holds a bouquet of flowers, while Boyd’s ramox — a dark horned beast symbolic of lust and base passions — is jumping up on her like a dog.

The reasons these pictures and themes have caused unease today is perhaps to do with what might be considered an exaggerated treatment of Aboriginal features, though any exaggerations need to be seen in the context of Boyd’s expressionistic style in which figures from the visionary early pictures to the Nebuchadnezzar series are all violently distorted. Perhaps there is concern about the subject of the half-caste bride and the alienation entailed by her mixed-raced status, especially in light of what we now know about the removal of mixed-race children.

One can see how even Boyd himself, 20 years after the pictures had been painted, could be led by changing cultural attitudes to feel a little guilty about the series. He is reported to have said he could have been more explicit or forceful in his commentary on Aboriginal disadvantage. On the other hand some recent admirers of Boyd’s work and of this series in particular have tried to argue for a politically engaged reading of his images.

But Boyd was a poetic, not a political painter, and the truth is the series is not primarily about the plight of the Aborigines any more than the Nebuchadnezzar series is literally about the Biblical character. The figures of the shearers and the brides and the half-caste children have all become, in Boyd’s imagination, universal symbols of love, desire, loss, loneliness and pain; ultimately, images of the impossibility of wholeness and harmony.

Boyd was not an intellectual, a theorist or an ideologue; he followed his imagination in searching for images that could articulate his deepest instincts about the human condition. Here we can see that quite early in the series, he abandons the half-caste theme and emphasises instead the tension of black suitor and white bride. Time and again, he evokes longing, appetite, separation and despair: the bridegroom riding a horse that has the head of the bride; the bride weeping over the dead groom. These are not subjects that can be decoded into a political iconography, they are simply intuitive images of the impossibility of union.

The impossible conjunction is primarily that of man and woman, and commentators never fail to recall the painful memories he had of his mother refusing his father entry to her bedroom. Other pictures allude, as his recent biography has shown, to a difficult time in his own life, when his wife had suffered a nervous breakdown, and he was engaged in a secret liaison with another woman. It was typical of the way Boyd’s imagination worked that whatever he was experiencing would become grist to the mill of his work.

The picture of lovers threatened by a man with a gun has been plausibly identified as reflecting his dread of being found out by his lover’s husband. Here, Boyd is the black bridegroom and the bride is his lover. It is significant that the man with the rifle is represented with a black face; Boyd clearly wanted to exclude any superficial and distracting reading of him as a white man threatening a black man. By this time the white and black colours were almost nothing to do with their original Aboriginal referent, but primarily stood for the polar opposition of male and female.

This use of the colours black and white to signify the irreconcilable difference between the lovers is much less to do with any observation about the difficulties of relations between individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds than an archetypal symbol of what is antithetical and yet complementary, like male and female or the moon and the sun.

Indeed the more we look at these pictures, the more we find the overt subject transforming into poetic ideas of more general connotation. The impossibility of the union or synthesis of male and female itself transcends the objective distinction between the sexes and seems to become a more universal principle within the human subject, something like
Jung's idea of the animus and the anima.

The pictures, ultimately, seem to speak of the irreconcilable duality within the human soul: the dark and the light, the masculine and the feminine, the assertive and the receptive. In a classical and humanist view of the world, these elements may come into a harmonious synthesis or rhythmic alternation. In Boyd's bleak post-Christian vision of a world populated with suffering, guilty sinners, they are eternally at odds, eternally in tragic opposition.

So the Bride pictures, although initially inspired by glimpses of Aboriginal life, are far wider and more general in meaning. This certainly does not mean Boyd was indifferent to the suffering of Aborigines. In the end his greatest tribute to the Aboriginal people was not in making any superficial and tendentious statement about their social situation, but rather in adopting them as powerful symbols of universal human experience and suffering.

**International Round-up**

**NEW YORK**
**Museum of Modern Art**
*The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters*
MoMA is exhibiting the works of French artist, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The exhibition concludes on March 22.

**PARIS**
**The Louvre**
*Animals and Pharaohs — The Animal Kingdom in Ancient Egypt*
This show explores the bond between the Egyptians and the animal world. On display are more than 430 objects, most of which come from the Louvre collection. Runs until March 9.

**LONDON**
**The National Gallery**
*Monet: The Water Garden at Giverny*
This free exhibition displays the National Gallery’s holdings of Monet’s Giverny paintings. It is the first time in 17 years these pictures have been shown together.

**LONDON**
**The British Museum**
*Ancient Lives, New Discoveries*
Discover the hidden secrets of eight mummies at the British Museum’s latest exhibition. Ends April.
Half-caste child (1957),
top; Bride running away
(1957), left
Boyd’s powerful Brides reunited

Arthur Boyd: Brides
Heide Museum of Modern Art,
7 Templestowe Road, Bullen, Victoria
Closes March 9, Tues – Sun
10am – 5pm
Reviewed by Sasha Grishin

Earlier in 2014 the National Gallery of Australia held its magnificent Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy exhibition, which was largely drawn from Boyd’s gift to the gallery of thousands of works from his own collection. Although Boyd’s gift to the nation was outstanding in its size and depth, covering much of his work from the late 1930s through to the early 1970s, an obvious gap was his production from the early 1940s through to the later 1950s. Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy – the figures are endlessly waiting, but are self-conscious of their own futility. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Aboriginal peoples he came into contact with: “They are forced into this position and it has a tremendous softness and passivity.”

The leading theme of the series is the subject – I suppose – because they are, as far as I know, the only native, aboriginal race that has this suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, but they are self-conscious of their own futility. Boyd wrote of his own response to the Aboriginal peoples he came into contact with: “They are forced into this position and it has a serious effect on you, when you are not used to it… you suddenly come against it after imagining that they are noble savage types living in the bush. In their rites and in their dances there is a sort of rhythm against it after imagining that they are noble savage types living in the bush. In their rites and in their dances there is a sort of rhythm

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?

In them there is a combination of lyricism and dramatic intensity, but this is seen through the prism of Australian art and in Arthur Boyd’s development as an artist. However, seeing them now half a century later, how do these paintings appear as works of art?
Unlike Nolan's early Kelly series, with which the Brides are so frequently compared, Boyd's Brides do not transcend the period of their creation.


For the thinking and the curious.

Arts diary

WAS HERE!

WILL ALWAYS EXPRESS A
INITIALS IN A FREE AND PAINING
LIKE AN EXPLORER WHICH

LIE ON THE WATERWASH CARVING

ARTIST
Arthur Boyd: Brides

This event has already occurred.

Sunday, 8th March 2015
7 Templestowe Road
Bulleen, Victoria

Call: 03 9850 1500.
Email: info@heide.com.au.

Arthur Boyd's series Love, Marriage and Death of a Half Caste, more commonly known as the Brides, was painted between 1957 and 1960 after Boyd travelled to Central Australia. It represents a defining achievement in both the artist's career and in Australian art of the twentieth century. A milestone in the advancement of local modernism and its humanist themes, the series offers a critique of Australia's racial divide in the form of an invented love story. The two main protagonists in the allegory—an Aboriginal man and his mixed-race bride—face the trials of a love thwarted by both personal and cultural conflict. They embark on a metaphorical journey that is traced symbolically through complex imagery denoting cyclical growth, decay, and renewal. The Brides were produced in stages, with the initial sequence exhibited in Melbourne at Australian Galleries in 1958, then again with new additions at Zwemmer Gallery, London, in 1960. The series earned Boyd critical acclaim but was gradually dispersed across public and private collections around the world. In recent years many of the works have returned to Australia, providing an unprecedented opportunity to reunite them. Heide's exhibition will present the core paintings of the series shown at the initial 1958 and 1960 exhibitions and related drawings and ceramic pieces alongside them.
YOU'VE GOT THIS.

COME ON BABE

Bianca Cash is heading up our march for International Women's Day, and to keep the momentum going we are giving away one of her exclusive prints!

OFFERS, BUBBLES, DJ'S AND MORE
At the David Jones Fashion and Beauty Event Tonight!

ARTHUR BOYD: BRIDES
WIN two tickets to see the Heide exhibition before it closes.

SAMBAG | FAMILY & FRIENDS WEEKEND
Personal styling, and a 10% discount for you and your bestie.