



## MEDIA RELEASE

# BOOK REVEALS NEW DIRECTION FOR ABORIGINAL ART

## Thérèse Rein to Launch Corrigan Collection Book on Nov 12



**OCTOBER 30, 2008**— The new direction that Aboriginal painting has taken since the turn of the century will be revealed when **Thérèse Rein** launches ***New Beginnings: Classic Paintings from the Corrigan Collection of 21st Century Aboriginal Art*** at 6pm Wednesday, November 12 at the **Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane**.

“As with many of the artists in this book, collector **Patrick Corrigan**’s life has been a series of new beginnings,” said author **Emily McCulloch Childs**. “The artists whose work he collects share with him an early life that encompassed hardships and abrupt change that was navigated and overcome.”

A self-made businessman who divides his time between Sydney and the Gold Coast, Patrick Corrigan’s arts benefaction has grown with his business success. His card, which evocatively reads “*Successful Beggar – I beg for amongst others Art Gallery of New South Wales, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland State Library.... struggling artists, jazz musicians...*”, indicates the personal commitment which has led to his donations of many million dollars worth of art and funds to Australia’s cultural institutions over the last 40 years. Already known for many different collection streams, post-2000 and moved by the strength of contemporary Aboriginal painting, Corrigan started his new collection.

“I fell in love with this work when I first saw paintings by the older artists of Blackstone and Wingellina (Irrunytju) and other art from around that region in 2000,” said Corrigan. “During the 1980s and ‘90s when artists such as Emily Kngwarreye and Rover Thomas were coming up I’d been focussed on other collecting, especially contemporary photography. But this art, with its colour and power, completely bowled me over. I’d never seen anything like it and it started me looking at other contemporary Aboriginal painting as it seemed to have entered a new dimension.”

***New Beginnings*** features the latest in Aboriginal painting by some of Australia’s oldest artists who have newly turned their talents to canvas. In this sumptuously illustrated book, their work appears for the first time alongside those of other classic modern painters of the 21st century.

Featured from the collection are modern masters of the Western Desert, Kimberley and Top End such as **Tommy Watson, Bill Whiskey Tjapaltjarri, Naata Nungurrayi, Makinti Napanangka, Patju Presley, George Tjungurrayi, Eubena Nampitjin, Jimmy Donegan, Regina Wilson and Wingu Tingima**, whose work is featured on the book’s cover, as well as a large and cohesive range of other equally powerful paintings.

A supporter of the new and emerging, Corrigan chose 32-year-old writer and curator Emily McCulloch Childs (co-author also of the newly released *McCulloch’s Contemporary Aboriginal Art – the complete guide*) as the book’s selector of images and main author. The book features a preface by National Museum of Australia’s **Margo Neale** and an extensive essay by University of Sydney Professor of Contemporary Arts, **Ross Gibson**, on the aesthetics of the collection and Aboriginal art.

**Patrick Corrigan, Emily McCulloch Childs and Ross Gibson are available for interview.**  
(Biographies follow.)

Publisher: McCulloch & McCulloch Australian Art Books  
Format: HB, jacketed  
Extent: 156 pp. Size: 305 mm x 245 mm  
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## Emily McCulloch Childs BA Hons



The co-director of McCulloch & McCulloch Australian Art Books, Emily is a writer, publisher and curator. Born in Melbourne in 1976, she grew up partly at her grandparent's house on the Mornington Peninsula, an old cottage full of books and art, much of which was produced by family and friends such as Arthur Boyd. Her education in the arts largely occurred here with the McCulloch family.

She assisted in the family endeavours of writing, publishing and art from an early age, giving her first gallery tour to visitors to the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery (where her grandfather, Alan McCulloch, was founding director) at the age of four, and like her mother, Susan McCulloch, before her, assisted with the *Encyclopedia of Australian Art* as a teenager.

Emily studied Music and English at La Trobe University, graduating with honours in 1998. She has worked in publishing companies and newspapers in London, art galleries in Melbourne, written for art magazines including *Australian Art Collector*, *Antiques & Art*, and *The Scene*, was the panel for Art Melbourne 06 *Off the Wall*, and assisted in curating Clean Ocean Foundation's successful surfboard art charity auction *Hang 12*.

Since 2003 Emily has worked in collaboration with her mother, with whom she co-wrote and published the 4th Edition of *McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art*. Her interest in Aboriginal desert art has led to her travelling to many remote communities around Australia and conducting extensive research in this area. She is the co-author of *McCulloch's Contemporary Aboriginal Art; The Complete Guide*.

## Ross Gibson



Ross Gibson is Professor of Contemporary Arts at the University of Sydney. He makes books, essays and films and also produces multimedia environments and IT systems for museums and public spaces.

His books include *The Diminishing Paradise* (1984), *South of the West* (1992), *The Bond Store Tales* (1996), *Exchanges* (1996, editor), *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland* (2002), and *Remembrance + The Moving Image* (2003, editor).

His films include *Camera Natura* (1985), *Dead To The World* (1991) and *Wild* (1993).

His major exhibitions include *Remembrance + The Moving Image*, *Street X-Rays*, and *Crime Scene*, the latter being part of a suite of multimedia productions entitled *Life After Wartime*, made in collaboration with Kate Richards.

Between 1993 and 1996, he was a senior consultant producer during the inaugural phase of the Museum of Sydney. From 1999 to early 2002 he was Creative Director for the establishment of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image at Federation Square in Melbourne.

He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities.



## Patrick Corrigan



**Patrick Corrigan AM** has been one of Australia's most well-known and passionate arts patrons, collectors and benefactors for more than forty years. Since 1980 he has made major donations to Australia's leading and regional art galleries and many other art projects. He is chair of the Qantas Art Prize, director of the Gold Coast Arts Centre, non-executive chair of the Gold Coast City Regional Gallery and life patron of the Queensland State Library, the Art Gallery of New South Wales Library and the National Association of Visual Artists. He received an honorary doctorate from Bond University and is a life member of a number of music and visual art organisations. When not travelling to pursue his business and collecting interests he lives with his wife Barbara on the Gold Coast and in Sydney. His three adult children, who share his interest in art, live in different states.

Excerpt from **The Collector and the Collection**

***New Beginnings: Classic Paintings from the Corrigan Collection of 21st Century Aboriginal Art.***

Emily McCulloch Childs

One of Australia's major art collectors and patrons, Patrick Corrigan AM, has had a strong collecting instinct since he was a young child. Born in Central China to English parents, he began collecting lead soldiers at the age of five. By the time he was nine, this collection was the best amongst his friends.

Corrigan's early beginnings were affected by World War Two. After the outbreak of hostilities as a result of the war, he and his mother attempted to travel to Australia for safety, but were captured by the Japanese in Hong Kong, and spent four gruelling years in a prisoner of war camp. They finally reached Australia after the war, and the young Corrigan quickly showed his aptitude for business upon leaving school. After initially beginning as a junior clerk with Unilever, he rose quickly through the ranks of companies until by 1955 he was appointed General Manager of J.N Campbell Pty. Ltd. He established his own freight company, Corrigan's Express, in 1967, with a \$1000 loan. This business became the springboard for a highly successful career in the freight industry.

It was through freight, unusually, that Corrigan found his love of art. His company shipped large numbers of books for Paul Hamlyn Books, and Corrigan became friendly with its publisher Kevin Weldon. He would visit Weldon's headquarters at *Art & Australia*, and there met artists such as John Coburn, Brett Whiteley, Pro Hart and Neil Taylor. Art, he says, 'drew him in'.

He became drawn to the 'modern genius' of Whiteley, and enraptured with the 'tenacious draftsmanship' of Lloyd Rees.<sup>1</sup> He began collecting their works with a passion, and soon came to add further artists of great note, such as John Olsen and Rosalie Gascoigne, to his collection. Other artists Corrigan has collected include the thoughtful, poetic Noel McKenna, powerhouses Susan Norrie, Janet Laurence and sculptor Clement Meadmore, and that great painter of fire, Tim Storrier.

Earlier works in his collection include those by modernist Grace Cossington Smith, *The Field* abstractionist Alun Leach-Jones, and the radical, New Zealand-born Colin Lanceley. Whilst



undoubtedly a serious collector, Corrigan is also always looking for the fresh and innovative, and likes to have fun with art. Recent artworks in his collection include the whimsical dioramas by art world visual commentator Alasdair MacIntyre, and a DVD by new media artist and 2007 Venice Biennale representative, Daniel von Sturmer, which sits on light box on a kitchen bench.

Corrigan's other love, books, has also led to two major important book collections. His collection of artists' bookplates, *The Pat Corrigan Collection of Australian Artists' Bookplates*, which includes bookplates created by Eric Thake, Norman Lindsay, Tom Roberts, Adrian Feint, Brett Whiteley, Lloyd Rees and hundreds of others, was donated to the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1995. Taking heed of the motto 'a good collector is an informed collector', Corrigan has always collected books on Australian art and read widely in order to make informed choices. In 1980, many of his art books were acquired by James Hardie Industries, and now form the basis of the Library of Australian Fine Arts, housed at Queensland's State Library. His interest in Lindsay memorabilia led to his collection of some 3000 letters, manuscripts and other material by Norman Lindsay and his family. Valued at around \$1 million, in 1998 he donated the collection to the State Library of Queensland. He continues to collect art books.

Corrigan's commitment to emerging and younger artists has seen him in the past initiate programmes such as the NAVA Pat Corrigan Artists Grant and the Pat Corrigan Travelling Scholarship for Painting at the National Art School. More recently, he became Chairman of the Judging Panel of the new Qantas Art Prize, a venture designed to enable contemporary artists to travel in order to further their future work, with awards granted state by state. The inaugural winner for Queensland was one of the notable Venice Biennale 2009 Australian representatives, Vernon Ah Kee.

At a personal level, Corrigan is supported by his wife Barbara and children Kylie, David and Ryan who all share his interest in art.

#### Notes

1. Marina Saint Martin, *Rich man, poor man, beggar man...art man*, biography of Pat Corrigan, 2007, p.3.