



'Chain of Ponds'
76cmH x 56cmW Collagraph

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LAND MARKS

Orange Regional Gallery
Civic Square
ORANGE NSW 2800
AUSTRALIA

March 2007

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... The main body of the show consists of large paintings, and these are a very lively group of works indeed. Tim works in a style that I describe as 'Natural Abstraction', something of a genre in Australian landscape, where exponents such as John Olsen, Fred Williams, John Firth Smith, and others simplify through abstraction the tracks and traces of landscape, marking out watercourses and tree lines with gestures of more or less solidity.

There is no landscape painting like this anywhere else in the world, and Tim Winters is certainly a fine practitioner within this overarching category.

Australia's bare ground and wide spaces between ancient watercourses and natural features of astonishing ruggedness and ancient folding allow this kind of painting both a minimalist figure on ground effect, as well as a natural rhythm, which Winters counterpoints with a combination of broad strokes and delicate marks. Natural Abstractionists tend to use the aerial view quite a lot, because it is easier to distinguish the rhythms that exist in the landscape from this perspective.

Aboriginal painters also take this overhead view, as their traditional work is often of the nature of a map, depicting significant natural features as well as ceremonial grounds and mythological stories where the landforms play a major role. The accuracy of some Aboriginal art in giving scale from an overhead perspective is quite amazing, in many cases baffling pilots and others who know the land from the air, but also know that the artists have never flown (at least in a plane).

Winters uses the aerial view very well, not making maps, but rather strongly accented rhythmical works that sometimes remind me of some tribal art because of their earthy colours and strong contrasts. Indeed three or four of his prints even have something of the quality of an African striped animal skin, with a terrific texture gained by fine scratching that really does resemble animal hair. (It is interesting that some theorists believe that all Western art, and geometry itself, ultimately derives from animal skins scraped and stitched together for clothing and studied during the long winters in the cave). I think these prints to among Winters' best prints to date, with lovely velvety blacks and gorgeous rich colour and texture contrasts.

His printmaking cross fertilises his painting and vice versa, with some of the paintings utilising what looks like a resist technique to force paint to pool or to flow thinly over certain areas. He makes good use too of near complementary colours to set up a vibrancy as the eye moves over the surface. Small applied marks of very bright colour animate the surfaces of some of his paintings, while the prints rely solely on rhythm for their ability to lead the eye through the work.

I really do feel there is a great 'wow factor' in this exhibition, and as you walk up the stairs you are met with a diptych that looks so good subtly glowing and pulsing against our red walls it looks like it should be a permanent fixture.

ALAN SISLEY

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Director
ORANGE REGIONAL GALLERY
2006