

Waterworld

Alex McDonald, *Waterworld*, State of the Arts, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery catalogue, 2005

All the works in the Macquarie City Art Gallery's collection have some link to water. Water is in fact a pre-requisite in the Gallery's collection policy. The Gallery's latest exhibition, *Great Escapes* draws upon its vast collection of aqueous imagery, offering works by Tim Storrier (an artist better-known for his images of burning wood than for his ocean-inspired works), Philip Wolfhagen, Narelle Autio and Chris Langlois.

In her introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Curator Meryl Ryan describes how "Modern-day cynicism has yet to quell our yearning to transcend the everyday or our expectation for artists to negotiate the way. Visual artists continue to meditate on the natural world in the quest to express the inexpressible and viewers continue to find their work irresistible.

"In *Great Escapes* Tim Storrier, Philip Wolfhagen and Chris Langlois preserve direct links with traditions of landscape painting, fusing faithful observation with dramatic grandeur in works of compelling scale and power," says Ryan. "More intimate are Stephen Lees' response to the encroaching dark at the beach and John Morris' floodlit painting of a snowfield. Morris also tries mediation. His solitary tree, like Trent Parke's and Narelle Autio's swimmers and Arryn Snowball's column of steam, draws the viewer into the image to find him or herself either oblivious, vulnerable or submissive to the almost predatory hum of the unknown."

Partners in life and art, Trent Parke and Narelle Autio add a photographic dimension to the show with works from their road trips around the Australian coast. And as Peter Timms explains in his catalogue essay, "The sheer range of approaches to the natural environment expressed in *Great Escapes* testifies to the fact that we live in an age of uncertainty and apprehension. The question that these works ask – what is our place in creation now that we are cast adrift from the religious and social certainties that once provided guidance? – is probably the most important question we have."

More Information:

Great Escapes
Until 30 January
Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, First St, Booragul
Details: (02) 4965 8260