

Godfrey Miller

The Human Figure and The Landscape / Canvas, Paper, Bronze / From the John Henshaw Estate  
Charles Nodrum Gallery

4 – 27 July, 2013

## Introduction

If principally known for his rigorously geometric abstraction of the landscape and the still life, Godfrey Miller's exploration of the human figure was pursued with equal dedication but with a looser, more intuitive – hence less structured – approach. This exhibition looks at the interaction between these contrasting strands of his work, with the paintings on the one hand and the drawings and sculpture on the other.

Sometimes the human form is enclosed within a landscape and occasionally (no examples in this show) it's hard to say if we're reading trees or bodies – particularly in the unfinished works where, in our mind's eye, we have to fill out the work from his initial suggestive hints. His drawings are equally brief – suggesting rather than delineating – and have long been closely admired by practising artists who seem to respond intuitively to their exploratory quality.

The intuitive speed and directness allows the independent, autonomous human form to emerge most clearly and boldly in the drawings (of which there are many) and the sculptures (of which there are few). "I use drawing as my bulldozer or wedge into the unknown" he wrote, the "hard yakka" metaphor mirroring the physicality of both the practice itself and the subject in question. The sculptures, with their blocky, emphatic, decidedly physical presence, pursue that materiality into the third dimension and thus form a stark counterbalance to the ethereal geometry of his paintings where material form can virtually dissolve.

All were cast posthumously, from the 1960s to the 1990s – some in different batches and at different foundries. Whilst this variation has concerned some of the purists, overall editions were limited to 12 and the works offered here were all authorised by John Henshaw – the artist's acknowledged artistic executor. They remain the only record we have of some of the more forward-looking contributions to modernist sculpture produced in Australia in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

CN, 2010