

LYNNE BOYD

NIGHT AND DAY

Preview Saturday 15 July 11am - 2pm

18 July - 5 August 1995

CHARLES NODRUM GALLERY

267 Church Street, Richmond, Melbourne, Victoria, 3121
Tel (03) 427 0140. Fax (03) 428 7350. Tuesday-Saturday 11am-6pm

Lynne Boyd
CATALOGUE NOTES

Water, clouds, light, space, darkness, time — these are the elements to which Lynne Boyd returns again and again in her work. They have the quality of dimensions rather than of discrete images or subjects and they evoke the immediate and the local, Melbourne's winter skies, the Bay from St Kilda. Breath, air, silence, water. The substance here is what is between the solids; it is relational. In her attention to the strangeness of the ordinary Boyd's intuition may be akin to that of the French Surrealist poet Paul Éluard: '*Il y a une autre réalité, mais elle est en celle-ci*' (There is another reality, but it resides in this one').

But Boyd is engaged in a number of conversations or exchanges which are hardly obscure to us as viewers or practitioners; nor need they be seen as resolved or conclusive. There are ongoing dialogues here with artists like Agnes Martin, Richard Diebenkorn and Mark Rothko; possibly, closer to home, with an artist like Clarice Beckett. And just as the traditional materials, oil, canvas, stretcher, reflect the simplicity of Boyd's concerns and are seen as givens, she embraces supposedly outworn methodologies and formal disciplines of classical and modernist painting — the grid, the picture plane, play of line against field, minimalist orchestrations of colour - in ways that continually surprise.

Boyd's interest in writers provides equally important threads to the weave, Virginia Woolf's opening to *The Waves* in particular:

The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.

Catalogue

Oils - on linen, signed titled & dated 1994/5 on reverse

- 1 Night - St.Kilda
215 x 153cm
- 2 Day - clouds, St.Kilda
215 x 153cm (oil with collage on linen)
- 3 Night Veil
215 x 153cm
- 4 Cloud
153 x 122cm (oil with collage on linen)
- 5 Night - Georgia
153 x 122cm
- 6 Night dissolving
(text from "An upward look" by James Merrill)
153 x 122cm
- 7 Twilight
153 x 122cm

The passage is relevant as much for the suggestion of the physical activity of painting as for its pictorial vividness. In Lynne Boyd's work there may indeed be an analogy between the marks made — the vertical or horizontal or hatched brushstrokes — and the function of breath in poetry, forming a sort of visual metre which is inseparable from the total saying. In this way the paintings grow within certain structures and principles. Often these principles or formal cues are taken from observation, with the elaboration of a vertical or horizontal, a certain kind of brushstroke becoming the code for that painting. It is the unity of making and thinking, of physical gesture and idea that emerges as a key quality in these works.

Yet the paintings are not expressionist. They do not rely on overt emotional gesture; if anything they present a sense of containment, of accretion, of something approaching a Classical temper rather than Romantic excess. They stand with a 'concentrated reticence' — a term Chris Wallace-Crabbe has used to describe the 'seductive power which [a poem] exerts by seeming to withhold experience from us'.

In this respect, the elements of text in the paintings function much less as supplementary information, than as titles which have drifted up into the paintings and become embedded in the surface, trapped beneath the resin skin of the object. With them they carry that faint halo of tail-lights on a wet night, suggesting simultaneously a diminishing of literal meaning and fugitive states of feeling.

The discipline in these works is that of simplification, although that term is perhaps misleading. The impulse is not reductive in the usual modernist sense: rather, the drive is to find the area of 'space, mood and light,' in Richard Diebenkorn's words, which is beyond representation.

Tim Bass

8. Night
176 x 61cm
9. Air Cloud Sea
91 x 76cm
10. Clouds - study
30 x 40cm
11. Night - study
30 x 35cm
- 12 - 22 The Waves I - XI
(some with text from "The Waves" by Virginia Woolf)
oil and collage on linen; some laid on board
25 x 30cm or 30 x 40cm

Pastels

- 23 - 27 Night & Day I - V
all pastel & pencil on Arches, 19 x 14cm