

THE SALLY AND SHANE THOMPSON COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART



Akin to a biography of their lives and distance travelled together over 35 years, **The Sally and Shane Thompson Collection of Contemporary Art** is informed by a shared aesthetic. Many collections to appear on the market in recent years

have a similarity, yet this collection stands distinct, an epic narrative, with little interest in the direction of the market or the vagaries of fashion.

Neither was inculcated in the ways of art in their family homes, but Sally Robson became an employee of the nascent Ray Hughes Gallery in Brisbane (1978-79). After meeting Shane Thompson, a young architect who describes his visual interests as shaped by Le Corbusier and the lyrical modernists, art became integral to their joint lives, with their home and Thompson's architectural studios dominated by increasing acquisitions. Within a few years, art jostled for space in a salon hang – on their walls and, at times, even the ceiling! The aesthetic visible in this collection is not driven by names, but by gut instinct, strength and honesty, and the marked lack of pretension familiar to others who began with Hughes's gallery.

Accordingly, the collection reflects their friendships and connections to artists and other like minds, with a love of landscape, a sensitive and lyrical abstraction, figurative imagery and the presence of the maker. As Sally expressed it, "Initially we followed people we knew and that brought a different complexion to the collecting. We knew them and what they were doing and collecting meant we were living it with them, sharing their lives as artists, and that was exciting."



Paintings by Joe Furlonger, Jun Chen, Michael Bell, June Tupicoff, Gavin Chilcott (NZ), Robert MacPherson, David Marsden, Rod Withers and Scott Whitaker, photographs by Glen O'Malley and Geoff Strong, and sculptures by artists John Cervenka, Tobias Richardson, Tom Risley, Jeff Thomson (NZ) and Mick Ward date from the Ray Hughes period. These have been built on by acquisitions from galleries in Australia, Europe and America and, more recently, auctions. Major works by Jon Molvig, Tony Tuckson and Robert Klippel, who were central to Australian modernism, were hung cheek by jowl with an eclectic collection of Aboriginal art (so central to the development of Australian art since the 1980s). Sculpture from Aurukun, barks, early work from the Lockhart River (Queensland) and, most notably, an important painting by Weaver Jack (2005), are found alongside other works that reflect the extension of the Thompson home to a weekender on Stradbroke Island (in Moreton Bay), with acquisitions of work by local artists and gifts from friends.

Their abstract interests brought Ildiko Kovacs and Donna Marcus into the collection, with significant Irish painters such as Martin Finnin incorporated after an international sojourn. The balance and synergy developed from Sally's decades of horsemanship seem visible in the lyricism of much of this work. Sally's equestrian interests initially lay in dressage and now in new methodologies in natural horsemanship, while Shane is a design leader and a highly influential architect, known for his minimalist aesthetic.

In 2013, Shane wrote, "... in many ways we just trust our own eye and that has come about by simply looking at a lot of artwork, both old and new."

The eclectic breadth and aesthetic truth of this collection are its distinctive qualities. It was housed in a renovated "make do" house from the 1950s on acreage, extended more recently with a church from a similar era. Shane retained his sophisticated design skills for clients, with his interests in sustainability driving a simple backdrop at home that allowed for the attention, always, to be on the art.

Louise Martin-Chew

July 2017

1 Sally Thompson, conversation with the author, 27 June 2017.

2 Shane Thompson, "Art/Life: The Makings of a Collection", in Art/Life: Selected works from the Shane and Sally Thompson Bequest, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane, 2013.

The Sally and Shane Thompson Collection of Contemporary Art

Auction | Tuesday 25 July 6.30pm

On View | Sat 15 - Tue 25 July 11am - 5pm

Catalogue | View online [here](#).

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