

# Ken Whisson: As If

17 March – 15 July 2012

**Heide Museum of Modern Art**

**Curators** Lesley Harding (Heide) & Glenn Barkley (MCA)



Ken Whisson  
*Group Photo with Big Bottle and Green Boat* 2010  
oil on linen  
85 x 120 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Watters Gallery, Sydney

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## Introduction

*I believe that the reason for making art, art in general, is that it gives to the world, not just to human beings, some more profound dimension, something nearer to the reality that we feel it surely must have, but does not seem to have.*

Ken Whisson, 2002

In a career spanning over sixty years, Ken Whisson has been making thoughtful and uncompromising paintings and drawings which hold a unique place in Australian art. Whisson's reputation has been built around his tenacious dedication to the act of painting and persistent fascination with the delicate machinations of both his inner reality and the world at large. Although Whisson is not predisposed to explaining the meanings to be found in his art, his artwork is deeply personal.

Whisson's imagery has evolved to combine the tendencies of his formative years with an increasingly linear and graphic abstraction. He has forged an unconventional and highly personal aesthetic which sees topographical and single-point perspectives coalesce, and imagery that often suggests a heightened, sometimes hallucinogenic reality. Following his relocation to the Italian city of Perugia in the late 1970s, Whisson's interests in displacement and memory have joined his enduring themes of landscape, identity and politics. The artist's title for this retrospective derives from Immanuel Kant's dictum: 'May you live your life *as if* the maxim of your actions were to become universal law', and the Paris surrealists' declaration: 'Let us live *as if* the world really exists'. The exhibition traces the evolution of Whisson's major themes and series, from his powerful portrayals of human relations to those which consider the relationships people and animals have with the natural, built and cultural environments.

Ken Whisson: As If is produced in association with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia where it will be exhibited from 28 September to 28 November 2012.

The exhibition includes:

- 100 paintings and framed works on paper from 1947—the beginning of Whisson's career—through to 2011.
- 30 works on paper in display cases, including 2 sketchbooks
- A film: Ken Whisson, Artist, by Maya Huxley, produced in Melbourne in 1973 (approximately 11 minutes duration)
- A resource display with books from Ken Whisson's reading list of favourite books, ranging from philosophy to novels and short stories.

## Ken Whisson: Curators Essay (extract)

Ken Whisson began painting during a dramatic period of human history, near the end of the Second World War. The Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Cold War, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the end of Communism, the domination of global capitalism, the collapse of colonisation and European political power. More recently 9/11 and the war on terror form the backdrop against which his work has taken place: 'my paintings have a much better memory than I do for the things I've seen ... a much clearer memory, they seem to remember a lot of things that I don't remember.'<sup>1</sup> Despite appearances Whisson is fundamentally a political artist: A title here, a flag or banner (or fighter plane) there might offer clues, though Whisson does not explicitly state his views, preferring instead to offer us *other* descriptions of the world.



Ken Whisson  
*Portrait of Pauline McCarthy* 1944  
oil on paper  
36.5 x 26.7cm (sight)  
Private collection, Melbourne

### Gumtrees and grassroots

Ken Whisson was born in 1927 in Lilydale, outside Melbourne. The family owned a milk bar and fruit shop. Whisson liked to draw, and started studying fine art at Swinburne Technical College in 1944, but as luck would have it a portrait he painted of cousin Pauline McCarthy (both artist and sitter then aged 16 or 17) was spotted by Russian émigré painter Danila Vassilieff at the McCarthy's flat in Fitzroy. A friend and regular visitor to Pauline and husband Jack, Vassilieff was also a friend of John and Sunday Reed and the Heide circle of artists, writers and intellectuals in the 1940s.

Vassilieff invited Whisson to study at the Koornong School at Warrandyte, a progressive alternative school in 1939. The early lessons from Vassilieff remain firm in Whisson's mind: principally to work intuitively and immediately, from the left to the right of

<sup>1</sup> Ken Whisson in interview with Barbara Blackman, p. 172.

the picture, and then to 'put it to the wall'.<sup>2</sup> James Mollison recalls seeing a Whisson painting in progress in the 1960s: a small section was resolved and complete and the rest of the picture white and blank—as if the artist was writing—clearly a legacy of that method.<sup>3</sup>

While Whisson can be said to have emerged out of the so-called Melbourne expressionist school, and has been described as an 'expressionist romantic' he makes the important point that he came onto the Melbourne art scene at the time of Nolan, Hester and Tucker were leaving to live interstate or overseas.

### Interior life

In 1954–56 Whisson himself travelled abroad to Europe, making the first of two extended trips overseas. The first of these saw a much anticipated introduction to some of the great museums of the Old World. The second was an epic journey in the late 1960s from the UK through North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and northern Australia. Both trips coincided with important world events: the 1956 Hungarian revolution and subsequent Soviet attack on Budapest, and the wake of the May 1968 protests in France. 'I wanted to be in Europe when the rebirth of politics was well underway'.<sup>4</sup>

While these great upheavals were to impact acutely on the artist's consciousness, and give him direct contact with the realities of life, this is not apparent in a visual sense in the pictures created at the time. Possibly it was more a process of sharpening perspective, as the images from these periods are scarce but important touchstones in his ongoing practice and the development of his personal iconography.



Ken Whisson  
*Yellow Room* 1962  
oil on composition board  
61.3 x 90.8cm  
Gift of the Trustees of the Museum of  
Modern Art and Design of Australia, to the  
National Gallery of Victoria 1981.  
Transferred to Heide Museum of Modern  
Art by the Council of Trustees of the  
National Gallery of Victoria 2005

Whisson has never strayed far from the modes and subjects that could be considered the cornerstones of Western art—paintings and drawings of landscapes, still lifes, figures and portraits—though he could hardly be called orthodox in his deployment of any of them. For a time the theme of interior life appears in his paintings, most pointedly through the subject of a

<sup>2</sup> Ken Whisson in conversation with the authors, Perugia, 11 September 2011.

<sup>3</sup> James Mollison in conversation with the authors, North Melbourne, 18 January 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ken Whisson in Robert Rooney, 'Abstractions of a political landscape', *The Australian*, 29 – 30 October 1994.

discontented couple in a room. The people in these paintings could be dancing, arguing or moving away from each other. His painterly manipulations are sometimes violent as well as in the face of the person looking out in *Yellow Room* (1962) above.

This violence and disjuncture between what we see and what we feel creates the paintings' energy. The distance between the two people is an intense psychological space. If ever there might be a key to the personal in Whisson's imagery, such paintings seem a likely place to look. When Barbara Blackman asked in her 1984 interview with the artist if they were autobiographic, Whisson initially replied in the negative. But when pressed to consider that the theme might hark back to his observations in childhood, he submitted: 'I have an idea of marriage as mostly fighting seeing it from outside.' He recalled his aunt Hilda having 'splendid' arguments with her husband, though clarified that they were never personal, always about politics and without malice.

### Idiot Wind

In the period spanning his return to Australia in 1970 and his relocation to Italy seven years later, Whisson created a body of work that many view as a highpoint in his career. It marked the beginning of his success and recognition as an artist, and perhaps this gave him a confidence that sustained the high quality of the work he produced. Whisson's return to Melbourne saw him reside in an intellectual and bohemian Carlton, which provided grist to the mill for the artist. He came straight back into the anti-Vietnam war movement.<sup>5</sup>

Over his lifetime Whisson has painted the landscape around him, mostly from memory. Whisson was regularly on the move from the late 1940s onwards, but it would take months or years for a landscape remembered to appear in his paintings. It is only after he settled in St Kilda that landscapes started to materialise in his work at the time he was experiencing them.



Ken Whisson  
*Disembarkation at Cythera (Idiot Wind)*  
1975  
oil on composition board  
82 x 112  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased 1976

An example of the St Kilda paintings is *Disembarkation at Cythera (Idiot Wind)* (1975).

<sup>5</sup> Ken Whisson, letter to the authors, 28 February 2012.

It is directly linked to Antoine Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera* (1717), in which travellers board a boat for Cythera, in Greek mythology the birthplace of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Surely this is in some way linked in Whisson's painting to the seedy, earthy grunge of St Kilda, then in decadent decline full of late night bars, prostitution and gritty glamour? This was a scene in which Whisson remained, as always, on the fringes of, separate and apart. But the suburb as wrack and ruin is an important motif in the St Kilda works. With its mix of ideas and iconography Whisson's painting is layered, like the ancient archeological and mythological strata of the island of Cythera itself. This is why *Disembarkation* acts as an anchor in the sea of works that Whisson produced during this time. Water, vehicles, the coming and going, these are the things that such images are concerned with, metaphorically and visually. Melbourne as port town, destination and departure point, backwards and forwards, in and out like the tides.

When speaking of *Disembarkation at Cythera*, Whisson directly linked it to Watteau's painting in both formal and social ways:

[there are] people going down a marvellous staircase with absolutely wonderful ethereal columns to a splendid boat with an idea obviously that it's going to take them to some place which is even more beautiful and splendid. And my people are getting off the boat—they are more like Italian migrants getting off the boat at Port Melbourne—coming from a splendid beautiful place to awful Melbourne, to an industrial place, a place without Italy's traditions and history to cushion the twentieth century ... It's like *Disembarkation* ... in the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to consider, too, the subtitle of the work. Whisson has said that his titles have 'more to do with politics—sometimes I give them political titles when the painting doesn't have a great deal to do with politics, and sometimes there will be some germ of a political idea in the painting and the title will be an extension of that idea'.<sup>7</sup> As such the titles, which always come after the painting, have an important way of placing the work in the 'real world'.

For *Disembarkation at Cythera*, the subtitle 'Idiot Wind' references a track from Bob Dylan's 1975 album *Blood on the Tracks*. Dylan, like Whisson, is endlessly mercurial yet without straying too far from the core history and themes of popular song. 'That was a song I wanted to make as a painting,' Dylan has said of 'Idiot Wind': 'A lot of people thought that song, that album *Blood on the Tracks*, pertained to me because it seemed to at the time. It didn't pertain to me. It was just a concept of putting in images that defy time—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.'<sup>8</sup> Within Dylan's approach we find the allegorical. Whisson, too, has the habit of grounding his work in personal circumstance, and memory, then obscuring it within the imaginings and concerns of the broader world: 'in the personal events which reappear in the individual memory, the fears and aspirations of mankind assert themselves—the universal in the particular.

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<sup>6</sup> Ken Whisson in interview with Barbara Blackman, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173

<sup>8</sup> Toby Creswell, *1001 Songs*, Hardie Grant, Melbourne, p. 24.

### Perugia

In 1977 Whisson relocated permanently to Italy. Perugia provided a base from which to explore the rest of Europe, and there are few artists who would be as familiar with its great collections and museums. It can also be seen as a kind of self-imposed exile or isolation from the Australian art world, while being an acceptance of his vocation at the same time. He left when he was starting to achieve real success as an artist in Australia through increasing acknowledgement from younger artists who saw his work as a precursor to their own painting.<sup>9</sup>

The first major indication of the difference between the paintings of Australia and those of Italy can be found in the shift in Whisson's materials.<sup>10</sup> In Melbourne he used composition board, and in Perugia canvas, a change that seems at least in part to be a practical one: canvas could be rolled and sent back to his gallery representatives in Australia. When painting on board the paint never permeates the surface but instead seems to sit up on it. The method of painting is integral to the materialisation of the image, while the size and shape of the brush is important in constructing a faceted, densely painted surface where light, and its play against the blue of the sky, is incorporated into the formality of the picture. Many of these formal concerns built up over the past twenty years had to be remade, reconsidered or discarded when Whisson switched to canvas. This was an important, pivotal shift in the work, such that it is possible to think of Whisson's career as split between pre- and post-Perugia.



Ken Whisson  
*Flag for my Bright but Terrible Childhood* 1979  
Oil on canvas  
110 x 90cm  
Hassall Collection, Sydney

<sup>9</sup> Keith Looby visited Whisson in St Kilda during the early 1970s and said that Whisson seemed to be the up-and-coming painter, even though he was at least a decade older. Keith Looby in conversation with Glenn Barkley, Sydney, 23 January, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> As suggested by Ray Hughes, who was Whisson's Brisbane dealer during this key period. Ray Hughes in conversation with the authors, Surry Hills, 23 February 2011.

This change is clearly visible in a series known as the *Flag* paintings. The works are a bridge between the images of the 1970s, and the later linear landscapes from the early 1980s into the present, in which the high horizon line used in Australia gives way to a multi-perspective treatment of space, often without a vanishing point, and a constant and energetic push–pull of foreground and background. Sometimes the four edges of the canvas are the only orienting device and, on occasion, the dispersal of pictorial elements is such that in *Flag for My Bright but Terrible Childhood* (1979) for instance, it is difficult to work out which way is ‘up’. The paintings see the solid blocks of colour typical of his earlier work starting to dissipate into concentrated patches of line and plasma-like triangular forms. They also uncover a radical new reinvention of the figure, whereby a coded series of shapes and stripes that loosely correspond to the face become part of other constructions.



Ken Whisson  
*Farmyard with White Livorno* 2002  
oil on linen  
90x120cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

### Why paint animals?

Whisson’s work is also concerned with agriculture as subject but also taps into deeper, almost primal relationships between animals and humans, and animals and animals, employing this metaphorically. It is extremely prescient, and testament to the clarity of Whisson’s imagery from a very early point, that Robert Hughes described his paintings in 1962 as ‘images of fright and noise and dog-like sex.’<sup>11</sup>

### But mostly air...

Along with domestic animals Whisson has always painted birds, and planes too, and they could be related. Excepting farmyard fowl, Whisson’s birds are generic, not recognisable as any particular species—they fly and they fall. Their direction could be determined by the way the painting moves as it is made—they are upside-down, right way up, sometimes flying, other times on the ground. His depiction of birds goes beyond the symbolic and into the formal—they affect the way we look at a painting spatially. We expect them to be in a certain

<sup>11</sup> Robert Hughes, ‘Troublesome Melbourne’, *Nation*, June 2, 1962, p. 21.



space or dealt with in a certain way. When they are not, the whole atmosphere of the painting changes.<sup>12</sup>

Birds also relate to the idea of escape, being freed from the earth, weightless. The fascination with flight is something that Whisson has in common with romantic artist and poet William Blake, whom he quotes in his notebook: ‘How can we know but that each bird which cuts the airy way/Is an immense world of delight, bounded by our senses five?’<sup>13</sup> Perhaps, Whisson’s sense of elevation is a spiritual and a human one, of the soul and spirit, bringing us up out of dreariness to find something exciting and compelling about the world around us; the poetry and the celebration of lives being lived passionately.

### From the Newspapers

In Whisson’s paintings and drawings we see the worlds of old and new put together, presented in his own version of visual shorthand. But that shorthand is under continual change and refinement. Whisson has constantly scorned the idea of *technique* as if it were something to be avoided (‘it would probably be better if people—those working in the visual arts, in particular—dropped the use of the word altogether’),<sup>14</sup> but denying it does not mean that it doesn’t exist.



Ken Whisson in the Niagara Gallery  
Viewing Rooms  
Photograph: Joel Gailer 2008

<sup>12</sup> Raquel Ormella in conversation with Glenn Barkley, 23 February 2010. The authors would like to acknowledge the ongoing discussions with Ormella who has researched extensively the relationship between humans and animals and how this is manifest in contemporary art.

<sup>13</sup> Ken Whisson notebook, 1972–96. The quote (remembered not transcribed) is from Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–93)

<sup>14</sup> Pam Gilbert, ‘Interview: Ken Whisson’, *CAS Broadsheet*, Adelaide, vol. 13, no. 3, May 1984, p. 4.



Ken Whisson  
*From the Newspapers No. 7* 2005  
 oil on linen  
 105.5 x 114cm  
 James and Jacqui Erskine Collection,  
 Sydney

The *From the Newspaper* series of paintings that Whisson produced between 1998 and 2006 is in fact all about technique and discloses the way that his pictures may be planned. The images appear almost one-dimensional, as if scattered like clippings that can be moved around the paintings surface. Their cohesiveness comes from Whisson knowing just where to place and leave them. Most are sourced from the left-wing newspaper *Il Manifesto*, snapshots of the world at war. Interestingly enough Whisson is drawn towards those images that he already knows through his paintings' own history: the ship in three-quarter view, jets, farm scenes. They relate to, but sit outside of the rest of his work as quite a distinct subsection. Distinct because Whisson doesn't often tell real-life stories, but instead tends to paint for us the situations and experiences we might have in common.

These investigations of the world around us—the visible world and the landscape in particular—are an expression of what we share under the most ordinary conditions, and in the collective consciousness. History and world events are certainly a part of this, but equally so the everyday.

It seems relevant to consider this exhibition and publication as a marker in Whisson's long career rather than an attempt to delineate it in a logical fashion. For Whisson's work and life defy such reasoning. He celebrates the human spirit, its perversity and its admirable qualities in equal measure. He demonstrates art's creative, transformative potential in a way that is so complete, so unwavering, that beholding and thinking about it is one part admiration to another heartbreaking.

**Glenn Barkley and Lesley Harding**

February 2012

Two Dark Nudes



Ken Whisson  
*Two Dark Nudes* 1963  
oil on composition board  
61 x 90cm  
Private collection, Melbourne

This painting is one of the first in which Whisson depicts levitating figures. The pared-back and roughly articulated forms appear suspended within an indeterminate space, as if swimming in the air. Such imagery owes much to Whisson’s interest in the ‘fantastic’ and its allegorical possibilities.

The discolouration on this picture is the result of many years of direct exposure to tobacco smoke. Although reversible with conservation treatment, the staining has not been removed at the owner’s request. In this way the painting’s lived history, as a much-loved picture in a domestic environment, becomes part of its story.

The ethical considerations of looking after, or conserving and preserving artworks are very complex. Do you think this artwork should be cleaned by art conservators back to it’s original state or does this staining add to the story of the artwork as an object? Why?

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How could Heide Museum of Modern Art ensure no further damage occurs to this artwork?

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**Vegetative Man**



Ken Whisson  
*Vegetative Man* 1967  
oil on composition board  
61.5 x 40.9 cm  
Private Collection, Melbourne

At a time when Australian artists were divided between the two distinct camps of figuration and abstraction, Whisson seemed to have the capacity to move between each as the need arose—either within the one picture or from one work to the next.

The diminutive *Vegetative Man* seems to depict this difference. Here we find a figure contemplating a multi-coloured geometric form that could be read as an abstract Colourfield painting, typical of the prevailing style of the late 1960s.

What does the title of this artwork imply about the man pictured? Describe why?

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What other possibilities could there be to describe what the man is looking at?

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**Medieval Jugglers and Thin Black Camel**

Ken Whisson  
*Medieval Jugglers and Thin Black Camel* 1983  
oil on linen  
119.5 x 99cm  
Hassall Collection, Sydney

Whisson's interests in levitation and the fantastic are made manifest in a series of circus paintings, begun in the early 1980s. The people and things that populate these works are posed with improbable, dream-like contortions.

The paintings focus on the feats and theatricality of the performers, especially those whose role it is to try and defeat gravity—the jugglers, acrobats, aerialists, and performing animals. Note the central figure of in *Medieval Jugglers and Thin Black Camel*: the forms the juggler has thrown are now strangely suspended for all time.

The circus can become another way of orienting ourselves towards the world, a form of interaction that allows people to relate to each other as human beings—one that doesn't bring about wars: 'we might need to relate together by entertaining each other' Whisson has said. The world as a great circus: it's a marvellous thought.

**Art activity**

Think about what the circus means to you today. Make an artwork in the style of Ken Whisson about an experience you have had at a circus or how you imagine the experience to be.

Write some words that describe the feelings you have about circuses.

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Antonin Artaud



Ken Whisson  
*Antonin Artaud* c. 1967  
oil on composition board  
68.6 x 58.4cm  
Private collection, Sydney

Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) was a French avant garde playwright, poet, actor, theatre director and intellectual. He was known as much for his supposed madness and troubled genius as for his prolific output of writings, plays, films, and drawings. Artaud developed the concept of “theatre of cruelty” believing that theatre should affect the audience as much as possible. He used a mix of strange and disturbing forms of lighting, sound, and themes of rape, torture, and murder to shock the audience into confronting the base elements of life.

Think of other artists who have made artworks inspired by other musicians, writers, actors or people from the news or popular culture? Can you think of people who would make interesting subjects for an artwork you make? Describe some techniques you could use to emphasise the personal qualities of that person. What colour choices and painting techniques could you apply to exaggerate these qualities?

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**Notebook**



Ken Whisson  
*Notebook* 2001  
oil on linen  
120 x 110cm  
Robin Greer Collection, Brisbane

In some paintings Whisson brings together a back catalogue of motifs to harmonious and even dream-like effect. In *Notebook*, assorted images appear quite mysteriously from the pale backdrop of the picture surface. They are on the one hand playful, on the other a still point. Any sense of foreground or background is achieved in the subtlest of ways, dependent on the scale and clarity of the individual elements rather than any ordering or perspective devices.

While the technique is similar to that used in the *From the Newspapers* series, this is story-telling of a quite different order. Rather than descriptive reportage or symbolic allegory, they are simply images drawn from the artist’s visual experiences and imaginings.

**Art activity**

Make a list of objects that have been important to you throughout your life. For example, toys, people, places or pets. Using your memories of these things, paint or draw all of the objects together on a large sheet of paper or canvas. Make some large and some smaller. Think about the colour palette you will use; bright and vivid or soft and dull. Does your arrangement of the objects on the picture plane tell a story about your life and memories?

List ten objects to get you started.

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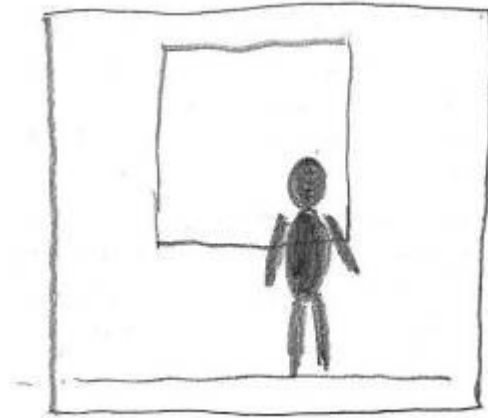
### Evaluating Contemporary Art

Identify a painting or drawing by Ken Whisson that you have enjoyed looking at.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In the empty box to the right, sketch yourself in relation to the size of the selected artwork.



Describe the materials, methods and techniques Ken Whisson has applied to create this artwork:

*Ken Whisson stretched plain white linen over a stretcher frame. Then he ...*

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List the things you can see in this artwork. For example, acrobats, animals, head and shoulders, buildings, colours or shapes.

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How have the art principles been applied to this artwork? Comment on at least two: colour, tone, texture, shape, form or line.

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How have the art elements been applied in this artwork? Comment on at least two: composition, contrast, emphasis, unity, balance, movement, rhythm or pattern.

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What is the overall mood or emotional intent of the artwork?  
How does it make you feel? What has the artist done to make you feel like this?

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Does this artwork refer to or remind you of other artworks, artist or art movements? Has the artist appropriated (borrowed) anything from another source? What other artists, art movements might have inspired the artist? Are you reminded of anything else?

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Do you think the artist is interested in other things, such as political or current world events happening in the world at the time the artwork was created? What makes you think that?

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Is Ken Whisson's artwork the same or different to other artworks you have seen on display at Heide? Try to describe the difference.

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What issues, ideas or themes do you think the artist might be trying to raise in the artwork? What might the artist's point of view be? What makes you think that?

Do you have an opinion about it?

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Do some research about the artist to see what else you can learn about their art practice. Read the wall labels and promotional brochure or catalogue.

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Make a sketch of the Ken Whisson artwork you have been evaluating in the box below.



**Art Title Poetry**

This is a twist on the emerging poetry form ‘book spine poetry’. This version uses artwork titles rather than book spines.

Select five or seven artwork titles and place them in a pleasing sequence. Here is an example taken from Ken Whisson’s exhibition ‘As If’.

Angels and Phantoms  
Brothers Early Morning  
Man Seated  
Fisherman and Boats  
Domestic Machine  
Faces and Large Boats  
Face on Wall Opposite  
Angels and Phantoms

Select and list seven titles:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_

Alter the sequence to write your poem.

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## Influences

When Ken Whisson was a young man, he was taught by the artist Danila Vassilieff. Look carefully at this artwork by Danila Vassilieff.



Danila Vassilieff  
*Mildura Wedding* 1954  
oil on composition board  
91 x 122 cm  
Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne  
Purchased from John and Sunday Reed 1980

Select an artwork by Whisson that you can see the influence of his teacher. What similarities and differences are there in how materials are used and techniques applied between the two artists? Refer to art elements such as line, colour, texture, tone, form and shape to describe how the two artists have developed aesthetic qualities and styles in their artworks.

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**Studio Arts**

What type of gallery or art gallery is Heide Museum of Modern Art? (Tick the relevant box)

- Artist run initiative (ARI)
- Online gallery
- Alternative art space
- Commercial gallery
- Public gallery
- Art rental space

How do you know this?

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Who are the curators of this exhibition? What are the curatorial objectives or intent for this exhibition?

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What role has Ken Whisson played in the exhibition of artworks and the catalogue complementing this exhibition?

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How has this exhibition been advertised and promoted to the general public?

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Who is the viewing audience and how have they been considered for example in the marketing of the exhibition or in the viewing space?

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## Further Reading about Ken Whisson



Glenn Barkley and Lesley Harding, *Ken Whisson: As If* Exhibition Catalogue, Heide Museum of Modern Art and Museum of Contemporary Art, 2012.

John Barbour, 'Ken Whisson', *Art Monthly Australia*, June 1984.

Joe Frost, 'Ken Whisson. Between psyche and spirit', *Artist Profile*, issue 10, 2010.

Keith Looby, 'Ken Whisson', *Art and Australia*, vol. 13, no. 4, autumn 1976.

Bernice Murphy, *Ken Whisson, Paintings 1957–1985*, Broken Hill Art Gallery, New South Wales, 1987.

Robert Nelson, 'Artist tyres of awful Melbourne.' *The Age*, June 2012.

[www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/artist-tyres-of-awful-melbourne-20120619-20ly1.html](http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/artist-tyres-of-awful-melbourne-20120619-20ly1.html)

Michael Wardell, 'Ken Whisson: St Kilda to Perugia', *Art and Australia*, vol. 22, no. 3, summer 1984.

*Ken Whisson: Paintings 1947–1999 with Writings and Talks by the Artist*, Niagara Publishing, Melbourne, 2001.

Ken Whisson is represented by;

Niagara Galleries, Melbourne [www.niagara-galleries.com.au](http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au)

Watters Gallery, Sydney [www.wattersgallery.com](http://www.wattersgallery.com)

## Heide Education

Heide's range of education programs can significantly enhance and support students learning. Heide offers a unique environment which creates inspirational opportunities for students. Heide's exhibitions, architecture and landscape provide a rich learning experience that goes beyond the classroom.

A visit to Heide:

- provides a stimulating environment which helps to put learning into context, promotes an understanding and appreciation of our rich, cultural heritage
- encourages motivation, by stirring curiosity and developing an intrinsic fascination for art that can only be satisfied by first-hand experience
- supports students to make cross-curricular links between different subject areas
- greatly benefits students who learn best through kinaesthetic activities
- nurtures creativity and enables social learning
- provides learning through experience and interaction which encourages students to build on prior expectations and beliefs to create new realities
- is a cultural experience that all pupils should enjoy as part of their education

Looking at original works of art with a suitably trained educator also encourages the development of the following skills:

- **literacy:** by encouraging discussion and extending vocabulary
- **observation:** by focussing concentration on detail
- **critical thinking:** by demanding questions and informed conclusions
- **reflection:** by considering rationales behind thinking processes

All education programming and resources at Heide align with the VELS curriculum frameworks and VCE Study Designs. Further information about curriculum links is available at [heide.com.au/education/school-visits/curriculum-links/](http://heide.com.au/education/school-visits/curriculum-links/)

### Educator Forums

Heide offers inspiring professional development programs for teachers of all year levels, with lectures, guided tours and workshops. Programs are designed to meet the VIT Standards of Professional Practice and Principles for Effective Professional Learning.



### Bookings

Bookings are essential for all programs. For more information or a booking form visit [heide.com.au/education/school-visits/](http://heide.com.au/education/school-visits/) or contact Heide Education: T (03) 9850 1500 E [education@heide.com.au](mailto:education@heide.com.au)

Teachers are encouraged to visit Heide prior to a booked school visit (complimentary ticket available) to familiarise themselves with the exhibitions and facilities.

Heide is committed to ensuring its programs and activities are accessible to all. Schools recognised as having a low overall socio-economic profile on the Government School Performance Summary are eligible to apply for a reduced fee. Please contact Heide Education for more information.

Keep up to date with the latest Heide Education news and special offers by subscribing to the Heide Education e-bulletin at [heide.com.au/subscribe](http://heide.com.au/subscribe)

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### Heide Museum of Modern Art

7 Templestowe Road

Bulleen VIC 3105

T (03) 9850 1500

[heide.com.au](http://heide.com.au)

Open Tuesday - Sunday

10am–5pm

Closed Mondays (except public holidays)