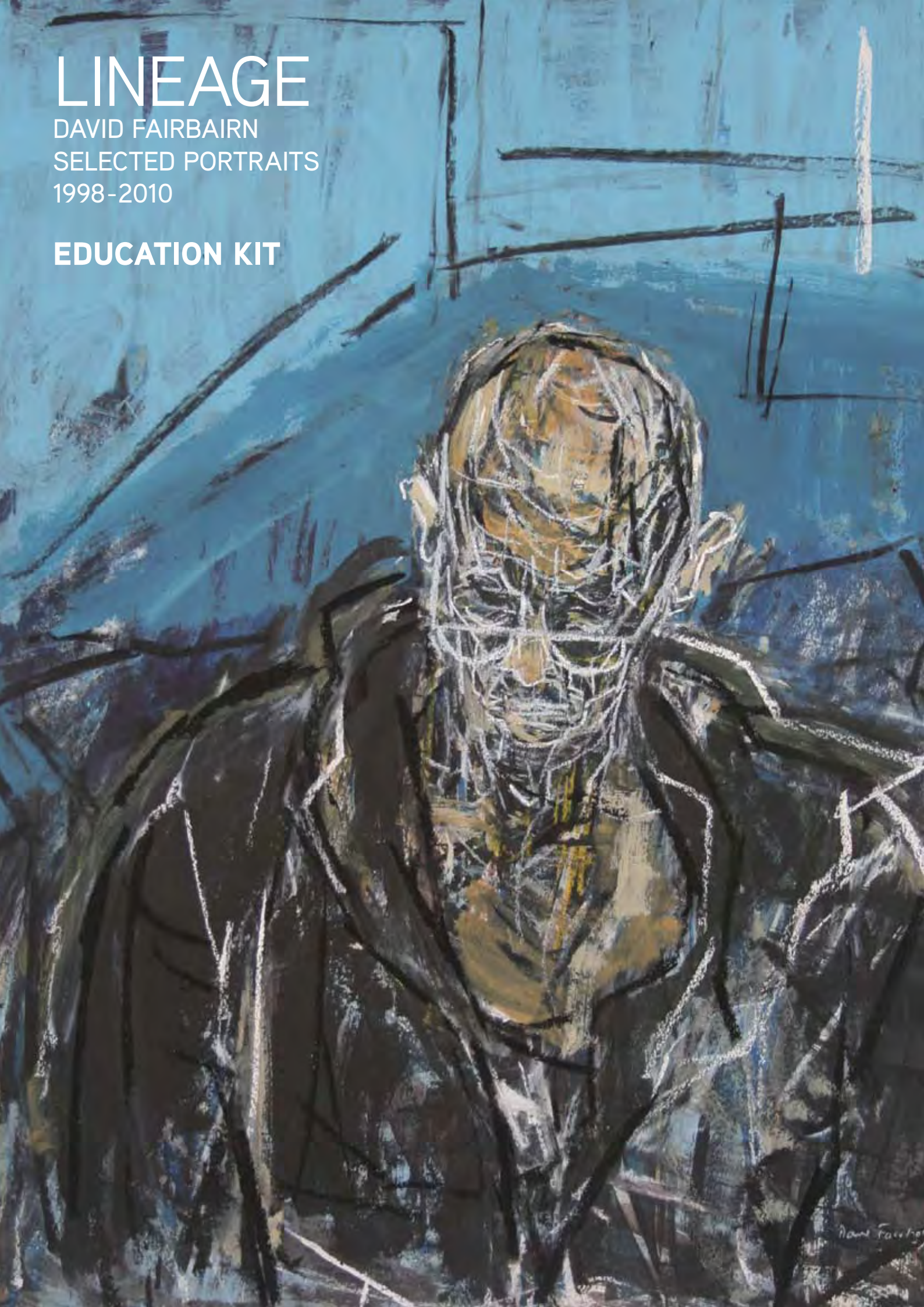


LINEAGE

DAVID FAIRBAIRN
SELECTED PORTRAITS
1998-2010

EDUCATION KIT





D.G. study No.1 2009
acrylic, gouache, etching, pen and ink on paper
29 x 30cm
Private collection

About this education kit

This education kit has been authored by Campbelltown Arts Centre to accompany *Lineage: David Fairbairn Selected Portraits 1998-2010* touring exhibition.

Lineage showcases the past twelve year's of artist David Fairbairn's practice, illustrating his dedication, skill and insight into portraiture. Curated and produced by Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, the touring exhibition features a significant body of work made up of large scaled portraits accompanied by medium and smaller sized works.

The education kit highlights key artworks and themes of *Lineage* to assist secondary school students and teachers in their enjoyment and understanding of David Fairbairn's work within the broader context of contemporary art making practice. It has been written in line with the Years 7-10 Visual Arts Syllabus and the Higher School Certificate Visual Arts Syllabus, as a guide to exploring the exhibition or as a post-visit resource. Tertiary students and the general public may also find the resource useful.

This education kit was researched and developed by Nikoleta Szabados, Education and Public Programs Officer, Campbelltown Arts Centre, November 2010, with the kind support of David Fairbairn.



Large head V.H. No.2 2009
acrylic, gouache, pastel and charcoal on paper
201 x 171cm
Collection of Nigel and Penelope Stewart

*'My drawings and paintings are a forensic mapping out of an energy field'*¹

- David Fairbairn

Studio and sitters

Lineage showcases the ambitious and complex products of David Fairbairn's working practice over the past twelve years. The exhibition of works represents an important stage in the artist's career, which has spanned a 30 year period since the late 1970s.

Fairbairn spends a countless number of hours with each of his sitters, making quick sketches, feverish notes and careful observations before developing large scale works. Informed by the traditional processes of portraiture, Fairbairn works directly from a model in his studio, often for up to sixteen months at a time. His subjects, for the most part, are family, friends, or local people. *'I enjoy the developing artist-model relationship and often feel quite displaced when the sessions finally cease and I have to find new sitters. I am intrigued by their fascination with my drawing process and the delight at seeing their own image exhibited publically outside the intimacy of the studio'*.² The ritual of sharing the studio with his sitters is a direct catalyst for the highly dynamic and visceral works that result, each the insight of an intense physical and emotional exchange between the artist and his subject.

Set in the pristine Australian bushland of Wedderburn, nestled on the edge of a steep, leafy gorge that meets the sacred Dharawal Nature Reserve and leads to the headwaters of the Georges River, is Fairbairn's home, which he shares with his wife Suzanne Archer and son Corrigan Fairbairn, both practicing artists. Perfectly complimenting the natural landscape, the home was built by David and Suzanne out of natural and found materials and is decorated with a number of artefacts that they have acquired over the years. Striking African artworks from Fairbairn's childhood, examples of Aboriginal art, and a number of large contemporary paintings and drawings fill the house. Their studios sit alongside the house and overlook the gardens and surrounding bushland.

The decision to work directly with a sitter is fundamental to Fairbairn's art making practice. The traditional practice of portraiture – the length of time spent with a sitter, the day to day stopping and starting of work as a series develops over time, and even the subtle daily differences that exist in both the subject and the artist, are factors that contribute to the interpretation of Fairbairn's work. *'My portraits represent the transience of life itself... the passing of time both in life and in the studio. Each work represents a period of time that has passed during the sitting; you cannot capture that in a photograph'*.³ The passing of time is an important consideration both in the systematic layering of materials and the experiences of the many sitters who have spent time with Fairbairn while he works.

Fairbairn's approach to mark-making focuses on the use of line as a way of capturing the energy and life force of the subject as it exists in physical space and time. Fairbairn says *'the line is a constructed image that reinforces the idea of how something is built, without necessarily creating a copy. I like using line to create a frame, or an idea of something, rather than an exact replica, it makes the work more abstract and highlights the character of the subject'*.⁴ Martin Gayford (who sat for artist Lucian Freud) describes the tradition of working from a live model as an attempt to hit a moving target,⁵ the 'changeability' of the subject allowing traditional portraiture to continue to rise above the photographic portrait. Fairbairn captures this notion in the layers of material he applies to his work, each mark representing the minute changes that occur as time passes.



Jeanette No.4 2005
acrylic, gouache, drypoint, charcoal, pastel and ink on paper
210 x 183cm
Collection of the artist



Auto portrait No.12 2003
copper etching 3/20
33.5 x 24.8cm
Collection of the artist



V.H. No. 5 2008-2009

Acrylic, gouache, pastel, chinagraph and monotype on paper
76 x 56cm

Collection of Ross McLean and Fiona Beith

*'Sitting for David was eye opening. I did not realise how much energy goes into creating an artwork and how much of the artist's personality is absorbed into the work'*⁶

- Vija Heinrichs

Sitting for the artist

My first sitting for David Fairbairn began in April 2008. I don't think I ever imagined that I would spend more than a year as an artist's model, but I agreed to sit for David as, being retired, I now have control over how I spend my time. Sitting for David was one of the most memorable experiences I have had.

Before we began the sittings, we discussed how I would arrange my hair and that it was necessary I wore the same clothes each time. David took photos of my face from various angles and then started work on the first etching. He explained that he would first do a number of etchings and mono prints and then go on to painting.

David had a range of good music to listen to, and I did a lot of daydreaming. During morning and afternoon tea we chatted and, believe me, we covered a variety of subjects.

One thing I did find challenging about sitting for David was keeping still in certain sitting positions. Lacking the knowledge of how an artist works, I did not realise that the mono prints David created were to be used as the basis for his paintings, and that the mono print is actually a mirror image of the sitter's original position. Getting comfortable in a position during the print-making, I would later find that my position had to be reversed for the next stage of drawing and painting.

My sitting sessions finished a couple of weeks before the opening of David's exhibition "Captured", at Stella Downer Fine Art Gallery in August 2009. As a memento, David gave me one of the paintings, which I gave as a long-awaited gift to my niece.⁷

- Vija Heinrichs



Large head W.C.F. No. 1 2007
Acrylic, gouache, pastel and charcoal on paper
183 x 210cm
Clayton Utz collection

*'People think that good art happens automatically. Creating art takes planning and self evaluation. You need to break your own boundaries'*⁸

- David Fairbairn

Making

Developing a body of work for each new exhibition, Fairbairn starts his drawing process by completing a number of initial sketches and studies, taking photographs only as a reference point for his own art making process, and filling a working diary with written notes and observations.

Preferring to call himself a draftsman rather than a painter, Fairbairn's works are, ultimately, a hybrid of drawing, painting and printmaking. Despite starting off his career as an abstract painter in the late 1970s, Fairbairn made a conscious decision to focus on drawing in the mid 1990's and has since developed a unique territory working with the figure. Looking back, he says *'I struggled to paint in a way that's all my own. I felt I was up against other painters. I came to accept that the best line of attack was my aptitude as a draughtsman'*.⁹ Pastel, charcoal, gouache, ink and acrylic paint are the artist's materials of choice.

Instead of building up from a blank surface, Fairbairn's artworks start with a series of completed prints - dry-points, etchings on copper, and monotypes using oil sticks and inks. The prints are overlaid with drawing and paint, the artist often swapping between several different materials to make his marks. The choice of materials is expressive and visceral, the aim is to emulate the subject's presence rather than imitate physical appearance. Art writer Lou Klepac describes Fairbairn's initial art making process as a way of *'entering into the 'presence' of the sitter, and transferring the soul from the person observed to the large sheets of paper stapled to the board on which the artist works'*.¹⁰ Often the underlying print work lifts through the multiple layers of drawing, creating a visible sense of depth and resonance.

White or black pastel marks applied over the under-layers of the work add detail to the subject, tightening the often loose and expressive initial gestures, and outlining roughly the features of the sitter. Akin to 20th Century figurative artists such as Frances Bacon and Alberto Giacometti, Fairbairn often uses colour as a mechanism for adding depth to the work. He says *'different levels of the drawing are used as a way of creating space. I prefer to use tones instead of colours, because light value adds a graphic realm to the work and keeps it looking layered and dimensional. A good way of seeing the tonal variation in my work is to look at the work in black and white'*.¹¹ Graphic, visual texture is used in place of tactile texture, achieved through etched, engraved and tonal marks.

For Fairbairn, the process of adding layers to his works is just as important as rubbing back and reworking them. Each work moves through a countless number of variations before it is completed. Some sections are removed completely before being reworked, the angle of the sitters pose changing slightly or, at times, dramatically. Fairbairn never discards his works, preferring to recycle them. *'The more serious transformations might involve taking the work into the garden and hosing it down with water to scrub away some of the layers, then reworking it once dry'*.¹² In some works the process of adding and removing layers creates a pale cloud of colour behind the sitters head or body, giving the appearance of movement akin to taking a photograph using a slow shutter speed.

Fairbairn rarely works on just one artwork at a time – preferring to move between a number of different works to make up a series. More recently he has become interested in exploring multiple variations of an image, an approach that suits the printmaking process and artist's working style.

The documentation of his own work and thought processes are an important part of Fairbairn's practice. The artist keeps meticulous records in large working-diaries, capturing each stage of his process. *'Each layer I add to a work is documented so that I can see whether it is working, enabling me to recall the process I used. I also like to write down what I am thinking at the time, or if something has captured my attention and might influence my work in some way'*.¹³ Keeping a visual record is an important part of creation and self evaluation for Fairbairn. *'If there is a particular book that I am reading that I find interesting I write the name in the margins. I also look at the work of a lot of other artists, so an image of their work might appear in the diary. It is important to understand how history has influenced you and why other artists are significant to your work, as it can help you to finesse your work and develop it in certain areas'*.¹⁴ Photographs of each stage of development are numbered in sequence, and often accompanied by written notes, sketches, personal thoughts, musings and self reflections.



David with Vija Heinrichs in studio, Wedderburn, 2009



David in studio, Wedderburn, 2009



Red portrait Suzanne 2000
acrylic, gouache, monotype and pastel on paper
172.3 x 199.2cm
Moran Prizes collection
Photograph courtesy Ian Hobbs

*'Winning the Doug Moran Portrait Prize gives you incredible visibility in the art world'*¹⁵

– David Fairbairn

Artist and awards

David Fairbairn was born in Zambia, Southern Africa, in 1949, his father having emigrated from Yorkshire to Zimbabwe in the 1920's. Fairbairn lived mostly in West Africa until he was 9 years old, where his father worked as a mining engineer.

When he was a child, Fairbairn attended a public boarding school in England. He received his education at the Kings School, Canterbury together with his two brothers and travelled home for the holidays.

As a young adult Fairbairn frequently travelled between England and Africa. In 1969 he returned to South Africa to attend his first art school, studying at the Durban Technical College. He travelled back to England in 1970 to study eventually at the West Surry College of Art and Design in Farnham, gaining his degree in painting and printmaking in 1974, and receiving a postgraduate certificate in painting in 1977 at the Royal Academy Schools, London.

In 1981 Fairbairn's desire to travel brought him to Australia where he met and married fellow artist Suzanne Archer in 1985. Whilst living at Balmain, Sydney, Fairbairn and Archer's friendship with Roy Jackson and John Peart, two artists living on the Wedderburn plateau, prompted their move to Wedderburn in 1988, where they built studios and a house and have lived for the past twenty three years. Fairbairn has taught art for over 20 years and currently teaches at the National Arts School.

Fairbairn has received over 40 awards and prizes since 1981, has held over twenty solo exhibitions, and been included in over seventy group exhibitions across Australia. In 1999 Fairbairn was awarded the prestigious Dobell Drawing Prize, and in 2002 won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, with an entry of his wife, artist Suzanne Archer. Fairbairn has been a finalist for the Archibald Prize on seven occasions since 1983 and a finalist for the Dobell Drawing Prize thirteen times since 1996, marking a significant list of achievements and notable visibility within the Australian arts scene.



Large head C.S. No.3 2007
acrylic, gouache, pastel and charcoal on paper
173.5 x 199.7cm
Collection of Mark and Marianne Schultz

*'Fairbairn's line is angular and constructive; it hacks, chisels and carves the decisive contours of the head'*¹⁶

- Peter Pinston

Lineage

Although natural and industrial landscapes have, in the past, been a focus of his practice, Fairbairn is best known for his portrait work, which has captured his attention since 1984.

Lineage celebrates Fairbairn's fascination with the human figure as a subject. *'For me, the word Lineage suggests a continued dialogue and connection with the many sitters I have had over the years'*.¹⁷ The emotional, expressionist approach Fairbairn has to the human form as a subject is an important consideration in his work.

As a draughtsman, lines are central to the way Fairbairn physically constructs his artworks. Through mark making alone, Fairbairn's drawings are a suggestion of the elements of the physical being - form, mass, space and energy. Describing his works as 'heads' rather than portraits, Fairbairn is concerned with both an analysis of form and a psychological expression of the subject.

Studying in the UK at the West Surry College of Art in Farnham, and the Royal Academy Schools, London, Fairbairn has experienced first hand the evolution of drawing that has taken place within the 'School of London', a term referring to a group of painters, who in the mid 1970's at the height of minimalism and conceptual art, doggedly pursued forms of figurative expressionism in painting and drawing, in the face of prevailing avant-garde forms. The chief artists associated with the School of London were Michael Andrews, Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, Howard Hodgkin and Leon Kossoff.¹⁸ Artists working within this genre of 20th Century draftsmanship, of which Fairbairn is significantly influenced, use line and mark making to explore the energy force of living things, in place of merely creating an exact representation of the subject.¹⁹ This visceral, intuitive approach to drawing reached into the art schools of Sydney in the 1960's and today is a major influence on a younger generation of artists, including Elisabeth Cummings, John Peart and Suzanne Archer.²⁰

Important to Fairbairn's art making practice is a desire to acknowledge and appreciate the historical genealogy of figurative art. His studio shelves are stacked with books on artists from which he takes inspiration - Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti. For Fairbairn, the aptly titled *Lineage* recognises the artist's own place within a linear progression of figurative work that sets out, in some way, to achieve a sense of that which is 'real'. *'Over the Centuries of Western figurative art, one of the overriding concerns has been the making of marks on a surface to achieve a sense of 'reality'. This was the achievement of renaissance artist Tiziano Vecelli (Titian) in the 16th Century, Spanish artist Diego Velazquez in the 17th Century (who was a model for realist and impressionist figurative painters, in particular Edouard Manet), and Baroque-inspired artist Jean-Antoine Watteau in the 18th Century'*.²¹ In the 19th Century and early 20th Century a wave of 'modern' artists set out to achieve the same aim, the results being more acute and emotionally charged, as with the figurative works of Spanish artists Francisco Goya and the early works of Picasso, and the post impressionist figurative works of Paul Cezanne and Vincent Van Gogh. *'Recent painters working within the same framework would include Frances Bacon, Giacometti, Lucien Freud and Leon Kossoff'*.²² Bound up in these references, Fairbairn's art takes its place within an important historical lineage of figurative art making practice.

As well as finding influence from past artists, Fairbairn also shares a significant dialogue and connection with a number of contemporary Australian artists, including Sydney-based artists Mike Parr and Kevin Connor. Like Fairbairn, Connor develops the basis of his art making practice around a passion and talent for drawing people and his surrounds. *'Connor is a compulsive drawer, taking his sketchbooks everywhere with him, detailing daily observations of people in pen and black ink - where they live, work, play and congregate. He uses these sketches as the basis for paintings'*.²³ Connor's paintings of people share the expressive and graphic tonal gestures of Fairbairn's large portrait works. Parr's early practice in drawing and etching also has important parallels with the psychological expressiveness of Fairbairn's portraits, both artists capturing the energy force of the human subject through detailed graphic and gestural line work.



D.G. Study No.5 2009
acrylic, gouache, etching, pen and ink on paper
38.0 x 28.0cm
Collection of Virginia Lloyd-Tait



D.G. No.5 2010
copper etching
54 x 74cm
Collection of the artist



September self portrait 1983



Head of SA with red outline 1984



Four studies of James Barker 1987



Head of KR 1995

*'One cannot ignore the significance of the mask in the work of David Fairbairn'*²⁴

- Dr Marilyn Walters

Masks and skulls

An early fascination with masks prompted Fairbairn to develop his practice as a figurative artist. Growing up in the West African bush of Sierra Leone and Nigeria as a child in the 1950's, Fairbairn's works communicate immediately and expressively with the simple images that formed part of his early childhood. His father, a mining inspector in Sierra Leone, was occasionally given gifts by local chiefs, which, together with his early experience of the African landscape, have had strong influences on his work. In the early 1980's the artist frequently experimented with angular lines and geometric shapes to represent the subject, taking influences from the African masks and other cultural items passed down by his father. *'I have always had a tendency towards primitivism and masks...I am sure the early images of tribal art, together with an experience of the African landscape, formed the basis of my early work'*.²⁵ Like Picasso, Fairbairn used the mask as a tool from which to analyse, deconstruct and create abstractions of the human head.

Cubism was also a reference point for the artist's earlier works, which frequently took more than one optical perspective at a time. Although recent works are more expressive, focusing on the use of line rather than shape, Fairbairn still adopts the use of multiple perspectives in his recent works, the background and object planes in some works interpenetrating one another to create an ambiguous space, one of Cubism's distinct characteristics. In others, Fairbairn makes the near extremities of the body often appear larger, demonstrating a perceptiveness of the figure's location in space. This approach to drawing was explored by 20th figurative artists and expressionists such as Alberto Giacometti, Frank Auerbach and Lucian Freud.

In his early work, Fairbairn frequently used skulls and masks as reference points for replicating the human head both structurally and subjectively, inspired by Australian postwar artists such as Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, Russel Drysdale and Noel Couninhan. The psychological notion of these visual tools has had some influence on Fairbairn's approach to his early subjects. *'In the early 1980s Fairbairn drew and painted fierce images of heads that were consumed by despair. Planes were splintered; eye sockets were black or unseeing, mouths grimacing with emotional pain. They were not so much representations of the stark bone beneath the subjects beguiling skin, as representations of the anguish beneath the subject's humanity. Fairbairn's most recent subjects are rendered with less ferocity and pessimism but no less urgency of execution, and with an equal sense of presence'*.²⁶ In more recent works, drawings of the head is a mechanism for capturing the psychology of the human subject, and the fleetingness of existence – his portraits will, eventually, outlast his sitters.

The subject of death and old age is not unfamiliar for Fairbairn. A recent series of works *Marking Time*, 2007, captured the existential vision of human existence. His sitter, Clive Stanbridge, died of pancreatic cancer during the course of the project. Fairbairn says *'I am drawn to old age and death. It is the sense of pathos, like Munch or late Rembrandt's works. Munch painted over 26 works of his family as they were dying'*.²⁷ Since *Marking Time* Fairbairn has created a series of works on his elderly father and a local woman, Vija Heindricks, now in her 70's. *'Older people have much more for me to work with. I enjoy finding out where they started and where they are going. A lot of the artists I am influenced by have come out of a post-war era that I grew up in, many focusing their work on the idea of a single, iconic person dealing with the world in an existential sense'*.²⁸ This notion of existentialism was explored by 20th Century figurative artists such as Lucien Freud and Giacometti, both known for their relentless investigation of the human figure, and great influences on Fairbairn.



Flourish 1993



Black tree 1993



Transfer tower 1996



C.S. No.7 2007. acrylic, gouache etching, pastel and ink on paper, 55 x 75cm. Collection of Mark Friezer

*'Like geological stratifications, the cliffs and rock platforms of his environment appear in the cheekbone, the jaw line or the angle of the nose in a Fairbairn portrait'*²⁹

- P. Gibson

Landscape

Before moving to Australia in 1981, Fairbairn worked predominantly as an abstract painter, informed by his early years at arts school and the wave of artists working in abstraction at the time. Fairbairn's relocation from the UK to Australia prompted an important shift in his work. The move allowed the artist to re-engage with figuration and move away from the constraints of his earlier art school training. In the late 1980's and early 1990's the artist developed his style in depictions of the industrial and natural landscape. Importantly, Fairbairn's portrait works share the layered, kinetic and visceral qualities of his early landscapes, the natural environment being an important aesthetic feature in his portraits.

Through a clever use of line, Fairbairn portraits draw connections between the contours of the landscape and the contours of the human head, his colours reflecting the subtle palate of the Australian bush. *'I enjoy thinking of my artworks, the heads, as something you could walk across, the lines of the face mapping out the rough, ever changing terrain of the landscape'*.³⁰

Inspired by his childhood in West Africa, Fairbairn acknowledges the effect that the passing of time has on the natural landscape, the ageing human face, and the fragility of human existence.

In 2000, four painters from the Wedderburn region of New South Wales, including Fairbairn, Suzanne Archer, Elisabeth Cummings and John Peart, whom all share a concern for the preservation of the fragile environment of the Wedderburn plateau, came together in a unique exhibition titled *Common Ground* at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery, NSW, to raise funds to protect their local environment, with money from the sale of a portfolio of prints by each artist going to the Georges River Environmental Action Team. This group of artists have maintained a shared environmental influence within in their work, which is evident in their unique artistic techniques and working styles.



Large head C.S. No.2 2006
acrylic, gouache, pastel and charcoal on paper
166.5 x 198.5cm
Collection of the artist

7-12 Framing Questions

- Find words to describe the qualities and characteristics of line in Fairbairn's body of work. Describe how the use of line represents the form of the subject, rather than creating likeness. Complete a number of sketches of a classmate using fast, repetitive line only to build up form. Experiment with the use of materials such as pastel, gouache, acrylic paint and charcoal.
- Describe how Fairbairn gives emphasis to perspective in his works. Take a photograph of a classmate from different angles. In a drawing, try to replicate the optical effect that the angle of the shot has on the appearance of the subject.
- Research the printmaking techniques of dry point, etching and monotype. Experiment with the processes of dry-point and monotype using different materials. Describe the experience of using these processes. Are they easy to do? How do the different methods affect your results? What is the level of control you have over the image? What are the challenges? What are the qualities of these process and materials that might appeal to Fairbairn?
- Research the distinction between hues, tints, tones and shades of colour. Describe how Fairbairn uses tone to create different levels of depth in his drawings. What effect does the range of tones have on the look and feel of his work? Create experimental portraits using hues, tints, tones and shades of colour. Write an analysis of the effect each has on the feel and mood of the portrait.
- In what way can Fairbairn's works be defined as both *figurative* and *abstract*? Define these terms. Find examples of 20th Century artworks that fit either or both of these definitions. As a viewer do we engage differently with figurative and abstract works? Explain.
- How might an artist represent the psychological dimension of another person?

- What affect does the gaze of another human figure have in the way we connect with and interpret a portrait painting? Describe the way Fairbairn draws his subject's eyes, comparing different artworks. What affect does the gaze have on the feel and mood of the work?
- Martin Gayford argues that painting a portrait is an attempt to hit a moving target. What does he mean by this? What is the difference between a painted portrait and a photographic portrait? Is one medium more effective or authentic than another? Research the evolving definitions of portraiture.
- Fairbairn says '*Over the centuries in Western Art one of the overriding concerns has been the making of marks on a surface to achieve a sense of reality*'. Describe the methods of impressionism, cubism and expressionism in achieving a particular sense of 'reality'. Find examples of artists working figuratively within these movements.
- Research the conventions of European portraiture – the methods, compositions, poses, gestures, expressions, techniques and styles. Where do these conventions come from? Describe how Fairbairn has adopted these conventions in his work. Does Fairbairn challenge any of these conventions?
- Unlike traditional portraiture, Fairbairn allows his sitters to talk and make movements while he is working. What does this say about Fairbairn's style and approach to portraiture? Is there any structural evidence of the subject's movement in Fairbairn's drawings? Take several automatic photographs of a classmate making subtle facial expressions using the time lapse function in a camera. Using tracing paper and a pencil, create a line drawing of each shot, overlapping the drawings to show movement.
- Make comparisons between the figurative works of Giacometti, Lucian Freud, Frances Bacon, and Picasso. and David Fairbairn. Describe how line, space and perspective are explored by each artist. What are the aims of each artist in portraying the subject?
- Compare Fairbairn's work to the work of Australian post-war artists such as Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, Russel Drysdale and Noel Couninhan. What similarities can you see in the themes and styles of art making? What are their influences?
- Fairbairn says '*I enjoy thinking of my artworks, the heads, as something you could walk across, the lines of the face mapping out the rough, ever changing terrain of the landscape*'. Describe how Fairbairn's portrait works reflect the Australian landscape. Why is the landscape an influence in Fairbairn's portraits?
- Outline the influence of cubism in Fairbairn's early works. Research the cubist movement and list its key characteristics. Describe why 20th Century cubism is considered 'avant-garde'. In what way did it revolutionise painting and sculpture? Explain the ways in which cubism was influenced by art from 'primitive' or non-European cultures. Is there any evidence of Fairbairn's early cubist concerns in his more recent work?
- Consider the purpose and role of an exhibition of selected works spanning a twelve year period. Can you see any changes in Fairbairn's style between 1998 and 2010? Compare this body of that makes up *Lineage* to artworks produced by Fairbairn 20 and 30 years ago. What reasons can you give for changes to the artist's style?
- Why is the use of a visual diary important for Fairbairn's art making practice? What are the benefits of keeping a visual diary?



Auto portrait No.12 2003
copper etching 3/20
33.5 x 24.8cm image
Collection of the artist



C.S. study No.45 2007

acrylic, gouache, etching, pen and ink on paper
28 x 36.5cm

Collection of Yvette Pritchard

K-6 Looking and Making

- As a class group, find words to describe the surface of Fairbairn's drawings and his use of line, shape, colour and texture, examining the background, middle ground and foreground. What are Fairbairn's artworks made of? What is the common theme between the works in the exhibition?
- Ask children to imagine what it might be like to walk over the surface of Fairbairn's drawings. Find common words to describe Fairbairn's drawings and the Australian bush. Write a poem to describe Fairbairn's drawings and their connection to the natural landscape.
- Work with children to create a definition for a portrait. Find examples of painted or drawn portraits from different cultures and times. Observe the differences.
- Practice drawing from a live model in the classroom. Why do you think artists might choose to work from a live model? How might it feel to model for an artist? Would it be difficult to stand still for long period of time?
- Have students create a three dimensional sculptural portrait using wire, then create drawings of their sculptures using only lines to create form.
- Ask students to describe the different angles from which Fairbairn draws his subjects. Create a series of drawings and photographs of a partner from different perspectives.
- Describe to students the printmaking process. Working in pairs, have students create a portrait using a continuous line drawing, then copy their drawings onto scratch foam board or lino to make a series of prints on paper.



D.B. No.2 2004-2005
acrylic, gouache, pastel and chinagraph on paper
76.5 x 57.0cm
Collection of Tim Watts and Colette Jonquierees

Glossary

Abstract art Art that uses a visual language of form, colour and line to create an often non-figurative composition, or one that exists independently from visual references

Avant-garde Experimental or innovative

Conceptual art Art in which the concept(s) or idea(s) involved in the work take precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns

Deconstruct The process of manually taking down or breaking apart

Draughtsman A person skilled in drawing for artistic or practical purposes

Drypoint A technique of engraving that uses a sharp-pointed needle to producing lines that have a burr. Drypoints are transferred onto paper using a printing press, and are characterised by soft, velvety black lines

Etching A printmaking process that uses strong acid to cut into the surface of metal to create a design, which is transferred onto paper using a printing press

Expressionism A cultural movement originating in Germany at the start of the 20th century. Its typical trait is to present the world in an utterly subjective perspective to evoke moods or ideas

Figurative art Describes artworks—particularly paintings and sculptures—which clearly represent real objects

Figurative Expressionism A period of the 1950's representing an artistic trend where artists worked abstractly with the figure

Hybrid A combination of two or more things

Kinetic Describes the energy an object possesses due to its motion

Lineage The order of descent from a common source or ancestor

Minimalism Movements in various forms of art and design where the work is stripped down to its most fundamental features

Monotype A printmaking process that uses drawing or painting on a smooth, non-absorbent surface. The image is then transferred onto a sheet of paper using a printing-press. Monotypes can also be created by inking an entire surface and then, using brushes or rags, removing ink to create an image

Muse An artistic inspiration

Offset printing A printmaking process where the inked image is transferred from a plate to a rubber blanket, then to the printing surface

Palette The range of colours in a given work or body of work

Portrait An artistic representation of a person

Resonance Richness or significance

Tactile Having texture that can be felt by touching

Traditions Beliefs, customs and practices

Transience Passing with time; something that is brief and short lived.

Variation A technique where material or form is altered during repetition

Visceral Instinctual, rather than intellectual.

Wedderburn A suburb of Sydney. located 57 kilometres south-west of the Sydney central business district, in the local government area of the City of Campbelltown. The steep gorge and heavy bush, gives it a small country town atmosphere, rather than a suburb.



D.G. No.12 2008-2009
acrylic, gouache, ink, charcoal, chinagraph and pastel on paper
76 x 57cm
Kedumba Collection of Contemporary Australian Drawings

ENDNOTES

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4. Interview with David Fairbairn, 7 December 2010
5. Gayford, M, *Face Off: Seeing Yourself Through the Eyes of Lucian Freud*, *Modern Painters*, Vol 17. no 3, 2004, p.99.
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7. Interview with Vija Heinrichs, 6 December 2010
8. Interview with David Fairbairn, 7 December 2010
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16. Pinston, P, *Common Ground: Four Wedderburn Painters*, *Art and Australia*, Vol 40, no 2, 2002, p. 276.
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20. Mendelssohn, J, in *6 from Wedderburn*, Exhibition Catalogue, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1998, p.11
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26. Pinston, P, *Common Ground: Four Wedderburn Painters*, *Art and Australia*, Vol 40, no 2, 2002, p. 276.
27. Fairbairn, D, in Gibson, P, 'David Fairbairn', *Artist Profile*, Issue 5, p. 40
28. Interview with David Fairbairn, 7 December 2010
29. Gibson, P, 'David Fairbairn', *Artist Profile*, Issue 5, 2008, p. 37
30. Interview with David Fairbairn, 7 December 2010

