



Robert Boynes

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Beaver Galleries has just opened a show of paintings by Canberra artist **ROBERT BOYNES** entitled *In the light of day*. Formerly Head of Painting at the Canberra School of Art for 27 years, Boynes is highly regarded and is represented in the National Gallery of Australia, all Australian State Galleries, Parliament House, Artbank and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

In the light of day could refer to one of many aspects of his practice – the light essential to photography, the public and exposed locations where he takes his imagery or the act of seeing itself. The attitude that there is something persistent and common to the human experience resonates in this show. Acrylic, velvet and wood splice canvasses are utilised to explore the sounds, sensations and movement found in our urban spaces and streetscapes. He uses fractured images and shards of light to reinforce the transience of memory and complexity of sight. Boynes explains, in reference to all art, that “it’s the mad material with no surface logic that persists in the nicest way.”

Boynes cites Goya, Manet, El Greco and the practice of seminal figures within modernism as influences. As they skillfully drew together and contrasted the “message” and the “delivery” of a work of art. He is also captivated by less literal depictions of the world, like colour field painting,

minimalism or even the soundscapes of John Cage and Philip Glass. He explains:

“I make paintings by transiting through photography and screen-printing. I would call it a multi-media mode of delivery. There is a reason that I have formed a unique language. It is the only way to express and reflect on my particular history of the day.”

In 1959, alongside the like-minded *Barbara Hanrahan, Alun Leach-Jones, Udo Sellbach and Peter Haynes*, Boynes juggled teaching and his scholarship at the South Australian School of Art. It was an extremely intense but formative period. As any student knows living and creating at once is a precarious balance. The nights he didn’t work were spent in Kym Bonython’s jazz cellar, a tiny place for coffee and cigarettes in Union Street, Adelaide.

Early on in Boynes’ career, Robert Lindsay advised that to find out what you do best and decide to keep doing it will be your greatest move. He has found this space yet concedes that there are peaks and troughs. A duality that also applies to conceiving the work itself, he says: “What do I plan to do in the future? It’s always the same, to make better artworks. The next picture is always the most exciting, and the last picture is always your best. In there lies an untruth and self-deception. Then again, unless you have an art-ego you *don’t go on to make more.*”

The In the light of day exhibition is being held at Beaver Galleries (81 Denison Street, Deakin) from Thursday October 20 until Sunday November 13. The gallery is open between Tuesday and Friday from 10am-5pm and on Saturday and Sunday between 9am-5pm. You can also view the works online at beavergalleries.com.au .

<http://www.bmamag.com/articles/exhibitionist/20111024-robert-boynes/>