

# John Cullinane

## New Paintings

Opening drinks  
Tuesday 01.08.06  
5.30-7.30

01-12 August 2006  
@ fortyfivedownstairs  
45 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne 3000  
Tue to Fri 11.00-5.00  
Sat 12.00-4.00

BRIGITTE BRAUN  
ART DEALER





2. The Colony



3. Hades



4. Minotaurs and Mermaids



5. Balance of Power



6. Wall of Jericho



7. Chaos



8. The Flock



9. Argus



10. Movers and Shakers



12 Dystopia



13. The Bullshitter



14. Burt out Worker



15. Chiron

- 1 **Boatpeople** 2006  
(Cover Image)  
Oil on linen 122x168cm
- 2 **The Colony** 2005  
Oil on linen 122x168cm
- 3 **Hades** 2005  
Oil on linen 122x168cm
- 4 **Minotaurs & Mermaids** 2006  
Oil on linen 122x168cm
- 5 **Balance of Power** 2006  
oil on linen 76x110cm
- 6 **The Wall of Jericho** 2006  
Oil on linen 76x102cm
- 7 **Chaos** 2006  
Oil on linen 76x102cm
- 8 **The Flock** 2006  
Oil on linen 76x102cm
- 9 **Argus** 2005  
oil on linenn 76x102cm
- 10 **Movers and Shakers** 2005  
Oil on linen 76x92cm
- 11 **Addiction** 2006  
Oil on linen 76x84cm
- 12 **Dystopia** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51cm
- 13 **The Bullshitter** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51cm
- 14 **Burnt out worker** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51 cm
- 15 **Chiron** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51 cm
- 16 **Heavy Load** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51 cm
- 17 **Horserace** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51 cm
- 18 **Meat Eaters** 2006  
Oil on linen 41x51 cm
- 19 **Fixed Idea** 2005  
Oil on linen 31x41cm



16. Heavy Load



17. Horserace



18. Meateaters



19. Fixed Idea

## BRIGITTE BRAUN ARTDEALER

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# John Cullinane

## Biography

### Born

1957 Subiaco,  
Western Australia

### Education

1987 Painting and Ceramics, WACAE  
1986 Diploma in Fine Art, Claremont School of Art  
1980 Certificate in Drawing, Perth Technical College  
1973 Drawing, Perth Technical College

### Solo Exhibitions

2006 New Paintings, Fortyfivedownstairs, Melbourne  
2005 New Paintings, Artplace, Perth  
2004 New Paintings, Fortyfivedownstairs, Melbourne  
2003 New Paintings, Artplace, Perth  
2001 New Paintings, Artplace, Claremont, WA  
2000 Gaswerk Galerie, Schwabach, Germany  
1999 New paintings, Artplace, Claremont, WA  
1997 From the sketchbook, Artplace, Claremont, WA  
1994 Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney  
1993 Artplace, Claremont, WA  
1992 Artplace @ Artshouse, Perth

### Group Exhibitions

2004 Artplace Group Show 2004, Artplace, Perth  
2004 Melbourne Art Fair 2004, Melbourne, VIC  
2003 Artplace Group Show 2003, Artplace, Perth  
Bank West Contemporary Art Prize, PICA, Perth  
2002 Artplace Group Show 2002  
Melbourne Art Fair 2002  
2001 Art 01 The Western Australian Art Fair,  
Artplace stand  
1999 Redland Art Prize, Sydney City of Perth Art Prize  
1998 Artplace Christmas Show, Artplace, Perth  
Review '98 - Director's Choice, Gallery 101, Melbourne  
6th Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne  
1998 Conrad Jupiters Art Prize, Gold Coast City Art Gallery  
Artplace at 101, Gallery 101, Melbourne  
The Albany Art Prize, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany  
New work by Artplace artists, Artplace, Perth

1997 Censorship Show, Artplace, Perth  
1996 5th Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne  
Figuration, Art Gallery of WA  
Five figurative Painters, Festival of Perth,  
Artplace Perth  
Six Western Australian Painters,  
Beaver Galleries, Canberra  
Out of Australia, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art  
1995 Sir Charles Gairdner Invitation exhibition  
1994 Fourth Contemporary Art Fair ACAF•4, Melbourne  
Mandorla Art Prize (finalist)  
1993 The Advantage of Isolation, Artplace, Claremont  
The Advantage of Isolation, Blaxland Gallery, Sydney  
1992 52 New, Artplace, Claremont  
Sir Charles Gairdner Invitation Exhibition  
Tresillian Art Award (Drawing)  
Mandorla Art Prize (finalist)  
Alice Prize  
1991 Albany Art Prize  
1990 Matilda Bay Art Prize (finalist)  
1989 Tresillian Art Award, works on paper  
Matilda Bay Art Prize (finalist)  
Albany Art Prize  
1987 Luv A Duck, University of Western Australia  
1986 Graduate Exhibition, Claremont School of Art

### Awards/Commissions

2000 Artist in Residency, Galerie Gaswerk  
Schwabach, Germany  
1998 Winner Albany Art Prize  
1994 Artist in Residence, New Norcia  
1992 Book cover, One More River, by Brenda Walker  
1991 Banner, Waterside Workers Federation  
1990 Book cover, Crush, by Brenda Walker  
1989 Best Figure Study, Albany Art Prize

## Publications

- 2004 Felena Alach, Well executed, creative spaces, Shout, Oct-Nov  
Jennie Fitzhardinge, "Just the ticket", Sunday Times, September 26
- 2003 Judith McGrath, www.artseeninwa.com, May  
Arts-Today section pg 7, The West Australian, May 7th
- 2001 Neville Weston, "Surprising Vision", The West Australian, big weekend, Sept. 15  
Rosemary Hunter, "Other worlds", Perth Weekly, September 5th  
Australian Painting 1788 - 2000; Oxford University Press; p585; 2001
- 2000 Ute Maucher, "Venus steht am Strand" Abendzeitung, Nürnberg, Germany, 22.7  
Eva Kettler "Das Licht der Romantik" Nürnberger Zeitung, Nürnberg, Germany 18.7  
"Mythologie purzelt beim Betrachten entgegen, Schwabacher Tagblatt, Schwabach, 20th July
- 1999 David Bromfield, "Mastering the craft of magic", Big Weekend, The West Australian, 12th June  
Evi Ferrier, "Heights of inspiration", Perth Weekly, 2-8 June
- 1998 "Off to the art fair", Local News, 24 June  
Patricia Gill, "Prize winner invites closer look", Albany Advertiser, 7 April  
Patricia Gill, "Albany Art Prize a dream come true for Perth artist", Albany Advertiser, 9th April  
Ron Banks, The West Australian, 14th April  
David Bromfield, "Cullinane's travels", The West Australian, 28 June
- 1997 Dorothy Erickson, "Shooting stars - Brigitte Braun's Artplace", Artlink, 17:3  
Neville Drury, Images III, Craftsman House, NSW
- 1996 Jill Bryant, Australian Imaginings, Hodder  
Headline Australia, [image p. 5] 1996  
Paul McGillick, The Figurative Edge, Art and Australia, Vol.34 No.1, Spring '96  
Anna Herriman, Six Western Australian Painters, exhibition catalogue,  
Paul McGillick, Perth Dreamscape finds its painters, Financial Review, 9.2  
Sonia Barron, Showing six who characterise painting in WA, Canberra Times 17.2  
Nikki Miller, Art Circuit, The West Australian, 28.2.  
John Stringer, Richard /Woldendorp, Artists in Residence, Sandpiper

- 1994 Neville Drury, Images 2, Craftsman House
- 1993 Margaret Moore, "Fifty times two", Artlink, Vol.13, No.2, p 80  
Dorothy Erickson, "Dip into the West", Bulletin, 16.2. Ron Banks,  
"Dream Show for Artist",  
The West Australian, 9.6.93  
Judith McGrath, "Paint poses few puzzles", Sunday Times, 13.6.93  
David Bromfield, "On Show" Big Weekend, The West Australian, 26.6.93

## Collections

National Gallery of Australia, Murdoch University, Parliament House Canberra, University of Western Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, Royal Perth Hospital, City of Wanneroo, SGIO, Town of Albany, New Norcia Art Gallery, Kerry Stokes, Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, Barry Humphries, Bank West, and private collections in Australia, Germany, Ireland, England, Canada and U.S.A.

## The Paintings of John Cullinane



11. Addiction

For almost twenty years, John Cullinane has painted in the same studio, a small crowded garret room at the top of a massive terrace house in inner city Perth. There is no view. A tiny hinged window, set very high, transmits the mood of the day and the sounds of the city. He works regular hours. His determination and dedication to painting were recognised at his first shows, for Artplace, in 1992 and 1993. Each new exhibition is a revelation, eagerly awaited by collectors, and public. Last year the National Gallery acquired his large low key figure figure composition Ticket of Leave. The bright complex colour of his new works is a remarkable achievement.

Two early paintings hang on the top landing outside his studio, small, passionately painted landscapes, one with a bright flame slashed across its centre. His early work was all about the landscape as a stage for natural events, human actions and the mysteries that connect them. He worked steadily towards the psychological and technical mastery of this subject. He tackles large canvases, multiple events, even, indirectly, complex social issues, as emblems installed across the landscape.

In Boat People, 2006, single figures in contemporary dress stand in elementary wooden boats all pointing left, but each is caught in the branches of a dead tree. They are only seven but spaced across an

infinite plain of red soil, in dramatic side lighting, to suggest that they, and their desires, are beyond number. Cullinane recalled Nolan's images of dead animal carcasses, stranded in trees after a flood. He transformed them into a meditation on human fate, all that hope and energy high and dry. At art school, the library, not the studio, informed his education.

Cullinane's recent work often presents a wide plain and high horizon, the dress circle view, the helicopter shot. Dali, Miro, Tanguy used this convention to contain incidents in a tableau within the same event horizon, the same mental landscape. Cullinane's sensibility approaches surrealism, but his wide open spaces echo the plain of the Swan Valley as he sketched it for many years. His finest work inscribes a specific West Australian imaginary, the reminiscences, sub-text and small talk of the most isolated city in the world, into a landscape of universal passions. Colony, 2006 references WA colonial history, as it whispers its endless madness to the present. Addiction, 2006 deals with a dependence beyond drugs, addiction as the West Australian lifestyle.

The difficulties to be faced in achieving the poetic and pictorial unity, the absolute conviction of these works, are often underestimated. Cullinane slowly remade himself as a painterly virtuoso, not in order to venerate the old masters but to achieve their freedom of imagination.

His skies became dramatic masterpieces of light and dark. Finely balanced, broken, flowing colours, rich purples, warm grays, and occasional acid reds and greens in the roiling clouds, form a realm of freedom for artist and viewer. Their superbly handled surfaces key in the eye to the rest of the canvas. They invoke the moment of uncertainty that lies forever between humanity and nature.

Cullinane vividly recalls La Tempesta 1505-1510 in the Venice Accademia – to the right a semi naked woman nursing a baby, to the left a finely dressed courtier, between them a fast flowing river, a broken column; beyond a bridge, a town clinging to the bank, an animated, stormy sky. Lightning moulds the figures and buildings.

He aims for this same unresolved, enigmatic poetry. Addiction would be a mere illustration if not for his painterly ability to transform the three figures with needles in their arms into universal emblems of dependence. His technique is deliberately anti-illustrative. He draws each figure by scumbling the form in pure paint, without medium, then glazes over each emblem and its background adding details and harmonic light. Their soft-edged shapes exist within the dramatic surface, the light and shade of the painting as a whole, rather than as a fractured illusionistic tour de force.

The three figures, 'high' in the sky, float with conviction, counterpointing the earthbound addicts. Cullinane embeds them in the troubled clouds as a single magically animate substance. Smoke slides from silhouetted factory chimneys on the distant coastline, reminiscent of the ruined environment around the industrial district of Rockingham. The poison that slips into the arms of the addicts is also being fed to the environment. A state of mind, universal addiction, dictates the state of the world.

On the horizon in The Colony the same poisonous factory smoke slides into the sky. Across the desolate plain below Cullinane presents a forensic ensemble of emblems that, like the useless furniture abandoned on Augusta's beaches by our early colonists, invoke our true colonial inheritance, perpetual, low key social terrorism.

Cullinane's images can come from surprising sources, but their aura of associations, however widespread, is always appropriate. The lovers in a grotto in The Colony's lower right quadrant were suggested by Adolf Hitler's dislike of grottoes as an architectural feature, because lovers might indeed meet there. No doubt Hitler had seen kitsch images of lovers in vine covered bowers, as has Cullinane, to judge from the pruned vines on his concrete grotto. He chose this image for all its associations, an icon of introverted freedom in a landscape of grinding repression.

Every image in The Colony invites careful inspection. Many are culled from artists as far apart in time as Bosch and the Goya of the Caprichos. In each desire wrestles with oppressive fantasy. Cullinane often reassigns mythological images in the local context. In Hades, 2006 dual Minotaurs range across a desolate plain with a smoking chimney on the horizon. Argus performs his guard duties from a great distance with a telescope.

Western Australian art has always favoured timid superficial optimism. It has lacked a painter talented and courageous enough to portray the life we live here, with all the drama, false hopes and fantasy just behind our perpetual smiles, our banal prosperity. Cullinane is that painter.

*David Bromfield.*