

## **New Paths**

'I have not had a solo exhibition in Sydney since 2007. This is, on a personal level, an exhibition I have been looking forward to for a long time.

The exhibition focuses on my figurative sculpture, which is influenced by a deep, subterranean reading of the Australian landscape. At the same time, a number of the round 'mandala' forms are shown. As John Neylon (the author of the two monographs published on my work) has commented, these figurative pieces, influenced by the Australian landscape, are connected to, and descend from the larger picture; universal forces, which the mandala forms symbolically represent. The local is connected to the universal.

I have since 2007 spent time on a long, dirt road trip in South Australia, following the route Stuart the explorer took traversing Australia from South to North, and visited the Kimberley Ranges and Kakadu. I am currently working on a long term, cross cultural, collaboration in the Tiwi Islands, working with the carvers and painters of the extraordinary Pukamani poles. This collaboration involves both respectfully learning from this very old tradition; and encouraging, evolving new approaches to their traditional carving. It is a wonderful and demanding opportunity. The final engagement with our extraordinary landscape is the restoration of over 400 acres of a post-colonial landscape in rain shadow country at Palmer in South Australia. Forty-five of my sculptures have also been placed there in a symbiotic relationship with the land. The intention environmentally is to make a contribution in what clearly now is a climate emergency. Culturally, the development of an Australian sculptural sensibility, which at the same time has connections with universal, symbolic and spiritual questions, is centrally important to me.

In 2023 the digital world may now be the reality which most people spend their time engaging. In a time when entertainment, overwhelming and continual input, rapid change and loss of connection with the natural world shape us culturally I see large scale public sculpture as providing a tether to timeless aspects of reality. In respect to this contemporary mythology, questions of spirit, connections to our profound landscape, and the continual unfolding of the story/ journey of sculpture worldwide, all provide significant input for the ongoing development of my sculpture. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we must continue to ask questions in all of the areas that the arts explore. It is our responsibility to reveal (and take care of) the sense of wonder which is expressed so profoundly by our natural world.'

-Greg Johns, February 2023