

# JOHN BEARD

## EIGHT YEARS

8 November – 25 November 2006

**John Buckley Gallery**  
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The land's end I, 1998  
Acrylic on paper, 109 x 109 cm

### Press release

Welsh born artist John Beard won the Welsh National Art Scholarship in 1962 at just 19 years of age. He studied at the University of London and the Royal College of Art, London. In 1965 he won the British Arts Council International Prize and Commission, and has since won many residencies and commissions at various Universities and establishments around the globe.

After various teaching posts in Britain, Beard arrived in Western Australia in 1983, to become Senior Lecturer, Head of Painting, Curtin University, Perth. After resigning in 1989, Beard travelled extensively, living and exhibiting in cities such as New York, Madrid, Lisbon and London before establishing a Sydney base in 1997. When the Tate gallery opened its St Ives gallery in Cornwall, 1998, John Beard was one of the first artists to be offered a residency and exhibition there.

The exhibition 'John Beard - Eight years' includes important works from the following series:

**'Heads - Self portraits'**, Beard manipulates the surfaces of his paintings to give life and movement to the works by altering the viewer's sense of light and perception. He works and reworks the surfaces of the canvas until the 'head' is almost unrecognisable.

The video work **'Aisle'** which makes reference to the Hubert Damish's 'Theorie du Nuage' 1972 is accompanied by a diptych of photographic screen prints relating to the work.

The **'Land's End'** series is an installation of seven modular screen prints and records an enigmatic rock in the sea off Cornwall, the most occidental point of the English coast.

The mixed media works entitled **'The Age of Prescription'** is a collaboration between the artist and his young daughter. These diptychs explore the innocence and mark making of a child juxtaposed with the image of the interior of a jumbo jet that acts as a metaphor for our complex and sophisticated global world.

The exhibition also includes John Beard's most recent works **'Adraga'** which is a visual exploration of a wave beaten rock off the Atlantic coast of Portugal.

**'The work is a result of a kind of struggle, a precarious equilibrium that must remain suspended so as to sustain its intensity. The 'Adraga' project gave me clues as to how to deal with the head and face of the subject matter..... I find myself literally washing in and washing away the most familiar features of reference in the face, arresting, it would seem, the anticipated need for confirmation of certain aspects of the subject.....another body of knowledge existing behind, and perhaps beyond the similarly complex layering of what we know'. – John Beard.**

John Beard has not shown in Melbourne since 1991. **John Beard – Eight years** gives a Melbourne audience the opportunity of catching up with the work of this important international Australian artist.

Recent solo exhibitions of note include: *After Adraga/The Land's End - Installation of selected works from the Tate St Ives UK*, Art Gallery of New South Wales; *The Land's End II*, Galeria Presenca, Porto, Portugal; *Age of Prescription*, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide; *Ocean*, Jensen Gallery, Auckland; *The Rock and The Head*, Stephen Lacey Gallery, London; *The Head and Uluru*, Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney; *John Beard: Headlands*, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney; *John Beard*, Centro de Arte Moderna, Calouste Gulbenkian Museo, Lisbon, Portugal.

Recent group exhibitions include: *The Possibilities of Portraiture*, The National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; *Painting the Century - 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000*, The National Portrait Gallery, London; *HEAD ON: Art with the Brain in Mind*, The Science Museum, London, England; *The Shell Collection*, National Gallery of Victoria; *Recent Acquisitions*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; *The Year in Art*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney; *The Archibald Prize*, The Art Gallery of NSW; *Small is Beautiful XX111*, Flowers Central Gallery, London; *Black Epiphanies*, Virginia Wilson Gallery, Sydney; Wynne, Sullman and Archibald Prizes, 2006, AGNSW, The Big Picture, Delmar Gallery, Sydney and Monochromed, Fine Art Society, London. John Beard was also the winner of this years Wynne Prize.

John Beard's work is represent in the Collection of Tate Gallery, London and the Collection of Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Centro de Arte Moderna, Lisbon, collections of major international and Australian public institutions. It is also represented in private collections in USA, Canada, UK, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and India.