



HEIDI YARDLEY

Heidi Yardley's work falls into a strange category all of its own. At times clearly inspired by both European painting and cinema, her most recent work also embraces an element of the dark, shadowy Australia found in *Picnic At Hanging Rock* and the stranger moments of *Albert Tucker's* landscape work.

Yardley's world is one of melancholy figures, eerie rock formations, suggestions of sacred and ritual sites, stone circles, fires and bacchanalian ritual. There are hints of the symbolists and their themes, particularly the work of *Eugene Carriere, Redon* and *Goya*. There is the hint of the spirit photography of the early 1900s and the sensual era of *Playboy* magazine during the dark Manson years. If there were a soundtrack to these paintings it would be performed by the *Aleister Crowley*-obsessed *Jimmie Page* collaborating with the industrial-punk maestro *Michael Gira*. It would be spooky and thunderous intersected with moments of contemplation and sensuality.

Yardley has for some time been seduced by imagery from the 1960s and early 1970s – a period of change and youthful rebellion; the sexual revolution, the sense of freedom, wild fashion and long hair. This moment was coupled with a renewed interest in the occult that can be seen in many publications and films from the era. It was the time of the Vietnam War, the JFK assassination – a period of extraordinary extremes. "My intention is to hint at the more sinister, to suggest ritual and magic and the uncanny or unexplained," Yardley says of these works.

And yet there are moments here where the subject could only be the Australian bush; a place infused with its own sense of mystery and one that has inspired artists – most especially painters – since the colonial days, a tradition that can be seen in such contemporary practitioners as *Peter Booth, Louise Hearman* and *Rick Amor*. And Yardley is very much a painter, allowing the textures of her oil paint to ripple over the surface of her pictures.

Based in Melbourne, Yardley completed a Bachelor of Fine Art in painting at Monash University in 1995 and an honours in drawing at RMIT in 1999. Three times a finalist in the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, she exhibits regularly in solo and group exhibitions, and her work is held in numerous public and private collections, including the BHP Billiton Collection, Methodist Ladies College Collection and the University of Queensland Art Museum.

Ashley Crawford

Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, and Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne.

From above left:

Heidi Yardley, *Farewells, Promises*, 2010. Oil on board, 58 x 45cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND JAN MURPHY GALLERY, BRISBANE

Heidi Yardley, *Farewell Fire 3*, 2010. Oil on board, 18 x 15cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND JAN MURPHY GALLERY, BRISBANE

Heidi Yardley. PHOTO: VIVA PARTOS

