

# FROM A SCRAP OF PAPER: Drawing, Watercolour, Paint, Print, Photography

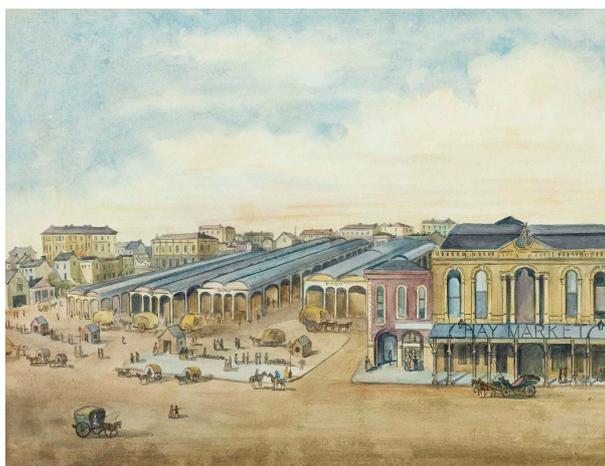
15 November – 16 December 2011

A closer look at... the landscape views of Melbourne and Hobart

This second *A closer look at...* examines the various landscape views of Melbourne and Hobart included in the exhibition *From a Scrap of Paper: Drawing, Watercolour, Paint, Print, Photography*. Australian landscape painting offers a rich history of the development of the country during the early colonial period, documenting the growth of our cities and of our artistic practice.

These works offer a profound insight into the history of colonial Australia; an insight into life in the colonies that goes beyond the images and into the personal stories of the artists. Amongst the exhibited artists one can find a convict, a royal navy lieutenant; a painter from a family of painters, illustrators and even the mystery of an unknown artist. Many of the artists were born overseas, migrated and were sent here, some forever and some only for a short period; other artists partook in a journey to the exotic land and returned to England with illustrations of the new colonised land.

The *Views of Melbourne* series, by an unknown artist, features six 'views' of a developing Melbourne: *Elizabeth Street*, *Bourke Street*, *Collins Street*, *Swanston Street*, *Eastern Market* and *View from Eastern Hill*, each measuring 20.5 x 30cm. The six pictures offer a unique and historical point of reference for Melbourne's progress and form part of a rich history of the colonial landscape. The NGV's collection includes a number of similar themed works such as Henry Burn's *Swanston Street from the Bridge*, 1851 and Henry Gritten's *Melbourne From The South Bank Of The Yarra*, c.1856.



ARTIST UNKNOWN  
*Views of Melbourne: Eastern Market*  
watercolour on paper  
20.5 x 31.5 cm

*Eastern Market* (left) depicts the former market that was located on the southwest corner of Bourke and Exhibition Streets. It opened on 22 December 1879, and lived on as a flower market and prominent meeting place for workers.<sup>1</sup> It was demolished c.1960 along with other major Melbourne markets, including the Western market, which took up an entire block. This watercolour serves as an important reference to the early period in Melbourne's evolution.

Another landscape depicting colonial Melbourne is George Rossi Ashton's *View of Melbourne from Sweet William, Brunswick*, a watercolour on paper measuring 41.8 x 61.7cm. The exact location from which the artist created the landscape is not identified. Upon closer inspection, however, one can make out the domes of the

<sup>1</sup> Eric Thake, *Goodbye Melbourne Town*, State Library of Victoria Website:  
<http://victoria.slv.vic.gov.au/ericthake/melbmemories/goodbyemelb/index.html>

State Library the Law Courts, a clock tower in the centre, which could be the Town Hall and the Royal Exhibition building, which housed State Parliament at the time.

Less well known as an artist than his brother, Julian Ashton, George Rossi Ashton migrated to Melbourne from London in the 1870s and remained in Australia for 14 years. He worked for *Illustrated Australian News* and covered the capture of Ned Kelly at Glenrowan.

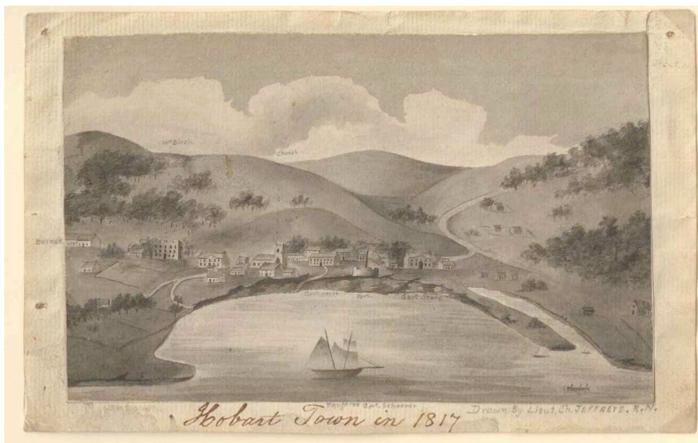


GEORGE ROSSI ASHTON 1857 - 1942  
*View Melbourne from Sweet William, Brunswick*  
watercolour on paper  
41.8 x 61.7 cm

Landscape views of Tasmania also feature in the exhibition. Works by Fredrick Strange, Charles Jefferys and George Augustus Robinson depict Hobart in the 1800s and show the development of the town.

The earliest depiction is Charles Jefferys' *View of Hobart Town* in 1817, a watercolour on paper mounted on early C19th laid paper. Measuring 11 x 17.5cm, it is inscribed lower right *drawn by Luit. Ch Jeffreys* and centre, *Hobart Town in 1817*. This view of Hobart Town was known from nineteenth-century (and possibly early twentieth-century) photolithographic reproductions and was believed to be lost. It has long been known that Jeffreys drew a sketch of Hobart during his time on the Derwent between 1814 and 1817, but its subsequent location remained unknown.

A lithographed reproduction of the sketch was produced later in the nineteenth century, apparently by Frank Dunnett. The present sketch was also reproduced in unidentified newspapers or journals, known from cuttings pasted into two of Jeffreys' book in the State Library of Tasmania.



CHARLES JEFFREYS 1782 - 1826  
*View of Hobart Town* 1817  
watercolour on paper mounted on early  
C19th laid paper watermarked  
11 x 17.5 cm

The watercolour by George Augustus Robinson, *Hobart Town* 1840, measuring 46.5 x 71 cm, also depicts colonial Tasmania. According to academic David Thomas, Robinson, who “arrived in Hobart in 1824, is better known as the protector of Tasmanian Aborigines than as an artist.” He is depicted as “the European figure in cap and coat surrounded by a group of native Tasmanians in Benjamin Duterrau's painting *The*

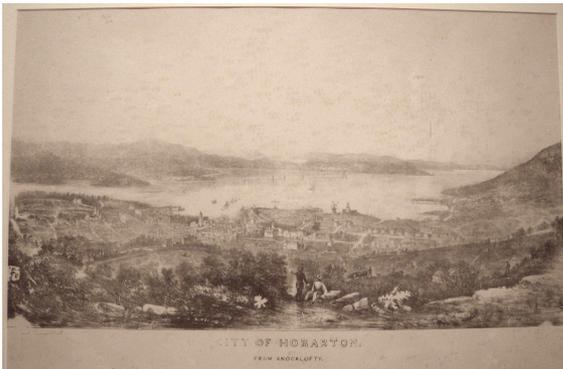
*Conciliation* of 1836, in the collection of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart<sup>2</sup>.



GEORGE AUGUSTUS ROBINSON 1791 - 1866  
*Hobart Town* 1840  
 watercolour on paper  
 46.5 x 71 cm

Thomas believes that the level of development of the town in this watercolour suggests that it may depict the town at an earlier date than is inscribed on the lower right of the painting: *Hobart 1840 G.A. Robinson*. Most of Robinson's works were sketches and illustrations for his field journals; and this watercolour is a rare example of a finished painting by the artist.

In the 1850s, Fredrick Strange depicted Hobart in both watercolour and lithograph from almost the same vantage point. (*Hobart Town*) is a watercolour on paper measuring 15.5 x 27cm and *City of Hobartown. From Knocklofty* c.1850 is a lithograph on paper measuring 38.5 x 58 cm.



FREDERICK STRANGE 1807 -1873  
*City of Hobartown. From Knocklofty* c.1850  
 lithograph on paper  
 38.5 x 58 cm



FREDERICK STRANGE 1807 -1873  
*(Hobart Town)*  
 watercolour on paper  
 15.5 x 27 cm

Both depictions of Hobart appear to be painted from a similar vantage point on Mt Wellington, which overlooks West Hobart. The lithograph however, appears to look directly down on Hobart, whereas the watercolour looks down from an angle. The figure in the watercolour seems to pause on the same view as the artist. The lithograph also shows two figures in the foreground, both are facing the vista in what seems to be admiration and contemplation of the landscape.

Strange was sent to Tasmania after robbing a grocery store in England. He worked as a portrait painter in Launceston and painted landscape views of the town. Many of these works can be found in the collection of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston.

<sup>2</sup> David Thomas, *The Annual Collectors' Exhibition 1999*, Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne, 1999, cat. no. 3