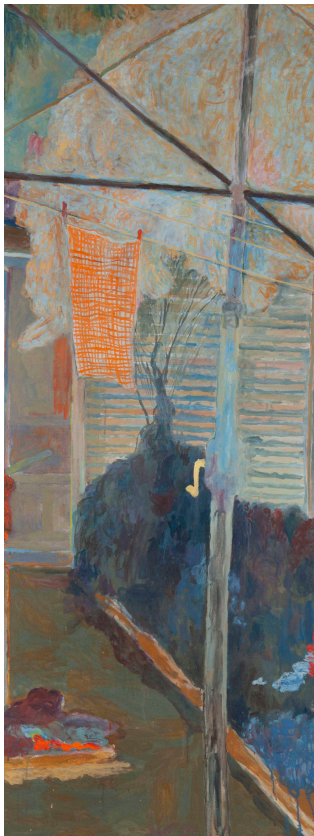


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A Closer Look At... large-scale paintings by John Dent

The artworks by John Dent in our exhibition *Between Two Countries* painted in the 1970s and 1980s feature still lifes of 'displaced objects' and atmospheric scenes inspired by his time living in Paris, are mostly of a domestic scale. However, there is a selection of works in the exhibition of a much larger size, their scale bringing a natural grandeur. Dent pushes the boundaries in his skilful large-scale prints as created at Atelier Lacourière-Frélaud in Paris, and we can see that the larger paintings retain the carefully considered compositions and complex colour palette of the more intimately scaled works.



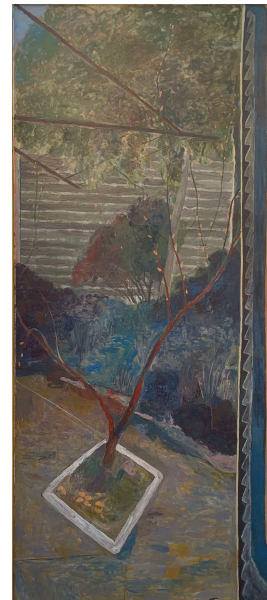
Urban Landscape I Richmond 180 x 77 cm



Elle 213 x 181 cm



The Studio Mallorca 106.5 x 147 cm



Urban Landscape II Richmond 213 x 91.5 cm

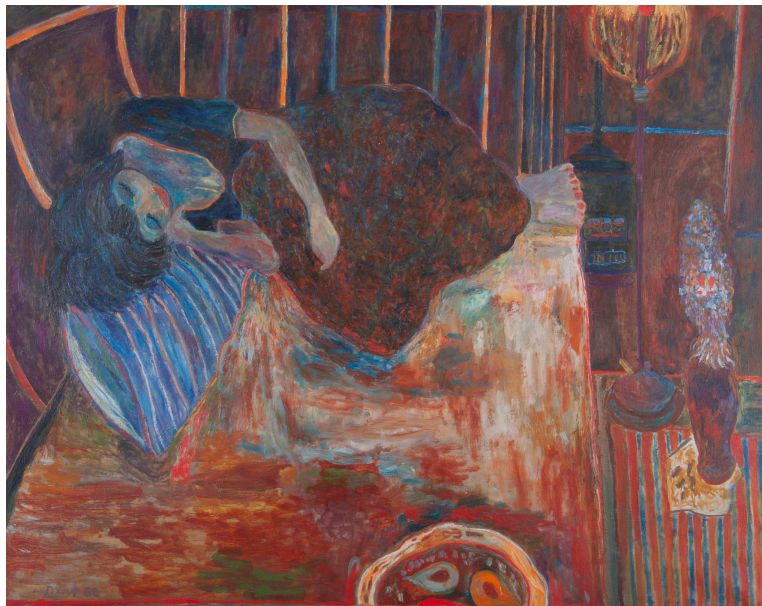
The subject matter of the larger paintings crosses a broad range: landscapes; interiors; figures; still lifes – all themes with a long tradition in the history of art. Despite Dent's encyclopaedic knowledge of art history and his ability to draw on a variety of influences, he uses the everyday scenes he sees and experiences for his inspiration. The backyard of an inner city Melbourne suburb, complete with Hills Hoist, or actual rooms lived in or studios worked in, complete with paintings, models and a variety of objects which can be found repeated in other artworks by Dent, a roll call with vases, peppermills, cloth covered tables. Dent is able to lift these elements from their everyday existence to the distinction of art, particularly highlighted in these paintings where such familiar objects are lifted through their presentation on a grand scale.



Natura Morta 1981 167 x 121 cm

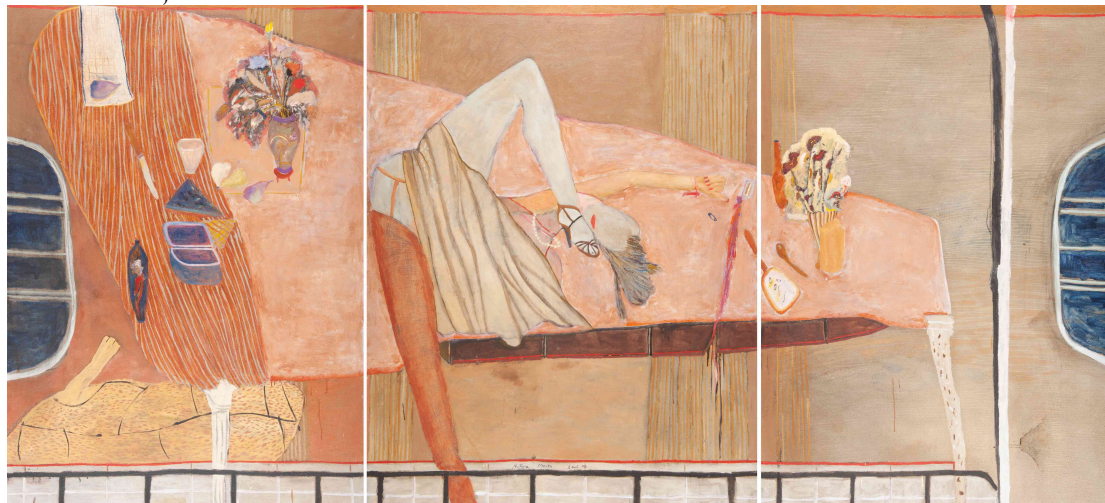
However the real subject matter is often the very act of painting itself, the placement of elements, of form and colour on the canvas. *Natura Morta* is an elegant example of this, where every object, every shape and every colour has been skilfully placed to create a harmonious and balanced whole, where we cannot imagine any element either being taken away or added to. This is a complex painting with its decorative use of patterning; its intriguing tilt of the picture plane; the 'displaced objects' seeming to fade and intensify as our eye moves across the canvas, registering a vase, a plant, chopsticks, a spoon; and the placement of colours which vibrate against each other.

The poetic colour harmony is also used to evoke atmosphere and mood. *Nocturne* features a sleeping woman in a richly coloured decorative interior, where the saturated colour reflects the reality of the interior of a wooden boat, however better conveys the cosy dreamlike state.



Nocturne 1982 122 x 152 cm

The relationship of objects to each other and the space around them, as well as the juxtaposition of decorative patterning against shimmering areas of colour are brought together in the masterly, seminal triptych, *Natura Morta- Marta*. Here is a painting that certainly warrants a closer look, the soft colour palette belies the rather uncompromising, macabre subject.



Natura Morta 1980 triptych: 152 x 106.5 cm; 152 x 117 cm; 152 x 106.5 cm

Preview the paintings in the exhibition [*John Dent: Between Two Countries*](http://www.diggins.com.au)
on our website www.diggins.com.au

where you can download the illustrated catalogue, view videos of the exhibition opening
and read further about aspects of John Dent's painting by taking *A Closer Look At...*

Showing at Lauraine Diggins Fine Art until 25 June 2021 EXTENDED

Gallery Hours: Tues – Fri 10am – 6pm or by appointment

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A Closer Look At... essays written by Ruth Lovell Photography by Nerida Blanche