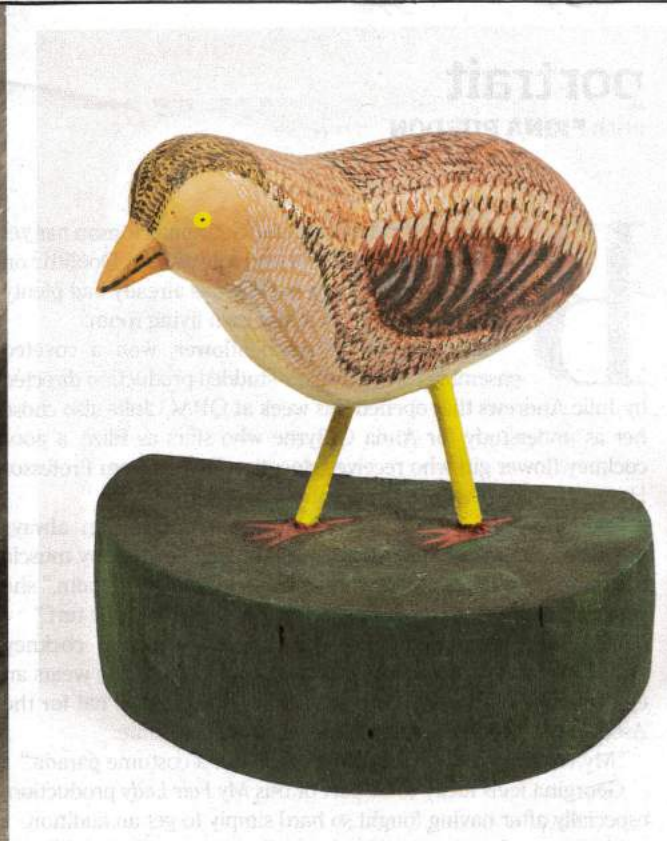
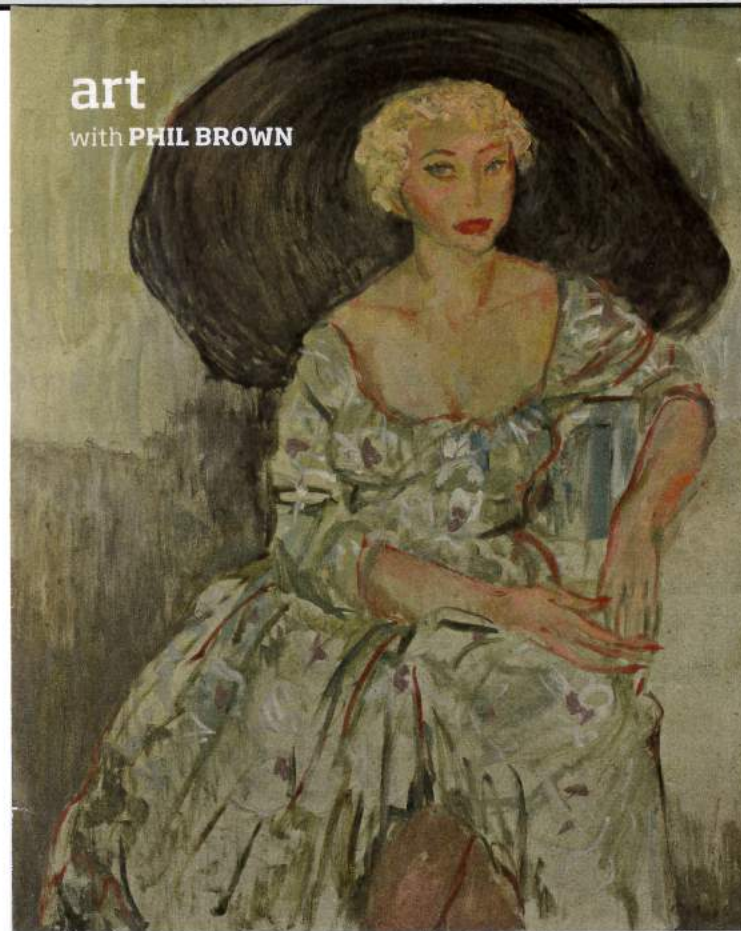


art
with PHIL BROWN



ART OF GIVING ... Jon Molvig's *Joy Roggenkamp*; *Forward to victory* by Norman Lindsay; and David Marpoondin's *Minh Pochong (Quail)* are among varied works in the exhibition.

The generosity of philanthropists is vital to any institution building an art collection. The University of Queensland's collection of more than 3700 works consists of many pieces that were donated to the institution.

Philanthropists and Collections, now showing at the UQ Art Museum, is a fascinating glimpse into the UQ collection and the people who helped make it happen. Curator Samantha Littley has had the pleasure of digging into that collection to build a show which includes works from the colonial to the modern era.

There are some real treats here and Samantha says it was a joy to discover little surprises along the way, such as Margaret Preston's exquisite *Native flowers*, a hand-coloured woodcut on paper from around 1935, gifted to UQ in 1945 by Mary Corkery, who, we discover, was a pioneering art dealer in Brisbane during the 1940s. She apparently organised exhibitions by Margaret Olley, Vida Lahey and Albert Namatjira in Brisbane and Sydney.

It's a gorgeous piece but there's only so much room available to hang things, so it has been tucked away behind the scenes for a while. Lovely to see it out again to be enjoyed by all of us. Margaret is, after all, one of our most loved Australian artists.

Another treat is a rather sumptuous portrait by Jon Molvig, an artist so influential in establishing a contemporary art scene in Brisbane. *Joy Roggenkamp*, painted in 1963, is a portrait of a fellow artist and was entered in the Archibald Prize, but as Samantha explains, it didn't win.

GIFT WRAP

Celebrating the generous donors
to UQ's extensive collection

"Robert Hughes said it was the best painting that year," Samantha says. The lovely thing about seeing this painting out again is that on a mannequin nearby is the very dress that features in the portrait, donated by Joy Roggenkamp's widower, Ross McCowan, in 2010. He offered the painting for sale and it was purchased through the generosity of the Alumni Friends of University of Queensland Inc and Veronika Butta, with Ross donating related sketches and that marvellous dress.

In explaining his decision to offer the work to UQ, Ross wrote that he "always promised Joy that I would get her portrait into a major gallery ... I made the same promise to Jon Molvig". Nice that he could deliver on both.

Another favourite of mine is Elaine Haxton's exquisite *Flower Bridge at Kwei-Lin*, done about 1956 – a piece in pen and brush with coloured inks and washes, gouache and pastel. It was a gift of Dr James Taylor Duhig through the Alumni Association.

Robert Jacks' 1998 watercolour *Woman walking with cello* is a ripper and was donated by Brisbane architect Michael Rayner through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts program.

In 2014 Michael, a keen art collector over many years, donated 90 artworks to UQ. He has been an adjunct professor in architecture at UQ since 2000 and says his generous donation was a way of "reinforcing my sense of belonging".

At the time, Michael said he hoped UQ would put some of the artworks "into curated shows with other artworks by similar artists or within cohesive themes". Done.

There are many other works of note ... a wonderful Sidney Nolan work entitled *African Montage* and a cracking David Rankin, an expansive painting entitled *Durras*, done in 1973. There are works by Lloyd Rees, Betty Churcher (when she was Betty Cameron), Norman Lindsay, John Passmore and many more. Samantha has taken a broad-brush approach.

She says it is important to honour donors and to learn what motivates them. "We discovered many fascinating stories that have enriched the records that we hold," Samantha says. Those stories are displayed as part of the exhibition, making it an entertaining glimpse into one of our most significant collections.

PHILANTHROPISTS AND COLLECTIONS, until Jun 4, UQ Art Museum, James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre (Building 11), University Drive, St Lucia, ph: 3365 3046. artmuseum.uq.edu.au