



**SIDNEY NOLAN** Myth and Country

## 1 HEAD (NED KELLY)

1947

enamel paint on board

75.5 x 63.5 cm

inscribed lower right: Nolan / 1947

inscribed verso: Head / 1947 / Nolan

### Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

*Through all Nolan's painting has run the heroic theme of the Australian bushranger, Ned Kelly, an outlaw who in popular myth may be compared with Robin Hood, Rob Roy or the American Jesse James. In every country there is such a figure: in Italy he is Pulcinello, in Russia Petrouchka. He is the invincible hero of the puppet show who defeats everybody: the police, the clergy, even death and the devil while he himself remains immortal.*

*No ordinary outlaw, Kelly was famed for his chivalry toward women and for his generosity to many men. After a long pursuit by the police, who were continually outwitted by his audacity and horsemanship, he was ambushed by fifty pursuers at the "Siege of Glenrowan", captured, tried for murder and hanged. His deeds are now ballads in the bush. The head-guard which he always wore was part of a heavy piece of home-made armour hammered out of plough shares. It has become so identified with him as to have become a symbol.<sup>1</sup>*

With his paintings of the outlaw Ned Kelly, Sidney Nolan created the most iconic image in Australian art. The core of the first series are held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and the Nolan Gallery, Lanyon. *Head (Ned Kelly)* is one of the few remaining in private hands, it reveals the humanist aspect, loss of innocence and exposure of the unmasked hero.

## 2 POLICEMAN CHASING MRS KELLY

1946

fibre-tipped pen and ink on paper

10.0 x 14.0 cm

inscribed lower right: Oct 46

### Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by John and Sunday Reed, Melbourne; The Reed Family Collection.

*Mrs Kelly was arrested by Sergeant Steele and his party at one o'clock on a cold frosty night...my mother has seen better days, she struggled up with a large family, and I feel more keenly than I can express the unjust treatment meted out to my mother, who was arrested with a baby at her breast and convicted of a crime of which she was innocent.<sup>2</sup>*

*Policeman Chasing Mrs Kelly* is from Nolan's first series on the theme of the Australian bushranger Ned Kelly. The image illustrates one of the key incidents that fuelled Kelly's rage against the Victorian police. In an attempt to lure him from the bush, Kelly's mother was imprisoned on trumped up charges of attempted murder. She was still incarcerated in Melbourne Gaol when Kelly, at the age of 25, was brought there and hung.

<sup>1</sup> Foreword, *Sydney Nolan*, The Redfern Gallery, London, 3 - 28 May 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Ned Kelly, quoted in Keith McMenomy, *Ned Kelly: The Authentic Illustrated History*, Curry O'Neil Ross, Melbourne, 1984, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney Nolan quoted in catalogue essay, *Nolan: Recent Paintings*, Skinner Galleries, Perth, 14 January - February, 1968.

# SIDNEY NOLAN *Myth and Country*

## MELBOURNE EXHIBITION

9 November – 4 December 2005



*It is only in myth that the truth about any country can be found.*<sup>3</sup>

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### 3 GIRL ON HORSE 1940

enamel paint on canvas  
35.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: 19  
inscribed verso (on frame): GIRL ON HORSE 1940 / Newcastle No (7)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan*, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, March 1961 and tour to Sheffield, Leeds, Hull, Bristol, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Wakefield, no. 7;

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 1, illustrated.

*One sees the effort of a young artist to explore the possibilities of his medium...Preserving his flat surface, he uses arabesque rather than form, pattern rather than volume and colour in its own right and different paint textures rather than imitative textural effects. His results are extremely interesting and stimulating, his line is intriguing and his colour is rich and sometimes rare in quality. Whether or not his aim at the absolute in art will be found wanting eventually in its relation to life, these experiments in the basic elements in painting will lay a foundation for the future of this young artist which will be invaluable.*<sup>1</sup>

*Girl on Horse* is one of Nolan's earliest figurative paintings based on the abstract architecture and fun-fair aspects of Luna Park in St Kilda, Melbourne, where he grew up. The subject and style are strongly influenced by the work of Picasso, Leger and Klee, where flat planes of bold colour are separated by thick black lines. A slightly larger version – *Girl and Horse* (1941) – was exhibited at the Contemporary Art Society, Melbourne, in 1941.

<sup>1</sup> George Bell, *The Sun*, Melbourne, 11 June 1940, p. 21.



## 4 CENTRAL AUSTRALIA 1950

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
122.0 x 152.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: 18-3-50 / Nolan

### Provenance:

Purchased by Professor Edward Ford, Sydney, through David Jones' Art Gallery, Sydney, on 31 March 1950;  
Purchased by Mr Joseph Brender, Sydney, in 1975;  
Private collection, Melbourne.

### Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Exhibition of Central Australian Landscapes*, David Jones' Art Gallery, Sydney, 31 March–14 April 1950, no. 19, 150gns;  
*The Wynne Art Prize, 1950*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, no. 33;  
*Sydney Nolan: Retrospective Exhibition: Paintings from 1937 to 1967*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 13 September – 29 October 1967, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 22 November – 17 December 1967, Western Australian Art Gallery, Perth, 9 January – 4 February 1968, no. 59;  
*Spring Exhibition*, Joseph Brown Gallery, Melbourne, 1979, no. 136, illustrated;  
*Nolan: Myths, Landscapes and Portraits, 1942-1964*, Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne, 11-26 June 1987, no. 12, illustrated;  
*Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 6 June – 17 August 2003, no. 31, illustrated.

### Literature:

James Gleeson, 'Landscapes triumph for Aust. Artist', *The Sun*, Sydney, 31 March 1950, p. 19;  
James Gleeson, 'Dobell painting is "superb"', *The Sun*, Sydney, 20 January 1951, p. 4;  
F.L., 'Prize-winning paintings in Archibald and Wynne contests', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1951, p. 3;  
*Art and Australia*, Ure Smith, Sydney, September 1967, p. 456 (illustrated);  
Alan McCulloch, *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, Hutchinson, Melbourne, 1984, p. 848 (illustrated).

In June 1949, Nolan embarked on an extensive journey of central and northern Australia. The trip was prompted by a fascination to discover and experience the 'real' Australia that existed behind the coastal fringes which he hoped would provide him with material for his first overseas exhibition. Traveling with his wife Cynthia and her daughter, their outback expedition stretched from weeks into months.

Inland Australia seen from the air provided Nolan with an entirely new visual challenge. Back in his studio, he commenced painting with a tremendous fervour – at times completing a painting every day. The high horizon lines, sweeping patterns of red, mauve and ochre, and often intense blue skies, gave the outback a sense of scale that no painter had attempted before.<sup>1</sup>

*Central Australia* is one of the most significant paintings from this outstanding series, and has been purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales with the generous assistance of the Nelson Meers Foundation. This acquisition has transformed their Australian collection.

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Smith, *Modern Australian Landscape Painting: Boyd, Drysdale, Nolan, Perceval, Williams*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2000, p. 4.



## 5 CENTAUR AND ANGEL (1952)

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
122.0 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower left: II -

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 8 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 10, illustrated;

*Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 6 June – 17 August 2003, no. 50, illustrated.

*Centaur and Angel* is a unique image in Nolan's oeuvre. It forms part of a series of paintings that depict religious scenes within the distinct Australian outback. In this painting, however, Nolan has combined the classical imagery of a centaur with an angel – the Christian with the pagan.







## 6 CENTRAL AUSTRALIA 1952

crayon, fabric dye and enamel on paper  
20.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan / 52

Provenance:

Private collection, Melbourne.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan*, Australian Galleries, Melbourne,  
27 April – 16 May 1992, no. 48 or 49.

*The vast mass of Australia is not amiable. It is cruel, harsh and barren beyond any other part of the habitable globe. For thousands of miles one sees nothing but red desert, the bones of a few dead animals, and occasionally the sordid remains of a street where somebody looking for gold had tried to build a township.*<sup>1</sup>

*Central Australia* is one of a group of small works on paper on the theme of inland Australia that depict immense, panoramic scenes on an intimate scale.

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Nolan quoted in, Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, p. 112.

## 7 CENTRAL AUSTRALIA (1952-53)

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
122.0 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower left: II –

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 11, illustrated;  
*Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 6 June – 17 August 2003, no. 53, illustrated.

Nolan's paintings of Central Australia evolved during 1950-53 from pure landscapes, to include historical narratives of the Burke and Wills Expedition, Daisy Bates, images of religion, and natural disasters of bush fire and drought. With the distinct mushroom cloud hovering in the distance – the only known painting by Nolan to record this – (*Central Australia*) refers to the testing of the hydrogen bomb at the Monte Bellos Islands, off the north-western coast of Australia, in October 1952 and the atom bomb at Maralinga, South Australia in October 1953.



## 8 DARLING RIVER (1953)

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
76.0 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: NOLAN

Provenance:

Purchased by Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, in 1953.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan*, The Johnston Gallery, Brisbane, 15-25 September 1953, no. 2, 40 gns;  
*Australian Contemporary Paintings*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 16 March – 27 April 1955, no. 5.

Literature:

Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, pp. 90, 91 (illustrated).

*Its tonal quietness has affiliations with some of the passages in his carcass series that was soon to follow, but after his Wimmera experience, where he raised distant horizons high into view in the manner of Cezanne, it seems that, as often, he turned the problem of achieving a sense of continuous distance without too great a depth in the picture-plane. Here has done it by an evenness of brush stroke that is rare in his work.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elwyn Lynn quoted in, Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, p. 90.



## 9 DROUGHT ANIMAL

1953

oil and enamel paint on composition board

91.0 x 122.0 cm

inscribed lower right: NOLAN / 53

inscribed verso: Drought Animal / Sidney Nolan / nearest / station / FINNINGHAM

### Provenance:

Sir John H. Plumb, F.B.A, United Kingdom;

Private collection, United Kingdom.

### Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Exhibition of Paintings*, David Jones' Art Gallery, Sydney, 29 July – 15 August 1953, no. 6, 80 gns;

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 8 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 12, illustrated;

*Sidney Nolan: Desert and Drought*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 6 June – 17 August 2003, no. 67, illustrated.

Firmly established as chronicler of the outback, Nolan was commissioned by Brisbane's *The Courier-Mail*, to make drawings of the areas in northern Queensland devastated by the worst drought in recorded history. At the time, approximately one and a quarter million head of cattle had died in Queensland and the Northern Territory and another four million were at risk after two years without rain. Nolan found the sights harrowing and strangely impressive and was transfixed by the twisted, leathery, decaying carcasses of dead cattle that littered the barren landscape.

Nolan produced a powerful series of paintings of animal carcasses. The dried-up bodies of the livestock reminded him of the contorted forms of humans and animals trapped in the flow of lava following the eruption of Vesuvius in AD79, which he had seen exhibited in the museum at Pompeii. Shown in Melbourne and Sydney in 1953, the drought series shocked audiences and received critical acclaim.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Smith, *Modern Australian Landscape Painting: Boyd, Drysdale, Nolan, Perceval, Williams*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2000, p. 5.





**10 KELLY**  
1954

fibre-tipped pen and ink on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan / 21-12-54 (illeg)  
inscribed verso: Kelly / 21-xii-54 / Nolan

Provenance:

Australian Galleries, Melbourne;  
Private collection, Sydney.

Exhibited:

Possibly, *Sidney Nolan: Paintings, Drawings*, Redfern Gallery,  
London, May 1955, no. 65.

*Australians become touchy if Ned Kelly is valued as less than the national embodiment of marksmanship, horsemanship and mateship in rebellion against sordid oppressors. Puzzled visitors who might, not unreasonably, envisage him as a cattle-duffing, murdering, horse thief who progressed to martyrdom by robbing banks in pursuance of a death wish, had best keep silent.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Donald Friend, *Donald Friend in Bali*, William Collins Sons & Co, London, 1972, p. 13.

**11 THE MARKSMAN**  
1958

crayon, oil stick, fabric dye on paper  
25.0 x 25.0 cm  
inscribed lower left: N 58  
inscribed verso: Nolan 1958 Target Practice / 11<sup>th</sup> April 1958 /  
Nolan Paris / The Marksman / Kelly Shooting at / Target on Trees

Provenance:

Gift of the artist, to his wife, Cynthia Nolan;  
Thence by decent to Jinx Nolan, USA.







**12 KELLY – SHOEING HORSE**  
1954

fibre-tipped pen and ink on paper  
24.5 x 30.0 cm  
inscribed lower centre: Nolan  
inscribed verso: Nolan. 28/XII/54. Kelly. Shoeing Horse

Provenance:

Gift of the artist to Mr Elwyn Lynn, Sydney;  
Private collection, Sydney.

Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 8 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 14, illustrated.

*The Ned Kelly series was all around the country that I knew, up round Wangaratta...and that made a very big impression on me – the landscapes in the paintings, not all the Ned Kelly things...I just recognised this sensation of this landscape which he seemed to have caught...it helped me to (answer the questions of) why do you paint this, and why do you paint that – why pick this landscape, and why not paint that?...I suppose if I'd been told I had to paint a landscape then, I would have treated it as some academic problem – whereas here was a man painting it as an emotional experience...I can't think of another painter that's struck the same note as that.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Ray Croke interview with Barbara Blackman in 1983, quoted in Sue Smith, *North of Capricorn: The Art of Ray Croke*, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Queensland, 1997, p. 13.

**13 KELLY**  
1954

fibre-tipped pen and ink on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed lower left: Nolan  
inscribed verso: Kelly / 21-xii-54 / Nolan

Provenance:

The artist, until 1987;  
Private collection, Melbourne.

Exhibited:

Probably, *Sidney Nolan: Paintings, Drawings*, Redfern Gallery, London, May 1955, no. 65;  
*Nolan: Myths, Landscapes and Portraits, 1942-1964*, Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne, 11-26 June 1987, no. 17, illustrated.

Literature:

*The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 June 1987, p. 30 (illustrated).



## 14 CRUCIFIX 1955

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
68.5 x 57.5 cm  
inscribed lower left: *II*.  
inscribed verso: 9 / 8 / 55 / *II*

Provenance:

Private collection, London.

Exhibited:

Probably, *Sidney Nolan*, Redfern Gallery, London, 3-28 May 1955, no. 19-26;  
*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 17, illustrated.

*The European heads, paintings of Italian crucifixes against a background of Italian hill-side towns, and Christ images, which follow, reflect a side of Nolan's imagination that is concerned with the outer props and manifestations of religion as much as a concern to make a head of Christ which might tactfully and naturally embody more generalised characteristics. The references to Kelly and the convict are very apparent.*<sup>1</sup>

Nolan returned to Europe in 1953, and with William Dobell, represented Australia at the 1954 Venice Biennale. Following an exhibition with Albert Tucker in Rome in 1954, Nolan returned to London in 1955 and commenced a series of heads and crucifixions. Wayside shrines he had seen and photographed in Calabria inspired Nolan's surreal skeletal crucifix.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes and Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p. 140.





**15 STORK**  
1956

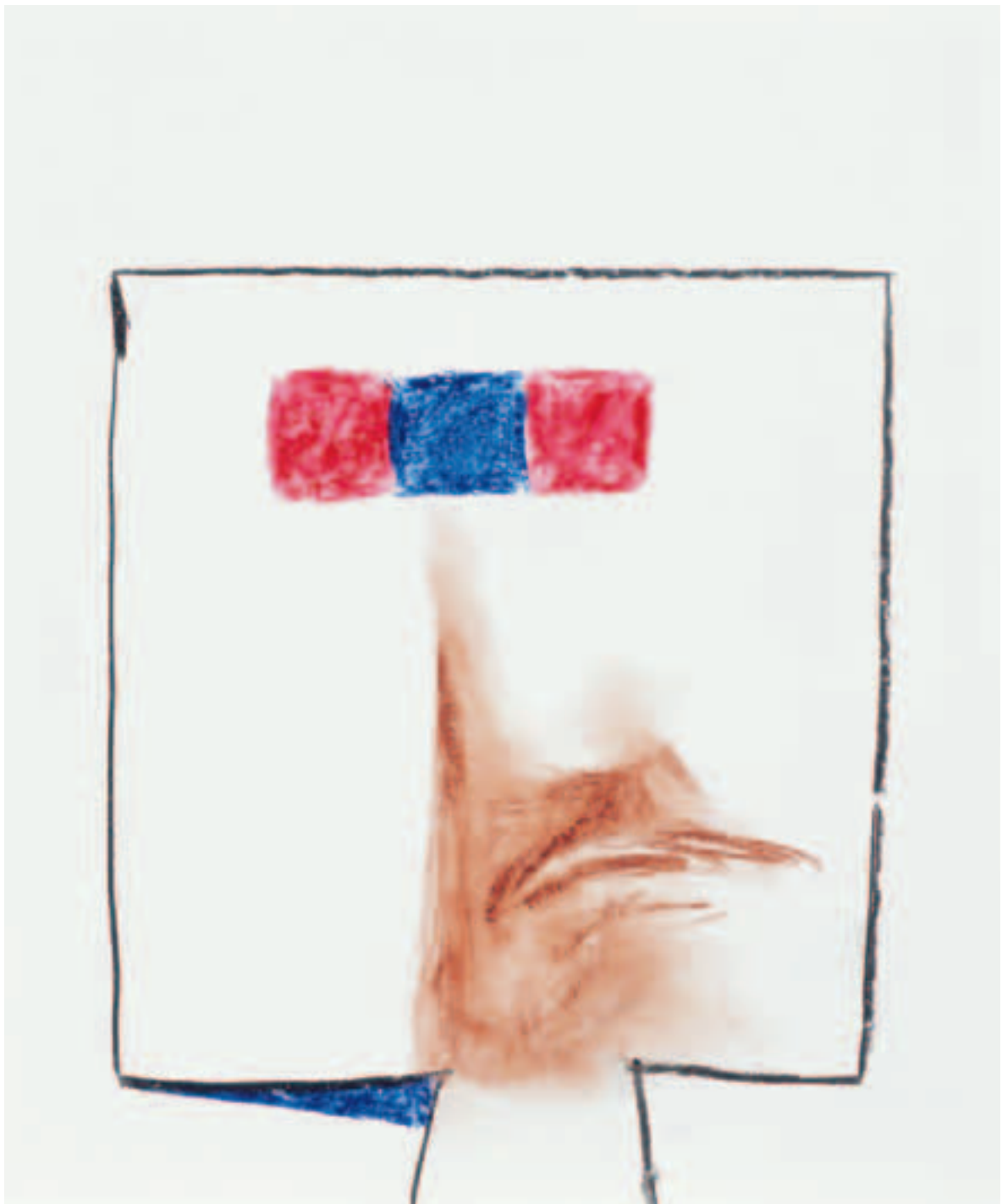
crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed verso: Cynthia / with love / xx / Ischia /11-7-56 / II

Provenance:  
Gift of the artist to his wife, Cynthia Nolan;  
Thence by descent to, Jinx Nolan, USA.

**16 KELLY**  
1956

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed verso: Bocca Di Magra 27<sup>th</sup> Aug. 56 / Italy II

Provenance:  
The artist, until purchased by Sir David Davies, London, through  
Australian Galleries, Melbourne, in 1991.



## 17 FIGURE AND BIRD: HUNGARY (NED KELLY) 1956

oil and enamel paint on composition board  
122.0 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: N 12.11.56.  
inscribed verso: Nolan Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 1956 / Hungary

### Provenance:

Purchased by Mr and Mrs Rory McEwen, London, through Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1957.

### Exhibited:

Sidney Nolan, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, June – July 1957, no. 69.

### Literature:

*Encounter*, London, January 1957, p. 17 (illustrated);

Kenneth Clarke, Colin MacInnes and Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, pp. 136, 138 (illustrated), 199, "Hungary".

*In the new Kelly series of 1954-55, the 'naïve' style has gone, and the invented shapes are intellectually more coherent and plastically more ingenious: the colours unlike those of the earlier landscapes are luminous, rich and varied; whilst the presentation of the Kelly myth has gained a new magic and imaginative power.*<sup>1</sup>

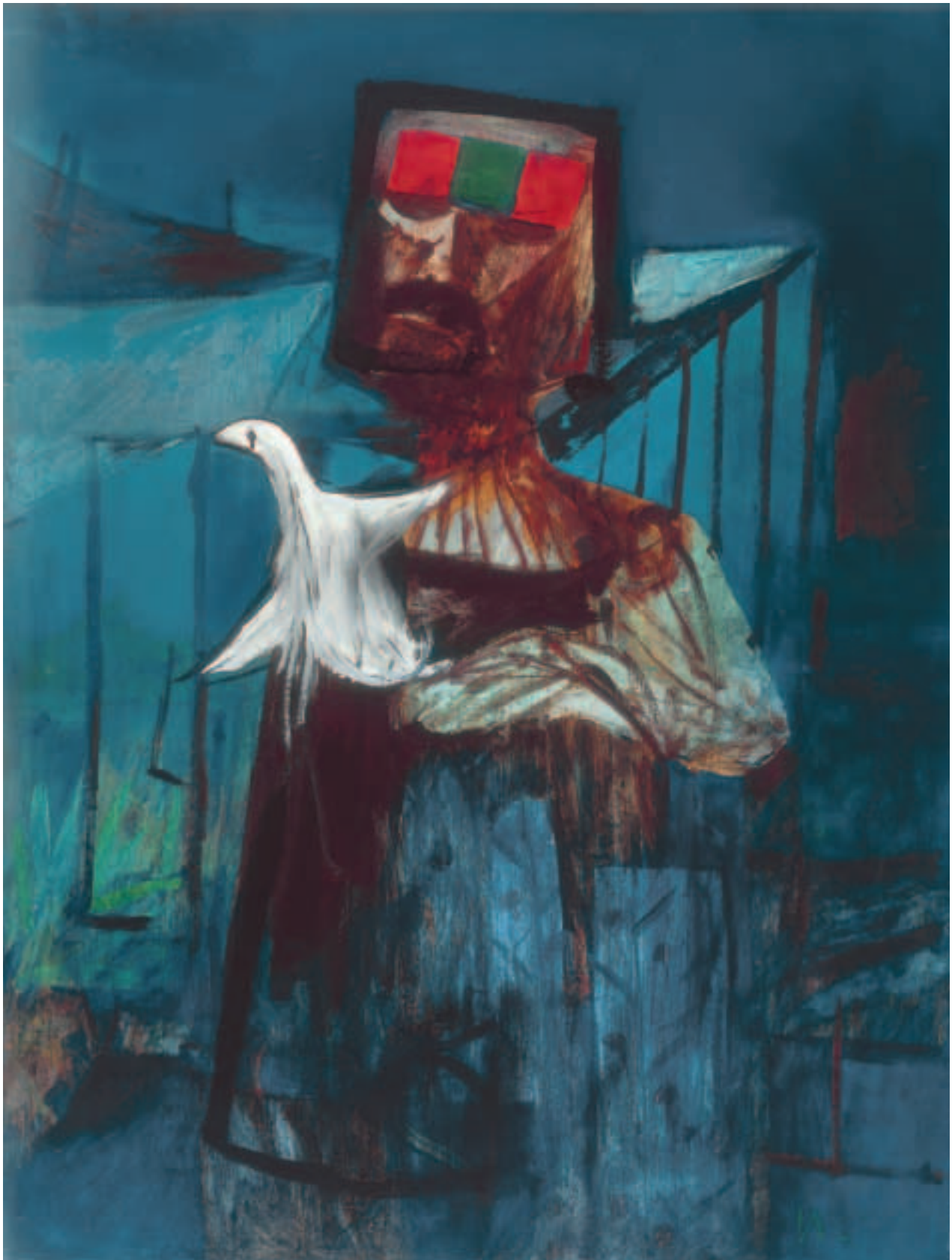
Living in London in 1954, Sidney Nolan commenced his second series of paintings on the theme of the Australian outlaw Ned Kelly. Exhibited at The Redfern Gallery, London, in May 1955, critics were universal in their praise for the individuality and remarkable power of the Kelly image, which should 'establish him [Nolan] among the half dozen best painters under forty in the world.'<sup>2</sup>

*Figure and Bird: Hungary (Ned Kelly)* marks the culmination of this highly acclaimed group of works, and expands Nolan's representation of the struggle of the oppressed into the international arena with his reference to the Hungarian revolution.

<sup>1</sup> Colin MacInnes, quoted in Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes and Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> David Sylvester, *The Listener*, London, 12 May 1955.







**18 ITALIAN CRUCIFIX – VERVE**  
1956

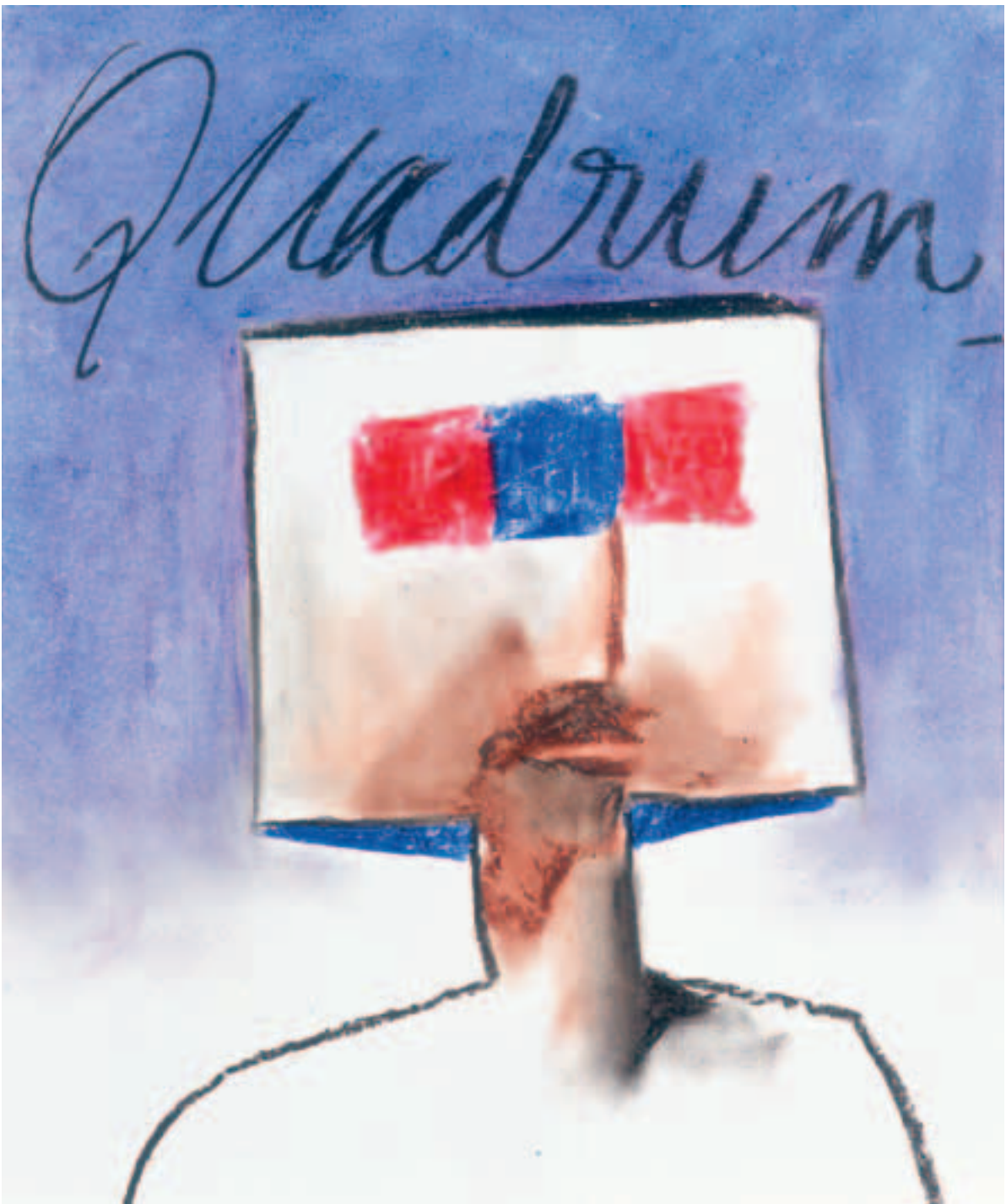
crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed verso: Ischia / 13-7-56 / II

Provenance:  
Gift of the artist to his daughter, Jinx Nolan, USA.

**19 NED KELLY – QUADRUM**  
1956

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed verso: Ischia / 14-7-56 / II

Provenance:  
Gift of the artist to his daughter, Jinx Nolan, USA.



## 20 LEDA 1957

polyvinyl acetate on composition board  
122.0 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: **И** -  
inscribed verso: Nolan

### Provenance:

Mr Bryan Robertson, London;  
Mr Vic Ramchen, Melbourne;  
Private collection, Sydney.

### Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, June – July 1957, no. 74;  
*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney,  
2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 21, illustrated.

### Literature:

Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes, Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, pp. 162, 165 (illustrated);  
T. G. Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London 2002, pp. 148 (illustrated), 149, 196.

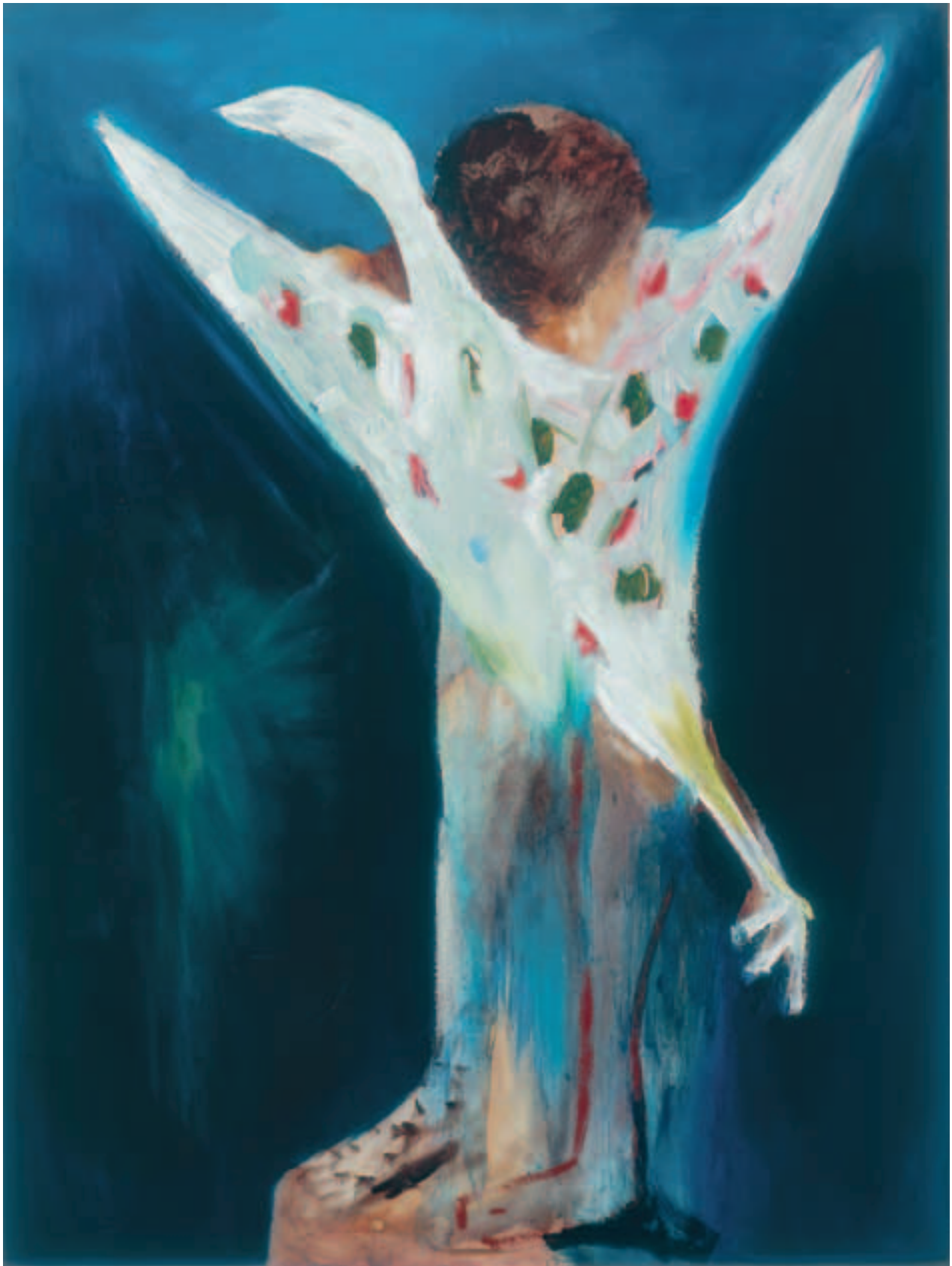
*An isolated Leda of 1957...is of particular interest (plate 99). This is the first reference to Leda since a number of smaller works made in Australia in 1943-5 and in this new appearance the figure combines the legend of Leda with something of the posture of a crucifixion. The figure and the bird are one, completely dissolved into each other.*<sup>1</sup>

The legend of Leda and the Swan exists in several printed versions. In its simplest form, the God Zeus transformed himself into a swan and coupled with Leda, wife of the King of Sparta. Leda subsequently laid an egg from which hatched Polydeuces and Helen of Troy – ultimately leading to the Trojan War.

Working with a new medium of polyvinyl acetate on composition board and fabric dye and oil on card, Nolan transformed the classical myth into something more personal and universal.

*Leda* belonged to Mr Bryan Robertson, director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and the organizer of Nolan's first major retrospective exhibition in 1957. He was instrumental in promoting the artist's international career and the work of other Australian artists based in London.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes and Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p. 162.



## 21 WATERLILIES (1957)

oil and polyvinyl acetate on composition board  
151.0 x 121.0 cm

Provenance:

The Lord McAlpine of West Green, United Kingdom.

*The series of paintings concerned with Mrs Fraser and the convict, Bracefell, are among the first to be painted in polyvinyl acetate. Many of them are executed in an impressionist manner, and working for the first time on a large scale Nolan scours and scrapes the paint away to produce an illusion of light: the rich, filtered light that one finds under dense foliage, shot through with strong rays of sunlight. Here, the artist works from dark to light.<sup>1</sup>*

Although devoid of figures, *Waterlilies* forms part of the series related to the marooned Eliza Fraser who was rescued by, and subsequently betrayed, the escaped convict, Bracefell. It belonged to Alistair McAlpine, Nolan's greatest patron.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes, Bryan Roberston, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p. 150.



## 22 SOLDIERS BATHING

1959

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan.  
inscribed verso: 1 Sept 1959 / New York.

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

Literature:

Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes, Bryan Roberston, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, Front Cover (illustrated), pp. 177 (illustrated), 198.

*With Gallipoli, Nolan continues his quest for a possible interaction between history and geography, and between imagination and reality. The theme is a great one and means much to the artist...Many drawings of Gallipoli soldiers, almost like finger drawings in brown pastel and water, have great bite and freshness.*<sup>1</sup>

The Gallipoli paintings are closely related to those of Leda and the Swan, technically and in method, Nolan also associated the Gallipoli campaign with the Siege of Troy. *Soldiers Bathing* with its androgynous figures floating in an almost surreal manner, is a key image from the series, and is illustrated as the front cover for the authoritative text on the artist.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes, Bryan Roberston, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1961, p. 178.







### 23 LEDA AND SWAN

1960

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan  
inscribed verso: Jan 6<sup>th</sup>. 1960 / Nolan

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by Mr John Hull, London.

*During the day he painted on the floor, first placing areas of colour on prepared board, next sweeping on polyvinyl acetate until the whole 4 x 5 feet area was thick with paint, then seizing a short-handled squeegee and slashing and wiping, cornering and circling like a skater, until another painting was completed...Now over and over again, he was painting Leda and the Swan. Sometimes the woman was bloody, the swan very savage. Often the figure was ambiguous, incidental, unidentified, the swan was not. At night he would usually continue on the large boards, or work on paper, for he was having a run.<sup>1</sup>*

Nolan's series of paintings and works on paper based on the Greek myth Leda and the Swan proved to be a revelation when first exhibited at the Matthiesen Gallery, London, in June 1960. Until that moment, Nolan's growing international reputation was founded on his distinctly Australian imagery of Central Australian landscapes, drought stricken carcasses, or historical references to the ill-fated explorers Burke and Wills and the outlaw Ned Kelly.

Such was the exhibition's acclaim and success that well-publicised purchasers included Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Sir Kenneth Clark, the Earl of Drogheda, Agatha Christie, Rod Steiger and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

<sup>1</sup> Cynthia Nolan, *Open Negative – An American Memoir*, Macmillan, London, 1967, p. 224.

### 24 LEDA AND SWAN

1960

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan  
inscribed verso: 2<sup>nd</sup>. Jan. 1960

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist, by Mr John Hull, London.





**25 LEDA AND SWAN**  
(1960)

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan  
verso: Unfinished work

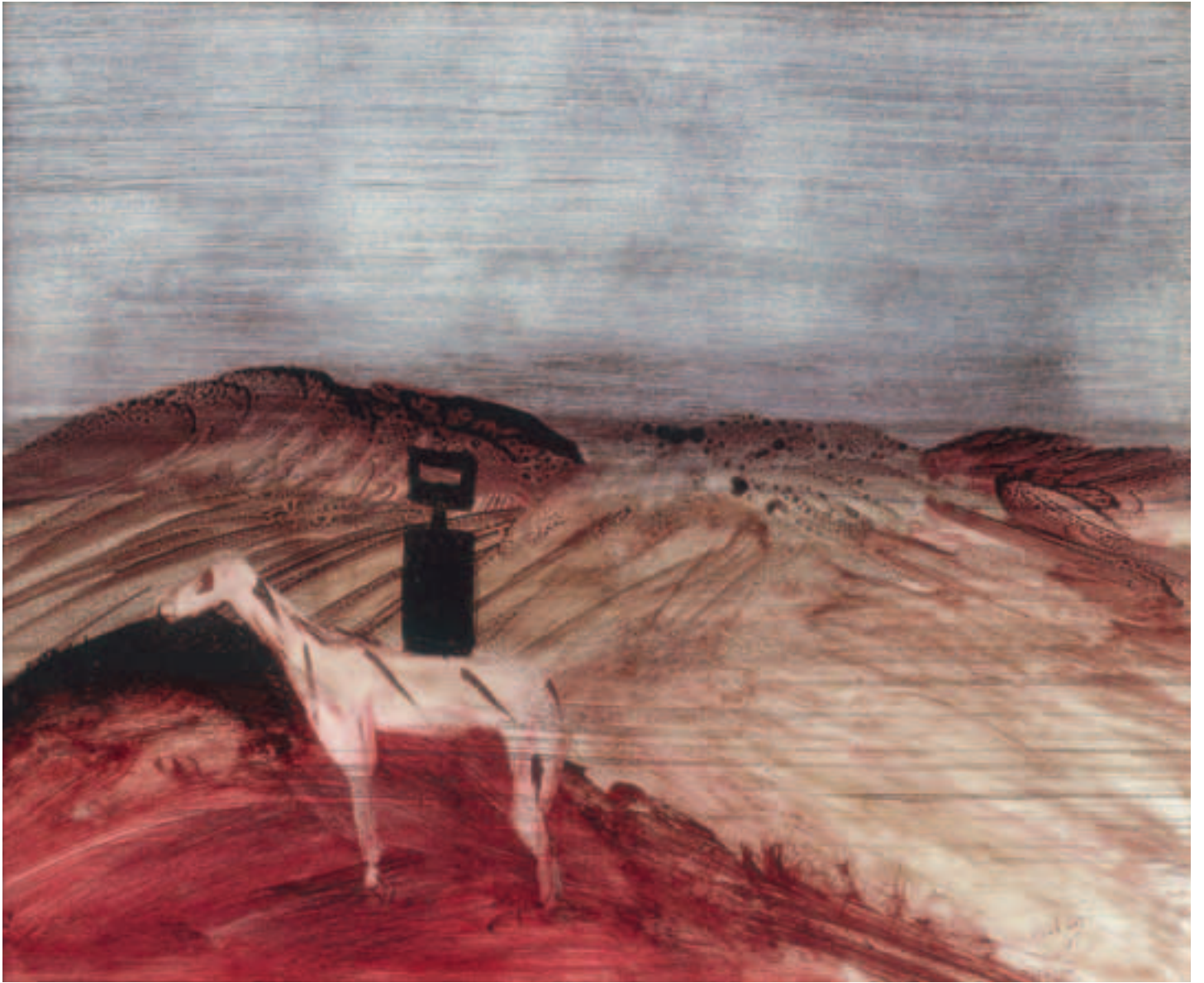
Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist, by private collection, London.

**26 NED KELLY**  
1967

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
25.5 x 30.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan '67  
inscribed verso: 11-4-67 / Nolan

Provenance:  
Private collection, London.

Literature:  
*Sidney Nolan: Ned Kelly's Australia*, Calendar 2004, The Ink Group, London, 2003, (illustrated).



**27 BURKE AND CAMEL**  
(1967)

oil, fabric dye and crayon on paper  
51.0 x 73.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan

Provenance:

Purchased by Fiona Lady Elsworthy, New Zealand, through Bonython Gallery, Sydney, in 1972.

*They had seen the fantastic dawn colours of the desert and had walked through country where white salt pans ran through scarlet sandhills with the cloudless sky overhead – a landscape of red, white and blue. And perhaps just as important as all this they had learned how to come to terms with the inevitable and the implacable – with the certainty of death – and had not found it too unbearable.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Alan Moorehead, forward, *Sidney Nolan*, Marlborough – Gerson Gallery, New York, January 1965.





## 28 BURKE AND CAMEL

1967

crayon, oil and fabric dye on paper  
52.0 x 76.0 cm  
inscribed lower left: Nolan  
inscribed verso: 7 Dec 1967/ Nolan

### Provenance:

Private collection, Melbourne.

*In the 1960-62 explorer paintings the exotic has been superseded by the fantastic; the desert is still as lucid and luminous as in 1950, but there is a new unity in the atmosphere and prevailing mood. The desert now flows, rises and falls like waves and melts beneath the camels and wan huts; nothing leaps into view. Once a bird, Kelly's helmet or a tree had been a mesmeric focal point, a point of reference for the dispersed landscape; now all are enveloped with the same encompassing rhythm and everything begins to slide, melt and blur.<sup>1</sup>*

Throughout his career, Nolan returned to the theme of the ill-fated Irish explorers Burke and Wills, whose attempt to cross the Australian continent ended in tragedy. The irony of the Expedition, which began with high promise and ended in public disgrace, was not lost on Nolan, who recorded the event with great pathos and humility.

<sup>1</sup> Elwyn Lynn, *Sidney Nolan: Myth and Imagery*, Macmillan, London, 1967, p. 43.

## 29 FIGURE AND CAMEL

1962

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan

### Provenance:

Private collection, London.

### Exhibited:

*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 29, illustrated.

### Literature:

Elwyn Lynn, *Myth and Imagery: Sidney Nolan*, Macmillan, London, 1967, p. 83 (illustrated).





**30 LANDSCAPE**  
1969

oil on composition board  
91.5 x 91.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan / Oct '69  
inscribed verso: Nolan / landscape

Provenance:

Corporate collection, Sydney.

*Nolan is simultaneously conscious of varied problems in landscape painting; opacity and its relation to transparency; the silhouette juxtaposed with flimsy wisps of cloud; and the way light illuminates, distinguishes and defines objects...Like traditional Dutch landscapists he wants to play the highlights off against the broad stretches of light-suffused land; and, like the Dutch, he needs to animate deep vistas by patches of shifting light and shadow and sudden swarms of trees...Nolan wants a sense of continuity between foreground and remote distances and all the distances in between.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, p. 146.



### 31 KELLY AT THE RIVER (1968)

oil, fabric dye and crayon on paper  
75.0 x 50.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan

Provenance:

Private collection, Melbourne.

*...(Nolan's) works of the sixties are often described as acrylic on paper. Actually, crayon with a high wax component is applied to a card with a shiny surface; the crayon is often rubbed and smeared and frequently scraped back, for example with a razor blade. The surface is then washed with quick-drying waterproof fabric dye, and rapidly wiped with materials like nylon which direct the liquid but absorb very little of it. The completed work is thoroughly sprayed with a fixative.*

*The result is a transparent fluidity and continuous flow of striations only elsewhere found in his early works on glass.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, p. 156.





**32 PROMETHEUS: IO AND BABY**  
1968

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed verso: Lowell Prometheus / 8 Feb 68 / Io and Baby

Provenance:  
Private collection, London.

Exhibited:  
*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 41, illustrated.

Literature:  
T. G. Rosenthal, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames and Hudson, London 2002, pp. 263 (illustrated), 149.

**33 PROMETHEUS**  
1968

crayon and fabric dye on paper  
30.5 x 25.5 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan  
inscribed verso: Lowell Prometheus / 8 Feb 68 / Nolan

Provenance:  
Private collection, London.

Exhibited:  
*Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*, Gould Galleries, Melbourne, 7 March – 15 April 2001, Gould Galleries, Sydney, 2 May – 3 June 2001, no. 40, illustrated.





**34 MAN AND BIRD – NEW GUINEA**  
(1969)

oil, fabric dye and crayon on paper  
52.0 x 76.0 cm  
inscribed lower right: Iolan

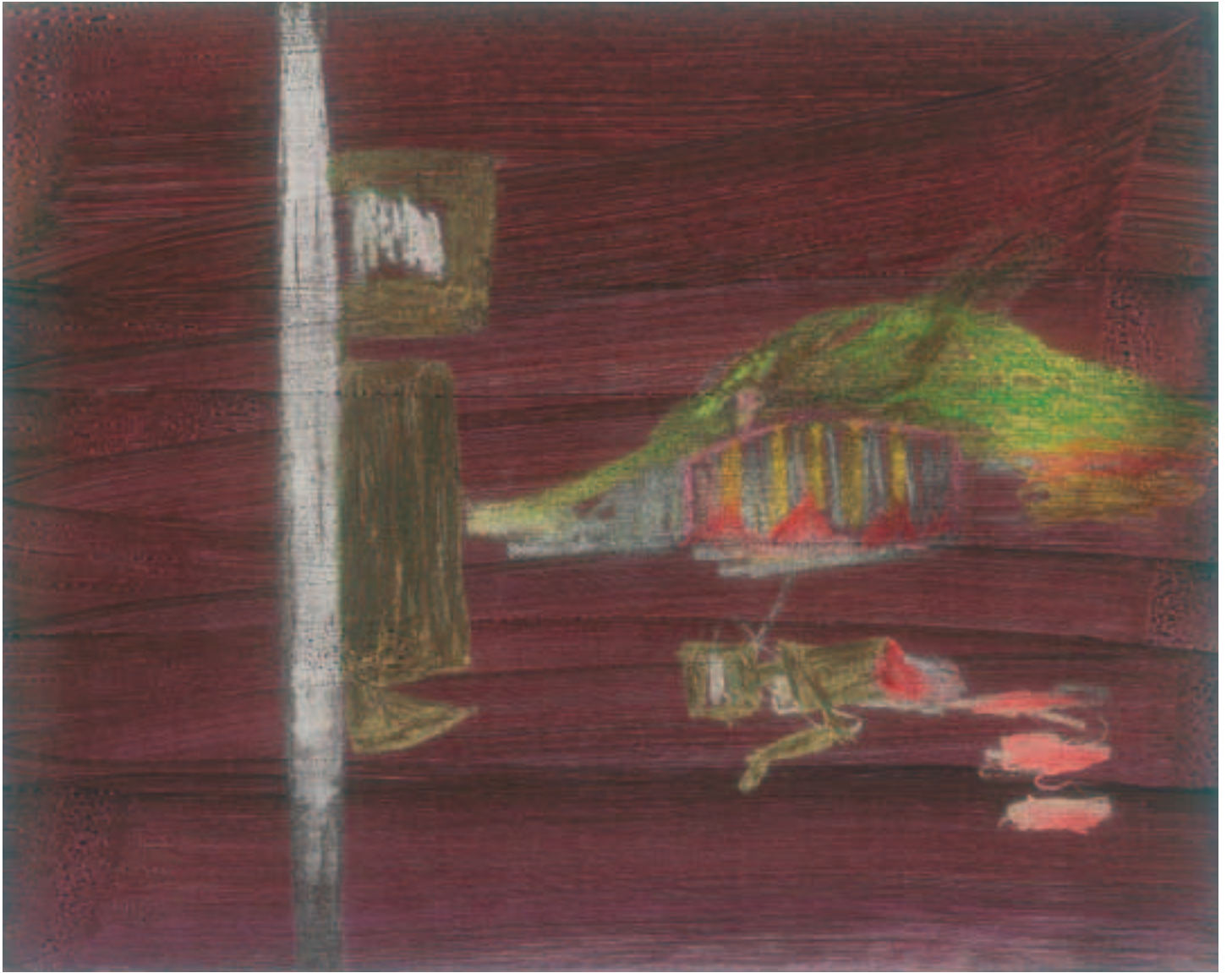
Provenance:  
Private collection, Melbourne.

**35 KELLY: GLENROWAN NOCTURNE**  
(1969)

crayon, oil and fabric dye on paper  
61.0 x 75.0 cm  
inscribed lower right: Iolan  
inscribed verso: Kelly / Glenrowan / Nocturne / Iolan /  
15 Aug 1981

Provenance:  
Private collection, Sydney.





## 36 LANDSCAPE 1981

oil on composition board  
91.5 x 122.0 cm  
inscribed lower right: Nolan  
inscribed verso: Landscape/ Nolan/1981

Provenance:

Mr Tony Reichardt, London;  
Private collection, Sydney.

Exhibited:

*The Lost Nolans*, Corso de'Fiori, Sydney, 24 November – 9 December 1993.

Literature:

J Dodds, 'The Lost Nolans', *Sydney News*, 1 December 1993, p. 8 (illustrated).

*In some ways it is most difficult for Australian artists to paint the landscape, because there is no light so intense and dispersing as we have. The light will not let you amalgamate forms, whereas in Europe you have the unity emanating from the skies and, say, a Claude Monet, who can use objects and their shadows and reflections to make things cohere.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Nolan quoted in, Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Bay Books, Sydney, 1979, p. 198





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