

Shona Nunan

Michael Francis

Cartwright

Jacob Cartwright

Sollai Cartwright

JOURNEYS

Nunan Cartwright *Journeys*

Organised by the Australian High Commission to the United Kingdom.

This exhibition is part of a yearlong programme of events in 2018 to mark the centenary of Australia House.

artists

Shona Nunan

Michael Francis Cartwright

Jacob Cartwright

Sollai Cartwright

Designed by Nunan-Cartwright Studios

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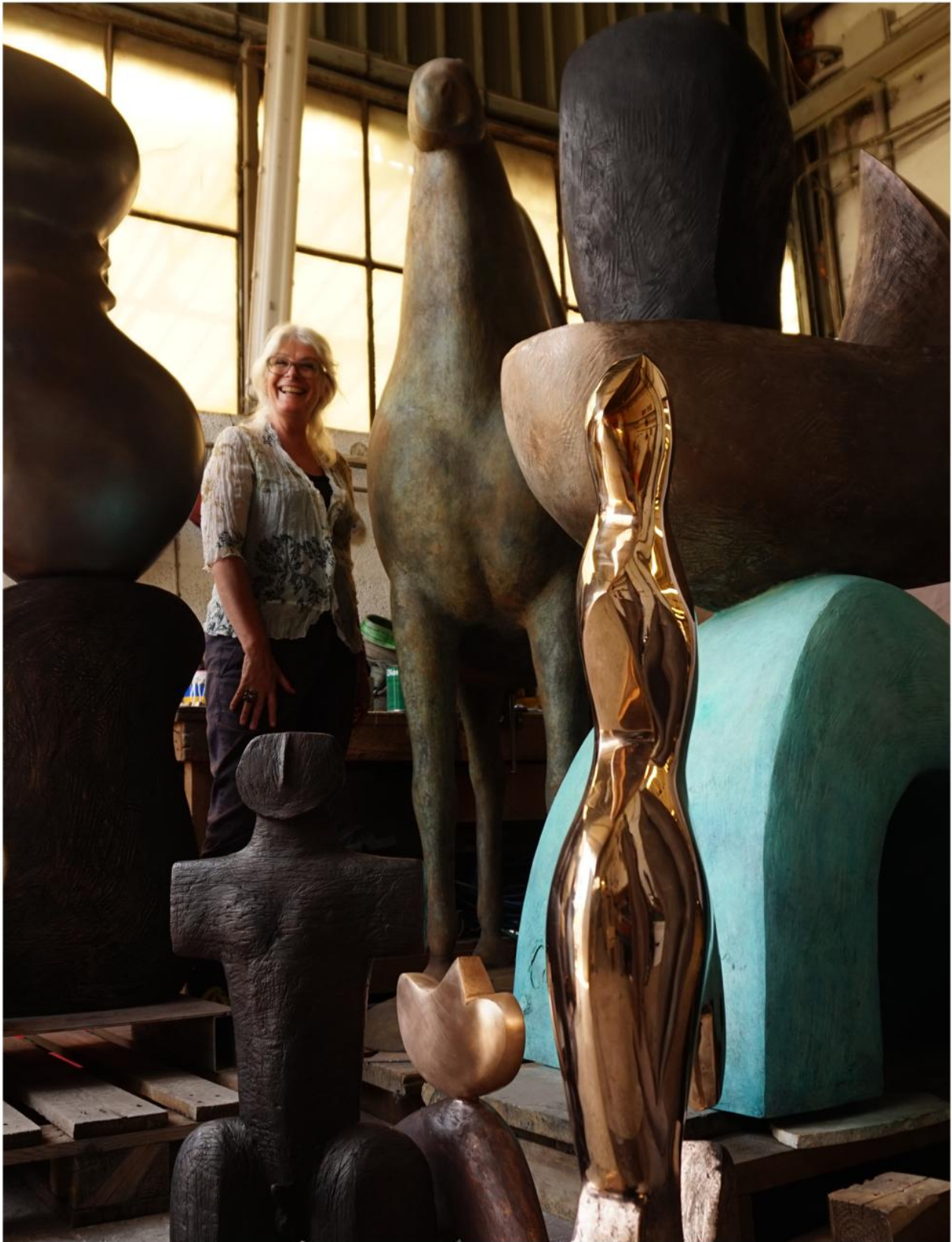
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Foreward

Several years ago, I visited the historical and geographical region of Garfagnana, at the foot of the great Apuan marble mountains of Carrara, where some of the world's most well-known and remarkable sculptures have been spurred for centuries. It was there I first met celebrated Australian sculptors, Shona Nunan and Michael Cartwright. Since the 1980s Shona and Michael have travelled to Pietrasanta and Carrara to carve and cast their work. They follow in the footsteps of some of the world's greatest sculptors, from Italy's Michelangelo to Britain's very own Henry Moore. During a visit to Shona and Michael's studio in Pietrasanta, I envisaged their arresting work adorning the marble floors of the Exhibition Hall at Australia House. Hence, the genesis of Journeys. I am thrilled to have Journeys on display at Australia House.

In this exhibition Shona and Michael exhibit with their sons, Jacob and Sollai, also distinguished artists in their own right. This exhibition explores their 'journeys' as artists, in skills and materials, and as travellers thoughtfully traversing this world, gaining knowledge and passing knowledge on. This remarkable family of artists together have exhibited their work internationally, delivered major public art commissions and are collected globally.

I am delighted that Journeys will be presented at Australia House as part of a yearlong programme of events to mark the centenary of Australia House. Opened in 1918 by King George V, Australia House has long been a place where Australian arts and culture has been celebrated in the UK. The UK is a significant global market place for the arts, exchange of ideas and culture. As a former High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, I am pleased that Australia House once again will play a key role in connecting this family of artists to the heart of the global arts community here in the UK.

I can only hope that you will be in awe of the work of this family of Australian artists as I have been.

Alexander Downer AC
Former Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (2014-2018)

Curator's introduction

This exquisite exhibition of sculpture presents the recent work of Nunan, Cartwright & Sons. I have had the pleasure of staging other exhibitions for this internationally renowned Australian couple, Shona Nunan and Michael Cartwright. One of the special features of this exhibition is that the parents' work is being shown together for the first time with those of their two sons, Jacob and Sollai Cartwright, talented artists in their own right.

Serene and majestic, timeless and joyous, over 30 sculptures by this talented family lead us through a spiritual journey – another stage of their collective journeys. Both transcultural and earth-inspired, the work of all four of the artists embraces the universal elements of humanity and take it to an aesthetic level that 'sings with ancient rhythms and enchants the viewers'.

Shona's poised figures are creations of her personal symbols for fertility, cycles and life. Her goddesses emerge from her inner-self as well as different cultures: from Mayan to Aboriginal, from East to West at the very dawn of their civilizations. Shona believes that her works show a connection to herself and the physical environment of nature. Elegant and definitely feminine in form, Shona presents new sculptures cast in bronze and based on her earlier Guardian and Women series.

Michael's direct and spontaneous pieces display a different personal style from Shona's work but are equally spiritual and powerful. Created with joy and wonder, Michael believes that his art has no impediment from country or culture. By juxtaposing the use of classical materials, such as metal, wood, granite and marble, his sculptures lead us into a harmonious world that is both ancient and contemporary. For this exhibition, Michael created pieces in sterling silver as well as a new series of landscape sculptures, which have been inspired by Montefegatesi and Prato Fiorito, both places being close to their studios in Italy. His organic forms are almost musical.

Being the sons of two artists, Jacob and Sollai's creative instincts were nurtured from a very young age. The family often shifted homes but always spent time close to nature. Sollai and Jacob also accompanied their parents on their many journeys, exploring different cultures both physically and spiritually. They acquired their passion for the arts most naturally.

Initially Jacob was a gifted child of music and was classically trained in clarinet and composition. However, over the years he practiced many art forms: from composition for films, art performances with groups and photography, finally leading to sculpture and installation combining art forms and sound. The embodiment of his many talents have led him to carving in marble and wood. The

pieces in this exhibition show the varying approaches to boat forms – another affirmation of his personal journeys.

Sollai's urge to carve took him to Pietrasanta at age 19 where his thirst for carving developed into a love and appreciation of marble. Pietrasanta has remained his mecca and he returns faithfully every year to choose his marble. Could one think of a better place? He has successfully placed work with collectors in Australia, Hong Kong and Germany where he now lives. The vibrant artistic atmosphere of Berlin has served him well and his connectivity with the stone continues to inspire him: 'each piece of marble and its properties dictates my creations'!

Enjoy the creations found in this remarkable exhibition!

Sandra L. Walters
Curator and Art Advisor

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I am deeply moved and influenced by the art works of ancient civilisations, Cycladic, Etruscan, African. I love these works because they are deeply spiritual and related to the deepest emotions of human beings, the desires for longevity, fertility, protection, abundance. These art works, in their utter simplicity, speak to the spirit of mankind through the essence of the art form, not distracted by the beauty of physical reality, not clever or cerebral, but rustic, always speaking to the unformed world of the soul.... The work can be really austere, but it haunts you, disturbing you and attracting you. You need that in art because it is not satisfactory to be beautiful alone, or to play a clever mind trick with you, or tell you a story. You need the recognition of yourself as a spiritual being.

R

Shona Nunan

Shona Nunan, born in 1959 in Daylesford, brought up around Melbourne, studied sculpture at RMIT. As a child, her father, an artist, was prone to taking long trips in the desert, sometimes taking his family on these wandering sabbaticals. For a year, they lived near an aboriginal settlement in the Northern Territory. It is her experience of the aboriginal culture, the corroborees, their connection to the earth and paintings on bark and in the caves, that have stayed with her as a major influence in her own artistic life. This culture of over 60,000 years brought a world to her that was non materialistic and connected to the essence of being.

Western culture gave her another perspective. Wonderful artists, Michelangelo, Rodin, Giacometti and Marino Marini, had their input into her work. It was their connection to the human condition that she loved. Along the way, the art of the Etruscans, Africans, Egyptians, Cycladic Greeks, their art referring to the essence of humanity, began to speak to her, further loosening her grip on realism and subtly creating in her the archetypal themes in her work as they related to her journey.

Travel and living in other cultures has been transformative and influential in Shona's work. Asia, France, Italy, Ireland, have been important stopovers creating a transcultural expression of the earth as she takes from one and gives to the other.

Her most consistent medium is bronze, casting her sculptures in Pietrasanta at one of the great Art Foundries. The themes of her work are archetypal in essence. The Guardians, great protectors and defenders of life, are symbols of night and day, yin and yang, the partnership . The celebration of the Woman or the Mother in Shona's work comes from a profound exploration of the feminine and using this knowledge to express the harvest, abundance, the cycles of life. The Horse and Rider another archetype, represents the journey of life. For Shona the relationship between the horse and rider reflect the relationship between the self, (the rider), and the horse, (inner self), at different times of life. Sometimes the horse is more powerful and solid reflecting the safety and security of the rider on the journey.

Shona lives with her husband and fellow artist, Michael Cartwright, between the mountains of Lucca in Italy and a beautiful valley in Provence. A connection to human ancestry in these old cultures is part of a new development in her work.



Spirit Guardian
Shona Nunan
2017
bronze
edition of 3
90 x 26 x 18 in
228 x 67 x 47 cm



Earth Guardian
Shona Nunan
2015
bronze
edition of 3
81 x 30 x 9.5 in
206 x 76 x 24 cm



Life
Shona Numan
2018
bronze
edition of 3
82 x 21 x 15 in
210 x 55 x 38 cm



Sentinel
Shona Nunan
2015
bronze
edition of 6
71 x 19 x 12 in
181 x 48 x 30 cm

Harvest
Shona Nunan
2015
bronze
edition of 6
75 x 17 x 8 in
191 x 43 x 18 cm





Torso
Shona Nunan
2015
bronze
edition of 8
19 x 24 x 3.5 in
48.5 x 62 x 9 cm



Michael Francis Cartwright

Michael Francis Cartwright, born in 1959 in Wangaratta, Australia, has been creating his art since he was a young teenage boy, bedridden with glandular fever, when his father, (an artist), handed him a paint brush and canvas. An introduction to the paintings of the Impressionists began a path to the joyous discovery of the Fauves and Expressionists whose influence can still be found in his work today.

Michael went to Caulfield Art College to study sculpture, where at first he experimented with installation art and after meeting lecturer, Stewart Ross who had been an assistant to Henry Moore in Much Haddam, was influenced and inspired to work in the tradition of modelling and carving. Changing colleges in his final year to the RMIT he met his wife to be, artist Shona Nunan. Their commitment to their journey as artists began immediately when they journeyed, with their first son, to Carrara in Italy in 1984, a mecca in those days for aspiring artists to work in marble or bronze.

Returning to Italy over the following years for inspiration, marble and tools, and with art residencies in France, Ireland and Hong Kong; exhibitions and huge art projects in Asia, helped lead Michael and his family to finally choose a life in Europe. It was a decision to follow and be enveloped in beauty, to be inspired by historical and contemporary greatness and to connect with the roots of his European and ancient history. At first, Italy in the Tuscan mountains and now France in a beautiful Provencal valley where he now lives with Shona. He paints, he draws, he sculpts. He returns regularly to Pietrasanta to carve marble in one of the old studios, by machine or by hand, or models in clay and plaster in one of the great Pietrasanta foundries to cast his work. He continues to exhibit regularly in Australia.

The themes of Michael's work have transformed over the years. At first his expression of the journey of life was his iconic Boat forms precariously balancing over the depths of a great sea. His Boat forms have transformed into other iconic images; his Bird forms, symbols of freedom and joy and miraculous flight; his Clouds on Hilltops, a capture of the fleeting moment and relationship of the ephemeral with the material; the Astronomer reaching up peering into the night sky. They are expressions of wonder of an amazing universe, honouring the majestic and the tiniest of all life and his sculptures or paintings, big or small, somehow make you feel humble and all of life is monumental.

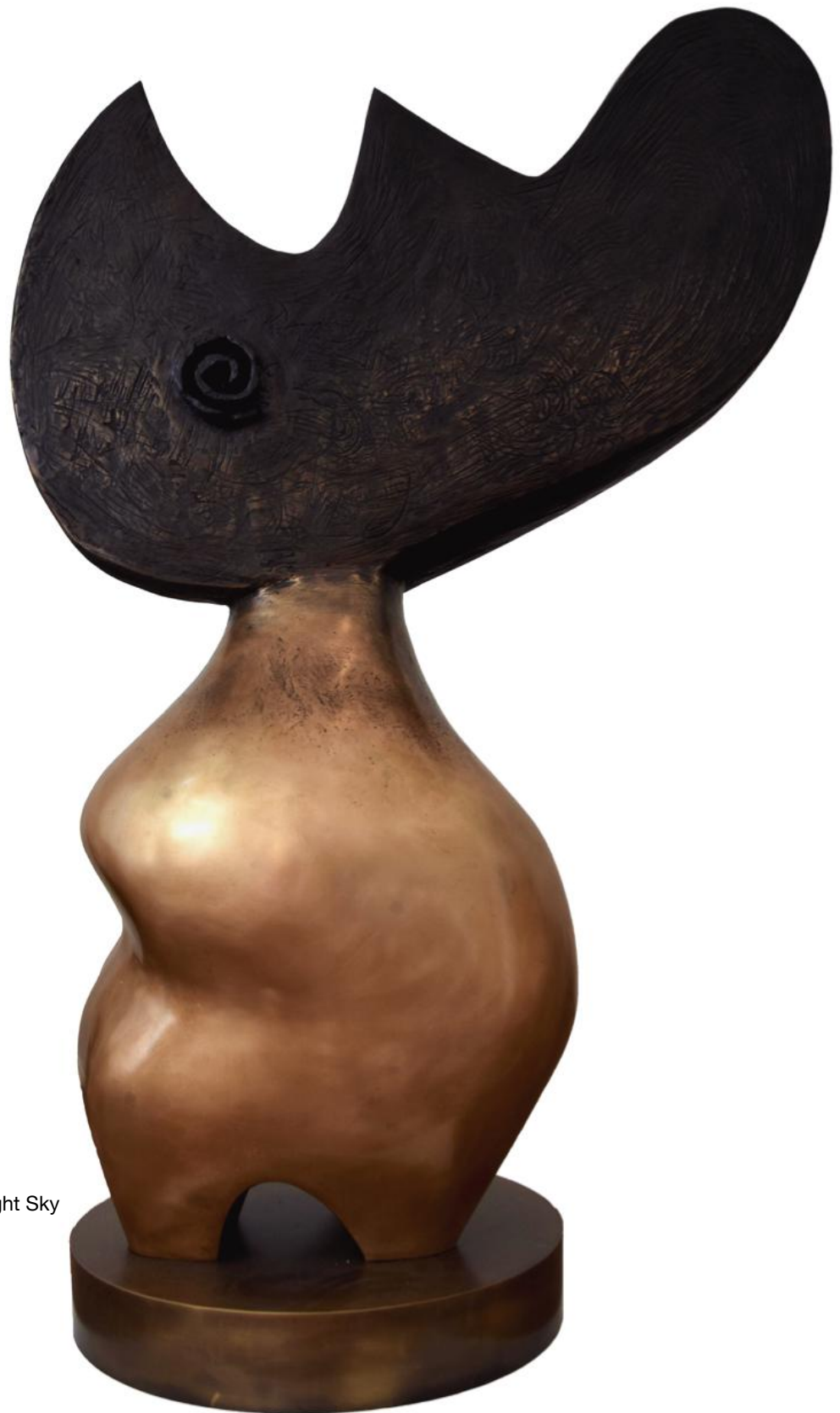


Moon Dance
Michael Francis Cartwright
2015
bronze
edition of 3
88 x 38 x 12 in
223 x 96 x 31 cm



Reflection

Michael Francis Cartwright
2015
bronze
edition of 3
79 x 33 x 16 in
200 x 85 x 40 cm



Astronomer Looking into the Night Sky
Michael Francis Cartwright
2015
bronze
edition of 3
57 x 21 x 36 in
145 x 54 x 92 cm



Cloud on Prato Fiorito
Michael Francis Cartwright
2015
bronze
edition of 8
14 x 11.5 x 5 in
36.5 x 29 x 12 cm



Cloud over Montefegatasi

Michael Francis Cartwright

2015

bronze

40 x 40 x 25 in

101 x 101 x 63 cm



Cloud Resting in a Field of Poppies*

Michael Francis Cartwright
2017
sterling silver & bronze
edition of 8
4 x 3 x 2 in
10.5 x 7 x 6 cm



Dreaming on a Hill*

Michael Francis Cartwright
2017
sterling silver & bronze
edition of 8
4.5 x 3 x 1.5 in
11.5 x 7 x 4 cm



Sunset

Michael Francis Cartwright
2017
bronze
edition of 8
5 x 3 x 1.5 in
12.5 x 8 x 4 cm



Cloud Resting on a Hilltop*

Michael Francis Cartwright
2017
bronze
edition of 8
3.5 x 3 x 2 in
9 x 7.5 x 5 cm

*MFC Makers mark, 925 Sterling Silver mark,
Birmingham Assay Office mark, Sterling Silver mark,
t 2018 date mark.



Sometimes I feel we are like a canoe floating on the surface of our soul,
looking to glimpse wondrous moments and entities in its depths.

Jacob Cartwright

Born in 1982 and bred in the arts in Australia, Jacob Cartwright was a gifted child of music, classically trained in clarinet and composition at the Victorian College of the Arts secondary school and a scholarship holder at Interlochen in Michigan, America. As a whimsical, thoughtful child of nature, roaming freely in the Victorian countryside, a life philosophy of transformation developed in him that now is integrated in all his art forms. At first, music embodied the sound of the earth and the rush of water and the deep stillness of the mountains and he was one with it, transforming into its essence. Now it belongs to him as he creates in whatever medium is appropriate to his need to express himself.

Over the years he has transitioned between composing for film, dance and theatre and experimental art performances with his groups, the Bob Collective and Koski, to photography, to sound sculpture, to sculpture where he carves and creates in wood and marble. His processes with all his art forms begin with his connection to nature and the poetry of the idea transforming into being.

Jacob's sculptures reveal themes of the journey of life epitomised in the boat form and the confluence of energy between land and water. Boats are part of his early history as a child and these have influenced the visual language of sculptures such as the cathedral like sound sculpture, the Quiet, commissioned for Bei Wu sculpture park in Germany. This has the appearance of the skeleton of an upturned boat. A recently commissioned 2.5 metre marble sculpture by his American patrons for their Tuscan property, saw his boat form upturned, feeling the influences of pacific island sculptures, the canoe prow, the mask and the shield synthesised in his work. His new sculpture, Canoe Lake, was developed through maquettes in the northern German landscape of reedy lakes and was created in his art residency at Le Rouret in Southern France.

Currently Jacob lives in Pietrasanta where he has a studio in an artist collective in the old centre. He has traveled adroitly from life to life, from Papua New Guinea, London to Madagascar, to Tuscany, to South East Asia and Europe. Through these influences in his creative world and his long intimate relationship with visual art through his family and peers, he is developing his language through the mediums, compelled to make the journey that speaks to him for his life and his art.



A Boat over Reeds. It comes to me as flashes of memories, feelings and images. There were those times when as a family we camped alongside lakes in the dry crackly landscape of Victoria. Gliding through precious water, I would love the way the land met it and became wet and cool. The reeds scraping on the side of the canoe as we passed through them were sounds of tranquil and delicate movement. Then, here in Europe, I have loved this universal entity, this water that is the same but so different, and have felt again this old, ancient sensation, a deep feeling of well being - enchanted by a world below.

Sometimes I feel we are like a canoe floating on the surface of our soul, looking to glimpse wondrous moments and entities in its depths.

Rising

Jacob Cartwright

2018

wood, steel

42 x 77 x 45 in

107 x 195 x 114 cm



Canoe Lake

Jacob Cartwright

2016

bronze

edition of 8

10 x 18 x 22.5 in

25 x 46 x 57.5 cm



The Space Between Us

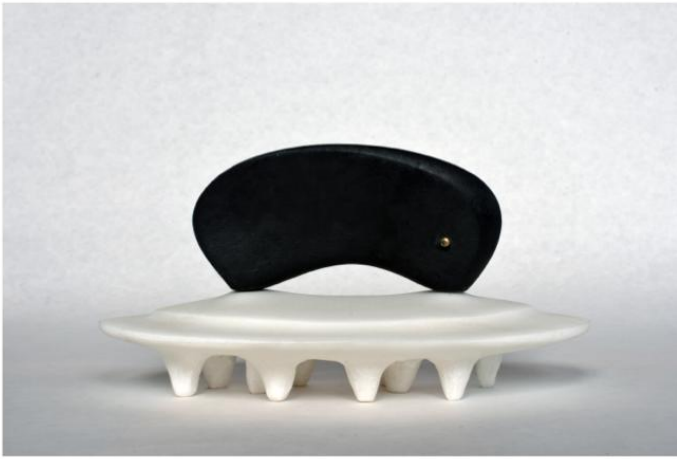
Jacob Cartwright

2015

chestnut wood and brass head nails

31 x 24.5 x 12.5 in

79 x 62 x 32 cm



Passing the Divide

Jacob Cartwright

2018

Statuario marble, wood and bronze

4.5 x 8.5 x 4.5 in

11 x 22 x 11.5 cm



Resonant Sum

Jacob Cartwright

2018

Statuario and Maquina Marble

8 x 12 x 6 in

20 x 30 x 16 cm



Collective

Jacob Cartwright

2018

Statuario marble

5 x 8 x 4 in

13.5 x 20.5 x 9.5 cm



The Dreaming
Jacob Cartwright
2018
White Carrara marble
12.5 x 16 x 7.5 in
31.5 x 40 x 19 cm



Confluence

Jacob Cartwright

2018

White Carrara marble

14 x 19.5 x 25 in

35.5 x 49.5 x 63 cm



I am often asked how I know when a sculpture is complete. In my opinion good art has no end, no conventional conclusion. Creation is a journey which at some point continues only through observation finding new enlightenments and contemplations; when a form is able to take you into its world. I love losing myself in this place and I love it when I can bring that feeling to others.

Sollai Cartwright

Sollai Cartwright is a young sculptor, born in 1988, in countryside Victoria, Australia. Kangaroos, birds and snakes in the scrubby dry land where he ran wild and free in the paddocks and bushland surrounding his home have informed his work and created his connection to the spirit of the earth. His penchant as a child, for dressing in character to his imagination, lead many to believe he would be an actor, however that gift now lends itself to his art where he totally immerses himself in the belief of his creation. Living in a family that shifted abode many times over his childhood and interlaced with travel to other cultures, Sollai has developed an adaptability to life and an almost monk-like asceticism to possessions.

Always a talented young artist, he found expression for his art in marble when his desires to carve lead him to Pietrasanta at 19. "I carve because it takes me away from ego, and connects me to the Universe and beauty in a productive way." He found a studio and marble and to the delight of the old artigiani who had believed the art form was dying, he thrived under their tutelage and interest.

In 2011 he met the love of his life, Danica Hilton, at Cirque du Soleil in Macau, where he was a carpenter for a short time, and Danica was an acrobat. She became his muse, influencing his drawings and paintings and finally his sculptures with the twist and curl of her body flying joyously and with perfect precision in the choreographed performances. The inspiration of her curling form has added to his appreciation of the modern masters especially Picasso and Brancusi.

Pietrasanta was his mecca as he returned religiously each year to carve long stints at the carving yards, collecting marble and tools to bring back to his studio in Australia. He has had the good fortune of patronage enabling him to create large works for collectors in Australia and later in Germany. Exhibitions in Hong Kong, Australia and Germany have been successful and encouraging for him, and his work is evolving acrobatically to the movement of his life.

He now lives in Berlin where he has a studio and engages in the fellowship of other young artists. Berlin nurtures the passions of the young and philosophical soirees, art, music and performance are a dominant and active part of his artistic development.



Lovers
Sollai Cartwright
2018
White Carrara marble
29 x 12 x 36 in
74 x 30 x 92 cm



Abstract Form
Sollai Cartwright
2018
White Carrara marble
19.5 x 20.5 x 54.5 in
50 x 52 x 138 cm



Midnight

Sollai Cartwright

2017

Spanish Black Marquina marble

8 x 7 x 17 in

21 x 18 x 43 cm



Wind Form

Sollai Cartwright

2015

White Carrara marble

24 x 19.5 x 7 in

61 x 50 x 18 cm



Male Torso
Sollai Cartwright
2017
Spanish Black Marquise marble
24 x 7 x 10.5 in
61 x 18 x 27 cm
also in bronze, edition of 8



Woman Figure
Sollai Cartwright
2017
White Carrara marble
44 x 10 x 10 in
111 x 25 x 25 cm

Journeys excerpts from diaries and letters

Generations ago, we arrived in Australia. Some of our early family were Jewish convicts, expelled from England for the Gold Dust Robbery. Some of us were poor Irish farmers and part of the great diaspora of Ireland at a time of opportunity when Melbourne was first established. Others came seeking fortune in the great gold rush from the tin mines of Cornwall and a saddlery from Derbyshire. In our eagerness and ignorance to have land and opportunity after our difficult origins, we took greedily from the original owners of Australia.

Our families have been in Australia not longer than 200 years. Before that, it was 10,000 years in gentle migration from the great bread basket of Persia. Our ancient journeys took us around the Mediterranean, and some up through central Europe to the Scandinavian countries, till we eventually arrived in Ireland and the United Kingdom where we remained for many centuries.

Our family sense of belonging on the earth is deeply European in its essence and our family's respective journeys have led us to explore the road that has taken us to Australia and back again to our roots. Our art is influenced by this great journey as we begin to understand the cultural heritage of every country we live in, feeling the great ancestors that have laid the messages important to human existence and survival. Messages of fertility, the hunt, protection and the afterlife, and in the good times, the celebration of beauty.

These days, Jacob and his wife, Jaqueline, live in Italy in Tuscany. Sollai and his wife, Danica, live in Berlin in Germany, while Michael and I live between France, Italy and Australia.

∞

Thirty four years ago we came to Italy. We came young, enthusiastic, wildly idealistic and full of promise. We were going to spend the rest of our life dedicated to our art and we were going to spend it becoming great. We had met two years before in our final year at art college. We fell irrevocably in love, we became pregnant, we married and Mike got work teaching and only two years later we were on shaking ground, wondering how we could continue this life together without our art. A good friend and former lecturer to Michael, took hold of us and told us to get out while we were young. Go find yourselves. Go and work in Carrara – that's what you were going to do before you both met, NOW, before its too late. We went. Joyous. Impassioned.

We arrived in Carrara in January, 1984, the coldest winter in decades. We had little Jake, not yet two, and Teddy and Potty, strapped to our backpacks. We trundled the streets fourteen hours a day for a week before we finally found a little house in the mountains in a village called Ortonovo. Here is an extract



Fishing Over Uluru by Michael Francis Cartwright

from a letter we wrote to our family at the time:

“Tramp, tramp, tramp, through Fontia and we eventually find a lady who has a home free in Ortonovo, however, she doesn’t want to rent it because it’s in the process of being renovated and has no shower, no hot water, poor little bimbo (Jacob) – she’s not very enthusiastic about us at all, but her son is and insists on showing us the house. We couldn’t believe it when we saw it. It was putrid, plaster, dust, machines everywhere, but it looked wonderful. We were ecstatic and I think we would almost have paid any price for it. It has one small bedroom which houses a bumpy bed and a small fold-up bed and a large mirror cabinet, pink ceiling, blue walls and crucifix. A kitchen, a toilet, and stairs, and the most wonderful studio you’ve ever seen. The top floor is one large windowed room that was in the process of renovation before we assured them we loved it just as it was \$15 a week. Marble bench tops and sinks and window ledges and architraves and stairs. Views like you would not believe. Absolutely spectacular. On the way up the mountain from Carrara a magnificent range of marble grey mountains, ragged and pierced by quarries, half covered in snow, surround you, and tiny walled villages defiantly perch on mountain tops or nestle into a shoulder. We are just over the mountain top which greets these views and face yet another stupendous view from our windows which look down onto terraces, vineyards and olive groves to a steep decent into little orange clusters of houses and spires. The village of Nicoli sits like a nipple on a mound like hill in the middle of a vast valley that reaches the sea and is broken by deep green rivers. Your heart is constantly in your mouth and the village people feel real and on the ground. You sit on the steps of the church in the village square and kids kick a ball around, ducking buses and cars on the way down and you think if they kick the ball hard it’ll be flying down the mountain. Somebody in deep baritone sings Santa Lucia and you feel privileged that you’re witnessing people living in a setting that’s hundreds of years old and that they are really only a small part of the whole long cycle of life and death. Australia somehow makes you feel bigger and grander than what you are...”

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4th June 1979

.... Dad wanted to show me some Aboriginal caves that he discovered nine years ago with some geologists. Unfortunately, we couldn’t get to them because of Uranium mines all through the area, so we went on a bit further where we found some more, listed on the map as the Christmas Aboriginal rock paintings. It was obviously a tourist attraction, but that didn’t alter the strange feeling I got from that place. We shouldn’t have been there. None of the land that we had just been through was ours. The rock faces of the edge of land following the road were forbidding and hostile. I felt like an intruder. The rock paintings that had probably been there for hundreds of years were fading, from lack of use, or from the inevitable touching and rubbing from tourists, I’m not sure. On one rock guarding the caves were paintings of three spirits, threatening and hostile to the evil intruders of this sanctuary. On the the roof and walls of this cave were some very beautiful drawings of emus, kangaroos,



Guardians by Shona Nunan

rock wallabies, goannas; each drawn with anatomical precision, structurally imperfect, but knowledgeable of the life working in the body system such as heart, lungs, organs, genitals etc. There were also some hunting scenes with use of the woomera and spears. Possibly the most interesting drawings to me though, were those of the women. Once again the structure of the drawings were out by westernised standards but their knowledge of beauty and anatomy was better than that of any artist I have known. Tall, lean women wearing fancy headdress, were depicted in lines, thin and graceful. Perfect lines. Lines, intricate in details of the feet and hands. Lines, sensuous and knowing as they depicted the voluptuous weight of the breast. Lines, thick and material as they wrote decoration over the body.

Another bonus to that visit was the big boulder directly beneath the painted ceiling. The top of the rock was pitted with numerous circular, shallow holes. One section was flat and obviously it was used to store the different ochres used for colouring these walls. There was a very smooth stone left in one of the pits and it was probably used to grind the colours into the palette. Another section on the top of the rock was extremely smooth and shiny and it is here that we presumed the artist would lie as he mixed his colours and painted his images on the ceiling.

We left this place feeling a little sad. Probably very sad inside. There was a definite feeling that this place did not belong to the white man. We felt privileged to have seen it, but in the end were no better than the average tourist who clamoured to see the sights of Australia, for we would not have given up the chance of seeing it, even knowing that we did not belong.

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1991

We arrived in Port Moresby not more than weeks ago. The heat almost knocked us over as we stepped onto the tarmac, going on to sweltering in a hot tin shed for hours as we went through customs and waited for our luggage to arrive. As our transport took us through the city, our hearts sank in trepidation. The wildness of the place, residential and business properties broken by great tracts of land overtaken by tall grasses and spindly trees. Huge barbed wire fences everywhere and guarded by fierce looking tribesmen with bows and arrows. Clusters of men walking with great machetes hanging from their grip. No beauty. Where was the beauty. The plane trip in had revealed a young beautiful landscape of hills dipping into aqua seas, of coves and beaches and islands and little boats skimming the waters, not many trees but all a lush green. It had not revealed the lurking sinister fear that loaded this city and kept people who could afford it, prisoners behind locked barricades and in expensive cars with tinted windows.

In the first few days we were invited to a leaving party of one of the teachers at the university, who had been there for three years. The relief and joy with which they were leaving, left us the impression we were about to undergo a prison sentence. Curfew had just been enforced, eleven expats killed by rascals

on the weekend we arrived, stories of murder and rape and torture were constant in our ears with the exhortations to be very careful everywhere you go - buy a good car, you can't afford to break down....

Jacob's memories of Port Moresby have remained intense for him. He was nine years old when he was in Port Moresby.

"One of the most poignant memories of my childhood, which keeps sneaking into my art subconsciously, is our family's time in Papua New Guinea. People often say my work reminds them of the pacific islands and I think this time in my life must be why. My parents had taken up residency teaching at the art school there. We lived in a concrete block which leaked waterfalls down the walls whenever it rained, which was often. I would walk the grounds of the art studios. Large, black, wood sculptures of masks inset with shells and boar tusks made by local artists, come to my mind. That, and a sense of pattern on simple form. There was a log drum which sat horizontally, hollow and opened at the top by a long slit. It was beaten with a mallet to mark times of the day. We would often go sailing on the weekends visiting islands and would sometimes play a game of jumping off the boat, catching hold of a rope and be dragged along behind in the wake. We would see fishermen on their dugout canoes with an outrigger which kept them stable and afloat on the swells. Everyone carried a machete with them. There were blood red streaks all over the ground made from the bloody spit from crimson mouths of beetle nut users. There was always a sense of tension, as though anything could happen at any time. Which it did. Often. We left earlier than expected in fret and panic. Mike was away on a week long sailing trip. There were riots and the students of the university were the most active. My mother walked with me down to the intersection of the ring road which ran through the campus. There in a heaving, volatile mass were hundreds of protesters stopping each and every car. Any car with a government driver was violently pulled out and the car set alight. Cars all around, aflame, and my Mum with Sollai on her hip. Then we were all together again in the car. A soldier stopped us and poked a machine gun through the window. Then we were at the airport, running across the tarmac, escaping the attempted coup. A mark from a sea fungus grew on my arm and took more than ten years to go away - a birthmark from another life which kept memories fresh."

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We are in Cill Rialaig, artists in residence in one of the seven available pre-famine cottages for artists on the cliffs of the Atlantic and off the ring of Kerry on the Iveragh Peninsula. So wild and so beautiful. We have been here before, 15 years ago. We came with Sollai while Jake was at his school for gifted young musicians in America. We thought a sojourn here would be closer to Jake if he needed us and in the meantime we would create and be inspired in this amazing environment. We loved the residency so much, we rented a house for four extra months in the same area after the residency finished and developed a great series of our work, Mike on the Vikings and me on the Skellig Monks.



Creation by Jacob Cartwright



It's a tough time of year to be here, but we were here fifteen years ago during the same period and we have been waxing lyrical for the past fifteen years, on the extraordinary light during the winter period and we wanted to experience it again. How lucky are we! Here in this magical light, the air so clean and up here on the cliffs, the weather patterns before us are constantly changing, emptying out and refilling with light and grey and black and aqua and gold and pink, tipping the crests of the water with silver and creaming up the sky under blue black clouds, piercing rays of the whitest light searing the water and touching sodden cliff horizons with a golden edge.

We walk for a few hours every day, drawing and painting as we go, up into the hills through prickly wet paddocks, clambering over fences and rocks. We have found two of the most amazing ring forts, and have wandered over them, mapping their abodes and tunnels and entrances and burial places. One of the ring forts, for sure, is an ecclesiastical abode with the enclosed burial ground outside the main circular building, a standing stone bearing the insignia of Christianity. The other one, in the hills above our little village, looks like a farmer's home and it is in sight of the other ecclesiastical fort. It has what looks like a chase that runs alongside the home paddock and up over the hill top where four standing stones, sentinels of varying height, seem significantly inline with the islands of the two kings in the sea.

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This morning I looked through my porthole sized window to watch the Atlantic waking up. Opposite our cabin is a flat area to park a car or, more perfectly, to use as a place to sip at a morning cup of tea, sort of religiously, and watch the morning sky spectacular along this rugged Kerry coast.

We are staying at the Cill Rialaig Artist's village set up by a wonderfully eccentric Irish lady, Noelle. We thank her for her craziness, to believe she could rebuild a pre famine village for artists to escape to the edge of the sea, at the edge of the world.

This morning I hurriedly dressed, sloppy jacket, painting trousers, some socks and clogs, scarf and hat and raced out to the parking space. A strong front was coming in from the sea and a slow one coming in from the land, colliding on the distant peninsula. Misty clouds, tracing falling rain, traveling across the sea and over the islands, the ones I love to paint. Two distant islands acting like a gateway, perhaps pedestals for sentinels welcoming ancient trading partners of distant lands. The morning sun, barely above the hills, screams through gaps in the heavy clouds with brilliant, blinding rays of golden morning light throwing patches on the sea, dappled by the choppy surface. Strong red light out at sea from the early sun reflected again in mirky brown clouds with a watered down wash of pinks and reds above. I run to get my paints.

It is impossible to paint what you see. There is also no table, of course, so I balance the little box of water paints in one hand and pad on my arm while I



Cill Rialaig Sea Study by Michael Francis Cartwright



Ancestor series by Shona Nunan

mix water from the bonnet of the car, from the morning drizzle. I mix with little packets of paint to find a color. I am happy to represent some part of this ever changing sky, sea, land. I can't get it down quickly enough and the wind keeps wanting to turn the page to start another sketch. I can only hand over in the excitement, and hope to get something that captures some small part of the feeling and experience.

The morning cold has begun to climb, numbing toes and feet. The colors dancing on the water are shifting to greys as the sun rises higher. I am aware my ears are freezing and my toes are wet.

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Here we are in Hong Kong again. We are up on the fourth floor in our little space in Hollywood Rd, with the sounds of buses roaring by and children squealing in the gardens below, water always drip drip dripping from some overflowing pipe in the courtyard. A quiet moment actually, to reflect, as there is nothing to do just now.

So beautiful this life, touching the lives of people everywhere, led to where our work takes us. I guess that is true for most people considering work is such a big part of living. I love it though. Mike and I are naturally restless, so when an opportunity arises through our work, we take it, blown into the wind, unsure of where it will drop us. It always worried our poor parents because it seemed to them that we took life on like gamblers, risking everything for the dream; selling houses we had bought just to have an exhibition - its profits would pay for all the bronze founding that had to be done each time. When Jacob got into his music school in Michigan we sold everything up, every possession we had to be near him, we got as far as Ireland, on the coast of Kerry, but it seemed only a hop and a jump compared to being back in Australia. Sollai, our youngest went to school at St Finian's Bay, overlooking the Skelligs Michael, while we painted and drew in that luminous winter light overlooking the great Atlantic ocean. However, Michigan didn't suit Jacob and soon we would be back together again, taking stock and then residing for months in the south of France, creating new work from all that bountiful colour that filled our souls to the brim. When we eventually returned to Australia from that particular trip, we had nothing but four suitcases of clothes and more dreams and somehow we emerged from the dust again and built a beautiful stand alone glass house in the hills of central Victoria, a part of nature and the elements. But truly, the most wonderful dream has been Italy. How lucky are we to have been able to do it. It has settled us too, because I think it is here that our hearts lie, here and southern France, we never could agree, but both are kindred spirits.

As I am sitting here I am remembering our last glimpse of the Tuscan hills as we departed for the airport. Mists roiling in the valleys wrapping themselves around little hilltop villages, ethereally capturing renaissance cameos of bell towers and craggy pines. A far cry from China, one day later, in the back blocks of Pudong where we are casting some work at a foundry. Grey and tough, an

almost colourless world, and yet the people are so lovely, so sweet and generous. China has really changed, especially in these big cities. The wealth is really apparent now, and you do not get the bargains you would expect, for instance the prices of foundry work is very similar to Italy and I know where I would prefer to be. A few days later we are in the south, checking out an art residency for next year at a university in Xiamen. More beautiful generous people and a leafy, lovely city by the sea, that we will enjoy staying in for a little while.

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Our hearts are glad here. Bagni di Lucca is so beautiful. We are surrounded by indescribable beauty. In fact, opposite us on the river we live, is an old paper factory with gracious old bones from the 17th century, but is now brutal with its recent additions of iron tanks and pipes and chimneys of hissing steam. It reminds us everyday of contrast. Today, so much of our modern world is built for functionality, with even contemporary artists focusing in their art with their heads and not their hearts, lost in the bleakness of living a functional and commercial life, representing a society on the surface and not its inner truth. Its true, beauty is useless. But can life go on without it, when unconcerned ugliness makes us sad, and when our hearts cannot sing in such a world. And in our greater selves, we are truly beautiful, and we are so happy when we are recognised as such. Great art reminds us of ourselves and our life journey. Italy is full of these reminders. Buildings that are still here after centuries, elegant and grand, or simply rustic and from the earth, buildings that people are desperate to own and restore. Art that comes from ancient burials depicting fertility, protection, the ongoing cycles of life, and art that comes to us, beautiful for its own sake, no other message than the inherent one of love, which the artist imbues like the breath of life into his work. Italy in all its chaos has protected beauty. Its ethos is not organisation or good business or practicality. It is unpredictably human. We love its humanity in all its craziness, because above all, beauty remains and the sensuous pleasure and luscious desires of being a human is the essence of life's growth and from which great cultures are made.

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In 2013, Sollai, our youngest son, arrived in Bagni di Lucca after a year in Montreal with his acrobat girlfriend, Danica. He had spent the year working on log cabins, stone chimneys and gardens up around the lakes and creating his sculpture carving alabaster and marble, in his city studio. Even though the experience was wonderful, bringing him in contact with an abundant wild life and contributing to the language of his art, trying to make money to live and still do his artwork, frustrated him enormously. Then, to his good fortune a lovely collector was encouraged to sponsor him in Italy to carve in one of the most renowned marble carving studios, La Cooperativa, in Pietrasanta, for three months. He was given accommodation, studio, stone, allowance and



Blackbird by Sollai Cartwright



tools in exchange for artwork created there. More importantly, he was in the mecca of marble carving and had access to the knowledge and advice of some of the most experienced artisans in Pietrasanta – or in the world.

“I arrived in Pietrasanta. Sunny and hot as summer gets in Tuscany. The mountains rose like chipped white teeth into the sky. It sparkled here and there as the sun hit the windshields of trucks carting down the marble.

In Pietrasanta the foundries cast figures three stories high. Blocks of marble, parked like cars in the thousands, line the roads in huge marble yards, their owners genuinely welcoming artists with a warm clap on the back. A young artist has come and they are so happy to support the next generation in this noble art. For these swarthy Italian men of the marble industry, should you have that glint in the eye, then you are one of them, that glint that says you are an addict, an addict for the most beautiful material in the world. They sit at the artist and artigiani bars, dusty and over worked, passionate. These men love the young artists. The next generation of marble addicts come to learn from the old sun burned chestnut and dust men. On my first morning, I wake to walk to the great square of Pietrasanta central, surrounded by medieval walls that climb the steep topography of the marble mountain base. I take coffee at Bar Michelangelo. Look there, where he signed some contract for another great masterpiece. And there his old apartment. I walk his path here, for this brief morning moment as the town wakes.

Thereafter, I spend my day in a love affair with form and light and return home in the golden Tuscan dusk, a happy cloud of dust and exhaustion, knowing I live my dream.” Sollai

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Australia is huge. We had the good fortune to take a day flight to Singapore whose path took us over Coober Pedy, Uluru and the Olgas and on through to Derby, before the red earth bled into the turquoise waters of the Timor Sea. Peering down onto this great lonely desert, we were reminded of aboriginal paintings, paintings like maps, defining water holes and stretches of land in varying red and ochre; of the great salt lakes, their white fat fingers stretching greedily, around them, circles of ghostly white rising; of the lines of rivers, dotted with trees and their tributaries and distributaries fanning in and out, full of water and glistening in the sun, life veins in this country now in wet season.

Rover Thomas in the dust, under a boab tree in the Kimberlies. We have an image of him there in his own quiet, earthy space, painting his land, a little away from the rest of the community, but part of them all nonetheless, every so often getting up to go walk-about, feeling the land, being the land, honouring the waterholes and their great spirits, throwing a stone in the water when he arrives to let them know he had arrived and washing his hands when

he leaves so not to take their spirits with him. His paintings, the land, beautiful empty canvases of burnt sienna and ochre, defined and pure, is-ness, being.

Artists need to be a little separate from their communities. They need to stand outside and look in, perceiving the inner-ness of their people, breaking the ground that needs to be broken, not for fashion's sake, but because things get old and stale and life needs to be looked at anew, refreshed, transformed.

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Dreams are special. I am so glad we dare to dream. Life seems to go so fast and now there seems to be nothing worthwhile to us anymore than finding the things in life that bring us joy and happiness and growth. For us it's not about being safe and secure, though we like it a lot, it's more about flying in the wind and trusting the abundant fertility of life to land you somewhere in the vicinity of that marvellous idea you had. Scary, but wonderful, and we continue to say, we love our life!

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Journey by Michael Francis Cartwright

JOURNEYS

The exhibition encourages viewers to consider the myriad of journeys that have informed the sculptures: the journey of the works themselves, from raw material through to creation; but also the journey of a family of sculptors who have continued to inspire one another whilst developing highly idiosyncratic bodies of work.

Organised by the Australian High Commission to the United Kingdom.

This exhibition is part of a yearlong programme of events in 2018 to mark the centenary of Australia House, London

artists

Shona Nunan

Michael Francis Cartwright

Jacob Cartwright

Sollai Cartwright

sculpture