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‘Speed’s Milk Bar.’ *B&W. 5.5”X 8.5” zinc plate. Earlwood.*

I grew up in milk bar for nearly twenty years and my father was known famously as Speedie as he was considered very slow in serving customers. Although it was noted that Speed was very quick whenever he raced off to the TAB across the road. My mother was ‘Mrs Speed’; while myself, my sister and brother were all ‘Little Speeds.’ It was also a never-ending source of curiosity as to why all three siblings had auburn hair. (At school I was sometimes referred to as the ‘rare red-headed wog’). This etching is based on a classic sepia photo of the milk bar which I have since ‘misplaced.’ The milkshake maker in the foreground remains a ‘family totem’ to this day. Despite the very long hours of tough labour it was a very lively, interesting way to spend one’s youth. Yet as my brother recalls the racism was rife (with a few brawls etc) and we bore the brunt of it until Australia finally became a more tolerant society (on the surface at least) when the ‘social accent’ thankfully shifted to multiculturalism. Yet, there are many good memories such as my brother and I playing the Wests brothers in a best-of-five ‘WOGLCON’ pinball series which had all the atmosphere of a Grand Final at the S.C.G. (CON stands for convicts. At the time Space Invaders was also a popular electronic game). The shop was also a little bohemian with a lot of suburban and political philosophy being espoused by a varied assortment of regular customers from all walks of life with even the occasional celebrity popping in to buy ciggies or whatever. I could rave on as the nostalgia always gets the better of me but I should add that although my extremely hardworking mother had to also raise three kids my very temperamental ‘larger than life’ father was definitely the ‘star of the show’ being both ‘tyrant’ and witty ‘comical satirist’ and thus I leave you with the following poem:

### ZEUS

I sometimes envy the family cordiality of the Anglo - American middle classes  
when I compare it to the psychological upheavals of my Grecian family history  
Which nevertheless goes back to the beginning of time  
To the time when Prometheus stole fire for humanity  
To the time when chaos was replaced by the universal order of the gods  
Who fight and debate amongst themselves

shifting the fates of both men and women

according to their whims  
according to their lusts  
according to their jealousies

according to their drunken states

States of mind

States of body

States of soul

and other Aristotelian dichotomies

(tri-chotemies?)

States of divine judgement

States of human error which do not guess correctly the divine moods

To the moods of my father who has the temper of a thunder god

I understand now he is none other than Zeus

I his son

The son of Zeus

Doomed to deal with a god who has the gruffness of a Spartan warrior

(How I envy the apparent civil manners of Anglo-Australian society)

Hey there's Zeus studying the racing form guide

with the discipline of a university

academic studying the

mysteries of quantum mechanics

Hey there's Zeus picking oranges and lemons from the backyard

Hey there's Zeus taking out the garbage

Hey there's Zeus shouting at everyone in sight

Hey there's Zeus who feeds my mother whose body has totally been worn down by disease and by the hours of hard work and emotional pain inflicted upon her over the long years

Hey there's Zeus watching the footie

Watching the share

market

Watching the parliament

debate

Watching endless episodes of American sitcoms

Watching John Wayne kill all those bad men

from out of town

Watching his grandchildren who play in the backyard created from the life force of his soul which contains enough energy to explode and tear apart the known universe from the suburbs of Sydney through to Circular Quay

It is a mystery to me

as I play with my sister's twin three year olds

My nephew

My niece

on the swings

(There I am pushing them to and fro in time with the rhythm of the universe)

to think of the push and shove and determination of my father who had his family working for twenty years in the milk bar

I'm still on the swing with my nephew and niece

We are all three silent enjoying the midday sun

In a paradise made from harsh toil

Yes it is still a strange realization to me that from the endurance tests foisted upon us by life can sometimes come such tranquillity



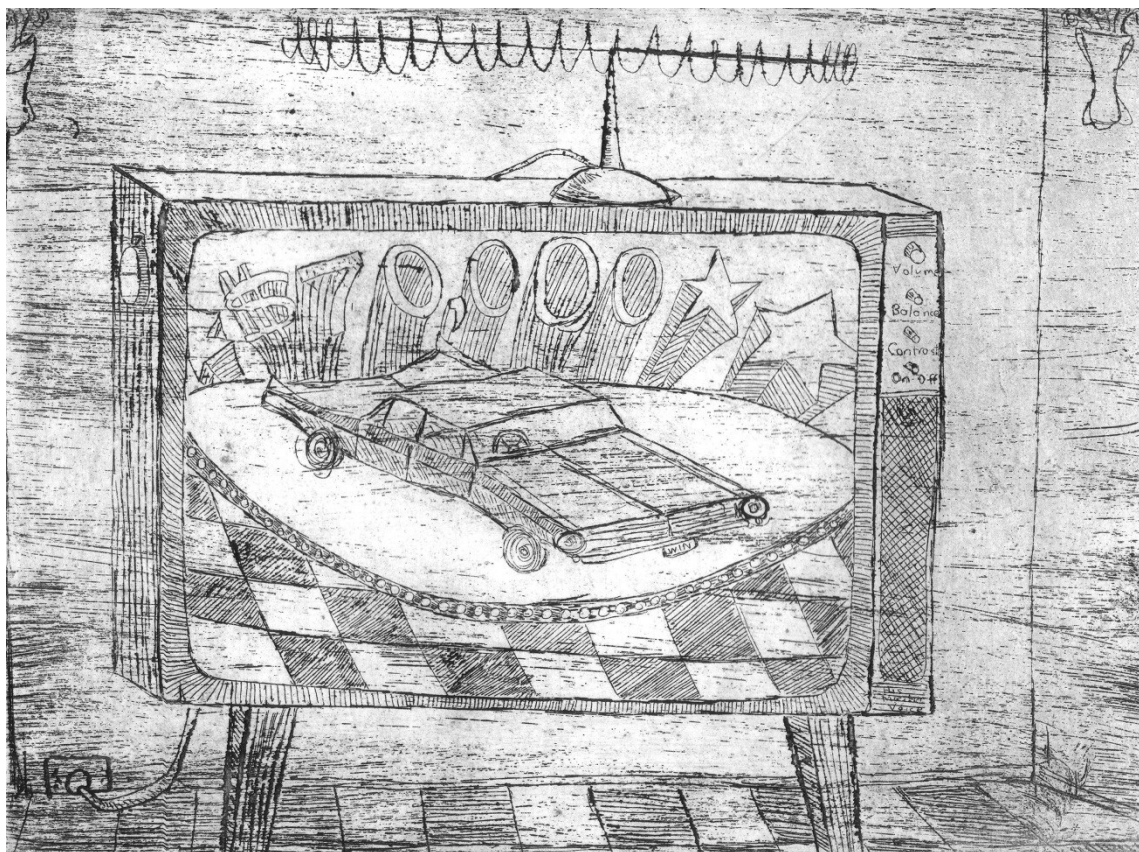


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### ‘Dancing Puppets. Kings Cross Street Festival’.

*B&W. 6"X4". zinc plate.*

One time at the Kings Cross street festival I came across this peculiar sight of a dancing puppet on a little stage. (I have considered ‘Sydney Voodoo’ as an alternative title for this print). I did a quick drawing on scrap paper. I asked one of these two women how the puppet could dance and it was cheerfully explained that the mystery would be solved if I bought one – which I duly did. As it turns out a piece of fishing line is strung on a little hook on the back of the puppet. It is a simple matter of lightly shaking this fishing line to make the puppet bounce up and down to make it appear as if it is dancing. Very clever.

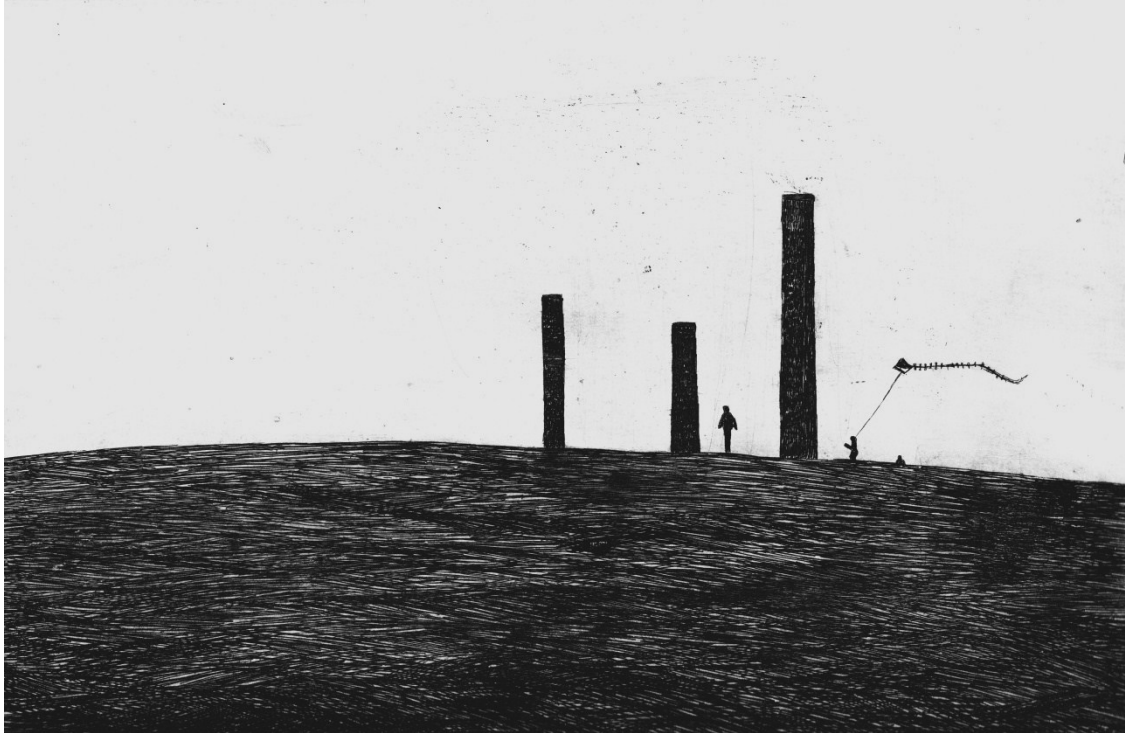


30

‘Suburban Dream.’

*B & W. 8" X 6". zinc plate*

This image recalls the Australian past time of watching late afternoon games shows. The Wheel of Fortune was a favourite of mine.

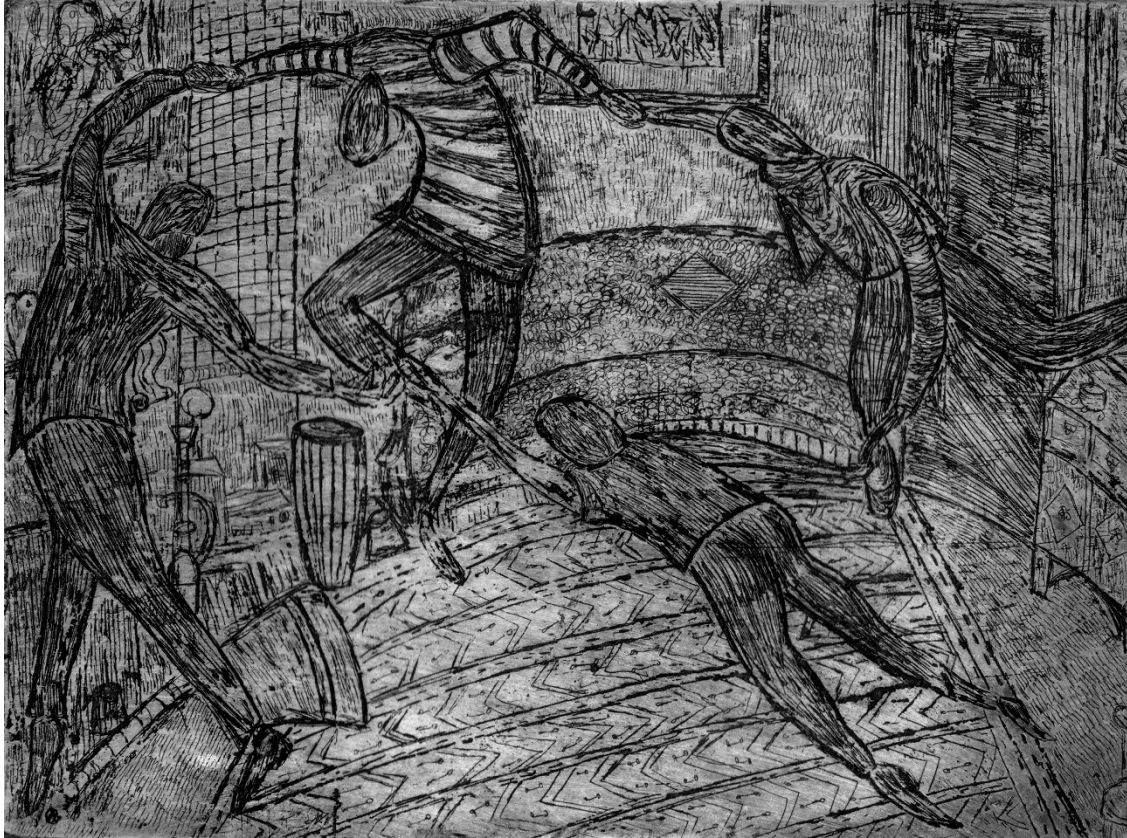


29

‘Kite flying. Sydney Park. St. Peters.’ *B&W. 11.5"X 8". zinc plate*

In the local area these tall chimney stacks of a now disused brick factory have a very iconoclastic quality to them as they are so dominating. There is a large park behind the stacks which is in regular use by the community. Every Christmas the stacks are decorated by the council. The small rooms within the brickworks are also sometimes used such as for exhibitions or plays. Many years ago I once went here to see a production of Samuel Beckett’s play *Happy Days*.





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### ‘Zorba the Greek’.

*B& W. 8" X 6". zinc plate. Llewellyn.St.*

This image is based on an evening with friends who used to live in this beautiful old house in Llewellyn Street, Balmain. I was driving over to the house one September on a Saturday night many years ago and I heard *Zorba the Greek* on the radio. At the house one of my friends mentioned *Zorba the Greek* and it was decided to play this tune and other folk songs from around the world. It is hard to explain but there was a dream like quality to the evening for me as we absorbed ourselves in dancing to these songs. The house had a rustic feeling to it and the magical overtone of the night was accentuated by dancing in the near dark - I think there was only a lamp lighting the room. The work itself displays the cluttered living room of this old house and the composition of the dancing figures - which includes myself and three other female friends - is based on Henri Matisse's *The Dance*.



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### ‘With Water And Courage.’

*B&W. 8" X 6". zinc plate*

Roslyn, an old friend, has performed in much street theatre and was a member of a famed troupe named Icarus. I once saw her in a spectacular fire performance outside the Supreme Court at Taylor Square on the Sunday evening of the Taylor Street Fair. At her former place in Darlinghurst - where on the wooden floor was a painting of the sun iconography you can dimly make out in the background - I asked Roslyn how she went about practising her fire breathing (she also often walked on stilts in her street performances). “With a lot of water and courage.” came Roslyn’s understated reply.



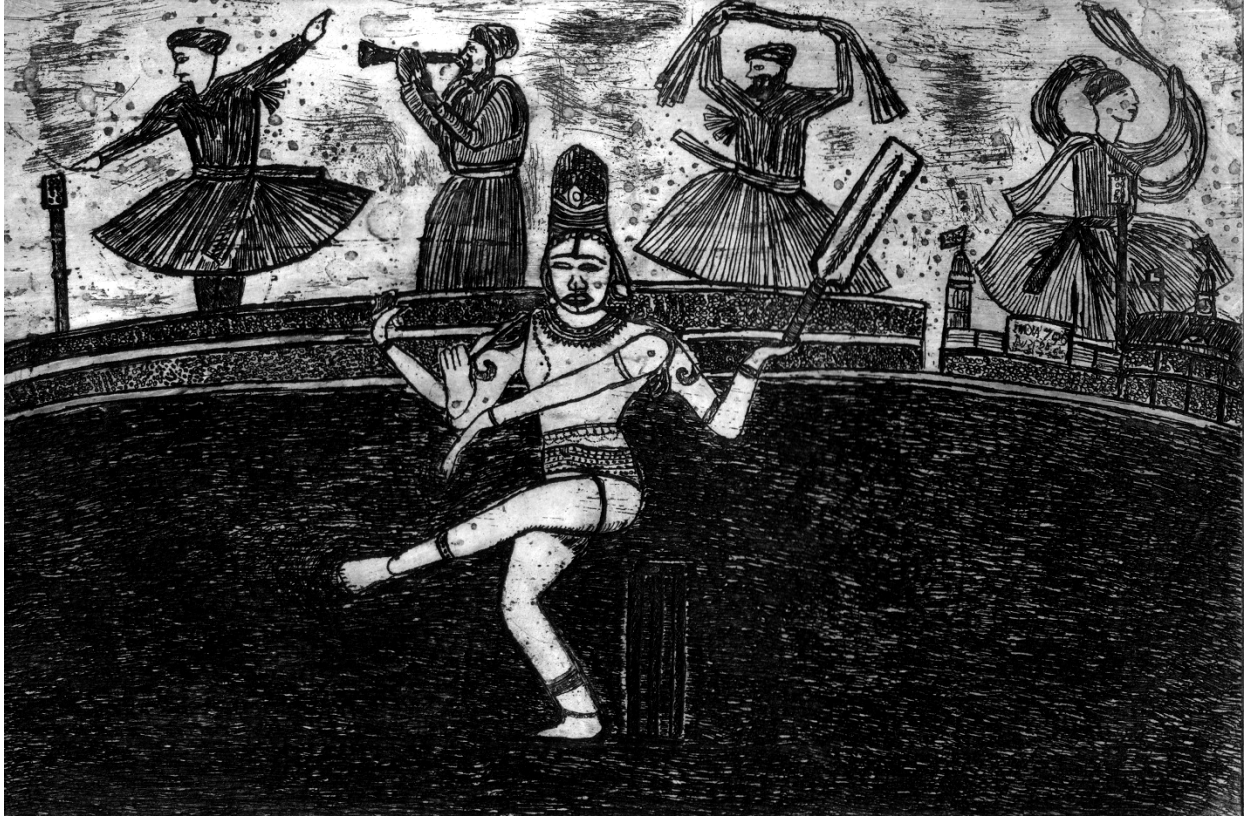




73.

‘The Curse is Lifted.’ In commemoration of Australia’s entry into the FIFA World Cup with penalty shoot-out win over Uruguay. Telstra Stadium. Sydney. November 16. 2005. *B&W. 8” X 6”. copperplate.*

I was with a friend at Sapphos Café in Glebe after the markets and we were commenting about Tufnell Park in North London where I had lived for a short while and where she had grown up in the vicinity. The conversation meandered onto Nick Hornby’s *Feverpitch* and the film based on the book as we are both Arsenal supporters. Funnily enough I had just bought a book on European & African Witchcraft in this café-bookshop and as the football talk started to focus on Australia’s recent entry to the World Cup I was very surprised to find out that my friend had not heard of the African curse placed on the Australian soccer team; this had occurred when the Australian footballers had refused to pay a witch doctor where they were playing in East Africa after asking him to put a curse on Rhodesia to secure a win. (Australia did win the match). Johnny Warren had told John Saffron that things did start to go a little haywire for the Australian team in subsequent matches. Thus John Saffron placed it upon himself to travel to Mozambique to have the curse lifted. The original witch doctor had died but John Saffron was able to acquire the services of other sorcerers. I have a memory of John Saffron on television dressed in the Australian football uniform being splattered in chicken blood on the very soccer field that Australia had gained its victory all those years ago. (I believe that subsequently Johnny Warren was also splattered with chicken blood in Australia). With this ritual completed Australia could only hope for better things and it is remarked that on the night of the second-leg win when John Aloisi (transformed here in this etching into an African spirits man) scored that final memorable penalty goal and ran off with his shirt waving above his head (much like that main central figure in Gericault’s *Raft of the Medusa*) that luck had finally run Australia’s way. Back home on that Saturday I was in the mood to do an etching that was possible due to John Saffron’s ‘feat.’ Thus this ‘magic image’ based on one of the many incredible newspaper photos of John Aloisi running off down the pitch after the ‘impossible victory’ was secured. It was such a momentous occasion and as the viewer casts his or her eyes onto the sea of endless dots in the Telstra Stadium - representing the thousands of people who each individually and as one massive organism witnessed this grand achievement - one can relive that precious millisecond of pure rapture that was felt when that ball landed into the back of the net. Life as joy. No matter what the future holds for these Australian footballers this fantastic moment - when this once cursed football team had been released from the African spirits - can always be savoured again and again...



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### ‘Shiva the Cricketer.’ S.C.G.

To commemorate India’s innings of 7-705 (declared) at the S.C.G. New Year’s Test. January. 2004.

*B & W. 9” X 5”. copperplate.*

As I understand it Shiva ‘the Auspicious’ is the Hindu god of both creation & destruction. It is what is intimated in the words from Rabindranath Tagore’s poem *Brahma, Visnu, Siva* where he talks of the great Siva awakening to give new form to our bodies that grow weary on a ‘law-fixed path’; Siva to sing of our destruction so that we may obtain new life. This print commemorates India’s 7-700 (declared) at the New Year’s Test. January. 2004. S.C.G. An awesome score by which India’s creativity was destructive to the Australians. I loved it. It certainly seems the Indian team did have this multi-limbed divinity miraculously aiding their batting. The Shiva is based on a bronze sculptural piece called *Shiva as Nataraja (The Lord of Dance)* which I saw at the Vision of Kings exhibition at the ANG. Canberra. The four dancing dervishes behind Shiva (& the S.C.G stands) are from an Indian image of dancers & musicians also in this exhibition. *Shiva the Cricketer* In a ‘backdoor way’ also wonderfully commemorates the liberating, exuberant life spirit of Bollywood! A ‘fantastic’ film style which I truly appreciate & marvel.

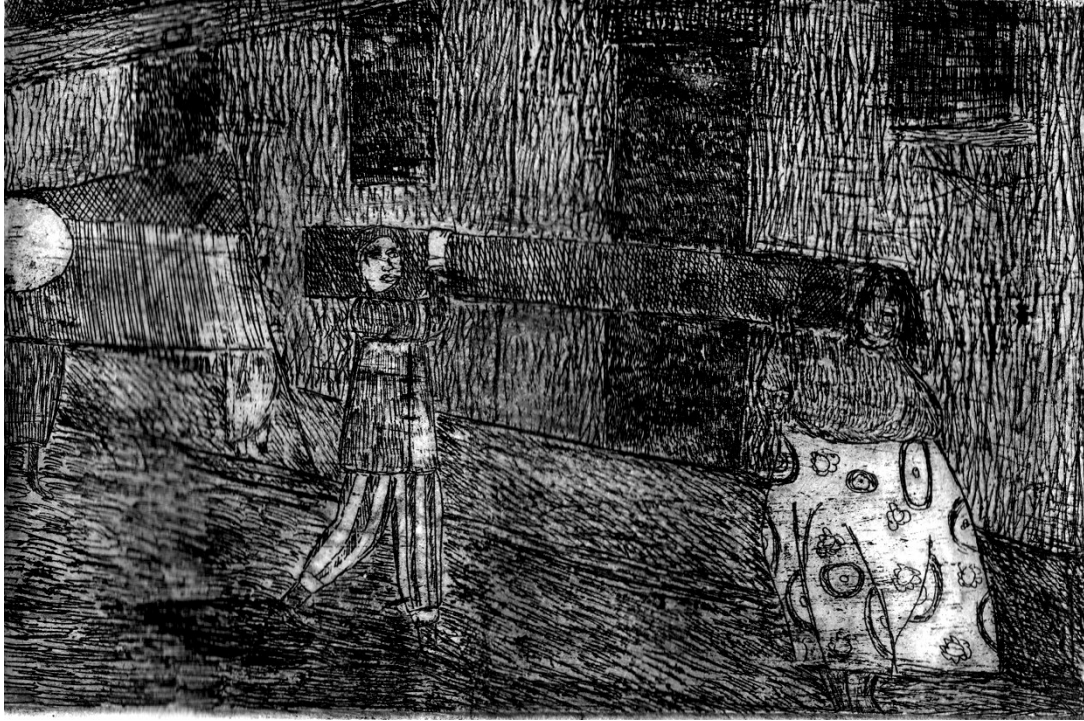


70.

‘Edmond, Perry & Bek all between the posts.’ *B&W. 9”X5” copperplate*

Over the years I have seen Edmond perform with Perry Keyes in many places such as at the ‘old Sandringham’ and at the former Broadway Hotel on Friday nights; as well as at the Warren View Hotel and the Rose of Australia in Erskineville on Wednesday nights backing up Bernie Hayes. I always loved the name of the old band ‘The Stolen Holdens’ as I used to own an EH Holden (and yes I used to worry that it would be stolen). However, what I especially love is song about the day the great South Sydney player Johnny Sattler broke his arm with its ‘signature line’ of kicking a ball between the posts. Perry who has grown up in the working class areas of Waterloo/Redfern bases many of his songs on local life and his ongoing compilation forms a sort of ‘oral history’ of what is becoming a bygone era of Sydney (although somewhat a little too romanticised for me...). As we see Sydney go through its present crass development era - with its globalised renovated hotels and so called general ‘gentrification’ with all those brutalist apartment blocks etcetera - which is displacing old established local communities, Perry’s early ‘non-commercial’ songs become more poignant especially for me as I hold onto a nostalgia for the ‘old Sydney.’ (However, I have only really got to know the likes of Perry due to the quirky gathering that used to occur every school holidays of catching up with him and two other friends for a pub lunch at either a Leagues Club, R.S.L or having ‘Vietnamese’ on Illawarra Road, Marrickville) . His taxi driver stories are very amusing and it is easy to see where his strength in writing ballads comes from. Thus at pub gigs I have taken photos (such as at the Gladstone Hotel in Dulwich Hill; at the Botany Bay View Hotel on King Street, Newtown as well as at the Carlisle Hotel off Australia St, Newtown) and as a result I have produced this ‘montage’ of Edmond, Perry and ‘Bekkie-Jean’ performing ‘larger than life’ at the old S.C.G (note I have included the old hill as well as ‘the Berries’; one player in the background wears the old Newtown Jets emblem) which was the arena for many a memorable rugby league finals game. Bek is the drummer in Perry’s present line-up and was in an excellent band called Eva Trout. Bek is so full of life and has an incredibly beautiful voice; it is always mesmerising to hear her sing. A true Siren. In Edmond’s case he is a very gifted musician and is also adept on accordion and harmonica. It amazes me that such great performers as these three incredibly competent musicians (as well as the likes of Steph from the former Roaring Jack) have not yet achieved great fame. Anyhow, in concluding it can be said that in short this ‘wry image’ is a memento to the Sydney (in many ways what was a more relaxed, less greedy, hospitable city) that Edmond, Perry Keyes and others sing about.





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### ‘Black Deaths in Custody March. Eveleigh St.’

*B&W. 6" X 4".zinc plate.*

In the late eighties there was a big push for a Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody. This Commission finally occurred and although many recommendations were made many still need to be put into practice. This image is based on a photo I took while this protest march I was in went down Eveleigh Street, Redfern where I was shocked by the derelict condition of many of the buildings. The photo of the girls with Aboriginal flag painted faces was taken at a La Perouse Survival Day Concert.





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### ‘An Angel At My Park.’

black on grey. 6”X4”. zinc plate. Burwood.

I taught mildly intellectual disabled primary age students for a year and once a week the class – which consisted of anything between five or six kids - was taken to Burwood’s Westfield. The students were shown how to independently shop in a supermarket. Afterwards there was lunch in the nearby park as well as a chance to feed the ducks before going back to school. A friend interested in psychology once came along. She had an immediate rapport with the children in my care – ‘Rain Class’ - not baulking at their ‘differences’. Her calm natural empathy throughout the day led me to believe that I had spent these hours with an angel. This image is based on a photo of her being on a see-saw with the kids. The photo has three of my former students dancing Zorba the Greek - which I taught to them.





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‘Resurrection Night.’ *B&W. 6”X 4”. zinc plate. Earlwood.*

At the stroke of midnight on the Saturday night of every Greek Easter people light their candles and hold them up and proclaim ‘Christ is Risen!’ It is an inspiring moment and visually these flames of light overcoming the surrounding darkness accentuates for me the deep mystical quality of the ‘eastern hues’ of the Orthodox faith.

