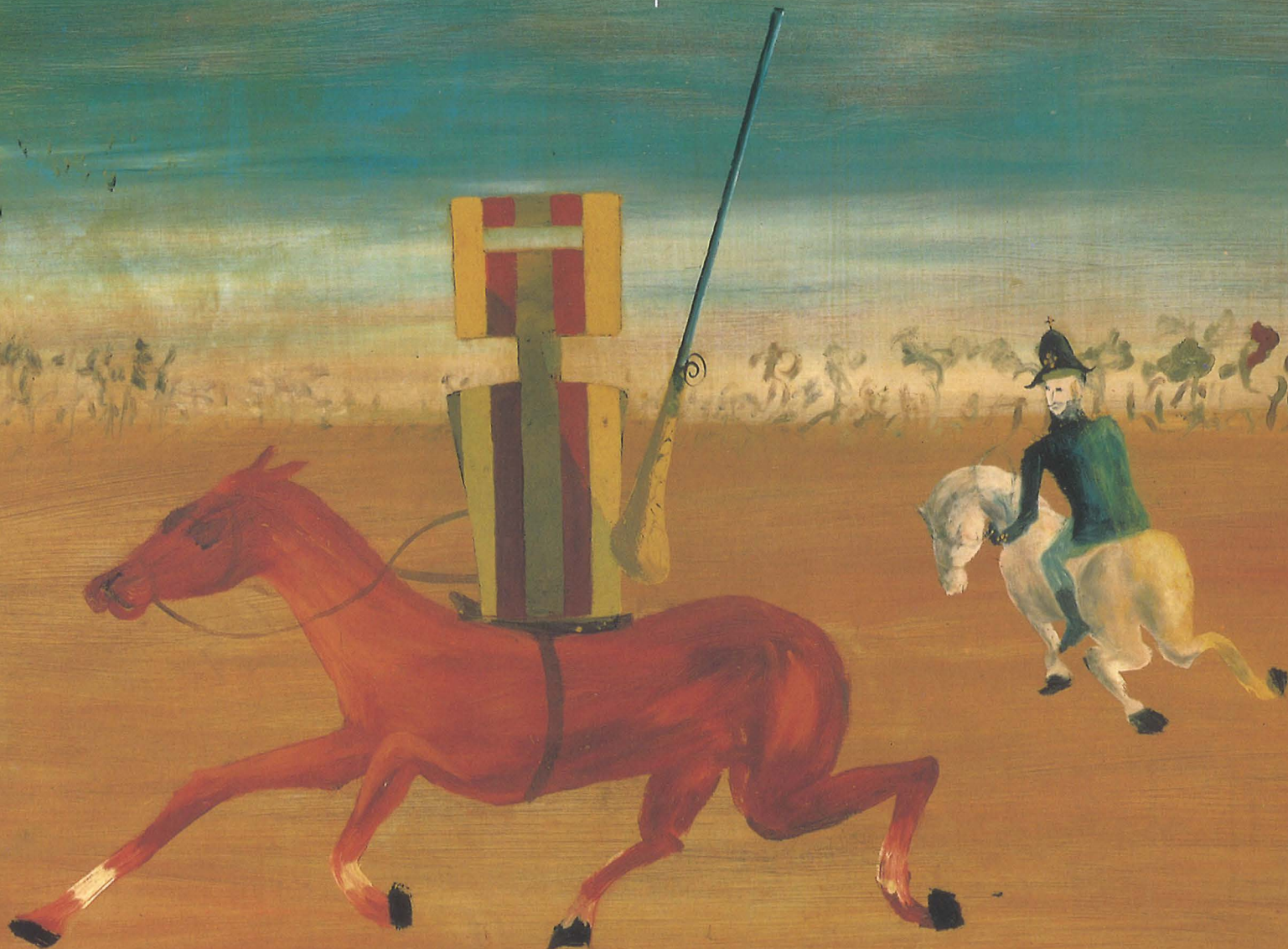


Sidney Nolan's | NED KELLY



The Ned Kelly paintings in the National Gallery of Australia

'...the paintings contain an image of striking simplicity which has entered the shared visual language of the culture. The slotted black box which Nolan made of Kelly's helmeted head has become an instantly recognisable icon; Nolan's Kelly has become Ned Kelly.'

Andrew Sayers

Sidney Nolan built a compelling narrative around the figure of Ned Kelly, the colourful and wronged anti-hero in his homemade armour, and the comic-opera police who pursue him through the vast and featureless Australian bush landscape. The mythologising of Ned Kelly did not start with Nolan's paintings, but his images remain the most enduring and instantly recognisable versions. With the stark black silhouette of Ned Kelly, Nolan found his most powerful symbol and poetic metaphor for Australians' relationship with their land.

Nolan returned to the subject of Ned Kelly throughout his painting life but the later works never matched the freshness, immediacy and intensity of the first series. Nolan's unforgettable depictions of the Australian bush and the country's history and folklore have earned him a place in the Australian imagination unrivalled by any other painter.

Andrew Sayers and Murray Bail have made authoritative and engaging contributions to this catalogue, published on the occasion of the presentation of Sidney Nolan's canonic 'Ned Kelly' series at City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand. This loan, primarily from the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, is part of the 2002 New Zealand Festival.

Sidney Nolan's

Ned Kelly

The Ned Kelly paintings
in the National Gallery of Australia

With essays by Murray Bail and Andrew Sayers



City Gallery WELLINGTON
Te Whare Toi

■ national gallery of australia

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Foreword

The National Gallery of Australia is delighted to share Sir Sidney Nolan's magnificent Ned Kelly series of 1946–47 with the people of New Zealand. I know the paintings will be warmly received while they are on loan to the City Gallery Wellington.

The Ned Kelly series has always had a personal significance for me. Australia, to the Irish mind, is still one of the most distant places imaginable, as is New Zealand, a step still further away. Yet the bond of ancestry is very close. Nolan was sixth-generation Australian, but was pleased to be Irish-Australian too. He grew up on boyhood tales of Kelly, as I did myself. The predominantly Irish Kelly gang shot three Irish policemen at Stringybark Creek in October 1878. It was Judge Redmond Barry, a Trinity College Dublin graduate, who sentenced Kelly to death and thereby defeated barbarism, at least in the eyes of the Victorian establishment.

Nolan declared, regarding the Kelly series, 'From being interested in these stories it is a simple enough step to find that it is possible to combine two desires: to paint and to tell stories'. Nolan achieved a significant contribution to both Australian landscape and history painting in his Kelly series. He also embedded international modernism in Australia. The Malevich-like black square helmet, broken by the eye-slit and extended by a neck, recalls the advance of abstraction while celebrating the art of story telling. The paintings are informed by Nolan's work in opera and ballet design, poetry, printmaking and book illustration and, of course, his interest in film. The series is

cinematic, like a sequence of film stills, the stylised figures carrying all the force of directed scene-making.

The National Gallery of Australia is privileged to house twenty-six of the twenty-seven paintings in the Kelly series: one was purchased in 1972, and twenty-five were given 'with love' to the Gallery by Sunday Reed in 1977. The remaining work has been loaned to the exhibition in Wellington through the generosity of the Vizard Foundation and the National Gallery of Victoria. We congratulate Paula Savage and her colleagues at the City Gallery for organising the exhibition and for collaborating so effectively with the National Gallery's Ruth Patterson and Kirsty Morrison on this catalogue.

Nolan's Kelly series is extraordinary. It more than anything else has convinced me that Australia is not 12,000 miles from Ireland: it is more that little Ireland is 12,000 miles from vast Australia. Our world view depends very much on where we live. Our countries are connected, but different and unique. New Zealanders, close to Australia, even further from Ireland, and, with their own part-Irish background, will understand this even more deeply.

As I said to Prime Minister Helen Clark in my Canberra office when, bushranger-like, she told me, 'We've come about the Kellys' – please enjoy the loan, but we want the pictures back!

Dr Brian P. Kennedy
Director, National Gallery of Australia

Foreword

Sir Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series offers us a unique opportunity to enter a myth. The myth is quintessentially Australian; say the name 'Ned Kelly' and you've summoned a distinctive cultural space. The space is the Australian bush in the late nineteenth century, and it resonates with a rural music made of lawlessness, Irishness, social injustice and personal rebellion. If we have none of the details of his life, we most likely still understand Kelly as colourful and wronged. And whatever the truth of that, somehow those qualities leak into our vision of Australia.

Sidney Nolan's masterful achievement is to transform this national and regional story – a bushranger operating in a specific historical climate for specific social goals – into something recognisably ours as well as 'theirs'. These paintings, through the force of their conception and the brilliance of their execution, argue for art's universal values. Though they attend to a large narrative and carry the freight of history and politics, they are affectingly human in what they notice and uncannily private in their focus. As Andrew Sayers writes here in his seminal essay, 'there are complexities in all of Nolan's paintings, but there are distillations of great simplicity.'

The Australian writer Murray Bail suggests, in his original and witty reading of these masterpieces, that Ned Kelly should be recognised as a prototype performance artist. Sidney Nolan comes along later and 'steals' Kelly's inspired art object –

his helmet. 'He took it and ran with it.' It's a delightful insight that threatens to wrong-foot our notions of the creative process. Just who is the artist here? And what is it about Ned Kelly that continues to pull at our imaginations? Moreover, how is it, as Andrew Sayers puts it, 'Nolan's Kelly has become Ned Kelly'?

These two writers' contributions come as part of a long line of reshapings and retellings of the Kelly myth. The mythologising, of course, did not start with Sidney Nolan in 1945, though his images remain the most enduring and instantly recognisable versions. The first Australian feature film, made in 1906, was *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. There have been many subsequent films, as well as novels, poems, plays, ballets, and songs. For the scholar and general reader alike there is a mountain of Kelly literature, of which the most recently formed and notable peak is Peter Carey's Booker Prize-winning novel, *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

That word 'true' in Carey's title is deployed with understandable irony. It is not so much that the historical facts can't be established. (Kelly historians such as John McQuilton and Ian Jones have authoritatively reconstructed the period.) What matters to the fiction writer, Carey, as well as to the painter, Nolan, is that Ned Kelly offers a kind of lens through which the artist can view the elusive and changing patterns of identity and belonging.

Andrew Sayers reminds us that these paintings are not simply biographical or even autobiographical narratives; they are vitally concerned with the land and with the sky. It is Nolan's inheritance as an Australian – as it has been ours too as New Zealanders – to seek a sense of self through a relationship with the physical world. The dramas enacted in his paintings are therefore also metaphysical. They are alternately full of terror and whimsy, comedy and mortality, heat and the loss of heat.

In seizing on the figure of Ned Kelly and painting 'through' the helmet, as it were, Sidney Nolan discovered a way of dramatising a series of questions not simply about Kelly's short life but about the shortness of everything we care for. Famously, Kelly's last words before he was hanged at Melbourne Gaol on 11 November 1880 were 'Such is life.' The miracle is that, with these paintings, Sidney Nolan created a contemplative space for such a doleful yet tough and accepting pronouncement to be examined and tested. That the space is also richly populated with characters and incidents, and fully, wittily alive, is yet another marker of their greatness.

Paula Savage
Director, City Gallery Wellington

Acknowledgements

It is a great honour for City Gallery Wellington to present Sir Sidney Nolan's canonic Ned Kelly series, key works from the Australian National Collection and a focus for visitors to Canberra. We are indebted to the National Gallery of Australia for generously allowing these works to travel to New Zealand and for the support and facilitation of this project by Director, Dr Brian Kennedy, and the staff. We also wish to acknowledge and thank Mr Steve Vizard and the National Gallery of Victoria for allowing us to complete the series by including Sidney Nolan's painting *First-class marksman*. We are deeply grateful to the two writers, Andrew Sayers and Murray Bail, for their authoritative and engaging contributions to the catalogue.

We would like to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon. Helen Clark, for negotiating this major cultural exchange with Dr Brian Kennedy, Director, National Gallery of Australia. We would also like to acknowledge the active support of Gillian and Roderick Deane in the loan negotiations for Sir Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly series.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous contribution made by City Gallery Wellington Foundation Principal Corporate Benefactors, Ernst & Young, Russell McVeagh and Telecom New Zealand, who are the principal sponsors of the exhibition. Our thanks to Saatchi & Saatchi for their ongoing sponsorship of creative advertising design. We are pleased to acknowledge the New Zealand Government, which has indemnified the exhibition through the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Finally we acknowledge major funding support from Wellington City Council, through the Wellington Museums Trust.

Ned Kelly, Artist

Murray Bail

Ned Kelly's contribution to art is substantial. Better known as a cattle duffer, a horse thief and a murderer, Edward Kelly (1855–1880) was a pioneering figure in what has come to be known as Conceptual Art, who went on to make a lasting contribution to Performance Art. A career cut short. On 11 November 1880 he was hanged at Melbourne's gaol for killing at least one policeman. He was only twenty-five.

Kelly was not an urban man; he was a country boy, who liked to throw punches. A larrikin with all sorts of grievances. Uneducated. Eleven Mile Creek was the name of the Kelly homestead in north-eastern Victoria. This was poor country. Nearby were places called 'Toomballup' and 'Faithfalls Creek'. When Kelly and his brother went into hiding they camped in the Wombat Ranges.

By late 1879 large numbers of police were out to get him. A wiser, slightly less vainglorious person might have grown a moustache and disappeared into another part of Australia, to another country even. But Kelly had the never-ending self-consciousness of an artist. He had things to set right, to re-direct. Like any good Conceptual Artist he stepped forward and challenged, actually harangued his audience.

If this was all, Kelly might have been forgotten – another born-loser, grubby and violent. But to take on the law, that is, the majority, he fashioned out of ploughshares (stolen) a helmet,

horizontally slitted for eyes, and a breastplate. With this he could surely march out into and, at the same time, stand out against the world. Isn't that verging on the melodramatic? He must have known that the police only had to shoot at his legs, which is precisely what happened. For him gesture had greater power than the prosaic, the practical.

Lugging his homemade armour, Kelly left his hideaway and rode across the landscape and into the small town of Glenrowan. At the hotel he took hostages and made speeches. Surrounded by the police, and more on the way, he fitted himself into the helmet and began shooting back at them. Finally, at dawn the next day, he came out and staggered towards them, until they shot him in the legs. By then he had an audience of about five hundred people, some standing on ladders. In all, his performance lasted barely twenty-four hours; but so indelible was the image of man-in-helmet that reports of it spread and reached the cities. It provoked a stream of articles in newspapers, exhibitions, biographies and plays (the first in 1943 written by Douglas Stewart, a New Zealander), two or three films, poems and novels – a stream which continues to this day.

Young, thin cultures are inclined to grab at anything that moves or, better still, dies in a curious tragic manner, to enlist as emblematic figures for national myths. Naturally most fall away. In Ned Kelly's case it would seem that his story was kept alive by the strange darkness of the helmet.

It was medieval, yet modern. A mobile Malevich shape superimposed on the dry and fairly featureless Australian landscape, and the desolate main street of Glenrowan. Kelly's helmet added something; it made a difference. Otherwise these hot dusty places were altogether too barren, places without apparent history. And Kelly's steel head was instantly human. It was defiant, a statement.

This was Ned Kelly's creation. It had been his idea – it had come to him (in a flash?) and he completed it. It was Kelly who did the hard, original work. After constructing it with his bare hands he was virtually killed inside the helmet while demonstrating it, 'performing' his idea, in the landscape.

It took a more traditional artist some sixty-five years later, Sidney Nolan, also Irish, to recognise Kelly's achievement. Kelly had used a campfire, a sledgehammer and a tree or fence post, and plenty of muscle to create the first helmet. Nolan, in 1945, on a kitchen table, used enamel house paint and masonite, with great speed, often with friends moving about and talking at his elbow.

It was an inspired burst of kleptomania. Kelly's helmet exerted some sort of power on Nolan. He took it and ran with it. And he repeated it. He made the helmet his own. Nolan soon had Kelly outnumbering the police. The helmet was ridden around on horseback, peering out from behind trees and from over hills; Nolan even had the thing making an appearance in court (judge looking alarmed). And the image became almost too strong for the artist, his albatross. It is difficult now to think of Nolan without seeing a Kelly head.

These paintings must have seemed remarkable in 1948. Today they still throw off a tremendous poetic energy. They have true authority. Nolan's connection to this subject is instinctive, and doesn't feel casual. It is through Nolan's art that Kelly and his heavy homemade helmet remain alive.

'Such is life' were Ned Kelly's last words on the scaffold.

Kelly's Words, Rousseau and Sunlight

Andrew Sayers¹

When Sidney Nolan painted his Kelly pictures, seventy years had passed since the bushranger was at large in the hills of north-eastern Victoria. Throughout Australia Ned Kelly had become a figure of folklore, but in those areas where the drama occurred he remained a real presence. He could still make people angry, particularly in Mansfield, a town centred around a stone monument, a memorial to the three policemen shot by the Kelly gang at nearby Stringybark Creek.

Nolan was deeply interested in the persistence of Kelly-feeling in the countryside of Victoria. Shortly after he completed his series of paintings on Kelly subjects in 1947, he commented on the lingering sense of outrage among people in parts of the north-east: 'Their energies are fine,' he wrote, 'but they need clarification. Kelly was not half rebel, half criminal, he was a rebel reformer. That is why he got into the language – he did something about the world.'²

Nolan wanted to understand the power of the events and the man that had ensured the survival of Kelly's memory. In the paintings Kelly is the source of action in his world; his black presence is overwhelming. Nolan showed the bushranger 'doing something about the world' from the moment when he is shown looking through the window at his sister Kate resisting the advances of Constable Fitzpatrick (the incident that 'began the real trouble'³) to the moment when Kelly stands defiant in the dock as he is sentenced to death.

Yet Nolan's Kelly has a significance beyond acting simply as an irrepressible historical agent. Through the narrative he built around the figure, the artist meditated upon violence, love, folly, authority and personal responsibility. He wove into this narrative a thread of autobiography and personal symbolism that is barely perceptible or, at best, enigmatic. More obvious, and more universally interesting, is Nolan's treatment of the landscape in these pictures, his investigation of the nature of the Australian bush and its light and space.

It is important to state at the outset that the man in the black mask is not the 'historical Kelly'. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he is not wholly the historical Kelly. There can be little doubt that from 1945 onward Nolan was fascinated by the history of the Kellys. He read all of the literature available and visited the areas where the dramatic events took place.⁴ When the paintings were first exhibited in Melbourne in 1948 (and subsequently),⁵ Nolan provided their historical roots, captioning them with verbatim quotations from his three principal sources: the voluminous official report into police conduct during their pursuit of the Kellys, contemporary newspaper reports, and J.J. Kenneally's 1929 book *The Complete Inner History of the Kelly Gang and Their Pursuers*. By 1946 Nolan had a thorough knowledge of 'the packed shelf of Kellyana',⁶ and although it would be wrong to interpret the Kelly paintings solely from the facts of the Kelly story, it is likewise impossible to understand the pictures without knowing something of the

historical Kelly, if only to appreciate the originality of Nolan's approach.

One aspect of the historical Kelly that is crucial to an appreciation of Nolan's interest was Kelly's self-appointed role as a political spokesman. It was the strength of this political dimension to Kelly's activities that set him apart from all other bushrangers and outlaws in nineteenth-century Australia. Kelly was an advocate for the cause of justice, not only for his struggling family but also for his people in a wider sense. In two long documents, penned while he was on the run, Kelly presented his side of the events in which he had been involved, passionately arguing his actions on behalf of his fellow Irish-Australians. One of Kelly's statements, the 'Jerilderie letter', is a blast of anti-British invective:

It will pay Government to give those people who are suffering innocence, justice and liberty. if not I will be compelled to show some colonial stratagem which will open the eyes of not only the Victoria Police and inhabitants but also the whole British army and now doubt they will acknowledge their hounds were barking at the wrong stump. And that Fitzpatrick will be the cause of greater slaughter to the Union Jack than Saint Patrick was to the snakes and toads in Ireland.⁷

Strong words. And in them Nolan found evidence that Kelly was not only a rebel reformer but also a poet.⁸

The Kelly Story

The Kelly story is a convoluted drama, full of sub-plots. Its real beginning, as Nolan suggested, was the visit of Constable Fitzpatrick to the Kelly homestead at Eleven Mile Creek near

the bush town of Greta in April 1878. The young, inexperienced policeman went to the house with the intention of arresting Ned Kelly and his brother Dan on charges of horse stealing. The warrant for the arrest of the brothers was the latest in a series of such warrants which had been issued over the previous eight years; Ned Kelly had gone to prison in 1870 for a similar charge and again in 1871 for three years. In 1878 he was twenty-three and Dan seventeen years old. When Fitzpatrick visited the Kellys he had intended to make an arrest; he was met with a derisive reception from the Kellys and a fight ensued.

Precisely what occurred in this fracas is not clear because the Kelly family's version of events differed significantly from the version related by Fitzpatrick. The policeman claimed that Ned Kelly had tried to shoot him; the Kellys countered that Ned was not even at the house at the time. Fitzpatrick pointed to an injury on his wrist, claiming it to be a bullet wound; the Kellys asserted it was a gash from a door lock. It was said that Fitzpatrick had outraged the family by trying to pull Kate Kelly onto his knee and that Dan had then wrestled the policeman.

Whatever the true course of events, Fitzpatrick's version was the pretext for warrants to be issued for the arrest of Ned and Dan Kelly for wounding with intent to murder, and for their mother, Ellen Kelly, her son-in-law, William Skillion, and a neighbour, William Williamson, for aiding and abetting.

While Mrs Kelly, Skillion and Williamson went to prison, Ned and Dan Kelly escaped arrest, disappearing into the densely wooded and rugged hills. They were joined by two locals, Joe Byrne and Steve Hart, who came from the ranks of the vast number of friends and sympathisers with whose help the Kellys

were able to evade arrest. The police, guessing the area in which the gang would be hiding, soon mounted a search concentrating on the Wombat Ranges near the town of Mansfield. The party consisted of Sergeant Kennedy and Constables Lonigan, Scanlon and McIntyre.

Given the Kellys' knowledge of their local country and their intelligence network, it is not surprising that they found the police before the police found them. (McIntyre had not helped matters, drawing attention to the search party by shooting at parrots.) The gang easily discovered that the police were using a campsite at Stringybark Creek as a base for patrols. They ambushed this camp, shot Lonigan dead, then held McIntyre hostage while they lay in wait for the return of the patrolling party of Scanlon and Kennedy. When the two arrived at evening, a gunfight ensued; Scanlon was killed, shot through the chest, and Kennedy was mortally wounded, his suffering ending with Ned Kelly shooting him in the heart. McIntyre, terrified, escaped on horseback and, after spending the night in a wombat hole, walked into Mansfield where he related the bloody story.⁹

After Stringybark Creek the members of the Kelly gang – Ned and Dan, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne – were declared outlaws. Their only hope lay in evading capture. The police mounted an extensive campaign throughout north-eastern Victoria to capture the outlaws, and substantial rewards were offered. The magnitude of the rewards and the search notwithstanding, the gang soon made two surprising public appearances. In December 1878 they bailed up a homestead outside the town of Euroa, took hostages, then rode into the sleepy town and robbed the bank. It was a bloodless robbery and Ned Kelly won a measure of admiration from the hostages for his charm and bravado. In February 1879 the gang appeared, again out of

the blue, in the New South Wales town of Jerilderie where they robbed the bank in a similar fashion. As in Euroa, Ned Kelly presented his side of the story to his captive audience and left behind a long written statement.

The incompetence of the police in their campaign to capture the outlaws was the source of immense public derision at the time. They used many strategies to run down the gang, including standing watches on the houses of their families and friends, employing Aboriginal trackers and using a former acquaintance, Aaron Sherritt, as a spy; all to no avail.

The climactic event in the story of the Kelly gang – the Glenrowan siege – came sixteen months after the Jerilderie robbery. After a period in which the gang seemed to have gone quiet it was expected that Ned Kelly would be devising some new robbery or attack. In the middle of 1880 Kelly did plan an elaborate attack on the police presence in northern Victoria, an operation on a scale larger than anything which had come before, and one befitting his rhetoric. The first part of the plan, to murder the police spy Aaron Sherritt, was carried out by Joe Byrne. Kelly had reckoned that once Sherritt's murder was known, police reinforcements would pour into the area by train. The gang proposed to derail the expected train. After Sherritt's murder they bailed up the hotel in the track-side town of Glenrowan, pulled up the rails and hoped to make hostages of any police who survived the derailment. It was a risky scheme and the Kellys had taken the unique precaution of making suits of armour and helmets fashioned from ploughshares bolted together.

Glenrowan did not go as Kelly had planned. A police train did indeed come, in the early hours of the morning, but one of

the townspeople who had got away from the Kellys, flagged it down before it reached Glenrowan and told the police that the gang was at Mrs Jones's Hotel where they had taken hostages. The police moved in to surround the hotel and a savage gun battle followed in which some hostages were mortally wounded and a young woman, Mrs Reardon, trying to run from the hotel with her child in her arms, was lucky to escape alive through the storm of police bullets. Ned Kelly, wearing his helmet and armour, appeared in the dawn like an apparition. As he staggered towards the police cordon he was shot in the legs and taken prisoner. The other members of the gang were still inside the hotel some hours later when the police decided to set fire to the building. As the flames took hold it was established that Dan Kelly, Hart and Byrne were all dead, having been killed earlier in the day.



Photograph of the remains of the Glenrowan Inn, burnt during the police siege, 1880 By permission of the National Library of Australia

Glenrowan was a spectacular failure. Ned Kelly's plan for a massive popular attack on the police had ended instead with his own arrest and the destruction of his gang. Kelly was taken to Melbourne where he recovered from his wounds. He faced a hurried trial for the shooting of Constable Lonigan and was found guilty. He was hanged in Melbourne Gaol on 11 November 1880.

Kelly in the Landscape

Sidney Nolan was not alone in his interest in Kelly in the 1940s; the decade produced two other major works of art on the theme. In 1943 a verse play, *Ned Kelly*, written by Douglas Stewart, was published.¹⁰ Stewart was as little concerned for the facts of the Kelly story as Nolan. The New Zealand-born poet wrote the play, he said, to set down his reactions to Australia: 'its heat, its spaciousness, its wildness, its colourful and adventurous history, and, so far as one can ever get to grips with anything so fluid and various, its national characteristics.'¹¹ Stewart's play has at least one strong parallel with Nolan's series – a vivid evocation of the Australian landscape. The character in the play who despairs of 'so much horror in the clear Australian sunlight' is trying to reconcile an ambiguity that Nolan also set up in his paintings.¹²

While there are parallels which can be drawn, it must be said that Nolan's works did not result in any way from Stewart's play. Neither is it possible to find any direct link (except a coincidental one) between Nolan's interest in Kelly and the interest that sustained Max Brown in the creation of *Australian Son: The story of Ned Kelly*, written between 1945 and 1947 and published in Melbourne in 1948. Max Brown's book is unlike

either Stewart's play or Nolan's paintings in that it sought to give an authentic historical account of Kelly. In the introduction to *Australian Son*, Brown explained that his interest in Kelly was a direct outcome of his experience in the army. He asked:

Was it the war which gave me a greater sense of the validity of my own country? Was it that in myself and in the men with whom I lived I found a certain unique Australian character – a promise and a threat, which had found expression in the life of Kelly many years before?¹³

In Nolan's case it was clear that from the outset he was interested neither in producing an 'authentic' version of the story nor in finding an expression of quintessential Australian character through Kelly. He was more concerned to find a contemporary relevance for the bushranger. The paintings omit the 'flash' Kelly, the charming bank robber Kelly, the Robin Hood Kelly, the Billy-the-Kid Kelly; none of these manifestations of the outlaw seemed to interest Nolan. Rather, he was interested in the Kelly who stamped his authority on his world – the rebel reformer. But he was equally interested in the human Kelly, a man at the mercy of events that had a life of their own. Stringybark Creek and Glenrowan were tragic, unforeseen and fateful events that overtook him. Many years after the paintings were made, Nolan told Elwyn Lynn that the work titled *Glenrowan* was like the final act of a grand opera, with all of the protagonists lined up on a 'fateful stage'.¹⁴ This analogy to opera comes close to expressing some of the spirit of Nolan's series.

While Nolan's Kelly is distinctive and individual, he was in many ways a product of a shared post-war condition; he was an existentialist hero of antipodean cast. There are a number of ways in which it is reasonable to interpret the Kelly paintings as post-war paintings. The war created a mood of intense

questioning of the role of the individual in relation to society and its structures. Many intellectuals, Nolan included, felt a sense of personal impotence in the face of global senselessness. Kelly's relevance to this questioning is clear, for Kelly was a man who 'did something about the world', and in doing so had an impact that transcended his time and place. In addition the Kelly paintings were made at the very time Nolan was evading authority himself, having gone absent without leave from his army duties in 1944. It is important, however, not to overstate this element of simple empathetic association with the outlaw if we are to understand the complexity of Nolan's emotional response to Kelly's story.

On the question of the autobiographical nature of the Kelly paintings, Nolan was teasing and evasive; as he told Elwyn Lynn in 1984, 'Really, the Kelly paintings are secretly about myself ... It's an inner history of my emotions, but I am not going to tell you about them.'¹⁵ He mentioned, too, that certain details in the paintings were completely authentic: 'That is what the fireplace looked like and the objects on the mantelshelf were really there'¹⁶ and 'That quilt is real'.¹⁷ The inclusions of these 'real' objects raise questions about the collapsing of history and the present in the series. The artist gave few clues about the inner meanings of the episodes depicted. Of *The watchtower* he said, 'This is really about myself'¹⁸ – a remembered episode from the Wimmera years – and he gave a direct autobiographical interpretation of *Mrs Reardon at Glenrowan* and *Glenrowan*, in which he identified the fleeing figure with the child ('a good mother') as a reference to his first wife Elizabeth (whom Nolan had left in 1941) and their daughter Amelda.

There can be little doubt that for the viewer looking at the Kelly series today, the violent force of feeling that brought the paintings

into existence is harder and harder to recover. An unpublished poem entitled 'Fragment at Glenrowan'¹⁹, which Nolan wrote in 1945, recaptures some of the intensity of mood that lies at the heart of the paintings.

Fragments of bone
and armour burning
relics are now done
the mind past turning.

Blood is present
and perhaps is burning
soon to be urgent
its own pain calling.

Seventy years past
and the sunlight burning
the gun still fast
and eyes past yearning.

Is the bush still clear
and the story still new
the blood in the tear
and the dance in the dew.

The dance along the artery
the circulation of the lymph
are told in different stars
another eucalyptus leaf.

Love is now done
and past its changing
fragments of bone
and armour burning.

Is the bush as before
with the armour burning
two boys on the floor
and eyes past yearning.

What Nolan tells us in this poem is that, for him, some seventy years after the dramatic events that culminated in the siege at Glenrowan, Kelly persists. He belongs both in the past and the present; his story came from a particular time and locality, a part of it will always remain in that particular place. Shortly after he had painted the pictures, Nolan put this another way when he wrote that the Kelly story is 'a story arising out of the bush and ending in the bush'.²⁰ For Nolan, landscape was therefore central to his motivation in painting the story. He wrote:

I find that a desire to paint the landscape involves a wish to hear more of the stories that take place within the landscape. Stories which may not only be heard in country towns and read in the journals of explorers but which persist in the memory, to find expression in such household sayings as 'game as Ned Kelly'.

Continuing these reflections on the Kelly story, Nolan wrote, 'In its own way it can perhaps be called one of our Australian myths.'

Almost all that has been written on the paintings has revolved around an examination of 'the Kelly myth'. But what did Nolan understand by 'myth' when he painted the series? Did he hope to find in Kelly an expression of a shared Australian consciousness, such as Douglas Stewart and Max Brown had sought to uncover, or did Kelly express a different idea of myth? I believe that, in the mid-1940s at least, Nolan's interest in myth was more in the idea of stories coming out of the land than

in stories that embodied some iconic or characteristic Australianness. If Nolan was interested in Kelly as the embodiment of anything uniquely Australian, it was in Kelly as an emanation of the particularities of a part of the Australian landscape.

Nolan began to grapple with the idea of myth in the early 1940s. As with all of his thinking, his interest in the subject was directly tied to the visual. In 1943, musing on painting in his army post in the far western Victorian town of Nhill, Nolan struggled to find 'the constant beneath' the ever-shifting appearance of the landscape.²¹ He described his thinking about this problem as 'scratching the surface of myth'. The use of the word 'myth' in this context points to its definition as the route through which the artist might get beneath that which is known, and (empirically) knowable, to more fundamental phenomena. This was precisely the way in which 'myth' had been described in a long polemic by Nolan's fellow artist Albert Tucker published in the Melbourne avant-garde journal *Angry Penguins* in 1942.²²

Nolan explained the way in which myth might be expressed in painting by invoking D.H. Lawrence's ideas on Cézanne. He knew that Lawrence admired Cézanne as the artist who brought art back 'to form and substance and thereness, instead of delicious nowhere-ness' and who yet managed to suffuse his landscapes with an anima, a sense of flux.²³ To express these qualities in the Australian landscape, Nolan thought, would produce something new, 'We are obviously now coming into an intense searching with the myth,' he wrote, 'and possibly the actual rendering of it is going to take rather queer shapes.'²⁴ Two years later these shapes started to emerge from the landscape in the Kelly paintings.

Nolan declared the importance of landscape as the source of myth by beginning the narrative sequence of the paintings with *Landscape*. It is a painting pregnant with a mood of expectation, a landscape waiting to be fulfilled by the story to which it gives birth. It is also a painting that presents a deliberate ambiguity, since we are able to interpret the yellow glow on the horizon as a lyrical promise (a sunset) or as a threat (a fire).

In his catalogue introduction to the 1948 exhibition of the Kelly paintings, John Reed echoed Nolan's idea that landscape was a fundamental theme in the series:

Australia has not been an easy country to paint. A number of artists have sensed something of what it holds and one or two – the early Roberts and Streeton – have succeeded in giving glimpses of it which were movingly true; but we have waited many years for a mature statement to cover both the landscape and man in relation to the landscape.²⁵

Reed's idea alerts us to the fact that Nolan's preoccupation with landscape was also an engagement with the landscape painting of earlier Australian artists. When Nolan thought about seeing, he also thought about the seeing expressed in the work of other painters – inevitably the work of the painters known as the Heidelberg School. This group had painted impressionistic bush and urban views in the late 1880s and 1890s, and by the 1930s young artists like Nolan lived with the commonplace that these plein-airists were the first painters truly to capture the Australian landscape. The youthful paintings of Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts and their companions, which depicted golden pastures, cloudless blue skies and the bleaching light of high summer, were considered a kind of national school. In the Kelly series Nolan was both to elaborate upon and to deny this vision of the landscape.

When Nolan had first been concerned with the idea of discovering 'the constant beneath' the landscape, he thought the Heidelberg painters were 'like children to imagine that what they saw in bright sunlight was what they could paint'. He rejected such painting as superficial:

all the things we see around [that] we sense are uniquely Australian still have to come to grips with the cast iron logic of paint as we so far know it. And that seems now for us more like the cumulative effect of generations here rather than the blind hope that you will short circuit the process by sitting in the sun and painting it.²⁶

Four years after he wrote these words, when Nolan was deeply immersed in expressing the emanation of the Australian landscape through Kelly, he continued to wrestle with the paradigmatic vision of the Heidelberg painters. He wrote of his intention to paint a picture of Mrs Kelly being taken to Benalla gaol before dawn; he wanted it to have precisely the things that one would not see in a hot, dry Heidelberg painting: 'rain and mud and cold mornings that are also typical of the country ... one aspect which Roberts [and] Streeton did not touch in their preoccupation with transparent light.'²⁷ He recalled childhood winter holidays near Shepparton in northern Victoria in which mud and impassable roads were the only visual constant. Again he was reminded of D.H. Lawrence who had described the Australian bush as mysterious, lonely, weird and hoary. Nolan observed, 'Even in wet conditions, something of the same essence persists.' Although his painting of Mrs Kelly going to gaol in the cold never became part of the series,²⁸ he imbued other Kelly paintings, such as *Morning camp* and *The questioning*, with a sombre Lawrencian melancholy.

The Quality of Space and Distance

Nolan's investigation of the elements of landscape – of mood, light and season – grew and changed as he worked on the paintings. Landscape began to take on a different role in the series as the paintings progressed. In order to understand fully the nature of this change, it is necessary to reconstruct the sequence of execution of the works, for their eventual arrangement as a narrative does not correspond to the order in which they were painted.

Although Nolan began painting Kelly pictures in early 1945, the earliest works that he included in the canonic series were executed a year later: two violent subjects, *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek*, completed 1 March 1946, followed



Longreach, Queensland. Photograph from *Walkabout: Journal of the Australian Geographical Society*, vol. 13, no. 5, March 1947
National Gallery of Australia Research Library Collection

in April by *Death of Constable Scanlon*. After a break of several months came an intense bout of painting: September and October produced *Ned Kelly*, *The encounter*, *Bush picnic*, *The chase* and *Constable Fitzpatrick and Kate Kelly*; the four Glenrowan subjects and *The defence of Aaron Sherritt* were also painted in the later months of 1946. *First-class marksman* was painted in December. January 1947 was again a period of feverish painting activity, producing *The trial*, *Stringybark Creek*, *Quilting the armour* and *Landscape. Township* and *Steve Hart dressed as a girl* were completed in February; *Morning camp*, *The questioning*, *The slip*, and *The marriage of Aaron Sherritt* were painted in March. The chronological sequence of work ended with the completion of *The burning tree* and *The watch tower*. The two undated paintings in the series, *The alarm* and *The evening*, almost certainly were also made in 1947.

The most important thing revealed by this sequential reconstruction of the series is a change of emphasis around the beginning of 1947. The series breaks into two parts. From *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek* (March 1946) to *Stringybark Creek* (January 1947), all of the paintings are about the main events of the Kelly story. Thereafter the paintings are more an investigation of landscape mood, and the subjects are peripheral to the drama. The figures become smaller, almost incidental to the settings in which they are placed, and the landscapes become elaborated and dense when compared with the summary treatment of topography in the earlier works. Several of the landscape backgrounds in the 1947 paintings appear to be taken from photographs. The townscape in *The watch tower* was definitely painted from a photograph of the outback Queensland town of Longreach.²⁹



Sidney Nolan *Kelly in bush* 1945 enamel on composition board 63.6 x 76.0 cm
Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, ACT
© Courtesy of the artist's estate/Bridgeman Art Library.

Such a use of photographs was not new in Nolan's work, and it is significant in that it shows the diversity of the artist's strategies to discover the essential elements of landscape. The strategy that Nolan employed in the Kelly series in using a photograph of an outback town was, surely, to invest his landscape with a sense of space.

When he began to paint Kelly pictures in March 1945, Nolan set the drama in dense forest. Interestingly, these settings are closer to the look of the actual Kelly country than the sparse landscapes of the later paintings. For example, *Kelly in bush*, painted in 1945, has some of the qualities of the actual bush at Stringybark Creek – dense, concealing and dominated by tall, straight trees. In the 1946–47 paintings, however, the artist abandoned these claustrophobic forests, opening up the landscape. Shortly after

he had finished the series, Nolan flew over the Kelly country on his way to Queensland. He described the landscape rhapsodically:

The Hume Reservoir took my breath. The different colours of water flowing into it staining the blue with mud colours and dead trees, and the lovely shape of the reservoir itself taught me something final about the land and explained to me in a sense the quality of space and distance that I have tried to uncover in some of the Kelly paintings.³⁰

The quality of space and distance was not a new preoccupation for Nolan. It had been his great obsession between 1942 and 1944, the years he was in the army, most of which were spent in the far west of Victoria. Labouring in the tiny country towns of the Wimmera, Nolan relieved the tedium and the sense of entrapment in army life with a vigorous and passionate intellectual quest. He read avidly, painted sporadically, and thought about painting constantly. Whereas in the late 1930s his paintings had been concerned with nonfiguration or a Picasso-like distillation of image, in the war years he was forced to engage with the landscape. The landscape of the Wimmera is dry and absolutely flat. It is mostly wheat-growing country, with the Little Desert, a vast swath of low scrub, running through it.

In the Wimmera Nolan experimented with putting big forms against the landscape, flattening perspective, and bringing distant objects and putting them in front of near objects.³¹ In his 1943 Wimmera painting, *Railway guard* (National Gallery of Victoria), a distant railway signal invades the head of the guard which dominates the foreground space of the composition. In *Kiata*, a painting of a tiny trackside cluster of buildings around a wheat silo, a silhouetted horse and cart seems suspended against the distance. Such manipulations of space



Sidney Nolan *Kiata* c.1943 enamel on composition board 60.9 x 91.7 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
© Courtesy of the artist's estate/Bridgeman Art Library.

reappear in the Kelly series in different guises. In the painting *Ned Kelly* the outlaw rides through a typical Wimmera landscape; a sliver of sky is brought from the distance and placed in the aperture of the mask. The artist commented later that this was a strategy to give the 'maximum feeling of space'.³² In *Burning at Glenrowan* the creation of space through the manipulation of superimposed planes is even more elaborate. The looming Kelly figure on the left-hand side of the composition is constructed from ambiguity. Kelly is elusive; half of him is there, but his other half disappears behind an impossibly thin tree trunk. These ambiguities carry into the sky; its clouds seem to engulf the underlying plane of sunset red and yellow beneath.

Experiments and Sources

Nolan's fascination with space in the Kelly series was a manifestation of concerns that had already occupied his attention for at least a decade. Toward the end of his life he frequently

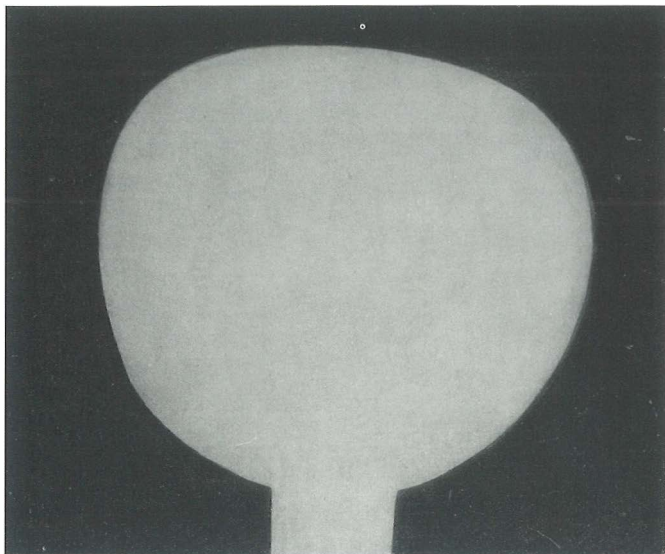
stated that the formal aspects of the Kelly pictures were very important and, further, that the works could be looked upon as the culmination of a range of experiments that he pursued in the years leading up to them. Indeed, in order to understand fully the Kelly paintings it is important to see how they arose out of Nolan's earlier work.

As a young man Nolan was determinedly avant-garde. His work as a commercial artist between 1933 and 1937 left him with a refreshing receptiveness to the possibilities of new materials, and this lasted throughout his life. He felt comfortable with enamel house paint – he habitually used the French Ripolin and the domestic Dulux. These paints had a sense of modernity; they were associated with the clean, glossy interiors of modern buildings and had the pedigree of approval of a range of admired artists, most conspicuously Picasso. (Oil paint, Nolan said, belongs with Rembrandt and Cézanne.)

The breadth of the young artist's experimentation with materials is best seen in his early works on paper. From 1936 Nolan made calligraphic brush drawings, transfer drawings, monotypes, photograms, air-brush works, paintings over old stereoscopic photographs, and collages incorporating found materials and pieces cut from magazines. His most sustained and important series of collages was made in 1939–40 from nineteenth-century steel engravings cut up and montaged. Although reminiscent of Max Ernst, these collages do not have Ernst's surrealist motivation. Their aim is more simply a disruption of figuration by the introduction of nonfigurative elements – holes are cut through the superimposed layers and interrupt pictorial expectation to create a new (chaotic) order. A formal feature of these collages – the squares cut into the illusory surface and imposed upon perspectival space – clearly prefigures the Kelly motif.



Sidney Nolan *Promontory, illustration to Rimbaud* c.1940 collage of steel engravings on steel engraving 30.6 x 22.5 cm National Gallery of Australia, Canberra Gift of Barrett Reid 1988 © Courtesy of the artist's estate/Bridgeman Art Library.



Sidney Nolan *Boy and the moon* c.1939–40 oil on canvas mounted on composition board 73.3 x 88.2 cm National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
© Courtesy of the artist's estate/Bridgeman Art Library.

In 1940, when Nolan mounted his first solo exhibition in his studio in an old building in the centre of Melbourne, his abstract monotypes and collages baffled viewers. Although such experiments were seen as insubstantial or idiosyncratic (even by some sympathetic fellow artists), Nolan had the enthusiastic support of certain believers in new ways of seeing. Among these supporters were the lawyer and publisher John Reed and his wife, Sunday.

John and Sunday Reed were deeply involved in many areas of intellectual life in Melbourne, from left-leaning political polemics to painting and poetry. Their farm, Heide, at Heidelberg was the centre of passionate searching for new and authentic forms of expression. For many artists, for the young Nolan in particular, Heide was a 'paradise garden'; it was a place of real intellectual

engagement in which his early determination to see and paint in an original way was nurtured. From 1939 Nolan spent much time at Heide, and from the time he left the army in 1944 until July 1947, he lived almost continuously with the Reeds. All but one of the Kelly paintings were painted at Heide, on the kitchen table.³³

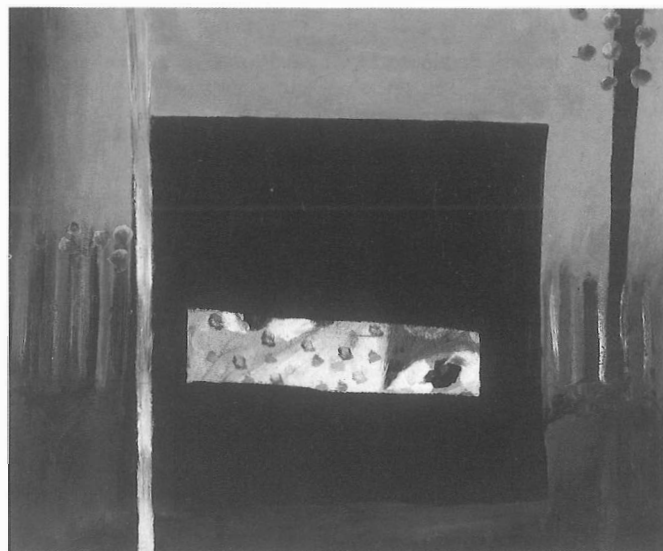
Nolan and the Reeds had initially been brought together through their mutual crusade for modern art. Both Reeds were important figures in the Contemporary Art Society (CAS) in Melbourne. In the first CAS exhibition in 1939, Nolan included a controversial painting, an abstract head entitled *Head of Rimbaud* (Heide Museum of Modern Art). Nolan's painting in the 1940 CAS exhibition, *Boy and the moon*, pushed the definition of contemporary art further than many of his fellow exhibitors would accept. This uncompromising distillation, like his submission of the previous year, was considered a joke. Yet 'Moonboy', as Nolan named the motif in the picture, was to become an enduring symbol which Nolan used throughout his career. It was another clear precursor of the Kelly motif.

Collages of steel engravings, images pared down to conjunctions of primal shapes, evocations of Rimbaud, paintings in Ripolin – all of these would have been impossible in Australia in the late 1930s without the artist's immersion in contemporary European art. Nolan was a voracious reader, and in the Reeds' library he had access to a wide range of books on contemporary artists. In *Cahiers d'Art*, *Verve*, and *XX Siecle* he was able to engage with Klee, Miró and Matisse, and with the most recent works of Picasso; in the pages of *Horizon* and the *Sewanee Review* he found a level of discussion about visual and literary expression that fed his imagination and gave direction to his experimentation. In the late 1940s he was able to study the Reeds' collection of

the Museum of Modern Art (New York) exhibition catalogues – amongst them the 1939 and 1946 Picasso exhibitions; the 1936 exhibition of Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism; the 1941 Miró exhibition; and the 1942 retrospective of Henri ‘Le Douanier’ Rousseau.

Late in his life Nolan claimed the reductive modernist ‘black square’ as a source for Kelly.³⁴ The black square was a characteristic icon of the Suprematist period that the Russian modernist Malevich introduced in paintings and drawings in 1913. While Malevich’s image became heroised with the triumph of minimalism in the early 1960s, it is hard to find a source for Malevich-enthusiasm in the 1940s. Yet a Kelly-related work of 1945 bears a remarkable resemblance to the Malevich black square on a field. In the painting *Ned Kelly ‘Nobody knows anything about my case except myself’* the artist presents a disembodied Kelly head – a black square in a literal field, with flowers and sapling trunks.³⁵

In general it would be a pointless and mis-aimed pursuit to try to identify sources for motifs in the Kelly series among the array of materials to which Nolan had access in the 1940s. He used a wide range of sources, often unexpected and often not ‘high art’ ones. More than any other Australian artist of his generation, Nolan was aware of his position as an artist in relation to other artists. He summed it up perfectly when he wrote to Sunday Reed in 1942, ‘Past painters help you see but I don’t know any that help you paint.’³⁶ Yet one artist was clearly of central importance to Nolan in the making of the Kelly paintings – Henri Rousseau. Nolan invoked Le Douanier in his often-quoted statement on the Kelly series: in 1961 he told Colin MacInnes that the ingredients from which the paintings in the series were made were ‘Kelly’s own words, and Rousseau and sunlight’.³⁷



Sidney Nolan *Ned Kelly ‘Nobody knows anything about my case except myself’* 1945 enamel on cardboard 64.0 x 76.0 cm Heide Museum of Modern Art Purchased with funds provided by the Friends of the Museum of Modern Art at Heide and the Heide Circle of Donors, 1988 © Courtesy of the artist’s estate/ Bridgeman Art Library.

Where, beyond the quality of naiveté, is Henri Rousseau to be found in the paintings? He surfaces in the most deliberately naive of the Kelly paintings, *Constable Fitzpatrick and Kate Kelly*, which is recognisable as a parodic reconstruction of Rousseau’s *The sleeping gypsy* (Museum of Modern Art, New York). There are other Rousseau touches that appear in the paintings – in the plasticine tree trunks, the lonely clouds, the flattened hands – but to single them out would be to miss the overall meaning of Rousseau for Nolan. While the loose technique in the Kelly paintings is far from Rousseau’s meticulous rendering of landscape, his oil sketches (‘atmospheric’ sketches, Nolan called them) rather than his finished paintings are close in spirit to what Nolan was trying to achieve. Nolan’s greatest debt to Rousseau, however, is to his eerie sense of drama.

Rousseau was not the only naive artist whom Nolan studied; American and English untutored painters also interested him. In the period of the Kelly paintings, Nolan made a series of annotations in a book on the Italian naive painter Cesare Breveglieri (1902–1948), annotations that go to the heart of his interest in naive painting and Rousseau in particular.³⁸ He drew together Breveglieri's work, Bonnard's painting, Rousseau's *Boy on the rocks* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), and Picasso's *Butterfly hunter* (Museum of Modern Art, New York) and concluded that 'it is the technique that is "primitive" not the vision ... the comic is the final interpretation.'³⁹ He analysed the space in one of Breveglieri's paintings, commenting that its formality 'reminds me of how I have seen things frozen in the middle of a block of ice.' Nolan conjoined naive technique with sophistication of seeing, naive manipulations of space and a sense of stasis, all these elements going into the making of the Kelly paintings. They are also related in quite a direct way to one of Nolan's other early preoccupations – film.

Nolan never made films, but in the early 1940s he was convinced that new forms of myth – 'the apocalyptic essence' – would be best expressed through film. From the Wimmera he wrote glowingly of Walt Disney, describing things as though they were sequences from films. As he struggled with his canvases he dreamed of film, a medium not 'bounded by four straight lines, colour that moves while you watch it and music at your elbow into the bargain.'⁴⁰ On this point one remarks on the number of Disney motifs (such as Kelly's eyes in *First-class marksman*) to be found in the Kelly paintings.⁴¹

'If I were making a film...', the artist mused when describing *Bush picnic* to Elwyn Lynn in 1984.⁴² It is possible that only lack of materials prevented Nolan from getting involved in film during his formative phase. Such speculation draws out a point

of particular relevance to the Kelly paintings. Film may very well have answered a basic question posed by all of Nolan's art. At its most fundamental, it is a question about seeing and knowledge. Much of Nolan's early work engaged with the possibilities and limitations of the visual and the verbal – a tension between what can be done with paint and what can be done only with the temporal and rhythmic medium of words. As a young man, Nolan could not decide whether to be a painter or a poet. In the Kelly series, narrative – having rhythm and passage over time – brought these two tendencies together. Yet somehow the disjunctive, episodic nature of the Kelly paintings denies any fluidity of 'reading'.

The Kelly series is both operatic and filmic. As a sequence it strongly resembles a film storyboard. The action zooms to close-up, as in *Stringybark Creek*, or remains distant; scenes break off rather than flow into each other. Each episode (such as the falling horse in *The slip*) is captured as a flash whose curious stasis heightens our sense that, in the very next moment, everything will change. As Nolan wrote to fellow painter John Perceval in 1943:

Technically there is no such thing as a continuous vision, we are not constituted that way, one flash succeeds another; it is our job to preserve that one organic and spontaneous moment of vision and at the same time make the necessary artifices of language that constitute communication.⁴³

This is the intuition with which all of Nolan's art is charged.

The Kelly paintings are a culmination of many years of searching and thinking for Nolan. They look back to his earliest preoccupations with European modernism and forward to further series in which he explored outback landscapes and other old stories arising out of the bush – the stories of Eliza Fraser

and of the explorers Burke and Wills. But the Kelly paintings, as a series, presented a complete and profound statement. They also represented a kind of closure, for in July 1947, not long after he had painted *The watch tower*, Nolan travelled out of Melbourne to wander and look around in Queensland, and started on the journey that eventually led him out of Australia, more or less permanently, in 1950. He severed all of the intense emotional ties he had developed at Heide; he slammed the gate of the 'paradise garden', leaving the Kelly paintings with the Reeds. During the time the paintings belonged to the Reeds, they were published widely and were exhibited, first in the Velasquez Gallery in Melbourne in 1948, then in Paris in 1949, in Rome in 1950, and in many other places subsequently.⁴⁴

Nolan left the Kelly paintings behind, but Kelly remained with him as a subject for the remainder of his painting life. He made a second series of Kelly paintings in 1954–55, in which different themes appeared. Kelly could be made to carry many things, and in the later series the artist referred to political events in Cold War Europe. Nolan's Kelly slowly transmuted, overlaid with new ideas and new imperatives. But of all Nolan's paintings of Kelly, those of 1946–47 remain completely fresh and disarmingly immediate. It is the type of painting that he always hoped to achieve; simple and lucid, yet profound. There are complexities in all of Nolan's paintings, but there are distillations of great simplicity. The Kelly paintings are no exception; their engagement with landscape, with history and with words is very complex. Yet the paintings contain an image of striking simplicity which has entered the shared visual language of the culture. The slotted black box that Nolan made of Kelly's helmeted head has become an instantly recognisable icon: Nolan's Kelly has become Ned Kelly.

Notes

- 1 This essay is a revised, updated and modified version of the text originally written for the catalogue of the exhibition *Sidney Nolan: The Ned Kelly story*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 19 April – 4 September 1994. Andrew Sayers was then the Curator of Australian Drawings, Watercolours and Colonial Paintings, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. He is currently the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.
- 2 Sidney Nolan letter to John Reed, Brisbane, 22 August 1947. Reed Papers, La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria. All Nolan quotations from the Reed Papers by permission of Lady Nolan.
- 3 Nolan quoted in Elwyn Lynn and Bruce Semler, *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly: Paintings and drawings from the collection of the Australian National Gallery*, Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1989, p. 16. All references are to the 1989 edition.
- 4 Nolan briefly visited the 'Kelly country' with poet Max Harris in the period before he painted the Kelly series. They hitchhiked, and although they would easily have been able to visit the towns of Euroa, Benalla and Glenrowan (all of which are on the main Sydney–Melbourne highway), it is unlikely they were able to visit the almost inaccessible site of the Kellys' farm which was at (and also known as) Eleven Mile Creek or the heavily forested area where the Stringybark Creek shootings occurred.
- 5 Nolan made at least forty-five Kelly paintings between March 1945 and July 1947, but the selection of twenty-seven paintings that he made for the first showing of *The 'Kelly' Paintings of Sidney Nolan 1946–47* at the Velasquez Gallery in Melbourne in April 1948 remains the 'canonic' Kelly series. All but two of the paintings, *First-class marksman* and *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek*, were given to the National Gallery of Australia by Sunday Reed in 1977. The sequence in which the paintings were arranged in 1948 and the captions that accompanied them in the 1948 Velasquez Gallery catalogue have usually been maintained when the paintings have been subsequently exhibited and published.
- 6 The phrase is Max Brown's in *Australian Son*, Melbourne: Georgian House, 1948, p. 9.
- 7 Kelly's *Jerilderie* letter (with original spelling and punctuation) quoted from the State Library of Victoria's transcription. See also Alex McDermott (ed.) *The Jerilderie Letter*, Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2001.
- 8 In 1954 Nolan painted a work that included the death mask of Kelly. The work, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England, was initially titled *Death of an outlaw*, but shortly afterward the artist retitled the work *Death of a poet*, a title that the painting has had ever since. See Jane Clark, *Sidney Nolan, Nolan Landscapes and Legends*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 120. In this context it is interesting to note the comments of Alex McDermott, *ibid.*, in his introduction (p. xxix): 'The Jerilderie Letter not only prefigures the ambition of modernist literature to make written and spoken words indivisible, as exemplified in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, but also harks back to the warrior's fiery polemic of Homer's *Iliad*, highly personal, dramatic, oratorical, and charged with competitive hostility. This is the reverberative document which inspired novelist Peter Carey's highly praised reinvention of the Kelly tale, *True History of the Kelly Gang*.'

- 9 Nolan painted a work in 1946 depicting McIntyre's night of terror in the wombat hole. It is simply a matter of speculation as to why he excluded it from the series when first exhibited. *Policeman in a wombat hole* was part of the artist's gift to the Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, ACT. See Maureen Gilchrist, *Nolan at Lanyon*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976.
- 10 Originally performed as a radio play in 1942, Stewart's play was given a stage production in Sydney in 1956 (Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust). By this time Nolan's Kelly paintings were well known, and Nolan, then in London, was commissioned to produce set designs.
- 11 Douglas Stewart, foreword to Max Lawson, *Companion to Douglas Stewart; Ned Kelly*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1965.
- 12 Douglas Stewart, *Ned Kelly: A play*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1943, p. 70.
- 13 Brown, *Australian Son*, p. 9.
- 14 Lynn and Semler, *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly*, p. 48.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 19 Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 20 This quote and the following two from the artist are from 'The "Kelly" paintings by Sidney Nolan', *The Australian Artist*, Melbourne, vol. 1, part 4, July 1948, p. 20.
- 21 This quote and the following one are from Nolan to Sunday Reed, Nhill, 18 May 1943. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 22 Albert Tucker, 'Art, myth and society', *Angry Penguins* 4, 1942, pp. 49–54.
- 23 D.H. Lawrence, in *Phoenix: The posthumous papers of D.H. Lawrence*, London: Heinemann, 1936, p. 564.
- 24 Nolan to Sunday Reed, Nhill, 18 May 1943. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 25 John Reed, introduction to the catalogue *The 'Kelly' Paintings of Sidney Nolan 1946–47*, Velasquez Gallery, Melbourne, April 1948.
- 26 Nolan to John Reed, Nhill, 8 February 1943, quoted in Richard Haese, *Nolan, the City and the Plain*, Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1983, p. 21.
- 27 This quote and the following one are from an undated note by Nolan on the reverse of a drawing, *Sergeant Steele taking Mrs Kelly to Benalla gaol* (National Gallery of Australia), possibly written during December 1946 while Nolan was house-sitting for fellow painter Danila Vassilieff. The Heidelberg School painting he was thinking of was Frederick McCubbin's *The north wind* 1891 (National Gallery of Victoria).
- 28 An oil sketch, retrieved from Nolan's studio by John Sinclair and Jean Langley, entitled *Mrs Kelly and the cart* (private collection) was included in the exhibition *The Ned Kelly Paintings: Nolan at 'Heide' 1946–47*, Museum of Modern Art at Heide, Bulleen, Victoria, 1997. Illustrated in the catalogue of that exhibition, p. 79.
- 29 Betty Churcher drew my attention to this photograph. It appeared in the Australian magazine *Walkabout*, 1 March 1947, p. 27.
- 30 Nolan to John Reed, Brisbane, 10 July 1947. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 31 'Sidney Nolan: Landscape and modern life', in Ian Burn, *Dialogue: Writings in art history*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991, pp. 67–85. The essay is a thorough and inspired investigation of Nolan's Wimmera paintings.
- 32 Lynn and Semler, *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly*, p. 13.
- 33 *First-class marksman* was painted in December 1946 at Stonygrad, Danila Vassilieff's house at Warrandyte, Victoria.
- 34 For example in Elwyn Lynn and Sidney Nolan, *Sidney Nolan – Australia*, Sydney: Bay Books, 1979, p. 60.
- 35 See also John McDonald, 'Iconic images', in *Federation: Australian art and society 1901–2001* (exhib. cat.), Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2000, p. 207.
- 36 Nolan to Sunday Reed, Ballarat, 17 August 1942. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 37 Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes and Bryan Robertson, *Sidney Nolan*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1961, p. 3.
- 38 Guido Piovene, *Cesare Breveglieri*, Milan: Edizione Del Milione, 1943. Mary Eagle drew my attention to this book. The volume from the Reeds' library with Nolan's annotations is now in the National Gallery of Australia Research Library, Canberra.
- 39 Nolan's comparison of these two specific works by Rousseau and Picasso must have been prompted by the same comparison that is made and illustrated in Alfred H. Barr's catalogue *Picasso: Fifty years of his art*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946, p. 265 (reprinted by Arno Press for the Museum, 1966). This book was one of several on Picasso in the Reeds' library.
- 40 Nolan to Sunday Reed, Dimboola, c.1942. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 41 These qualities are also to be seen in the series of drawings Nolan made in April 1946. *Kelly, tree and trooper* (National Gallery of Australia), in which Kelly and the policeman peer out from behind the same tree trunk, and the 'animated' *Constable McIntyre riding, falling, walking and hiding in wombat hole* (National Gallery of Australia) are obvious examples.
- 42 Lynn and Semler, *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly*, p. 41. At this stage in his career it must be remembered that Nolan, having fallen out with Patrick White, was teasing the writer with the fact that he had the film rights to White's novel *Voss* and stated his intention to make the film (although it never eventuated).
- 43 Nolan to John Perceval, Horsham, December 1943. Reed Papers, State Library of Victoria.
- 44 The story of the 1949 Paris exhibition of the Kelly paintings can be found in Andrew Sayers, 'Sir Sidney Nolan: Un Maître "Moderne" lance par la France, en 1949', in *L'été Australien*, Montpellier: Musée Fabre, 1989, pp. 79–81. An excellent overview of the subsequent history of the Kelly paintings is given in Warwick Reeder, 'Nolan at Heide', in *The Ned Kelly Paintings: Nolan at 'Heide' 1946–47*, Bulleen (Victoria): Museum of Modern Art at Heide, 1997.

The twenty-seven paintings that constitute Sidney Nolan's 1946-47 Ned Kelly series are reproduced here in the narrative sequence chosen by the artist and with the captions which accompanied them in the Velasquez Gallery catalogue of their first exhibition in 1948. With the exception of *First-class marksman* (Vizard Foundation, Melbourne) the paintings now form part of the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. The paintings in the national collection were given to the Gallery by Sunday Reed in 1977, with the exception of *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek*, which was purchased by the Gallery in 1972.

The quotations that accompany the Kelly paintings were selected by Sidney Nolan from newspapers of the day, the Royal Commission report of 1881 on the Victorian police force and its conduct of the hunt for the Kelly gang and J.J. Kenneally's *The Complete Inner History of the Kelly Gang and their Pursuers*. At the right of these quotations are the artist's comments about the paintings, made to Elwyn Lynn on 6 September 1984.

The Paintings

Landscape 1947

The 'Kelly Country' is that portion of north-eastern Victoria which extends from Mansfield in the south to Yarrawonga in the north, and from Euroa in the south-east to Talangatta in the north-west.

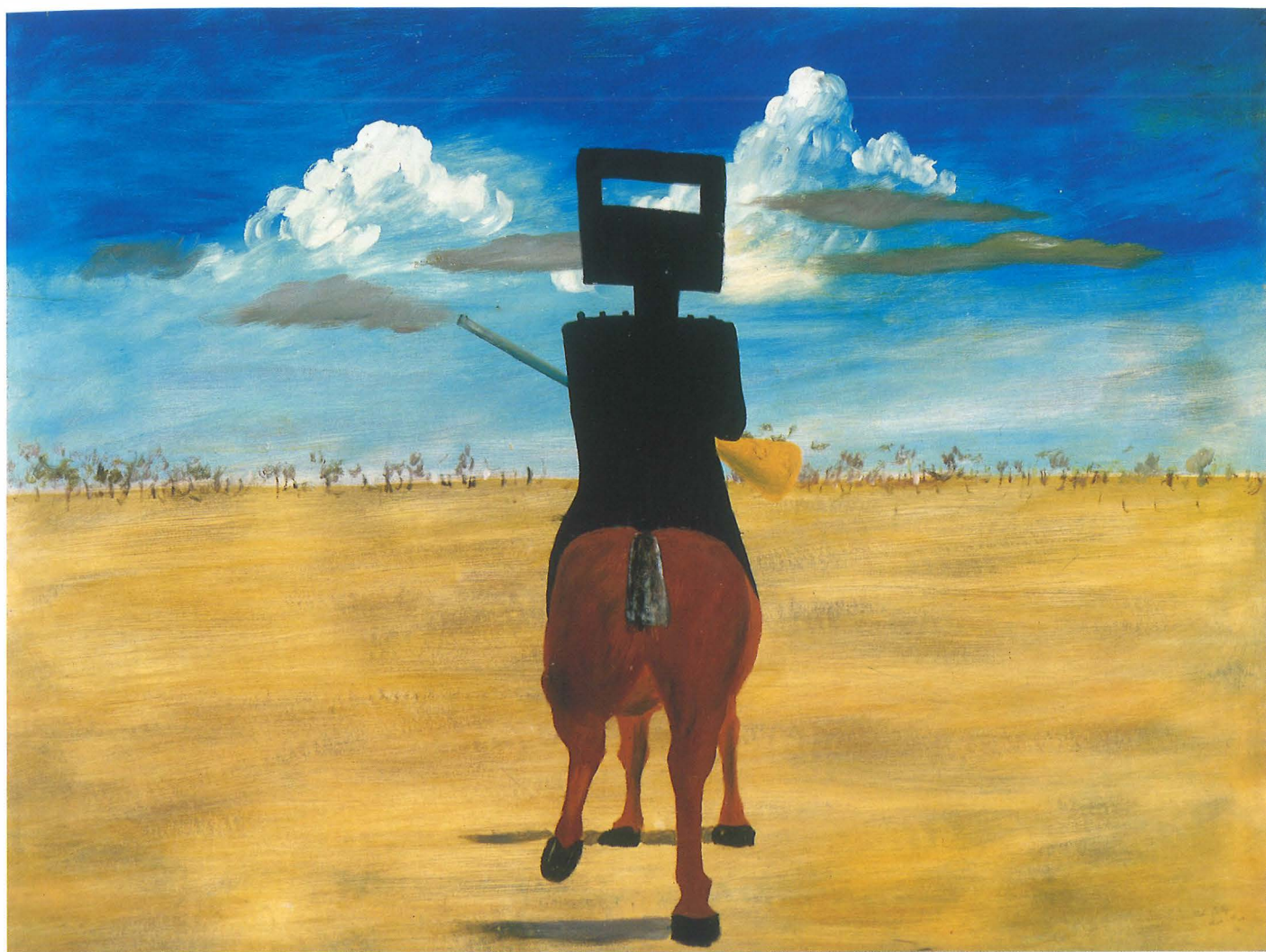
I put a fire or a setting sun on the horizon ... I wanted a clear ambiguity because this was the tranquil scene for the subsequent violence. It's along the Goulburn River. That muddy, opaque quality of the dam is very Australian; muddy under the serene, clear blue sky.



Ned Kelly 1946

We rob their banks
We thin their ranks
And ask no thanks
For what we do.

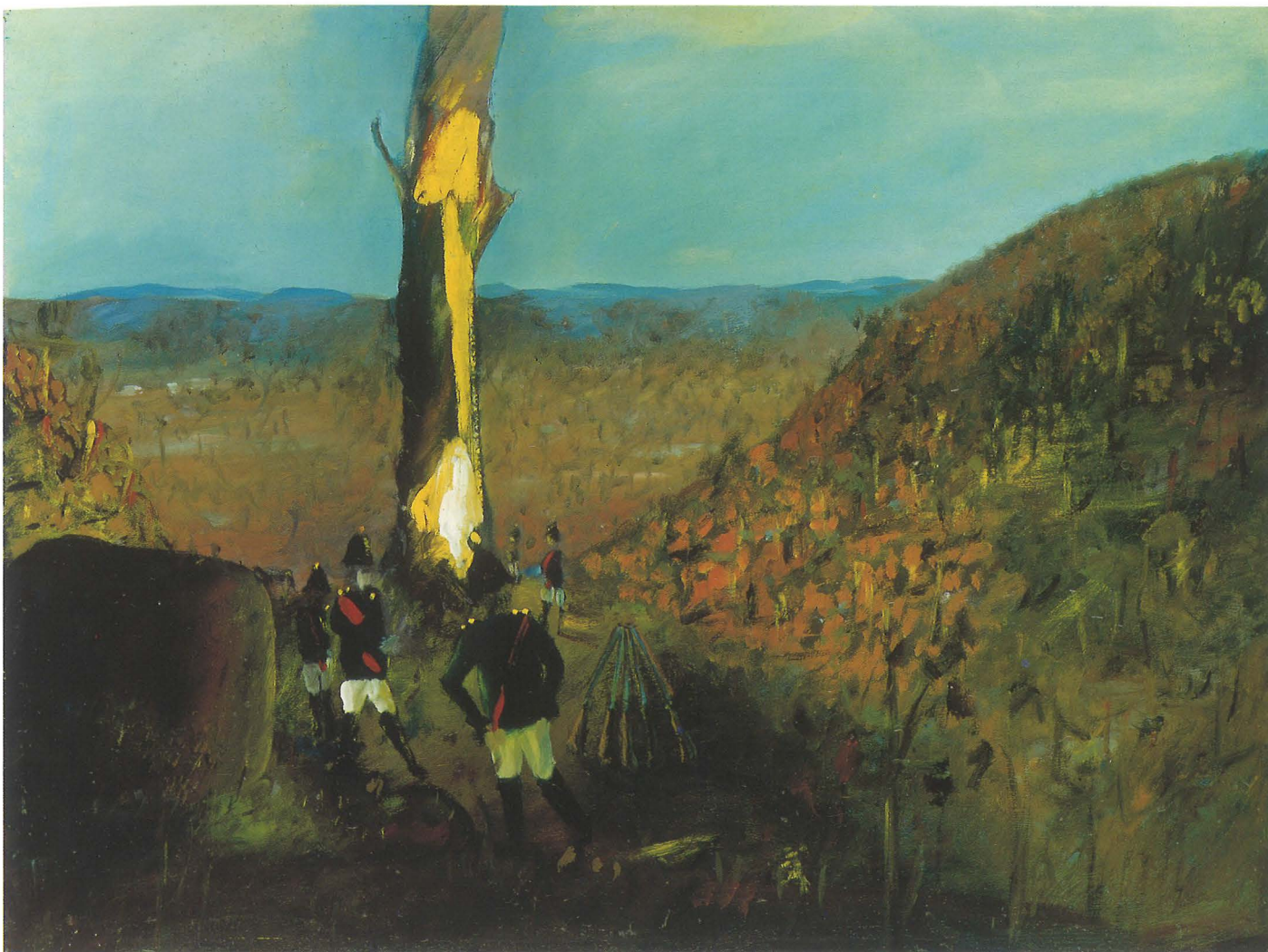
This is Kelly the defiant. I put Kelly on top
of the horse in a particularly orderly manner.
I wanted an air of perfect authority.
It looks simple but I wanted the maximum
feeling of space, so the cloud appears
through the aperture in the mask.



The burning tree 1947

At one time during a police search
in the Warby Ranges I allowed the men,
seeing they had had no warmth for weeks,
to set fire to an old hollow tree.

It is typical of Australia that to keep warm the policemen
set fire to a whole, standing hollow tree, which would
have been a blazing beacon to any Kellys or their friends.
It looks spectacular, Wagnerian.



Constable Fitzpatrick and Kate Kelly 1946

Kate, in the exercise of her domestic duties, was passing by Fitzpatrick when the latter seized her and pulled her on to his knee.

That is what the fireplace looked like
and the objects on the mantelshelf were really there.
The action looks a little comic but it began the real trouble.
Kelly is very observant and watchful.



Morning camp 1947

Ned Kelly knew all our camps in the Warby Ranges.

He would describe the constables who used to go and look for the horses at daylight, and the one who was told off to light the fire and boil the billy of tea.

I was amused that the police had hammocks in the bush. It seemed to indicate something of comic opera.



First-class marksman 1946

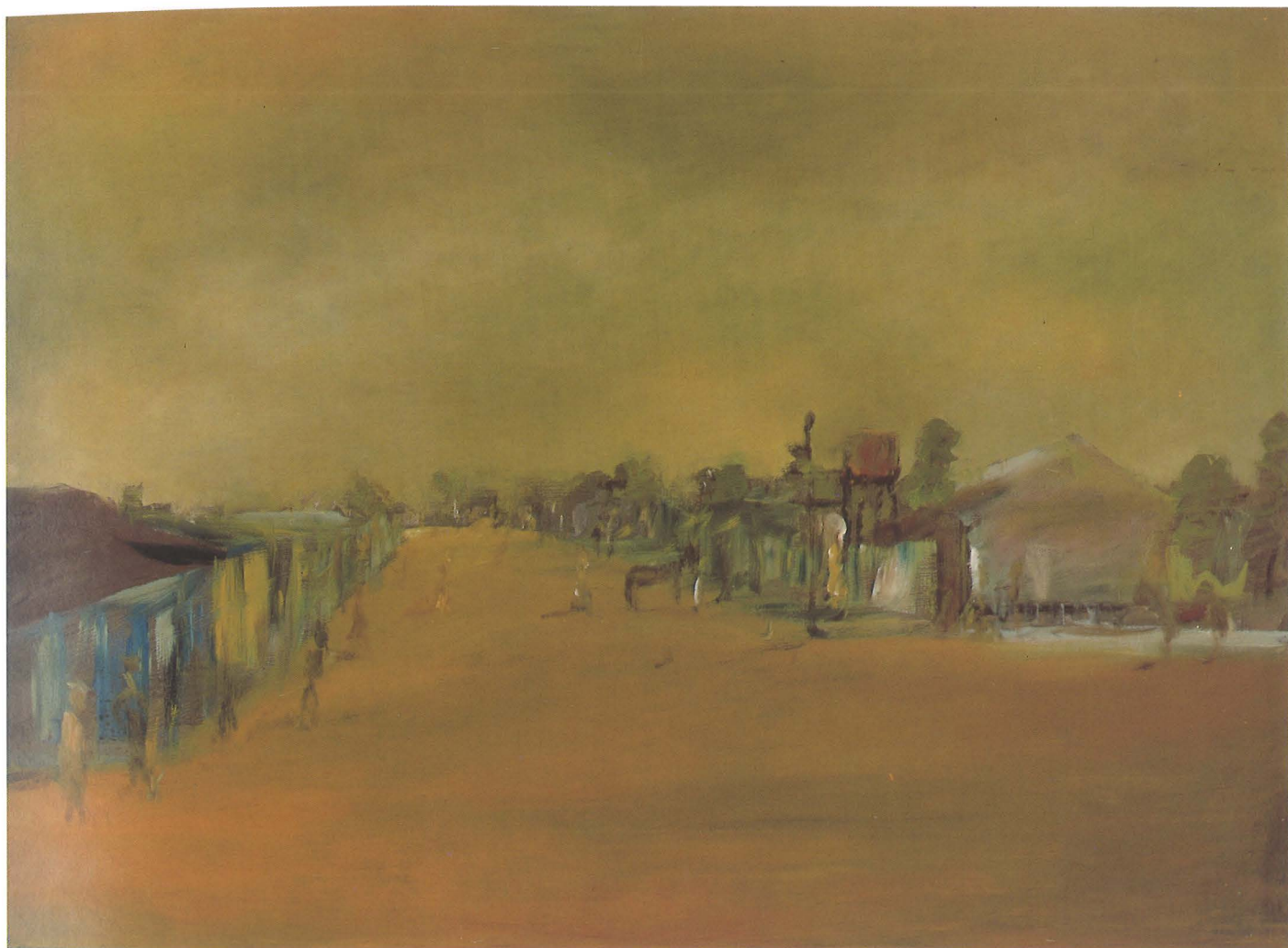
While in the ranges they indulged in rifle
and revolver practice to such an extent
that all of the four males were first-class
marksmen with any kind of firearm.



Township 1947

The peaceful town of Mansfield.

I think that this and *The watch tower* are good paintings
of sleepy, hazy and dusty country towns in the heat.
This is where they brought the dead policemen
and I was intrigued by violence in peaceful settings.



Steve Hart dressed as a girl 1947

He appears to have been possessed of a considerable courage and resource, and during that period of his outlawry frequently rode about in feminine attire.

All the Kellys may have dressed like this at times to deceive people for fun. The picture is as posed as the rider. The story is that Steve Hart, dressed as a girl, won the race at the Greta Races, riding side-saddle.



Quilting the armour 1947

Mrs Skillion, who was Margaret Kelly,
sat out in the evenings sewing the soft blue
quilting into the headpiece of the armour.

The armour casts a heavy, baneful shadow.
Kelly's sister is quilting the helmet to protect
a precious head and it's done with tenderness and love,
while a peaceful world goes about its life.



Death of Constable Scanlon 1946

He was in the act of firing again when
Ned Kelly fired, and Scanlon fell from
his horse and died almost immediately.

In a sudden, violent accident time seems to stand still.
I have exaggerated; the bridle must have been long,
but that and the levitated horse and constable increases
the unreality of violent events. Kelly seems to be present
only as a force of destiny.



Stringybark Creek 1947

If left alive Kennedy would, Kelly said,
be left to a slow torturing death at the mercy
of ants, flies, and the packs of dingoes.
Therefore he decided to put an end to the sufferings
of the wounded sergeant, and, as the latter
momentarily turned his head, Kelly fired
and shot him through the heart.



Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek 1946

Kelly: 'Had he been my own brother
I could not help shooting.
I put his cloak over him and left him
as honourable as I could.'

Matters are not separated here.

They are forced right against the eye,
terror and evil so close that no one is seen as a whole;
everyone is cut off in both senses of the word.

Kelly is cool and natural...

No compassion, the natural thing to do.



The watch tower 1947

From the tower, which we mounted in shifts,
a good view could be had of the town
in all directions, and in particular of the roads
by which we might expect the outlaws to arrive.

This is really about myself. I used to climb the watertower
at Horsham in Victoria and look at the sleepy town and think,
dream and imagine.



The alarm (1947)

A peacock which used to sleep
on the top of a tin shed. The bird was
accustomed to making cries at the
approach of any stranger.

People used peacocks as 'watch birds'; they could see
people two miles off. I was amused by the oddity
of peacocks in Australia and their being put to such a use.
The pale-faced policeman does not know how close
observers may be; remember that policemen had been killed.



The chase 1946

I am sure the police would not ride
them down in a day; they would have
to hunt them down, but not ride them down –
the outlaws were well mounted.

Kelly had been black but I put the stripes as though
he may have played Australian Rules, you might think,
but the same stripes occur as wallpaper in the burning
Glenrowan Hotel. Events casting their shadows before them?
The policeman goes the opposite way . . . wisely.



The encounter 1946

Should a constable encounter one of these
outlaws, he should apprehend him with
the maximum efficiency and devotion to duty.

Many of the policemen did not want to encounter the Kellys.
Kelly was a wrathful myth in his own day and the
frightened policeman got out of the way in the corner
of the painting and gave Kelly centre stage.



The marriage of Aaron Sherritt 1947

We police regarded him as a valuable and cunning spy. He got married on Boxing Day, 1879.

Constable Barry was at that time in charge of the search party hidden in the cave. After his marriage we regarded him as less trustworthy.

This is a story within the Kelly story; a double informer?

Actually, the police were hidden in the caves.

Sherritt had been a member of the gang and was now marrying into a family friendly with the Kellys.

They were an Irish bunch and Sherritt had gone too far:

'It's a shame, but we will shoot him.'



The defence of Aaron Sherritt 1946

Mrs Sherritt: 'They (the police) were
in that position when Dan Kelly
was in the room. I was put under the bed.
Constable Dowling pulled me down ...
and then Armstrong caught hold of me,
and the two of them shoved me under.'

A satirical title and a rather scornful portrayal,
but the police thought the whole gang was outside
and they had heard Sherritt shot. That quilt is real.
A friend who was in the army with me gave it to me.
It was made by people in a Heidelberg hospital.



The evening (1947)

At times, when the troopers and black-trackers
had made camp, I would ride ahead in the evening;
thinking perhaps to find some clue to the outlaws'
movements by travelling alone.

This is right out of the commission report.
It gives a slightly more sympathetic view of the police.
There is a feeling of innocence and the horse
is right out of early hunting prints.



Bush picnic 1946

On one occasion the outlaws had arranged to have a picnic some distance from Violet Town.

The Kellys' friends flattered the constable and shouted freely for him. He got pretty full and someone suggested dancing on the green. Good music was available and Ned Kelly took the merry constable as his partner in a buck set.

This is just a story. If I were making a film I could have the policeman and the members of the gang in disguise but this is as impossible as the horse in *The evening*. It's a fantasy.



The questioning 1947

The troopers enquired at the homestead
as to the whereabouts of the outlaws,
but were told to ask the old man who
was up bathing himself in the dam.

The police did not question the old man as they knew
he would misdirect them, but thought the wife could
be bluffed, but she was shrewd and well trained
and like a good wife would misdirect them.
My Uncle Jack used to wash himself with a bar
of laundry soap in the dam; Velvet soap, in fact.



The slip 1947

The gully was exceedingly rough and precipitous.
So much so that on one occasion
as we were ascending in single file one of the
packhorses lost its footing and fell.

I was proud that I'd got the horses going up the hill all right.
It was difficult for me. One of the packhorses had fallen,
so I decided to put it upside down and give levitation another aspect.
It is a dreadful descent and the horse will fall forever.
I am nearing the climax of the tragedy.



Mrs Reardon at Glenrowan 1946

I came into the yard and screamed for the police
to have mercy on me. 'I am only a woman;
allow me to escape with my children. The outlaws
will not interfere with us ... do not you.'

She thought she was trapped. There was sort of truce,
but she was fired at. Her actual shawl was exhibited
at the commission. I put the silly, self-assured policeman
in the corner. All is in chaos ... I was interested
in the reflection of the burning hotel on the trees.



Burning at Glenrowan 1946

Very Rev. Dean Gibney: 'I got no answer,
of course, and I looked in and found the bodies of
Dan Kelly and Steve Hart lying together.

As far as I could tell they were burnt
from the waist up.'



Siege at Glenrowan 1946

At about eight o'clock in the morning a heart-rending wail of grief ascended from the hotel. The voice was easily distinguished as that of Mrs Jones, the landlady. Mrs Jones was lamenting the fate of her son, who had been shot in the back by the police, as she supposed fatally. She came out of the hotel crying bitterly and wandered into the bush on several occasions, etc.

These were once joined together and I had Mrs Reardon and her baby still fleeing for their lives. It was once six feet by four, but late one night, Jack Bellew, a journalist, said, 'Look Sid, that painting is too bloody big, cut it in two.' I told him to leave it alone, but to prove it was not too big, I would cut it in two. You see I come from a long line of Irishmen. So I cut it and looked at them separated and together, and they looked better together. Unfortunately I parted them forever.



Glenrowan 1946

'Such is life.'

This is subtitled, as it were, 'Such is life!' Muster up your spirits and go out as well as you can. The police thought they were an army so I gave them, satirically, a regimental goat. The Aboriginal trackers are there with tribal markings. Irish police and non-Irish police, Aborigines from a remote culture and outlaws all meeting on this fatal stage, like the final act of an opera, all lined up. No wonder the sky went crimson. Mrs Reardon is still there, the baby with a different shawl. She changed it as she ran along; a good mother.



The trial 1947

Judge Barry then passed sentence of death,
and concluded with the usual formula:
'May the Lord have mercy on your soul.'
Ned Kelly: 'Yes, I will meet you there!'

The tiled floor in red and white was in a house
I was in once. The courthouse was in South Melbourne
and through the left-hand window you can see
sailing ships of the time. The candelabra is true to life.
The judge wears the black cloth of death and below
is a sergeant with a rolled, sealed document that spells
doom for Kelly. Of course, it could not have been ready.
Kelly told Judge Barry that he would soon see him
in the next world, which is not a very polite thing
to say to a man who's just sentenced you to death.

Strangely enough, Mr Justice Barry, a great man,
who did many good deeds, went home to bed
and died a fortnight later, from, it is said,
a septic carbuncle.



Checklist of Works

The checklist is arranged in chronological order and alphabetically within each year. Attributed dates are in brackets. The page numbers given after each painting title refer to this catalogue, in which the paintings are reproduced in the narrative order used in the Velasquez Gallery exhibition at Tyes furniture store, Melbourne, 6–16 April 1948.

Measurements are in centimetres; height before width. All paintings, unless otherwise stated, are held by the National Gallery of Australia.

Sidney Nolan

born Australia 1917
died England 1992
England and Australia from 1950

Burning at Glenrowan 1946 (p. 67)
enamel on composition board
121.5 x 90.7 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.298

Bush picnic 1946 (p. 59)
enamel on composition board
90.4 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.293

Constable Fitzpatrick and Kate Kelly 1946 (p. 27)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.279

Death of Constable Scanlon 1946 (p. 39)
enamel on composition board
90.4 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.284

Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek 1946 (p. 43)
enamel on composition board
91.0 x 121.7 cm
Purchased 1972
72.162

First-class marksman 1946 (p. 31)
enamel on composition board
90.4 x 121.2 cm
The Vizard Foundation
Purchased 1989

Glenrowan 1946 (p. 71)
enamel on composition board
90.9 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.299

Mrs Reardon at Glenrowan 1946 (p. 65)
enamel on composition board
90.8 x 121.5 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.297

Ned Kelly 1946 (p. 23)
enamel on composition board
90.8 x 121.5 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.277

Seige at Glenrowan 1946 (p. 69)
enamel on composition board
121.2 x 90.3 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.296

The chase 1946 (p. 49)
enamel on composition board
90.5 x 121.3 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.288

The defence of Aaron Sherritt 1946 (p. 55)
enamel on composition board
121.2 x 90.7 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.291

The encounter 1946 (p. 51)
enamel on composition board
90.4 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.289

Landscape 1947 (p. 21)
enamel on composition board
121.4 x 90.7 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.276

Morning camp 1947 (p. 29)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.280

Quilting the armour 1947 (p. 37)
enamel on composition board
90.4 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.283

Steve Hart dressed as a girl 1947 (p. 35)
enamel on composition board
90.6 x 121.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.282

Stringybark Creek 1947 (p. 41)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.5 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.285

The alarm (1947) (p. 47)
enamel on composition board
90.5 x 121.3 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.287

The burning tree 1947 (p. 25)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.278

The evening (1947) (p. 57)
enamel on composition board
90.5 x 120.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.292

The marriage of Aaron Sherritt 1947
(p. 53)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.290

The questioning 1947 (p. 61)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.294

The slip 1947 (p. 63)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.1 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.295

The trial 1947 (p. 73)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.2 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.300

The watch tower 1947 (p. 45)
enamel on composition board
90.6 x 121.4 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.286

Township 1947 (p. 33)
enamel on composition board
90.7 x 121.5 cm
Gift of Sunday Reed 1977
76.281

Further Reading

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ANDREW SAYERS is Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Between 1984 and 1998 he worked at the National Gallery of Australia, first as Curator of Australian Drawings and from 1996 as Assistant Director (Collections). He is author of *Drawing in Australia* (1989), *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (1994) and the *Australian Art* volume in the Oxford History of Art series (2001).

MURRAY BAIL's novels include *Eucalyptus*, which won the 1999 Miles Franklin Award and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

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