

JAMES GLEESON INTERVIEWS: MARGARET TUCKSON

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: Well, Margaret, a lot of our work's been done for us by Daniel in that introduction to the Memorial Exhibition to the catalogue, and that gives a great deal of biographical material. In fact, all that we'll need, except that you mentioned to me that there were a few corrections that had come to light since then. Could we put on record what those corrections were?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. These came from Tony's sister, Ruth Thornton, who lives in England. It was after I sent her a copy of the Retrospective Exhibition catalogue that she said there were a few corrections she could add to it. I have them written here. So perhaps I'll just read them out from this.

JAMES GLEESON: Good, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: It's from the chronology section of the catalogue, the corrections are for. It's on page 19. So she lists it, as it is in the catalogue, by years. For 1921 she just says that that's all correct except that there were only seven years in age between she and Tony. We said there were eight, I think. Nineteen thirty-four, '37, she says, I thought he had a matriculation certificate. Better than School Certificate but not really important. At this he was living with father and stepmother in New Southgate, London. This is why he picked Hornsey Art School—it was quite near'. I think we had the wrong art school there. Nineteen thirty-eight his father died, in November, the 22nd. Nineteen thirty-nine stepmother moved to Clackton and Anthony forced to go too. Ruth always called him Anthony. No art school there. So like me he left home and came to Kingston where I was living with our aunt, Miss Laura Peglar, mother's sister, as neither of us felt we could support him completely at art school. That doesn't make sense. It looks as if that's a new sentence. As neither of us felt we could support him completely at art school fullstop. He got a job. She doesn't mean the full stop. He got a job at Bentalls which was a furniture shop in Kingston.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: And went to the art school at night. This he did until he joined the RAF in 1940. I married in 1940, January, and Anthony stayed on with Aunt Laura until June 1940. Aunt Laura died November 27th 1940. Her flat was sold up and furniture put in store in Bentalls, as it was all left to me, and at the time Robert—this is Ruth's husband, Robert—wouldn't allow me to go to Kingston as London was being heavily bombed and I was expecting my first baby, Anne. So my uncle and aunt, Claude and Minnie Peglar, sold up the furniture—did it for me, she says. She means sold up the furniture. This meant Anthony had no home, but he came either to me or to the Daly's. The Daly's were very great family friends of the Tuckson-Thornton family. He went to the Daly's for leave. I think in Daniel's and my write-up here in the catalogue I said

12 November 1979

that he lived with the Daly's for a while, but Ruth is putting this straight—that he only went to them for leave. He didn't ever really live with them. Also he had a girlfriend in North London, who he stayed with sometimes. Robert, by this time, was in the army. That's the end of the corrections.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. Well, that is good to have. Now, Margaret, all the rest is in Daniel's catalogues, so we needn't worry about that. Sometime ago, to supplement the works that we had in the National Gallery, you gave us a group of paintings from Tony's earlier period as study works. Now, on our card we have a study group of 11 early paintings but we have photographs of 13, so there must have been 13 that came in.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: We'll have to check that and correct that from 11 to 13.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. Yes, I'm almost certain that none of these photographs are of paintings that were ever sold through Watters. I'm putting them out of order, am I?

JAMES GLEESON: It doesn't matter.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Just suddenly thought I'd look again and make sure I'm right here. See, I'm sure we've never shown nudes yet in any of the exhibitions. So I think that's right. There must be 13.

JAMES GLEESON: Good, good, fine. Well now, we've just numbered them, I suppose, in a fairly arbitrary way, but perhaps chronologically, roughly chronologically. When you speak about them could you just sort of identify them by the number?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, No. 1 is a nude.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Is of a nude. You've labelled them No. 1 of 13 to keep it in order.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: It's just of a typical art school type nude painting. Done, I would think, fairly early at his time at art school.

JAMES GLEESON: This was in the Sydney Tech?

MARGARET TUCKSON: I'm trying to think. Yes, at East Sydney Tech. I'm trying to think who would have been his life teacher at that stage. Dobell was teaching him at one time, but I've no idea really whether it was at this period.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: No, no.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But I think that's all we can say about that. So as he was at art school—where did we find in the chronology? Which year was it? Forty-seven, or '46 onwards, '46 to '49 he was at art school so I would think that's near the beginning period of that.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes, '46, '47 or something. This was just after he came out of the air force, I suppose.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, when he was demobbed in Australia. He went and did a CRTS course at East Sydney Tech.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, No. 2 of those.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No. 2 is of a girl, a clothed girl. What would say, as opposed to a nude study?

JAMES GLEESON: A nude, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Well, it's not a nude, it's a clothed one. Head and shoulders of a girl, who is very possibly another student. They used to pose for each other. I've just noticed a painting as a background almost, isn't it? Oh, no, that's the edge of the painting, is it?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes. So it is. Looked as if it was a card with a painting behind her. As these photographs are in black and white I can't mention what the colours are, and I don't really remember.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But again this is an art school work. I don't really know. About the middle of the period at art school, I would think.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, No. 3 of 13.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No. 3 is what I would think was a very early abstract.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Well, they were probably particularly doing abstract classes at tech at that time, so I suppose it would have just been an early trial at abstract painting—very colourful, if I remember it.

JAMES GLEESON: You can't remember who was teaching composition or that sort of thing at tech at that time?

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: What's his name? Jimmy Cook. Jimmy Cook was one of his teachers. Douglas Dundas, Jimmy Cook, Ralph Balson and Grace Crowley. I think it was earlier than Grace Crowley, this one.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I seem to remember this as a very early one. Grace Crowley didn't come till later, did she? Where did we say? Forty-eight, wasn't it?

JAMES GLEESON: And you think this was probably before Grace Crowley?

MARGARET TUCKSON: I think so. But I'm really not certain about any of these things.

JAMES GLEESON: No, no.

MARGARET TUCKSON: There were so many hundreds of paintings, it's hard to remember them all. Now this, No. 4, is of a very harshly coloured, I remember it, painting of abstracted—what would you call it?

JAMES GLEESON: It looks like a sort of nightclub scene or something.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, a nightclub scene. But, I mean, it's semi-abstract, shall we say.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Semi-abstract. It was the play of lights in the nightclub forming the shapes for the abstract painting. This was at the stage when he was doing a whole series of paintings on nightclub subjects.

JAMES GLEESON: This was part of a series of interests?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. There were particularly a lot—starting at about this time and going on later—of cocktail shaker. You get a group of three people, and the central one is often with hands above, and other people haven't realised what it was. But I remember that it was a cocktail shaker being shaken backwards and forwards. This I remember being the same period. Eventually he did his work for the diploma with a nightclub type scene too. But this was earlier than that, I think. So perhaps around '47, '48. No. 5.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Is of the long narrow mural that he did. I meant to look this up. What did I tell you before? Maroubra.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Maroubra. Maroubra RSL. Now, there's quite a lot of material, archival type material, there that I'll try and copy for you later about this mural.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: It will have the date and so forth there.

JAMES GLEESON: Fine.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I meant to look it up before we did the recording. But all I remember was that he had to paint—this is the small photograph of the small one, of course.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's right, the small study ready for the mural. He painted the actual mural on the spot at the RSL Club.

JAMES GLEESON: It was a very big one, was it?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, I can't remember the finished size. I didn't ever see it at the club. But it wasn't very well received at all by the RSL. It's too abstracted for the general fellow who drinks in the bar there, and I believe they pulled it all down after a couple of years.

JAMES GLEESON: Good lord. So it no longer exists?

MARGARET TUCKSON: I don't know.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, this is the original study that we have got.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, and it was painted from that.

JAMES GLEESON: The final version is now destroyed?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I'm afraid so. Number—is that 6? Oh here, yes. No. 6 is a fairly large colour exercise, I think you might call it. I think it's at the time when he was particularly interested in colour and was working under Grace Crowley and Ralph Balson that he did this. I seem to remember that he used to work on it at home rather than at art school. Perhaps sometimes he took it back to school, but it was on his easel.

JAMES GLEESON: It would obviously take a long time to have done it.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. He used to add a bit to it over quite a long period. It was very vibrant colour, a thing that I love. I remember being sad to part with that one.

JAMES GLEESON: We've got a circa date of 1948.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Do you think that would be about—

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes. That is the time that Balson and Grace Crowley were teaching at tech.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. Good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No. 7 is another nightclub subject, you see.

JAMES GLEESON: Ah yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Dancing figures.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. But much freer.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Much freer, yes. I think we've sort of tried to put these chronologically but maybe that one should come later, I'm not really sure. But it's still at tech and it's a little bit similar to the sort of thing he did for his diploma, final diploma painting, which I think I've got a photo of somewhere. Anything else about that, do you think? So maybe we might say that that's more like '49 or even '50?

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Nineteen fifty. No, '49. It'd be still while he was at tech.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Now, this one is No. 8 of 13. It's a landscape, an abstracted landscape, I'd say the shape. A little Cézanne influence, would you say?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes. With the (inaudible) forms, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Getting trained by shapes from the trees. As he certainly was very interested in Cézanne's work, well, all his life, and starting at this time at art school.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Whether he did that—no he more likely would've done that from a sketch that he would have done in Tarara area maybe.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But whether he painted it at art school or at home, I can't remember, but it's certainly while he was still at art school.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No. 9 of the 13.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. This in my mind seems to relate to No. 10 also. They're both reclining nudes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: One seeming to have a sort of Modigliani influence.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: That's No. 10. And No. 9, although the pose is almost identical, but a rather more Matisse theme.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Matisse, Matisse, yes, yes, yes. Quite a lot of his painting at this time was Matisse influenced. There was one painting in the Retrospective Exhibition that was a very Matisse influenced one, which could well have been round about the time. This is either while he's still at art school, or soon after at home in East Gordon when I used to pose, but none of them are portrait-like ones.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Either the portraits or the nudes, but I was sort of used as the basis for the model.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I think that's maybe all we can say about them because, as you say, I agree that's more Matisse-like, No. 9, and No. 10 a little Modigliani.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. Now, No. 11 seems a more mature work.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. It does seem later. Very free.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Extremely free. Figure composition, I suppose we might call it.

JAMES GLEESON: It's a girl with one arm, her right arm, raised in an interior.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. With pot plant maybe, or flowers on the table. A very quick sketch, I think, paint sketch. Possibly done from some occasion when I posed. I can't remember this particular one. Most of the ones I posed for are ones in a chair, in a particular chair that I remember that we had. But I don't recognise the background or anything about this one really. It's just a quick sketch.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, No. 12 and 13 are related too in the sense that they're both still-life subjects, bottles and objects on table, done in that free washed style. They're both oils, I take it?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. I was just trying to think whether they are or whether they're watercolours. I'm not sure. Without looking at the actual paintings we can't know for certain. But I would say they're done almost at the same time because many of the objects are exactly the same.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: The knife, the spoon. This is a covered, you know, one of those Chianti-type bottles with a cane cover.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes, Chianti.

MARGARET TUCKSON: You see, if I can recognise any of these things, whether they would have been done at home or at art school. We had those Chianti bottles but nothing else I recognise specially, so it might have been at home. Oh, this chair maybe. He often set up still lifes at home.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: So it could have been, but there's no way of being certain.

JAMES GLEESON: No. Well, that gives us some, you know, indication of that early group. Now we come to the mature works, and I think we might start with perhaps one of the most important ones. This is a work done in acrylic on two hardboard panels which we have the title for *White lines brown and blue*, 1971.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: We don't have a photograph of it but it's a large painting, 74 inches by 96 inches. It was at the Watters Gallery, purchased from the Watters Gallery, but once belonged to the John Armstrong collection.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. That's right, yes. This title *White lines brown and blue*, 1971, is exactly from the catalogue entry for the 1973 exhibition at Watters. So it's Tony's title.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. It is.

MARGARET TUCKSON: At least in those first two exhibitions he did title them just with descriptions of the paintings. They didn't ever have names.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: He didn't believe in giving paintings names at any time. I don't think there's a single painting with a name, just a description like this.

JAMES GLEESON: A description.

MARGARET TUCKSON: So that was purchased, I think. I'm a little confused. Tony gave the Armstrong's—they were very good friends of ours—one painting and then they purchased a painting. I just can't remember for the moment which one this was.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But then about a year or so ago John and Jill Armstrong sold up their property in New South Wales and moved to France and couldn't take everything with them, so this one was offered for purchase to the National Gallery. It's a very important painting. I remember Daniel at the time thinking it was one of the best ones.

JAMES GLEESON: A major one, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: A major one.

JAMES GLEESON: It's No. 74 in Daniel's catalogue of the Memorial Exhibition and it is reproduced in black and white in the catalogue.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, that's right, in the catalogue.

JAMES GLEESON: So there's no problem in identifying that.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Even though we have no photograph of it here.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. Anything more on that one?

JAMES GLEESON: This one.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Which goes this way up.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I've got an arrow showing which way up. That was in the exhibition at Watters, the very first exhibition. First one man show Tony ever had at Watters Gallery. Perhaps there's nowhere in the catalogue recorded about how his first exhibition came about.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Would that be of interest?

JAMES GLEESON: Well, that would be of interest, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: To put on record. Several people had been trying to persuade him to have an exhibition during the late sixties, but mostly he said no, he wasn't ready and he didn't want an exhibition. But finally he started saying himself that perhaps he'd better have one because our house was so small he couldn't ever put the paintings up and really see them.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That if he had an exhibition he could see his own work on the walls and have a really good critical look at it. That was really, I think, his main reason for wanting an exhibition. He had no thought of selling them, or whether anybody else would like them. He wanted to see them up.

JAMES GLEESON: Did Frank Watters know about them at this time?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Well, how it came about was that Tony started thinking about the different galleries that were available, and Watters at that time was still in the small gallery in Liverpool Street. But Tony said, 'I think Watters is the only one I want to show with'. The space isn't big enough but it was because of Frank, he wanted Frank to show his paintings. But he didn't do anything about it. He kept putting it off. I'd say to him, 'Aren't you going to ring Frank?', and he'd put it off and put it off, and one day he finally said, 'You ring Frank'. I realised that it was he just couldn't bring himself to say to somebody, 'Will you give me an exhibition?'. So I rang Frank and said to Frank, 'Tony would love to have an exhibition with you but you don't really know his paintings well, so would you like to come up and see some of them?'. Frank said, 'I've seen one of Tony's paintings, and that's enough for me. I'll give him an exhibition any time he likes'.

JAMES GLEESON: That began a long association at the Watters Gallery.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, it certainly did. So after the decision was made Frank then did come up and go through them with Tony and select which ones. That first exhibition had—how many was it?—64 paintings or something in it.

JAMES GLEESON: Goodness.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Now, this particular one was purchased from that exhibition. So it's catalogue No. 14, is that, or four?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, 14.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Fourteen.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Oh, here, yes. Catalogue 14, Watters exhibition, May 1970, which was his very first one man show.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. Date from a period—Tony was not too sure of when the sequences (inaudible).

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's right. He wasn't able to date with certainty very many of those paintings even for that first exhibition, so we had vague dates like '58 question mark to '61. This particular painting comes from that group.

JAMES GLEESON: From that group.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Others in that exhibition were from a bit later than that. Right up until there were only two paintings in that exhibition that were more recent ones, done fairly soon before the exhibition, and they followed through to the sort of paintings that were in the 1973 exhibition.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: One of those is one Rene Free has. The other is that blue one there.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, yes (inaudible).

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. So to go back to this particular one, is there anything more we should say about that? That \$300 one.

JAMES GLEESON: No, I think that makes it clear. But it's interesting that it came from his first exhibition and was bought from his first exhibition.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes, yes. That's right.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. When was Tony's next exhibition?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Seventy-three, yes, at Watters again.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Of paintings that he did between that time right up until soon before the exhibition. But we haven't photos of any of the '73 ones here.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: This is of a later exhibition after he died.

JAMES GLEESON: It's a woman, Untitled painting

MARGARET TUCKSON: No. 56.

JAMES GLEESON: PVA on hardboard. Around 1964, would that be a correct dating for that?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, I think so. Because, I mean, at the time Daniel would have helped probably with the dating to a certain extent, and Frank, and that's the best we could come up with.

JAMES GLEESON: This was published, I notice, on the invitation card to the exhibition.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Tony Tuckson painting 1952-56, question mark.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: In June, 2nd June till 19th June 1976 at the Watters Gallery.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Would that be Tony's third exhibition?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Ah.

JAMES GLEESON: There was one in '73.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I'm not too sure.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, never mind. All that's chronology.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I think there was one in '70. Yes, yes. That's right, it's all listed in the catalogue.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Frank did put on an exhibition of some sort every year since Tony died.

JAMES GLEESON: I know.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Except this year, I think. I think.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: This is different in character in the sense that it is figurative.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Although the figuration is very free, very Art Brut kind of approach.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, yes. Certainly obviously very much later than any of that group of 11 early ones.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes. It's very related to that one that's hanging on the wall there, isn't it, the same period?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, roughly the same period as that, I think. Yes. What date did we say this was? About '60, 1960.

JAMES GLEESON: Sixty-four.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Sixty-four. Sorry. Oh well, no, between '52-'56.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh. We've got a date of '64 there.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Oh, so we have. Yet it was in the exhibition that was labelled '52-'56. I wonder how that came about?

JAMES GLEESON: Now, Margaret, we've got a circa date of 1964, and you think now that that is not probably correct, since it was shown in the exhibition labelled 1952 to '56.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, question mark.

JAMES GLEESON: Question mark. But it was certainly works of that period, rather than later works.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's right. Yes. Yes, that's right. So there's something wrong there.

JAMES GLEESON: So that's something we have to double check.

MARGARET TUCKSON: To be checked. Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, this is one vertical.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That way.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. I better look at the information first. This is called *White on brown masonite* for an exhibition that Frank Watters put on at Watters

12 November 1979

Gallery in November 1974, which he called a Memorial Exhibition, because it was exactly a year after Tony died.

JAMES GLEESON: It was 36 by 24 inches.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: It's an abstract, pure, pure abstract, I'd call it.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: We haven't got any details here yet about the painting. I'm not sure, we don't say whether it's oil or what it is here do we? No.

JAMES GLEESON: No.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I expect it's an oil. Cardboard or—

JAMES GLEESON: When Tony worked on masonite, did he prime it first or did he work straight on to the surface.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Earlier painting he used to do a lot of priming, but later ones—for instance, there's one that was in the Retrospective Exhibition which Lucy Swanton has purchased, which was just white lines directly on to the brown masonite. It only has a line down one side, because the other side and all the rest is just brown masonite.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But at this time, this earlier stage, he was mostly priming.

JAMES GLEESON: Priming, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: And often painting one painting and not liking it and painting over it.

JAMES GLEESON: I see, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Sometimes I feel maybe he did it deliberately because he came to like this feeling of the underneath painting showing through a little on to the top one.

JAMES GLEESON: I see, yes.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: But it's just possible that this is this sort of thing because you can in places see a little bit of what might be an underneath painting.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. We don't know what the medium is. We've got no indication.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No, we haven't and we don't seem to have found a catalogue for that particular exhibition. I think there wasn't a catalogue for that one because Frank put it on at a sudden whim, I think.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: He suddenly thought, it's a year since Tony died, we should show some. It was upstairs only, when somebody else's exhibition was below. I have an idea they didn't ever make a catalogue. I certainly can't find one at the moment.

JAMES GLEESON: So we don't know whether that's oil or acrylic.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No, not just yet. If I find anything later on any of these I'll let you have it.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Now, this is the next one.

JAMES GLEESON: Now, *Horizontal*.

MARGARET TUCKSON: White impasto on grey. A small part of its collage of paper and canvas and it's painted on cardboard. Is that Watters?

JAMES GLEESON: Taken to Watters Gallery, July '74, and bought from Watters Gallery October '74 for \$400.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. That must have just been a note of mine taken to Watters Gallery on the slide yes, yes. That's right.

JAMES GLEESON: Size 53.8 centimetres by 93.5 centimetres. That was purchased at that time for the lending collection. But all those pictures come back to the National Gallery in due course.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Oh, yes. So it's an impasto looking one, a pure abstract, with mostly white, I would think. You know, it's a black and white photograph so we can't see the colour. No record of colours at all yet on the cards.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: Clearly, like the last one, it's an abstract expressionist work and, in fact, the last whole group that we've been talking about except for the early works have been abstract expressionism.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, that's right.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Right.

JAMES GLEESON: Now this one.

MARGARET TUCKSON: This is the one that I think you are in the middle of purchasing at the moment, or have just done, or about to.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: It was shown in the Retrospective Exhibition at the Art Gallery, and I think you've purchased it since then. Yes. It was one that did belong to me still but I had lent it for the Retrospective. It was very much the same period as some of the ones shown in the 1973 exhibition at Watters, but this particular one I don't think was in that exhibition. I don't think they had any of the collage ones. Oh, these very major collage ones where there is actual clothing.

JAMES GLEESON: The trousers are actually collaged on to the black painting.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. Pyjama trousers—old pyjama trousers thrown out—of mine. I'd just thrown them in a waste paper basket. I found them on a painting. The small piece on the left hand side of the painting, a collage of not canvas—what do you call that?—sacking.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Would have been a left over piece from the curtain that Tony made for this studio here at Lucinda Avenue, Wahroonga.

JAMES GLEESON: I see, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: He made that curtain while we were living with my family, the Bissett family in Warrawee, ready for this studio. He just bought up a lot of old sacks and cut them up and he used to spread them all out on the front lawn and stitch them together with rough cord. It's still hanging there in his studio with the painting store behind it. This little piece has a Mickey Mouse type figure licking its lips looking in the direction of the pyjamas, according to Daniel. I don't know whether that was Tony's idea or not.

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: That was shown as No. 56 in the Memorial Exhibition that Daniel organised.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's right, yes, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: It's listed in the catalogue there. And illustrated in the catalogue?

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, illustrated in black and white.

JAMES GLEESON: Oh, good.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But it's what we call the red and black and white period still. That's the major colour, apart from the collage.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. Now, one that we have no card for and no photograph on, but is undoubtedly in our collection because it was lent by the Australian National Gallery for the exhibition at Watters Gallery in 1970, shown as No. 56. It was also shown in the Watters Gallery 1979, No. 3. It was lent, I think, to the Memorial Exhibition that Daniel organised.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's right, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: There it was shown as catalogue No. 63, called *Lines square with shape*.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, and recorded there as being lent by the National Gallery.

JAMES GLEESON: So that's something we've got to check on. It's PVA on hardboard, 122 by 122 centimetres or 48 by 48 inches.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes. I certainly remember the painting and remember that it is owned by the gallery. Especially when we look at the photo in the catalogue.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: I do remember it.

JAMES GLEESON: There is just that gap.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Finally there are two problems things, a problem we're really going to have to work on when you go down to Canberra. One we have called No. 26, which seems to indicate that it was shown in some exhibition—and that was an earlier catalogue number—about '58 to '61.

12 November 1979

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, and that's how it is recorded on that catalogue we found, isn't it. Those dates with a question mark.

JAMES GLEESON: Oil on hardboard, 48 by 36—that's 121.7 by 91.5 centimetres—and signed Tuckson top left on reverse. Purchased from the Watters Gallery in November '73.

MARGARET TUCKSON: That's unusual, a signature. I'd forgotten about that signature being there.

JAMES GLEESON: Tony hardly ever signed his work.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No, he didn't.

JAMES GLEESON: Not even on the reverse?

MARGARET TUCKSON: The only times he deliberately signed them—I don't know why I say 'deliberately'—the only time he signed them was if he was putting them in for an exhibition in the days when he occasionally showed with the Contemporary Art Society and the Society of Artists.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

MARGARET TUCKSON: He would then sign those. So we have four or five paintings that were signed and even dated from that time.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

MARGARET TUCKSON: But none of these others usually were signed.

JAMES GLEESON: Well, it may not be an autograph signature; it may be somebody's simply written—

MARGARET TUCKSON: What's it mean top left on reverse?

JAMES GLEESON: On the back of the painting.

MARGARET TUCKSON: On the back of the painting. Oh, I see. Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: It might have been just somebody writing the name of the artist (inaudible).

MARGARET TUCKSON: Well, certainly when I see that painting in Canberra the mystery will be cleared up, I think, because I'll know it then.

JAMES GLEESON: But the other one is a real mystery because it's an untitled painting without a photograph, purchased from the Watters Gallery.

MARGARET TUCKSON: No size either?

12 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: No, no, or medium or anything. Just purchased Watters Gallery 4/1/74 for \$200.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, and Alex Legge, who I've spoken to on the phone today, doesn't seem to have a record of it either. So it's a mystery one. Perhaps it doesn't exist.

JAMES GLEESON: Check up with Warwick Reeder when you go to Canberra in a fortnight's time.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Yes, right.

JAMES GLEESON: All right, Margaret. Anything else you would like to add to this?

MARGARET TUCKSON: I don't think I can think of anything out of the blue. It seems to me if I get talking about a particular painting it sometimes makes me remember special bits, but I can't think of anything at the moment.

JAMES GLEESON: Anyway, when the typescript comes back to you, you'll be able to make any addition or changes that you want.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Right.

JAMES GLEESON: Thank you very much indeed.

MARGARET TUCKSON: Okay.