JAMES GLEESON INTERVIEWS: NOEL COUNIHAN
2 November 1979

JAMES GLEESON: Noel, to begin with a few biographical details, exactly when and where were you born?

NOEL COUNIHAN: At Kurford Road, Albert Park, on 4 October, 1913.

JAMES GLEESON: How did you become interested in art? Was it always there from your childhood?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, from childhood, largely because my elder brother used to draw. I used to be stimulated by his drawings. Then I started to copy the drawings in comics and the illustrations in boys’ papers. At Sunday school and primary school they used to get me to draw Father Christmas on the blackboard. So, obviously, I was drawing from a very early age, but in a household which had absolutely no background from the point of view of the arts. My brother started to draw. I think he was stimulated by some watercolour illustrations in fairy stories or something of that nature, and I used to emulate him. From a very early age I was very concerned with the human face, and so I was always drawing people. I went to the St Paul’s Cathedral Choir School for five years for my sins, from the ages of nine to fourteen. The Melbourne Herald correspondent in Paris for many years, Roland Pullen, was my contemporary in the choir school. He and I produced a sort of a magazine. He used to write pieces for it and I used to make drawings for it.

Then, when my voice broke, I had one year at Caulfield Grammar in intermediate, third form. A couple of the masters noticed that I was always drawing. At that stage I had never seen an oil painting, except the old academic paintings of archbishops and bishops that hung in the Chapter House at St Paul’s Cathedral. They were very shiny and uninteresting. I didn’t really know what an oil painting was. In my family there were no books. There was no library of books and certainly neither of my parents had the faintest concept of the world of art. So I came out of a relative vacuum in that sense, but it is obvious that there was a very strong desire to make images; I think that must be something very personal. The two masters at the grammar school were perspicacious and sympathetic. They knew that, with the exception of English and French, I would be near the bottom of the class. Scholastically I was a nobody. On the other hand, they saw how I drew, and they encouraged me to take part in a hobbies exhibition, in which Robert Haynes also took part.

JAMES GLEESON: Really?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. He was my senior by about two or three years. He must have been in fifth or sixth form; I was in intermediate. He took part in it. I was given a special prize for my drawings. I was bottom of the drawing class because that was all bound up with plain and solid geometry, and perspective and drawing buckets by joining up ellipses. I had the dirtiest and scrubbiest drawings in the class, but I could do what the others couldn’t do—I could draw the master. So I used to draw the masters, particularly the ones I didn’t like. I got a special prize for one of those drawings in the hobbies exhibition. I was dragged into that as a deliberate policy on the part of these two masters to convince me that there was something in it. They knew that I would not be able to come back to school the next year because my parents could not afford it. They said, ‘When you go to work, go and enrol at the National
Gallery Art School and learn anatomy, learn to draw the figure. That is what you're cut out for. If you can draw the figure, you can draw anything'.
JAMES GLEESON: Good advice.

NOEL COUNIHAN: I never forgot that. I got myself a job the next year; I had just turned 15. I went straight up to the Gallery School, but I was too young.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. There was an age limit?

NOEL COUNIHAN: I had to wait for my sixteenth birthday. On my sixteenth birthday I went up and enrolled and did some drawings for Charlie Wheeler to have a look at. I was accepted, and I spent a rough sort of a year in the junior antique evening classes. I used to work at the warehouse in the daytime, and then buy a pie and go up to the Gallery School of a night and draw.

JAMES GLEESON: This was in the thirties?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. Alan McCulloch’s younger brother Wilfred, who was killed in Malaya, and who was gifted, was my best friend there for the first period. He befriended me because I was the youngest student there, I think. He nursed me along a bit and introduced me to Alan. There were people like Roy Dalgarno, and others were there on and off. But I got very sick of the academic after about six months. I wanted to get into the life class and I got very fed up with it. I used to turn up drunk and make a nuisance of myself. So Charlie Wheeler suggested, nicely, that my path could go in that direction, the school could go in that direction. So I left. Dalgarno asked me if I would like to share a studio that he and Nutter Buzacott were renting in the old St James Buildings, where Norman Lindsay and Gillian McDonald used to rent. I think it was the same studio, actually. A lot of bohemia lived there. I think that was the basis for the studio.

I shared that studio from the end of 1930. I didn’t learn anything from either Roy or Buzz, although I was very friendly with them. It was the opportunity in a sympathetic environment to sit down and start drawing for myself. I had been very interested in the portrait drawings of George Lambert. A lot of them were very photographic, very disciplined. They weren’t bad models for a youngster of my kind. I was very anxious to get into a life class. Around the time I started in the studio with Dalgarno and Buzacott I was also invited to take part in a life class run by Oscar Binder, who was a very well established commercial artist of Austrian background, and whose daughter was a student at the Gallery School. He ran a weekly life class in his studio in Middle Park, which was attended by a number of commercial artists who didn’t want to lose touch with the figure.
JAMES GLEESON: I see.

NOEL COUNIHAN: It was their opportunity to keep in touch with life. They all had the dream that one day they would make enough money out of commercial art to have security, and then they would paint the pictures they wanted to paint in the same way that journalists are always dreaming of writing the great novel. This was quite sad. It is one of the reasons why they drink so heavily, of course. Anyhow, I saw my first nude model there, which gave me a terrific shock. I started going regularly to the weekly life class. It was very helpful because I could see what the other, more advanced people were doing—that was the big thing. At our studio in the St James Buildings we used to hire a model once a week. Len Annois used to come from time to time, and Eric Thake and Harry Hudson. Adrian Watts, who in the twenties and thirties was a very well-known illustrator, also came. A few others used to come and draw there regularly, week after week. That was the beginning of my serious study. It was a matter of teaching oneself.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, as it nearly always is.

NOEL COUNIHAN: There was no master. As a group of friends we looked at what we were doing and criticised each other and so on. That was the beginning.

JAMES GLEESON: You are interested fundamentally in the human face, the human figure—

NOEL COUNIHAN: And in human relationships.

JAMES GLEESON: But always the figure—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, right through.

JAMES GLEESON: And that was established at that early stage?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, clearly.

JAMES GLEESON: So much of your work relates to people who write and to works of literature. Have you been influenced by your interest in writing?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Inevitably, in subtle ways, but not—

JAMES GLEESON: Not as an illustrator.
NOEL COUNIHAN: No, but I have done some illustrating. I have illustrated a collection of Katherine Susannah Prichard short stories. I recently illustrated the complete short stories of Alan Marshall. I did not illustrate every story. I did ten drawings for that. I have done some other illustrating. At one stage I did a lot of journalistic illustrating, from which I learnt a lot, having to work to a deadline. I learnt the hard way how to work under pressure. Otherwise the influence of literature on me has been cultural, in general, and has affected my outlook on life. In many ways it complements my attitude to painting, to problems of form and colour and so on.

JAMES GLEESON: It just struck me that it must be of some significance that some of your best portraits were of important writers.

NOEL COUNIHAN: They were all personal friends. That is the reason that none of them were commissioned. Each of them was painted because I asked the writer to sit for me and each of them was somebody I admired. Katherine Prichard and Vance Palmer were the mother and father of modern Australian literature—Henry Handel Richardson and the others came before. So far as the modern novel is concerned, Katherine Prichard and Vance Palmer are the parents. A lot were my personal friends, people like Judah Waten. Brian Fitzpatrick was a very close friend. Brian wrote a novel, which has not yet been published. From the age of about 17 I was constantly in the company of musicians who were members of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. The focal point of the group that I associated with was the violin maker William Dolphin. Bill handled the instruments for the Symphony Orchestra and for the local string groups. He also handled the instruments for all the visiting celebrities—Cecchetti and Heifetz and so on.

So the five years I had as a cathedral chorister provided me with a musical basis. I was fascinated by music and musicians. During the thirties I earnt my living as a freelance newspaper artist and my obsession with the human face played a big part in my caricature. A lot of my income came from caricature. I used to draw the visiting celebrities for papers like Musical News and Tabletalk, which meant I got free tickets into the concerts. I was able to go to rehearsals and meet them and draw them. Although I was very badly paid, these other things were the compensation. I met some wonderful artists, and then there were the musicians who used to drink at Bill’s place and at the Swanston family hotel, as well as the writers, the journalists, the pilots and a big group of painters.

JAMES GLEESON: How did you meet Jack Lindsay? Was he out here?

NOEL COUNIHAN: No. I knew that he was, as I was, a very young Marxist and a member of the Communist Party. Jack was writing not only his poetry and works of fiction and general scholarship but Marxist criticism. When I went to England in 1949 he was one of the first people I rang and went to see. We became very friendly and I invited him out to dinner. Pat and I were living at the Abbey Arts Centre, where a number of other Australians were living. If you were there you would remember old Bill Olley’s place?
JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: I spent two and a half years there.

JAMES GLEESON: What years were they?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It was 1950 and 1951. We left at the beginning of 1952.

JAMES GLEESON: I was there a little before, 1947 and 1948.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Was Max Newton there?

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, and Graham King.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Graham and Inge were there when I was there.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes, they were there after I left.

NOEL COUNIHAN: They stayed on. Len French was there while I was there.

JAMES GLEESON: That’s right. That was an Australian centre, wasn’t it?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It was; Olley liked Australians.

JAMES GLEESON: Bernard Smith was there.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Bernie was there. Bernie and Kate were there for at least twelve to eighteen months of the time we were there. We became very good friends. I went to the First World Peace Congress in Paris and had the pleasure of sitting with Picasso, who was a member of the French delegation. I was a member of the Australian delegation. We were both elected to the Tribune of the Congress, which is like the presiding body, representing our various delegations. The French delegation was a big one. There was a whole team of French delegates on the platform, including Picasso. I was able to sit near him and talk to him. I got him to sign an appeal to Australian intellectuals to support the struggle for peace. This was the period of the Cold War.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: And Korea—situations fraught with appalling dangers. Joliot-Curie had called this big world congress, and I became very involved in that aspect of the struggle for peace. In the period before the Second World War I had been involved in the movements against fascism and war here.
JAMES GLEESON: You were involved with the Anti-fascist show in Melbourne, weren't you?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: Who else was in that? Bergner?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Bob Bergner, and O'Connor—quite a number.

JAMES GLEESON: Was Tucker one of them?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Tucker might have refused to have anything to do with it—I am not sure—but Nolan was in it, and Arthur Boyd. You should have the catalogue for that.

JAMES GLEESON: It probably is in the catalogue.

NOEL COUNIHAN: The library would have the catalogue.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes; it was a famous exhibition.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Place, Taste and Tradition may list the artists who were in it. I can't remember.

JAMES GLEESON: It probably does. My memory is a bit vague.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Mine is too, Jim, but I know that Nolan's Latrine sitter was in it. Tucker might have had something in it. We were having great arguments with Tucker at the time because he did not support the war at all. That was the basis of the fight that took place in Angry Penguins—apart from the more hairy aspects of the debate, which was a youthful debate and which had all the excesses of a youthful debate. Basically, the people who were associated with me in the Contemporary Arts Society were there. The prosecution of the war at that stage dominated everything, but for people like Tucker it was only one big nuisance.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. Harry de Hartog—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Harry de Hartog was in it. Harry would have a good memory.

JAMES GLEESON: Jimmy Cant was away in Europe, wasn't he?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Cant would have been back by then. He was a foundation member of SORA (Studio of Realist Art) Australia with Missingham, Dalgarno and McClintock. The Anti-fascist show was very largely a Melbourne show. I don't know whether there was much in the way of interstate stuff in it.

JAMES GLEESON: I don't think so. The connection between the states was very limited in those days.
NOEL COUNIHAN: It still is.

JAMES GLEESON: But that was not the first time you showed. You had been showing paintings before, hadn't you?

NOEL COUNIHAN: No, I had only just started to paint.

JAMES GLEESON: So that was your first?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Not the first. Which comes first I am not quite sure, but I started to exhibit with the Contemporary Arts Society. I had drawings in the inaugural exhibition.

JAMES GLEESON: The one in 1938.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, I had drawings in the inaugural exhibition of 1939. The society was founded in 1938 but its first show was in 1939 at the National Gallery. I had drawings in that, but I did not start to paint until 1941, after I had been ill with TB. The others were all more or less in uniform and I was a civilian because I had the TB. I started to paint when I came out of the sanatorium in 1941. By the time that was painted, for example, I had only been painting for two or three years at the most. By 1942 I had been painting about eighteen months.

JAMES GLEESON: So that is the earliest one we have of yours.

NOEL COUNIHAN: That is the earliest, yes. It was painted under the direct influence of the war. Only two or three pictures in that vein were in existence. I destroyed most of them because I became very dissatisfied with them. I felt they did not have the feel of flesh and blood, because they did not arise out of my own personal experience.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: They were idea paintings. The sympathy and the feeling were there. What I was trying to do was clear, but to me it was not what I really wanted to do. I felt I was doing something else out of a sense of duty, although the issues all meant a lot to me. Theoretically I came to the point of view that art only really comes out of one's own personal experience of life. So I destroyed everything that I had done, with two or three exceptions. One of them, at least, escaped by accident. I only discovered it a year or so ago. I didn't know it was still in existence. It is in a private collection in Sydney.

JAMES GLEESON: How do you regard The New Order? How do you think it stands?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It stands as an example of what I felt, and of my philosophy at the time. But otherwise I think it is a theatrical and rather clumsy thing. It is certainly not painted without feeling—I was very deeply involved in the whole thing. When you come to this, you come to it out of personal experience and observation.
JAMES GLEESON: We don’t have a date on that, Noel. Can you remember?

NOEL COUNIHAN: We can check it from Place, Taste and Tradition.

JAMES GLEESON: Is it reproduced in that?

NOEL COUNIHAN: No, but the Australia at War show is dealt with in some detail.

JAMES GLEESON: It was shown in the Australia at War show.

NOEL COUNIHAN: There is no date on it. I did not start dating the signatures until much later. I think it would be 1945, but we can check that.

JAMES GLEESON: Good.

NOEL COUNIHAN: That exhibition was organised by the Artists Advisory Panel, which was created during the war for the purpose of trying to see that governments made more sensible and effective use of artists than they did in the First World War—other than official war artists. It was called the Australia at War exhibition and it dealt with the work, not only of people in the armed forces but also of people in the essential services, in the munitions industry and so on. I was not in the army. I was very much at that stage in the grip of feeling that I had to draw on personal experience. The miners were working flat-out to produce enough coal for the emergency and had been maligned and calumniated in the press for their militancy over the years, despite the awful tragedies that had occurred at Wonthaggi and other places. So I thought I would pay the miners a tribute. I asked the state mine management if I could go down the pits at Wonthaggi, the state coalmine, and study the men at work. They were terribly reluctant because at the time I was the cartoonist for the Communist Party Weekly, The Guardian, and they thought I was motivated purely by the desire to make political propaganda. I was not at all. I had interviews with the management, and they said they would let me down a particular pit, the VIP pit—the Governor’s wife could go down there. It was all vacuumed—

JAMES GLEESON: Good lord!

NOEL COUNIHAN: It had everything but a red carpet. Nevertheless, that particular drive had caused terrible havoc in the ranks of the miners. It was a white elephant; it was not really in production. Carving the tunnelling of that particular drive filled the lungs of many a miner with dust, with sandstone. I deal with it in the linocuts, The miners. There is one called The cough. That was the only area they were going to let me down. So I went to the miners union and said, ‘This is the situation’. I explained why I wanted to go down. I said, ‘I want to go anywhere a miner goes, but I will go with my sketchbook. I want to see the whole thing at first-hand’. So they sent a message up to the mine management from one of the pits that, if the artist bloke was not allowed down, there were going to be pit top meetings. So I was allowed down. I stayed in a miner’s home.
JAMES GLEESON: How long were you there?

NOEL COUNIHAN: I was there a month. I went down every day; I went everywhere they went. It was a revelation, and something I have never forgotten. When I came up I had a sketchbook full of very rough documentary drawings for these paintings.

JAMES GLEESON: What did you do for light?

NOEL COUNIHAN: I had a light; I wore a helmet. I was in areas in the narrow seam where there was longwall mining. The distance between the roof, which they called 'the ground', and what we would call the ground is only eighteen inches. So a miner spent eight hours a day swinging a pick, lying on his side in a wet, dripping space eighteen inches in height. The wall went along fifty or sixty feet. The men worked in pairs at intervals along it. There were underground fires and underground lakes. It is an extraordinary atmosphere. You realise why miners are so imaginative and why so much music and literature has come out of mines. It is a world of its own. The miners are always confronted with the possibility of death; they are never really free from that. I think that claustrophobic environment stimulates the imagination and so you get eisteddfods and D.H. Lawrence and Henry Moore—you get all sorts of things out of coal mining areas. I was drawing in one area, lying flat on my belly, and every time I raised my head to look over the top of my sketchbook to draw the man in front, my head hit the roof. I was lying on my belly and he was lying on his side, swinging a pick. So I came up. I had a month of it, and then I came back and I painted the three paintings which I entered into the Australia at War Exhibition. This one won the first prize for the whole show and also first prize for its area, which was the war production industry. I also won the second prize in that section.

JAMES GLEESON: Another miner?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Another miner. Another painting either won the third prize or shared it. Anyhow, they won the major prizes in the show. There were other prize winners in different areas.

JAMES GLEESON: What happened to the sketchbooks? Did you hang onto them?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, I have a lot of the sketches. I regard them as very rough documentary drawings with very little real aesthetic. They only have the value that they are first-hand notation, but they gave me the material that I needed. I have always worked from memory, anyhow; all my work is the result of digested experience. Since the days when I destroyed all the idea things—
JAMES GLEESON: Like the earlier ones.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: The first ones.

NOEL COUNIHAN: In the following year I made the set of linocuts.

JAMES GLEESON: So that followed on fairly soon.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. They were probably created within a year or two.

JAMES GLEESON: I see; that is this group.

NOEL COUNIHAN: *The miners*, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: This was your first one of the folio.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. That was the first folio. I did six and sold them for five guineas a folio. So people got six for the price of five guineas. James E. Flett printed them on his old flatbed. He had one of those big turn-of-the-century flywheels. Jim has always been obsessed with printing. He printed them, and I hawked them around the place myself.

JAMES GLEESON: You taught yourself the craft of linocutting?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. Flett had done a lot of linocuts that were technically very interesting. The National Gallery here has one or two that were done in the late twenties—romantic multi-colour linocuts. Eric Thake was working on his *Moby Dick* series, and Eric left me the gravers, the cutters. Anyone who saw what they were doing would have seen that what I did had nothing to do with what they were doing. I was just trying to carve out some form of graphic expression for myself. In the early thirties I had done some linocuts, a couple of which will be reproduced in a catalogue raisonné of my prints which Bob Smith has almost completed. It will be published next year. Richard Gryphon, from Gryphon Books, is publishing it. He did the Donald Friend *Bumbooziana*. I had done some very rough colour linocuts, cubist things. They showed my first interest in cubism, in about 1932. I did one for the cover of the University Labour Club magazine *Proletariat*, which was under Marxist editorial leadership at the time. It was identifying itself with the militant working class movement throughout the world.

JAMES GLEESON: And these came well before the folio?
NOEL COUNIHAN: They came well before it. I did not do many, so when I started to cut the miners I had not had much experience. It was fairly fresh ground. I suppose I was feeling my way. The main thing is that I was trying to achieve vivid, graphic images that would have something of the feel of the industry.

JAMES GLEESON: There is no doubt that the sympathy you felt comes through very clearly. Before we leave the miner subject, you mentioned to me earlier that you were unhappy about the way they are framed at the moment—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, the other one you have, and The miner. I saw them in the exhibition that Alan McCulloch organised, The Heroic Years. I was disappointed because I felt their impact was minimised by the very simple, stark frame. I do not want elaborate framing, but I do feel that a different type of frame is needed for work which has a feel of three dimensions, even if it still has a feel for the picture frame, the surface plane of the painting. I think the frame needs to be different from the very simple sort of frame which can be used on the paintings which rest entirely on the picture frame in the two-dimensional way. For Fred Williams’ landscapes, a very simple wooden frame, if it is relieved from the edge of the canvas, looks quite good. But I think that these paintings, which are three-dimensional, need a different—

JAMES GLEESON: A detailed—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. It does not need to be elaborate; it can be as simple as anything, but I think it should be in recess in some way.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes. That gives us some idea about that. You also mentioned to me earlier that you had done three folios of prints at various times, the first one being The miners.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. That gives us some idea about that. You also mentioned to me earlier that you had done three folios of prints at various times, the first one being The miners.

NOEL COUNIHAN: The first one was The miners. My long planned trip to Europe had been put off by the war. As was the case for many of my generation, the war was a very big interruption. In preparation for my trip I had to raise additional money. One of the ways I thought of doing it was to make a set of six stone lithographs which were printed by Rem McClintock, who had a nice big litho press. They were on disparate subjects, whereas The miners was on the one thing.

JAMES GLEESON: On the one subject, yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: They were variations on the one thing, different aspects of it. The themes were varied. The images do not have the same sort of thing in common. I put them into a cover. There was a zinc plate lithograph glued onto the cover; so the cover also contained its own print. Vance Palmer kindly wrote a forward to it.
JAMES GLEESON: That is this one.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes.

JAMES GLEESON: We have that. That was 1948?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. The edition was to go to 100, but it didn’t quite; I think it went to about eighty-five or ninety. The edition is stated as 100, but I don’t think we quite reached the 100.

JAMES GLEESON: Head of a young child—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, Portrait of my mother.

JAMES GLEESON: We didn’t know that. We have a profile—

NOEL COUNIHAN: It is called The artist’s mother.

JAMES GLEESON: The artist’s mother—so that is something we should correct. Is the child any identification?

NOEL COUNIHAN: He starts off with my firstborn. It is not a portrait, but a lot of the feel for the head comes from watching him. Also, that is in reverse. That is from a reverse print. There were two. The printer ran into a problem with the stone. It was beginning to play up after about 20-odd, so he ran a wet print through onto a zinc plate and made a reverse print. That looks to me as though it is one of the reverse prints. I get confused myself now. There are two of them, anyhow. I am pretty sure that is one of the reverse prints.

JAMES GLEESON: And that was done from a zinc plate?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It was printed from a zinc plate.

JAMES GLEESON: And what about the others?

NOEL COUNIHAN: So that was a break. You might say that a number of those were printed in the positive sense off the stone and then, to complete the edition, he had to go on to zinc and he completed it in zinc. The zinc printed much more easily. They are very good prints.

JAMES GLEESON: That relates only to—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Only to the boy’s head, yes.

JAMES GLEESON: All the others were done from stone.

NOEL COUNIHAN: The others were done from stone.
JAMES GLEESON: That's your mother.

NOEL COUNIHAN: My mother. That is a foundry worker. I had been wandering around inside an iron foundry in Richmond and making studies of the men at work there. I painted one or two paintings of moulders, design workers and then did some silk-screen prints of heads of ironworkers and two or three lithographs.

JAMES GLEESON: You have worked in a lot of printing areas, then. Etching?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Etching much later—and not so much etching as drypoint and aquatint.

JAMES GLEESON: Linocutting, silk-screening—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, stone and zinc lithography—

JAMES GLEESON: Does that have a title?

NOEL COUNIHAN: That comes out of a theme that I am talking about In a foundry.

JAMES GLEESON: It is In a foundry? We have just called it, for identification, 'Three men inside, two outside'.

NOEL COUNIHAN: It's In a foundry.

JAMES GLEESON: The same foundry as you did this—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. I did two or three head studies, but they did not all go into the edition. That was a comment on the current fashion. It was a fashion called the New Look, or something. The girls were looking like grandma. I did a sort of a Collins Street thing. It is not of much consequence, just a light-hearted thing. That was another one based on a foundry worker; just a worker resting. I think it is called A worker resting.

JAMES GLEESON: Good. That allows us to identify those particular subjects. Noel, the next folio was of War and Peace of 1950. You told me that was done at the Abbey in England.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, the Abbey Arts Centre, which was a happy enough home for a number of our contemporaries. No doubt a number have come afterwards.

JAMES GLEESON: Is it still going?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. I don't lose touch with people. I still have contact with Kate Olley. We write periodically. She came to see my show in London in 1973. William had died and left the place to her. She had a very interesting career but I do not think there is any point in going into that here. I was helped to go to London by a committee that was set up here. It consisted of the three writers Vance Palmer, Frank Dalby Davidson and Juda Waten, George Selaif, the Secretary of the Meatworkers Union, Don Thompson of the Building Workers Union, Dr Donald Lawson—there might have been another doctor—and possibly Guy Reynolds, the psychiatrist; I can't quite remember. They established a fund to help me to get away, which enabled me to sell more of my work in a more concentrated way. Some functions were put on to raise money where I could sell my work, including those prints, the lithographs. The lithographs played a considerable part in raising enough money for me to go. The set was sold at ten guineas a folio.
JAMES GLEESON: What was the edition?

NOEL COUNIHAN: There were up to ninety, of which maybe fifty or sixty were sold, complete. Then a number of them were sold as individual prints.

JAMES GLEESON: Broken up.

NOEL COUNIHAN: They were broken up and sold as prints. People could buy them for a guinea or thirty bob, something like that. That played a very big part in getting me away. The miners’ wives, the women’s auxiliary of the miners’ federation in Wonthaggi, organised a function and raised forty pounds to help to send me away. I think back on that with great pleasure. When Humphrey McQueen talks nonsense in—

JAMES GLEESON: In the Black swan—

NOEL COUNIHAN: In the Black Swan about my pictures of the relatively impotent and depressed miners, I think of the miners’ wives running functions to express their appreciation of the images that I created and, in the words of an old friend, ‘I turn to my beer and smile’. There is a lot of nonsense in that book.

When I got to England I heard almost immediately about this big peace congress that was about to take place in Paris. Very little word of it had reached Australia because there was an organised blackout of news. The press published nothing. When you consider the enormous expense involved in sending a delegation from Australia to Europe—even in those days it was very expensive—it looked as though we would not be represented there. Some other Australians who were in London and who were as concerned as I was wrote to various of our connections back here to see about proxy delegation. I was given proxy delegation from the various maritime workers unions in Victoria—the seamen, the waterside workers, the railway workers, tramway workers and the coal miners. I was given proxy delegation and credentials, so I went to Paris with a group of others.

JAMES GLEESON: Was Jack Lindsay with you?
NOEL COUNIHAN: No, Jack wasn't. He had been to the Congress of Intellectuals for Peace at Rotslav the year earlier, which was the source of the Paris Peace Congress. That was a congress of intellectuals from all over the world, except from Australia. Jack Lindsay had gone from England. It was from that congress or conference that a call for a mass world congress was issued. About 2,000 delegates attended the congress at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, where Chopin’s piano is still in the foyer. It is a marvellous big hall.

JAMES GLEESON: How long did that conference take?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Three days. Some of the most outstanding intellectuals in the world were there: J.D. Bernal, the English physicist and crystallographer, on whose work so much rests. Also there was Joliot-Curie, who was the father of the French nuclear industry. I stayed in a house on his heavier-than-water nuclear plant at Fontaineau Falls with one of the engineers there. That is where I saw my first television. I had a television set in my bedroom made by the engineer who used to make them in his spare time.

JAMES GLEESON: Goodness. That was 1950?

NOEL COUNIHAN: 1950, yes. There was Paul Robeson, Pablo Neruda, Picasso, Gromaire, Feugereau, and Guttuso, the Italian—a whole bunch of Italians. There was Mucchi and the English draughtsman, a very good draughtsman, Paul Hogarth. There was a big pile of American writers and educationalists. Then from black Africa and from Asia and India there were big delegations. It was marvellous for me to meet people of so many colours and so many cultures from all over the world. There was a big Russian delegation led by Fedovov, a novelist whose work I admired very much. He was a big, handsome man who committed suicide later. He was a very good friend and admirer of Katherine Susannah Prichard. There was an extraordinary variety of people there. I received a great impetus from that and from meeting Picasso and talking to him. I got him to sign an appeal—and a lot of the others whose names I have mentioned, but he was one of the first people I asked. I wrote a statement, which was an appeal on behalf of our delegation, that I wanted to be sent to Australia to break the blanket of silence. I thought the press would not be able to ignore—

JAMES GLEESON: Such a name.

NOEL COUNIHAN: A call that was signed by such people. Picasso and all the others signed it, and I sent it to Vance Palmer with a request that he put it into the hands of the press. I thought that if it came from Palmer, and with those signatures, it would have to break the silence because it was total. But it never arrived.

JAMES GLEESON: The document never arrived?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Palmer never received it.
JAMES GLEESON: Isn’t that interesting?

NOEL COUNIHAN: That’s just a little sidelight on the politics of the time. I am sure it still goes on, what with ASIO and company. So Palmer never received that—and it was sent by registered mail and all the rest of it, airmail. I went back to England and my head was so full of the peace struggle that I designed and cut this set of linocuts, 12 of them. I was earning a living. I had struck it good after hawking my … along The Strand, as the old song goes—hawking my wares up and down Fleet Street. I struck it lucky with The Daily Mail. The managing editor thought he had discovered another great cartoonist from the Antipodes, following on Dyson and Lowe. They love to discover somebody like that. He gave me a commission, which suited me down to the ground, to draw a library of political celebrities, but in caricature, which was my field. He tried very hard to persuade me to make political cartoons. He told me what I could earn. At that time it was about 70 pounds. I could have expected 70 quid a week, sterling.

JAMES GLEESON: Big sums in those days.

NOEL COUNIHAN: It is very big money for a daily cartoon or a feature cartoon several times a week. I had to duckshove and backstep and persuade him that I was in England to learn to study painting and that I had a family and that I would be very happy just to earn enough to get by so I could continue my work. So I finally persuaded him to just let me draw one caricature a week, for which in Australia—say, from The Bulletin or from The Melbourne Herald or from any of the Sydney press—I would have got at the most two guineas. I got ten, and a contract from The Daily Mail. So I was able to express myself freely, without any political commitment, and got me a press pass into the House of Commons, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I so loved watching the debates there and the way they carried on. I would spend a lot of time, similarly, in the state house here, which was like going to the zoo—but a very low zoo, a zoo on a very poor level, where the level of debate was shocking. I found that very exciting. We could live on that. At The Abbey, that ten guineas a week could keep Pat and the two young kids. We could live, not extravagantly, but we could get by on that. That financed that set of prints.

JAMES GLEESON: Linocuts.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. So I invited Jack and Ann, his then wife who had died of cancer at an early age, unfortunately, out to dinner. Jack saw these prints all around the studio wall. Alan Davey was in the next studio and he photographed some of my paintings for me. He is a good photographer, Alan. Anyhow, Jack liked them and he said he would like to write a poem to them and maybe we could publish them in some form together, in book form. I thought that was a very good idea. About three days later I rang him up and said I was very pleased with that suggestion and had he thought any more about it. ‘Yes’, he said, ‘the poems are all written’.
JAMES GLEESON: Goodness!

NOEL COUNIHAN: He had taken home a set. I had given him a set of the press. So he wrote the set of verses. We tried to get them published. We were going to dedicate them to the Second Peace Congress, which was to take place in Sheffield, but the British government would not let the delegates from Europe in, except Picasso.

JAMES GLEESON: Good lord!

NOEL COUNIHAN: Picasso was the only delegate from the continent to be allowed to land. This was a Labour government, the Attlee Government, but the Minister for Internal Affairs, Chuter Ede, was a shockingly rightwing reactionary, one of the worst. So in the grip of the Cold War and with the Americans breathing heavily down the backs of their necks and tying them up economically, they banned the continental delegates. So the congress opened but could not go on. Picasso delivered a splendid little speech, maybe one of the only public speeches he ever made in his life. I went there. At that stage I had been commissioned by the World Federation of Trade Unions to make drawings for their monthly journal, which was a multi-lingual journal, published in about seven languages. I started making illustrations of cartoons for that. But I made the mistake of doing the first ones under my own name, and some of my London market dried up immediately. The *Radio Times*, which I started to draw for, suddenly dried up, although I knew the editors were friendly. Someone said, ‘Why don’t you draw under a pen name?’ So I did. I stopped drawing under ‘Counihan’ and I took the good old Australian word ‘yakka’. I drew under the name of ‘Yakka’. I ended up drawing under three pen names for different papers. So I went to the opening of the congress as an artist correspondent for the World Federation of Trade Unions, and Picasso delivered this funny little speech. He did not talk about any of the things that the other delegates talked about. He talked—and everyone, I think, appreciated this—almost with the simplicity of a child, about how his father loved birds. During that First Peace Congress Paris was flooded with Picasso’s dove.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Absolutely flooded with it. It was a beautiful poster.

JAMES GLEESON: It was.

NOEL COUNIHAN: I think it was actually a fantail pigeon. It was white—it might have been a white dove, but it is immaterial. Anyhow, he said that his father loved birds and that they always had pigeons and doves and things. His father was a painter and a teacher at the Barcelona Academy. He had learnt, he said, not only to love birds but also to draw and paint them. For him, the bird was a symbol of liberty and peace. He just talked like that, in this very simple way. He didn’t talk about imperialism or anything else. He got a tremendous hand. He pulled this bit of paper out of his pocket and he just read it like that. He took about three minutes. Then the Polish Government sent aircraft over and said that they would fly—the whole congress could take place in Warsaw. And that is what happened. The Second World Congress took place in Warsaw, but only because the British Government had made it impossible for it to take place. I didn’t go. I could have got into an aeroplane on the spot and gone, but I had Pat and the kids back in London, and I felt I couldn’t do that. Jack and I had intended to produce this little book, which we did, dedicated to that congress. We couldn’t get printers to handle it, particularly in the time, but I think there were other things as well. So he sent it off. He had contacts with Orbis, the state printing firm in Prague. Within about eight days the book was back in that form, very nicely printed, and we sold it for about four shillings.
a copy.
JAMES GLEESON: So that at that stage there was the folio.

NOEL COUNIHAN: No, at that stage only in loose sheets. So then I went ahead with a local printer. I got the London booksellers Collets. They thought it was a good idea that they should be published in a folio. Under their auspices it was printed in Britain and published as a folio in an edition of about 300.

JAMES GLEESON: I see—and this was without Jack’s poems?

NOEL COUNIHAN: That is without Jack’s poems, yes. The book contains all the poems. So this new limited edition, which Gryphon Books have published here—

JAMES GLEESON: That came out this year?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It came out this year. That contains both productions in the one set of covers, with the original prefaces and forewords, the original poems—Jack’s poems.

JAMES GLEESON: Are they done from the original plates?

NOEL COUNIHAN: No; they are photo reproduction from the original blocks. They are from the original prints, but not from the lino, because I haven’t got them. I think they were destroyed. I stayed on in London drawing for various papers, with the ups and downs and various vicissitudes of a freelance existence. I did political cartoons for a liberal paper, not in the Australian political party sense, but for a magazine called Public Opinion. You may remember it. It was contributed to by Ronald Searle and Paul Hogarth, writers like Jack Lindsay, poets like Randall Swingler and all sorts of people. It was edited by a very famous journalist, an Irish columnist named Bill Connors, who wrote under the name of ‘Cassandra’.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.
NOEL COUNIHAN: He was the tribune for the other ranks in the British Army—the ordinary British Tommy during the war regarded Cassandra as his mouthpiece, almost like his ombudsman. He was a very interesting personality. The Daily Mirror owned Public Opinion. They had bought it in an attempt to set up a magazine which would compete with the new Statesman and Nation. So under Cassandra’s editorship, there was a wide political spectrum from left to right. He wanted my cartoons and he also wanted me to write, because I had some reportage published here. He thought that I could write and illustrate my own reportage in Britain. He sent me off to examine the state of the North Sea fishing industry and the state of the nationalised railways—he gave me some very good commissions—which I wrote and also illustrated. But he wanted political cartoons, and I felt with him I could get away with it. But I didn’t draw them under my own name; I drew under another one. I took Kevin Barry’s name, this time, a good Irish revolutionary. Cassandra was an Irishman. So I drew under the name of Barry. I used to feed him with three ideas. One was straight out for his rejection, the next one he might play with, but the third one he would accept. And it worked. He was firmly convinced that he chose the cartoons. But he was fed with two which were too Left for him to print. I knew I would get the other one in. So we had a very good working relationship. But then there was a power struggle in the big monopoly, the big international paper outlet run by The Daily Mirror. Public opinion was a casualty in this big struggle up in the board of directors.

JAMES GLEESON: Before we go on with that, can we go back to War and peace? I feel that we need to talk about the ideas that you had for War and peace.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Obviously it was a play—War or Peace, as opposed to War and Peace. I am not quite sure what you want to know here.

JAMES GLEESON: We have these images incorrectly here. So it is not ‘War and Peace’—it is War or peace. We have it on our card as ‘War or peace’, but here someone has copied that incorrectly.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Here I was concerned with the struggle for war. It seemed to me that the outcome would depend on the mobilisation of mass opinion throughout the world and that, if things were allowed to go rip, the way they were going, the war was inevitable. You might remember, for example, that a little later the Stockholm appeal resulted in about 400,000,000 signatures, of which over 1,000,000 were gathered in Australia. One of these prints here deals with that. In 1949, when I visited Eastern Europe, I went to Auschwitz and to Stutthof, two separate concentration camps.

JAMES GLEESON: So No. 5—
NOEL COUNIHAN: That comes out of the chimney of the incinerator, the death house, and that's a peace meeting.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: This is a women's demonstration for peace. Here, in a very English background—

JAMES GLEESON: No. 10, yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: There are people signing petitions in the street. Tables are set up in the streets with petitions, and people just stopped during their shopping and signed them. They collected over 400,000,000 signatures. That must have had some effect in high places. In one of Jack's poems he says that peace has 400,000,000 names, or something like that—he uses that expression. I had plenty of experience of demonstrations and police back here, so it came out of that. That one is in reverse. It should go the other way around.

JAMES GLEESON: They probably photographed it and printed it from the negative back to front.

NOEL COUNIHAN: That was based here on actions that the dockers were taking in Europe. They were refusing to load arms for Korea and for the Atlantic Pact powers. In Rotterdam and Cherbourg and places like that they took action against the unloading of arms. In some cases they pushed tanks off jetties into the harbour.

JAMES GLEESON: That tells us what we need to know about that. Thank you. The fourth set folio we have not dealt with and from it we only have three of the six prints. This did not have a common theme, I believe.

NOEL COUNIHAN: No. There are a variety of themes. One of them is a continuation of what we have been talking about. It is called Peace means life. It is a continued concern with the struggle for peace.

JAMES GLEESON: And there is Strontium 90.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Strontium 90 also. That is because of the nuclear threat. At the time I was working on these I had talks with Mark Oliphant because I was painting his portrait. He was coming here. These were done back here. I came back in 1952, and these were done in 1959. I was very concerned with the long life of radioactivity in things like Strontium 90, and the long-term threat to welfare. Namatjira had only recently died. There was that awful case where they arrested him for sharing his grog with a fellow tribesman. At one stage I understood that he was going to shoot himself. His brothers and his sons took the gun off him. He was absolutely wrecked by that. They had brought him to the eastern states to meet the Queen and done all the lip service, but they were really destroying him back at home. I had met him at a literary dinner earlier and thought what a simple, modest and dignified man he was. He was obviously very talented, irrespective of what people think of what he eventually did. We know whom he learnt from. He learnt very quickly. A lot of the things he painted about when he was at his best, about the Centre, are very true. The fact that all those images were commercialised later on is another matter.
He was a man between two cultures, and I respected him very much. I felt that something should be done about his tragic end, so I did a sort of a crucifixion figure, with Namatjira crucified. In 1956 I spent a month in Italy. I had been shocked by some of the poverty there, but also by the prevalence on the streets of well-fed priests prowling around in pairs. So I did a design called Memory of Italy, which contains in the one image a couple of sleek priests and a beggar. It was a simple juxtaposition of images, but I think it worked. Each print I tried to cut in a different way to exploit a different virtue of the medium. So if you look at them you will find that they do not just repeat themselves; each print has a different feel. That was very deliberate.

JAMES GLEESON: And that derived from the theme itself?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, arising out of the theme, and the type of image and the desire to extend the possibilities of the medium, even though working purely in the graphic terms of black and white. Some are white on black, some are black on white, some with a white engraved line, some with a black line. There is a black silhouette on the white paper; the images are approached aesthetically with a different feel in each case.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. We are missing three of these: Peace means life, Namatjira and Memory of Italy. But we have An old man, Strontium 90 and Hunger '59.

NOEL COUNIHAN: This catalogue is for an exhibition that has just taken place at Warrnambool, and it will go on a regional itinerary next year, when we are away. It is all prints and drawings. That is a drawing for Hunger. The linocut image is reversed. There are a whole series of studies, of which that is one.

JAMES GLEESON: I see. We have a number of independent studies of yours—not many so far—a Self portrait of 1970 in conté—

NOEL COUNIHAN: I am not sure which one it would be.

JAMES GLEESON: We haven't got the photograph of it, so you can't tell.

NOEL COUNIHAN: A waterside worker, sepia wash.

JAMES GLEESON: I remember that one. It is a man carrying a load over his shoulder.
NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, he is carrying a bag. I did a number of them and I am not sure which one it would be.

JAMES GLEESON: I can recall that one very vividly, because it’s very forcefully drawn.

NOEL COUNIHAN: I am just not sure which one it would be, because I did a number of them. I spent some time at the waterfront. One of the union vigilance officers took me around, and I went down the hatches with the men and drew a lot of them and so on. I have made a number of paintings based on the themes of watersiders.

JAMES GLEESON: You still believe this direct experience is central to your work?

NOEL COUNIHAN: One takes off from a fresh charge. Leading a quiet life in a quiet suburban street is not enriching one’s experience of life a great deal. There’s time for meditation, but I think from time to time it is a very good thing to go out into other people’s worlds and take off from a fresh stimulus. I have always been interested in the human aspects of working people. I find that life etches its experiences in very marked ways on working class faces, as opposed to our more smooth middle class countenances. You meet wonderfully interesting faces amongst working people. Sometimes one is accused of idealising workers. When I was younger I might have done a bit of that, but on the whole most of my studies of working people, I think, have a flesh and blood reality.

JAMES GLEESON: It is certainly true of all your studies of writers.

NOEL COUNIHAN: The attitude towards them is no different. Overall, it is the same attitude because my aesthetic philosophy does not fit into different compartments. It is one overall philosophy, which a lot of critics don’t necessarily understand. They try to compartmentalise you. You have to bear a label, whether you like it or not. As you know, labels are really only for convenience.

JAMES GLEESON: To help identify—

NOEL COUNIHAN: That’s all. Whether it is impressionist or anything else, once you examine labels, they do not have a great deal of validity. They are only matters of convenience.

JAMES GLEESON: Of these three, Dalby Davidson, Katherine, and Dolphin—

NOEL COUNIHAN: That’s the first one. It is dated 1947. It is the second portrait I painted.

JAMES GLEESON: What was the first?
NOEL COUNIHAN: The first one was William Dolphin, the violinmaker. That is in the Newcastle Gallery. I sent it to the Archibald, it must have been, in 1946, it was painted in 1946. I am not sure how they were dating the Archibald then—the year or the year later. The trustees gave Bill Dargie the prize and Missingham didn’t agree with this. He hung Dobell’s Professor Giblin on one side of it and my Bill Dolphin on the other, because he felt that either of those—

JAMES GLEESON: Would be better—

NOEL COUNIHAN: Would have been, from his point of view, a better choice than the winner. So Bill Dolphin was the first portrait I painted, and Frank Dalby Davidson was the second one.

JAMES GLEESON: Was that ever shown in an Archibald?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. It went up with a group of paintings from Melbourne in a crate and was never unpacked.

JAMES GLEESON: For goodness’ sake!

NOEL COUNIHAN: Frank rushed over, when the show was open, to see his portrait. He wanted to see himself hung in the Archibald. He thought it had been rejected and he was furious. He rushed around. No one had ever heard of it.

JAMES GLEESON: What had happened?

NOEL COUNIHAN: There were about six or eight paintings packed in Melbourne in a crate and sent up. They had gone into the stores and were lost sight of. There was one of Archie Colquhoun’s, and there were some others from Melbourne.

JAMES GLEESON: That never even got looked at. Some funny things happen in the art world.

NOEL COUNIHAN: The Palmer was painted some years later. The Palmer and the Katherine Prichard were hung in various Archibald shows. They didn’t win it, but they were hung.

JAMES GLEESON: And Jack Lindsay was the latest one of these?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes. That was painted in 1974 in England.

JAMES GLEESON: Yes.

NOEL COUNIHAN: At odd intervals I had made some line sketches of his head and so on. But he didn’t sit for it; I painted it from memory, the same as, say, the Alan Marshall up there. Alan never knew that was painted until I showed it to him. The way I work in portraiture the sitter has never seen this one here. He has never seen me pick up a brush. I sit with them for a couple of hours and talk and when they have gone—
JAMES GLEESON: You make mental notes?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, when they have gone. Then I start to paint what I feel about them. That was painted from small studies—

JAMES GLEESON: The Frank Dalby Davidson?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Yes, and sketches. The painting was done separately from Frank. He might have come a few times and sat, but I used to go to his place and make drawings.

JAMES GLEESON: And what about the Katherine Susannah Pritchard?

NOEL COUNIHAN: That is one of the few that was painted absolutely directly straight from the sitter. She was in Melbourne for about a week or so, and she could only give me three days. I used to go out to where she was staying, which was at the home of this lady, Mrs Stone—

JAMES GLEESON: Who had given it to us as a gift.

NOEL COUNIHAN: Mrs Stone was an old friend of Katherine’s. I worked on it morning and afternoon for two and a half days, directly from her. Then I went home and I went to bed for the weekend. I was—

JAMES GLEESON: Exhausted

NOEL COUNIHAN: I was drained right out, because it was very close, very concentrated work. She never liked it. Doon did—Doon bought it on the spot. But Katherine could not face up to the aging process. She had been a very, very attractive woman and the writers were all in love with her at different stages. She must have exerted a lot of attraction and appeal, with the little cloche hats and her big eyes and so on. If you ever see any photographs of her you will see that she is always wearing a hat tipped on one side, with one eye showing. I think her son Rick, when he wrote her biography, published this along with some of the photographs. But she never agreed to its use as a representative image of her. I was very impressed with her and for me it was the best I could do in the way of a tribute to her. But she couldn’t quite feel it that way. She was sick.

JAMES GLEESON: I see.

NOEL COUNIHAN: She was sick and she was old and she preferred to—

JAMES GLEESON: To remember—

NOEL COUNIHAN: To remember herself as she was. One doesn’t blame her.
JAMES GLEESON: What about Jack Lindsay? Has he seen his?

NOEL COUNIHAN: Jack likes it. I have a letter from Jack. He went to see it. It was shown. There was a special exhibition in 1974 in Lincolnshire and at the Commonwealth Gallery. It was to celebrate the bicentenary of Matthew Flinders. So they put on a show in Lincoln of the work of Australian artists working in England. All of us who were there put work into it. I put in about half a dozen things, including the portrait of Jack. He saw it when it came to London and it was hung at the Commonwealth Gallery. He liked it very much, I am pleased to say.

JAMES GLEESON: Noel, thank you very much for giving us this time. I think that covers it pretty well. Just before we go, the medium of these three portraits?

NOEL COUNIHAN: The first one of Frank Dalby Davidson contains some tempera with oil over painting and glazing.

JAMES GLEESON: It is on canvas or board?

NOEL COUNIHAN: It is on hardboard. The next one of Katherine Susannah Pritchard is straight oil.

JAMES GLEESON: On canvas?

NOEL COUNIHAN: On canvas, but there could be some tempera under painting and heightening in the face, but I think only in the face and the hair. And then there is glazing and over painting in oil. The Jack Lindsay is, I think, completely oil on canvas, from beginning to end.

JAMES GLEESON: Thank you very much.