ARTHUR BOYD - A VISUAL TIMELINE

BUNDANON TRUST EDUCATION GUIDE

Open Country cottage, Murrumbeena, c1917

Arthur Merric Bloomfield Boyd is born at Murrumbeena, a suburb of Melbourne, to Merric and Doris Boyd (ceramicist and painter respectively). His grandparents Arthur Merric and Emma Minnie are also artists. Arthur grows up at Open Country in an environment where everyone is encouraged to paint, draw or model in clay. The Brown Room is the focus of family life.

24 JULY 1920

Merric Boyd
Figure of Arthur Boyd age three years 1923
Ceramic

Merric Boyd's eight fire box kiln at Open Country, Murrumbeena, c1917

Arthur's father Merric Boyd- *the father of Australian studio pottery*- experiments with high heat in a gas kiln. There is a fire at the kiln, the pottery, studio kiln and recipes for glazes are destroyed. Merric suffers a breakdown and his epilepsy worsens.

"My mother ...was the backbone of our family. Without her, our life would have fallen to pieces" Arthur Boyd

1926

Storm Sky 1933
Oil on board
First oil painting by Arthur Boyd

The 'brown room' at Open Country cottage 1917-19 with sculpture *The Prodigal Son* by Merric Boyd.

Arthur leaves Murrumbeena state school, where he won the First Award for Art for three years in a row. He works in his uncle's paint factory, and his wages are used to support the family. He paints portraits of his siblings and self portraits.

1934

House at Murrumbeena 1934
Oil on board

Following the death of his wife Emma Minnie Arthur's grandfather, Arthur Merric Boyd, moves to Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula. Arthur lives with him for three years, painting landscapes and family portraits with his grandfather's encouragement. He has a boat for exploring the bay and the creeks. He makes a cart for carrying all his painting equipment behind him on a bike.

1936

Self portrait 1935
Oil on canvas

Studio at Open Country designed by Robin Boyd

Arthur's grandfather commissions cousin, architect Robin Boyd, to design a studio at Open Country for Arthur to live and work in. Arthur, together with his brothers Guy and David, builds the studio.

1938

Pastoral landscape with fence c1936
Oil on canvas

Yvonne Lennie and Arthur Boyd in Bendigo 1941

AMB Pottery Muurumbeena. John Percival top LHS, Neil Douglas top RHS. Arthur Boyd decorating tea pot set lower LHS

Arthur Boyd's studio at Open Country, c1945: from left, Matcham Skipper, Myra Skipper, Joy Hester, Yvonne Lennie, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, photo Albert Tucker

The Grange Mural - detail

Family and friends at Open Country, c1951
l to r back; Hatton Beck, Merric Boyd, David Boyd, ; centre Yvonne and son Jamie Boyd, unidentified, John Perceval, Mary Boyd, Lucy Boyd(with child), Guy Boyd; front: Joy Hester, Arthur Boyd, Doris Boyd, source unknown.

Arthur endures army service. He meets painter Yvonne Lennie, his future wife, and other artists, including Sidney Nolan, John Perceval, Joy Hester and Albert Tucker. He exhibits with the Contemporary Art Society in Melbourne.

1941-44

Arthur lives at Murrumbeena with Yvonne from 1944. He establishes the AMB pottery with John Perceval, Neil Douglas and others.

1944

On 6 March 1945 Arthur and Yvonne are married. Arthur paints portraits of friends and family. The Brown Room is a meeting place for artists, poets and philosophers. Arthur meets European refugees such as artist Yosl Bergner.

1945-6

Arthur's uncle, the writer Martin Boyd, returns from Europe. He commissions Arthur to paint the Grange Mural,incorporating the biblical stories of Susannah and the Elders, The Prodigal Son and the Assumption, at the old family home at Harkaway, outside Melbourne.

1948-9

Arthur and his family visit Horsham and the Wimmera. National gallery of Victoria purchases *Irrigation Lake, Wimmera*. Arthur returns to Open Country and works on large painted tiles.

1950

Still life with piano 1940
Oil

Jug with church and country road c1940
Ceramic

Portrait of Yvonne Boyd 1945
Oil on canvas

Above
Figure study incomplete Prodigal son? 1948
Oil

Right
Plate, *Angel and ramox* 1948
Ceramic

Aboriginal home 1950s

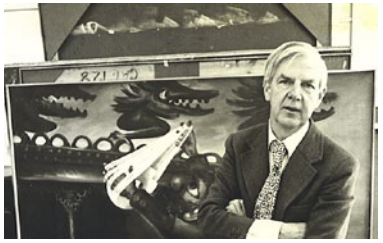


Photo: *Arthur Boyd with Bridegroom and Gargoyles*, 1958

Arthur travels to the Central Australia, where he experiences Aborigines for the first time. He is shocked by their living conditions.

Photo: Arthur Boyd working on maquette for Olympic sculpture, 1955

Arthur continues ceramic production and painting, including major ceramic commission for Melbourne Olympics in 1956. Represents Australia with Sir Arthur Streeton at the 1958 Venice Biennale. The *Antipodeans Exhibition* is launched and Merric Boyd dies. In November 1959 he travels with his family to England, supported by a stipend from Australian Galleries.

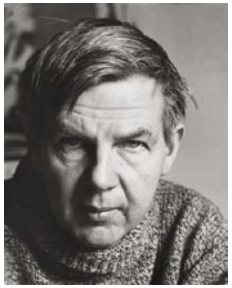


Photo left
Arthur Boyd in his studio in London, 1962, photo: Alex Poignant,

Arthur receives immediate critical acclaim with his first solo exhibition in London of mostly *Half-caste Bride* paintings in August 1960. He continues work on the Bride paintings and prints. He designs sets and costumes for Robert Helpmann's ballet *Electra*. Retrospective exhibition held at London's Whitechapel Gallery. Mother Doris Boyd dies in 1960. Arthur joins the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament protest.

Arthur's work includes theatre design, paintings and ceramics. He takes his first and only flight to Paris with Sidney Nolan and Barry Humphries in 1966 for a major Picasso show. Open Country is sold and Adelaide Festival retrospective of Boyd's work held. The Boyds travel to Europe, visiting Assisi, leading to the *St Francis* series.

Arthur signed a petition protesting about Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War- his son Jamie is of an age for service. He begins the *Nebuchadnezzar* paintings, attributing the series to anti-war protests. Franz Phillips' Arthur Boyd monograph is published.

Photo, Arthur Boyd painting at his easel, c1970

In England, Arthur spends time at his house in Suffolk painting landscapes. A print retrospective at Maltzan Gallery is held in London. *Lysistrata* collaboration is commenced with Peter Porter in 1970. He returns to Australia, travelling in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. He reviews the collection of drawings made by his father in the last years of his life and saved from Open Country. He produces *The Potter* series in homage to his parents.

1951 | **1955-59** | **1960-62** | **1963 to 1967** | **1968-70**

Ceramic painting, *Draft of fishes* 1950-52
Ceramic

Olympic sculpture completed 1956
Ceramic

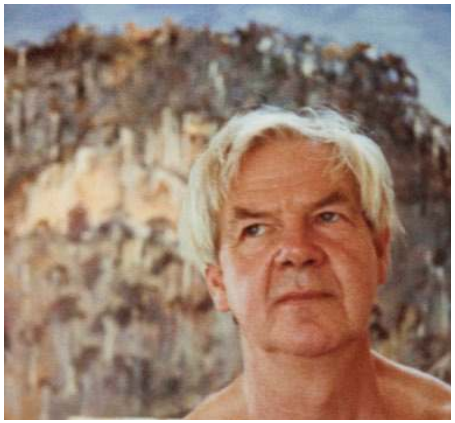
Lovers on fire in boat with kite 1965
Oil on canvas

Nebuchadnezzar with blue flowers and white dog c1969
Oil on canvas

Potter throwing a black figure 1968-9
Etching

Bundanon Homestead circa 1970

Riversdale, mid 1976c



Arthur Boyd in his studio at Riversdale, in the 1970s in front of a painting of Arthur's Hill.

Arthur leaves England to take up a Creative Arts Fellowship at ANU in October. He looks at properties around Canberra and visits Bundanon in late 1971 for two weeks as the guest of owners Frank McDonald and Sandra and Tony McGrath. Bundanon has a profound effect on Arthur.

Arthur returns to Canberra early 1972 and paints plein air using landscape, figures in landscape and the colours and high key tones of the Shoalhaven. He returns to England and decides to establish an Australian base on the Shoalhaven River. He asks Frank McDonald to look out for properties in the vicinity of Bundanon.

In England Arthur continues work inspired by Shoalhaven landscape, including paintings questioning his calling as an artist. Major exhibition at Fischer Fine Art, London is held. He buys Riversdale on the banks of the Shoalhaven near Bundanon and adds to the buildings to create a home and studio. He returns to Australia in October 1974; lives at Eearie Park while work at Riversdale is completed. He sees the Shoalhaven River in flood for the first time, which delays the move into Riversdale until May 1975.

Inspired by the election of Gough Whitlam, Arthur presents a major gift of paintings, ceramics, prints and drawings to the National Gallery of Australia. He continues Shoalhaven artworks and collaborates with poet Peter Porter on *The Lady and the Unicorn*, their second joint work. Porter's visit to Riversdale also results in a third collaboration, *Narcissus*. Returning to England he has a major exhibition at Fischer Fine Art, London. He begins the *Narcissus series* in 1977.

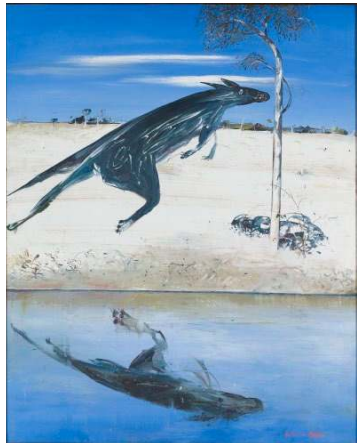
1971 **1972** **1973-4** **1975-77**

Landscape with white figure 1972
Oil on canvas

Suffolk landscape 1972
Oil

Waterfall and rock face at Shoalhaven Valley 1975
Watercolour and gouache on paper

The Lady and the Unicorn - The Unicorn and the Ark 1973-4
Etching and aquatint



Reflected kangaroo c1976
Oil on canvas

Bundanon Homestead, c1979

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd puchase Bundanon from Sandra and Tony McGrath and Frank McDonald in the summer of 1979.

Arthur Boyd building his studio at Bundanon, c1981

Arthur opposes sand mining on the Shoalhaven River. He starts to consider giving Bundanon away to the people of Australia. Arthur builds his studio at Bundanon.

Shoalhaven Spring Festival 1982

Arthur returns to England in early 1982. He makes the family house in Paretaio,Tuscany, available to the Australia Council for artists travelling overseas. Sandra McGrath's *The Artist and the River* published. Bundanon is open to the public for the first time in September 1982 as part of the Shoalhaven Spring Festival.

Arthur painting in the Shoalhaven bush c1980s

Arthur returns to Australia and Bundanon in February. He paints a series of large, iconic Shoalhaven images based on the river and bush around Bundanon. He is commissioned to design the tapestry for Great Hall of New Parliament House. He creates 16 canvases for the foyer of Victorian Arts Centre.

He is made Honorary Doctor of Letters, University of Melbourne.

Bundanon Homestead, c1985

He returns to England. The Shoalhaven works are shown at Australian Galleries in Melbourne and Holdsworth Gallery in Sydney.

Seven Persistent Images exhibition shows at Australian National Gallery, drawn from the 1975 Arthur Boyd gift. It tours nationally through to 1986. The film *Arthur Boyd in the Landscape* is made for London Weekend Television.

1978-9

1980-1

1982-83

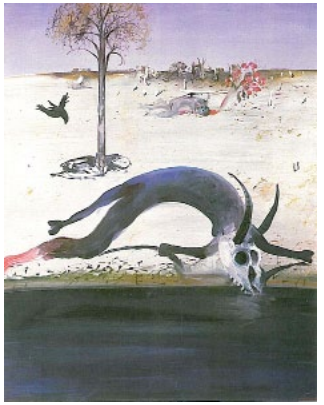
1984

1985

Untitled (Shoalhaven landscape) c1978
Ink drawing on paper

Shoalhaven landscape c1979
Oil on canvas,

Right
Crucifixion and rose 1979-80
Oil on canvas

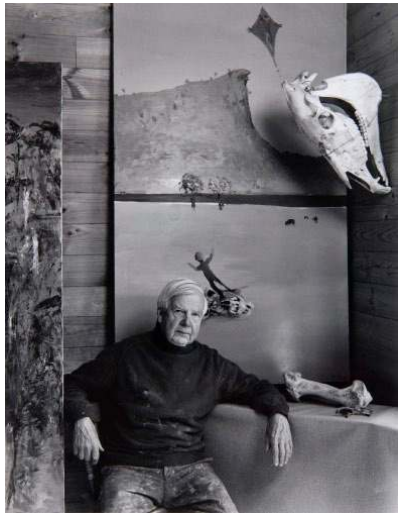


Curved body, Skull and Black Creek 1983

Hanging rocks and bathers 1985
Oil on canvas

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd on the balcony of Bundanon Homestead photo: Greg Weight, 1993

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd in the kitchen at Bundanon. photo: Greg Weight, 1993



Portrait of Arthur Boyd
photo: Greg Weight, 1993

Arthur Boyd and Prime Minister Paul Keating at Bundanon

Ursula Hoff's *The Art of Arthur Boyd* is published. Arthur represents Australia at the 43rd Venice Biennale in 1988 with eight major works. He is commissioned to paint *Earth and Fire* for the cover of TIME Magazine 28 November 1988 issue. He paints *The Australian Scapegoat*. The Boyd's begin to discuss the gifting of Bundanon with Federal Arts Minister Clyde Holding.

At the memorial service for Sir Sidney Nolan on 28 January 1993, Prime Minister Paul Keating announced the Australian Government's acceptance of Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift of Bundanon and the intention to establish the Bundanon Trust. Trustees are established by the Australian Govenrment to oversee the operation of Bundanon Trust. Arthur Boyd Retrospective held at AGNSW.

Bundanon's artist in residence program is advertised nationally. Janet McKenzie's *Arthur Boyd at Bundanon* published. Arthur Boyd Retrospective exhibition tours nationally.

On 26 January 1995 Prime Minister Paul Keating announces Arthur Boyd as Australian of the Year for his contribution to Australian art and the generosity of his many gifts to the Australian people. *Testament of a Painter* is filmed. The Boyds return to Australia by container ship in May and Arthur receives his award in person from the Prime Minister at Bundanon in August.

1986-90

1993

1994

1995

Nebuchadnezzar blind on a starry night 1992-3, Collagraph

Peter's fish and crucifixion 1993
Oil on canvas

Sangkuriang prints - Volcano 1993
Collagraph

Night of the piranhas 1995
Oil on canvas

Arthur Boyd painting in his studio at Bundanon 1993
photo: David Chalker

The Arthur and Yvonne Boyd Education Centre
Riversdale c1998

Construction of Artist in residence complex, Bundanon. with
Barn Studio and Study Centre

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd at Bundanon.
photo: Greg Weight, 1993

Late February, Arthur returns to England; *Arthur Boyd: Sixty years of sleepless nights* tours.

Late February, Arthur arrives at Bundanon. *Recent paintings, sculpture and etchings held at Australian Galleries*, Sydney, during June and July. *Arthur Boyd: Family and Friends*, from the Bundanon Collection, tours nationally from October 1997 to October 1998. Construction of the Boyd Education Centre commences at Riversdale. The building of the Artist in Residence Complex at Bundanon commences.

In January, Arthur is named Australia Post's 1999 Australian Legend and is represented on a stamp set. In February the Artist in Residence Complex at Bundanon is opened by Arthur Boyd. The Boyds leave Bundanon, Arthur for the last time, to return to England.

Arthur returns to Australia intending to attend the opening of the Boyd Education Centre. Upon arrival in Sydney, Arthur is admitted to hospital and suffers a cardiac arrest. Arthur partly recovers and the Boyds go on to Melbourne . Arthur suffers another heart attack and passes away on 24 April 1999, aged 78. A memorial service is held at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra on 27 May 1999.

1996 **1997** **1998** **1999**

The Prodigal Son - River 1996
Etching

The journey 1996
Etching

REFERENCES:
Timeline of Arthur Boyd and Bundanon Trust by David Chalker
Boyd Collection and Bundanon Trust archives
Arthur Boyd- A Life, Darleen Bungey

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Nodding Greenhood painted 1997, dated 1999