

***Tomb/gathering*** 1971

screenprint

edition 2/10

15.2 x 15.3 cm

***Disaster*** 1972 (after F. de Goya)

etching and aquatint

edition 1/8

20 x 15 cm

***Jem et Tim*** 1972

engraving and aquatint

A/P

30 x 22.5 cm

***Migraine*** 1972

etching and aquatint

A/P

20 x 15.5 cm

***Plantation*** 1972

coloured etching and aquatint diptych

A/P 3rd state

20.2 x 29.2 cm

***Strato I*** 1972

etching and aquatint

A/P 1st state

22.5 x 15 cm

***Strato III*** 1972

etching

A/P 2nd state

22.5 x 15 cm

***Window*** 1972

etching and aquatint

A/P

30 x 22.5 cm

***Wire*** c1972

etching

25 x 18.5 cm

***Landscape*** c1973

etching and aquatint

A/P

22.2 x 22.2 cm

***Double portrait*** 1975

etching

A/P

30.5 x 39 cm

***Window*** 1975

(from Hamilton SHS)

linocut

A/P

46 x 40 cm

***Self portrait*** 1987

linocut

A/P

42 x 29.5 cm

***Self portrait (Desperate times)*** 1987

etching and aquatint

29 x 22.5 cm

***Self portrait*** 1987

etching

A/P

14 x 11 cm

***Self portrait*** 1987

coloured linocut

A/P

40 x 30 cm

***Debarred*** 2009

pencil on paper

53 x 37.5 cm

# RJ DORIZZI - PRINTS

## CITY OF FREMANTLE ART COLLECTION

The most distinctive characteristic of Robert Dorizzi’s prints is their personal quality. They mirror the collective dramas, frailties and strengths that we all share, but also the raw sensitivities and insights that are specifically his. His printed images, before and after Vietnam, concisely detail aspects of his imaginative and real world experiences.

This exhibition presents for the first time a survey of prints from his student days at Perth Technical College, a time before his “inevitable” call up, his post-Vietnam prints, and creative revival subsequent to an acute and life changing illness.

Many of Dorizzi’s best early prints are his line etchings which appear succinctly understated and intuitive. They capture a range of figurative and landscape subjects referencing his art school days, friends, family, military service and each with similar modest economy and fluency of style. The images echo numerous historical, philosophical, literary and art influences: figurative painters and printmakers Durer, Goya, Sickert and British artists R.B. Kitaj, Francis Bacon and David Hockney. Many of Dorizzi’s images are printed as single proofs rather than printed editions, orientating his oeuvre with drawing, a discipline strongly espoused during his graphics training at art school. It was through the primacy of drawing later in his career, that Dorizzi found a departure point and stimulus for his artistic recovery.

Dorizzi produced a number of prints prior to his call up to serve in Vietnam in 1969. Together they realise complex feelings through a diversity of imagery referencing both the WWII service of his father in *Hooray for brass buttons*, 1968 and decision to marry his then partner during embarkation leave in *Wife of a hired gun*, 1968.

His post-Vietnam output was initiated by study at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) in 1971. At this time he also co-founded a t-shirt printing business to employ his printmaking skills and produced a series of colourful screenprints of classical Chinese confucianist *I Ching* hexagrams/trigrams, three of which are exhibited here. He returned to figurative subjects to produce two prints which reflect upon his service and Buddhist and Hindu mythological characterisations of death demons in *Mara II* and *Rakshasa*. Similarly, *Disaster*, 1972 identifies with the inhumanity of the Vietnam conflict and *Plantation*, 1972 suggests a fine line between jungle and cultivated rubber plantations in a war zone without boundaries. In an emerging trend, Dorizzi developed a series of landscape inspired prints *Strato I, II & III* that predict his interest in the formal aspects of drawing.

What Dorizzi laconically terms his “waking up stuff”, are the prints produced after his treatment and extended period in hospital for Encephalitis. During this recovery phase he produced a series of poignant self portraits. These images of varying scale and complexity were produced using a number of print techniques, in which Dorizzi is pictured in a melancholic state, his eyes averted from the viewer. Here Dorizzi references the figurative prints of Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942) and revisits

his earlier homage to Sickert's *Ennui*. The source for these self portraits is a group photograph taken at Dorizzi's 39th birthday party soon after he left hospital in 1987. This is a critical moment for Dorizzi, when impacted by his illness he could not recognise his friends, family or indeed himself. Much of his memory of his service in Vietnam was erased. Remarkably it was with the support of his workpate colleagues at the time that Dorizzi continued to “function” in a teaching role for a decade. During this period he persevered with growing his art through making elaborate classroom demonstration prints and the self portrait series after hours.

It was not until his early retirement from teaching in 2000 that Dorizzi found a renewed purpose and direction in his art making. Emerging from an illness that tragically and dramatically erased his episodic memory, including the “hard stuff” from Vietnam, he used drawing as a means to

regain his focus. He established a studio practice and embarked upon a “routine” of rediscovering his visual language through drawing, a trajectory largely defined by his graphic art training from decades before. From the seeds set within the best of his line etchings, Dorizzi has refined his formal

sensibilities to explore mark making through a range of line and tonal compositions. His precision in controlling his materials is a window to a process inextricably linked to his sense of self.

## Biography

Robert Dorizzi was born in Perth in 1948. He studied Commercial Art (Graphic Design) and Printmaking at James Street Technical School (Perth Technical College) 1965-67.

He undertook National Military Service in 1968-70 and was conscripted to serve in Vietnam with the 6th Royal Australian Bn. Motorised Infantry 1969-70. Following National Service he completed

an Associate Degree in Fine Arts at Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT) in 1971, sharing a studio with artist Giles Hohnen in East Fremantle.

In 1972 Dorizzi lectured printmaking at Perth Technical College. He gained his Graduate Dip. in Education at Secondary Teachers College in 1973 prior to teaching at Graylands Teachers College and a number of State secondary schools.

Dorizzi suffered an acute form of Encephalitis and was hospitalised for six months in 1986. This illness impacted negatively upon his memory and subsequently his relationships and working life. He took early retirement from all work in 2000. He was diagnosed as Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI): a condition linked with his military service. He has pursued his art fulltime from 2000, taking an *Artsource* studio in East Perth 2006 and then currently, in Midland.

From 1968 his prints where included in the Print Council of Australia touring exhibition and *University of Tasmania Print exhibition, Perth Prize for Drawing* and UWA Guild Prize. He was involved in establishing, and exhibited at, Praxis in 1975 and his prints and photography were included in *Vietnam Voices*, Casula Powerhouse, 1997. Dorizzi exhibited a significant body of his new drawing and painting *RJ Dorizzi at WGV* (White Gum Valley; Giles Hohnen and Eveline Kotai) in 2008 and again at Perth Galleries in 2010 and 2012.

***Ennui*** 1967 (after W.R. Sickert)

etching

13.5 x 10.5 cm

***Old buildings and youth*** 1967

engraving on bakelite

20.3 x 15.3 cm

***Trio C portrait*** 1967

etching triptych

32 x 7.5 cm

***Untitled*** 1967

etching

A/P

7.3 x 22.5 cm

***Woman*** 1967

(after *Portrait of his Mother* by Albrecht Durer)

etching

16 x16 cm

***Always lucky at marbles*** 1968

etching and aquatint

14 x 20 cm

***Dream*** 1968

etching and aquatint

14 x 19.5 cm

***Hooray for brass buttons*** 1968

etching

A/P

16 x 15 cm

### List of Works

Artworks are from the Artist's Collection and plate/image dimensions are given as height by width in centimetres.

***The striped shirt*** 1968

etching

14 x 20 cm

***Wife of a hired gun*** 1968

etching

20 x 14 cm

***The reason I write*** 1970

(after poem by L. Cohen)

engraving on bakelite

A/P

10.3 x 23 cm

***Mara II*** 1971

engraving on bakelite

A/P

15 x 20.3 cm

***Rakhasa*** 1971

engraving on bakelite

edition 2/12

15 x 20 cm

***Castle of hope/hearing*** 1971

screenprint

edition 1/12

15.2 x 15.3 cm

***Opposition*** 1971

screenprint

edition 3/8

15 x 15 cm