

ROSALIE GASCOIGNE: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1917 Rosalie Norah King was born on 25 January in her parents' house at 8 MacMurray Road, Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand, the second child of Marion (née Metcalfe) and Stanley Walker.
- 1922 Rosalie's parents separate and Marion and children live with Marion's widowed mother, Jessie Metcalfe, and unmarried sister, Ellen. Marion resumes working as a teacher to support her family. Stanley returns to the family house in c. 1933.
- 1935–38 Rosalie attends Auckland University College where she studies English, French, Greek, Latin and mathematics. Graduates with a Bachelor of Arts degree.
- 1939–42 Completes a one-year course at Auckland Teacher Training College in 1939 and from 1940 takes up teaching positions at various schools, including Auckland Girls Grammar School, where she teaches from 1941 to 1942.
- 1943 Travels to Australia to marry SCB 'Ben' Gascoigne on 9 January (they met in Auckland in 1933 and were at university together) and set up house on Mount Stromlo, a small, isolated scientific community outside Canberra. First child, Martin, is born on 21 November, followed by Thomas 'Toss' on 15 June 1945.
- Rosalie begins to explore the local landscape and vegetation and bring home pieces that attract her eye, and would continue to do so for the rest of her life.
- In December 1943 Rosalie meets Ben's friend, Sydney artist Carl Plate (1919–1977), who introduced Ben and Rosalie to the world of modern art.
- 1946 Rosalie and children visit Auckland (December 1945 – April 1946) (probably with Ben in March–April). They make a second visit in 1948–49.
- 1949 Ben and Rosalie buy a car in June, a second-hand Austin 7, and Ben teaches Rosalie to drive. Daughter Hester is born on 12 December. As war-time restrictions ease, Mount Stromlo begins to see new investment in facilities and housing, and life there gradually improves.
- 1952 A bushfire on 5 February destroys part of the Mount Stromlo workshops, along with most of the pine forest covering the mountain.

- 1955 Rosalie begins to enter flower arrangements in the Horticultural Society of Canberra exhibitions and over the next ten years attracts notice (and prizes) for her imaginative work. She introduces found objects and dried materials into her arrangements, and would use similar materials in her assemblages in the 1970s and 1980s.
- 1957 Mount Stromlo Observatory becomes part of The Australian National University, greatly expanding Rosalie's range of social contacts. In August Rosalie and daughter visit New Zealand, her last visit until 1983.
- 1959 Rosalie is commissioned to decorate the lobbies and main lounge of the Roy Grounds-designed Academy of Science building (the Shine Dome, formerly known as Becker House). This gave her an opportunity to work on a much larger scale in a sympathetic environment, with its natural light, muted natural colours and clean, uncluttered spaces. The challenge was stimulating. Although she terminated her original contract in 1962 she continued to provide installations on an occasional basis until 1974.
- 1960 The family moves from Mount Stromlo to 22 Dugan Street in the Canberra suburb of Deakin. The decade ahead was a time of great change in Canberra following the Menzies government decision in 1957 to resume development of Canberra as the national capital.
- 1962 Rosalie begins taking ikebana flower-arrangement lessons from the Sydney-based master Norman Sparnon (1913–1995), an exponent of the modern Sogetsu School. These take place monthly in the hall attached to the Methodist church in National Circuit, Barton (now the Canberra Central Uniting Church). Ikebana immediately influences her floral art entries in the Horticultural Society shows (she stops competing in 1964). After receiving her ikebana teaching certificate in November 1965 Rosalie offers her own classes in 1966 and continues to teach until about 1970. Her ikebana skills and demonstrations are highly regarded.
- 1963 The family, except for Martin, travels to England so Ben can take up a six-month sabbatical at the Royal Observatory at Herstmonceux in Sussex. They travel by sea via Athens (where Rosalie has a cousin), and by rail on to London and Sussex. Ben and Rosalie visit exhibitions in London, including the fourth *Sculpture in the Open Air* exhibition at Battersea Park, where Rosalie is much taken with Henry Moore's work. Rosalie and Hester return to Australia in November, travelling by sea from Sweden via South Africa.
- c. 1965 Rosalie begins collecting rusted farm machinery components from the paddocks around Canberra and old mining areas such as Captains Flat, initially using them in her ikebana arrangements. In the mid-1960s she starts to make small metal sculptures from rusted iron. In 1967 Ben brought back from London the catalogue of Roland Penrose's Tate Gallery exhibition *Picasso: Sculpture, Ceramics, Graphic Work*. Rosalie enjoyed Picasso's 'sportiveness, his enjoyment' and in later years took heed of this in her own practice.
- 1967 Rosalie and Ben decide to build their own house and they buy land at 3 Anstey Street in Pearce. Melbourne-trained architect Theo Bischoff designs a house with Rosalie's work in mind, incorporating some of the aesthetics of the Academy of Science dome.
- Ben is appointed astronomical adviser to the Anglo-Australian Telescope Board, and later commissioning astronomer for the telescope. His escalating involvement in the project means he is frequently away from home (until mid-1975).

- 1969 The Gascoignes move into their new house in June, which provides much improved working spaces for Rosalie, and in the following years they work hard to establish a garden.
- Martin introduces Rosalie to James Mollison, recently appointed exhibitions officer at the Prime Minister's Department. He would become the first director of the Australian National Gallery (later National Gallery of Australia).
- 1970 Rosalie accompanies Ben on a work trip to Europe, visiting Tokyo, Copenhagen, Stockholm, England, Paris and Portugal. In Paris they meet up with Carl Plate and, through him, other Australian artists there.
- 1971 Martin takes an appointment with the Asian Development Bank headquarters in the Philippines. He leaves his small collection of contemporary Australian art with his parents, who display it in their house. Their correspondence with him (and with Toss in Hobart and England) documents Rosalie's gradual emergence as an artist.
- James Mollison is appointed acting director of the Australian National Gallery, and through his friendship Rosalie is given access to the developing national collection.
- Rosalie's work as an assemblage artist is recognised for the first time through her inclusion in Fay Bottrell's book *The artist craftsman in Australia* (published in 1972).
- 1972 Rosalie resigns from Norman Sparnon's classes in February and winds back her ikebana activities. Ben enrolls in an arc-welding course at the Canberra Technical College in order to help Rosalie stabilise her rusted metal assemblages, but her attention soon shifts from rusted iron constructions to other materials.
- The Gascoignes acquire a second car for Ben's use, so Rosalie now has full access to the family station wagon for her collecting forays into the surrounding countryside. She begins to make large works out of found animal bones and continues to do so in 1973.
- Rosalie meets Sydney artist Michael Taylor (born 1933), who had taken a teaching position in Canberra, and the two quickly become colleagues and friends. She buys one of his paintings (and others later).
- Rosalie has another reason to visit, see exhibitions and engage with the art world in Sydney when Hester moves there, returning in 1973.
- 1973 Rosalie discovers a cache of abandoned apiary boxes near Gundaroo, north of Canberra, in May. She uses them (and others) as containers for her assemblages and by year-end has completed several works. She uses boxes for many works until the mid-1980s.
- Two of Rosalie's sculptures are included in an exhibition in Adelaide, *Life Style 70s*, at Myer department store, a display developed to promote Bottrell's *The artist craftsman in Australia*.
- In October Rosalie briefly experiments with paper collage, inspired by Michael Taylor's work. She begins to collect advertising logos for Arnott's parrots (biscuits), Norco cows (butter), Daffodil (margarine) and, in 1976, images of footballers, cricketers and racehorses from newspapers. She also sees the exhibition *Recent Australian Art* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, with its diverse range of art forms and practices.
- Martin sends Rosalie a copy of William Seitz's exhibition catalogue *The art of assemblage* as a Christmas present, from which she learns that what she makes is assemblage art. She subscribes to art periodicals such as *Art and Australia*, *Art in America* and *Artforum*, which she likes for their images of contemporary art.

- 1974 Rosalie has her first solo exhibition, at Macquarie Galleries, Canberra, in June. It includes rusted iron works (their first and only showing) and several works assembled in boxes. In September James Mollison buys two boxes for the Philip Morris Arts Grant collection of ‘young, bold and innovative artists’, the first of several purchases over the next few years for the Philip Morris and the Australian National Gallery collections.
- Rosalie develops a friendship with Melbourne artist Ken Whisson (born 1927) after buying his painting *And what should I do in Illyria?* 1974. He would invite her to write the introduction to his survey exhibition at RMIT Melbourne in September 1978.
- In May Martin returns to Canberra after two-and-a-half years in Manila.
- 1975 Michael Taylor selects Rosalie for inclusion in the exhibition *The Artists’ Choice* at Gallery A Sydney. This effectively launches her career. In May Ben declines a tempting offer of a job in Sydney because the move would be so disruptive for Rosalie’s art practice.
- 1976 Rosalie holds her second solo show, *Assemblage*, at Gallery A, Sydney. The work in this exhibition includes elements from a carnival sideshow found at the Bungendore tip in 1975, as well as advertising logos, dried plant materials (salsify stalks), enamelware and galvanised iron.
- Finds major source of galvanised iron and old window frames at the abandoned Canberra brickworks.
- James Gleeson is appointed visiting curator of Australian Art, Australian National Gallery 1975–78 and also a member of the first council of the ANG 1976–82. He becomes a valued friend.
- 1977 First show in Brisbane, at the Institute of Modern Art, where she exhibits *Pale landscape* 1977 — a great ‘carpet’ of swan feathers woven through newspapers — as well as two works with corrugated iron and old window frames. She also takes part in a group exhibition at Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane.
- Martin moves to Hong Kong, where he stays for three years. Once again family correspondence documents Rosalie’s progress and life in the art world.
- James Mollison is appointed first director of the Australian National Gallery.
- In November Rosalie acquires her first jigsaw, which she uses to cut out the shapes of images and logos she has glued to plywood.
- 1978 In April Rosalie’s first art-museum exhibition opens at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, four years after her debut. *Survey 2: Rosalie Gascoigne* was curated by Robert Lindsay.
- Rosalie discovers the Schweppes depot at Queanbeyan, NSW, near Canberra, which would be an important source of the wood she used in many works in the years ahead.
- 1979 Rosalie’s *Feathered fence* 1978–79, exhibited in the 3rd Biennale of Sydney, *European Dialogue*, attracts a lot of attention from visiting European artists. Nick Waterlow, the biennale director, remained an influential supporter of Rosalie’s for the rest of her career.
- Her solo show in June at Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane, includes *March past* 1978–79, the first work made with boards from dismantled soft-drink boxes.

- 1980 Rosalie exhibits *Paper square* 1979–80, a major piece made with newspaper, at the Adelaide Festival (reconstructed and exhibited as *Harvest* 1981–82 at the Venice Biennale 1982).
- Rosalie travels alone to New York and Washington DC to see the art there. This was her only trip to the United States.
- Martin returns from Hong Kong. Ben retires from Mount Stromlo as professor emeritus but continues his astronomical research and writing. He helps Rosalie find technical solutions for her works but as time goes on she has less need of his help in the studio. He also begins to photograph her works more systematically.
- 1981 Rosalie has her first exhibition at Pinacotheca, Bruce Pollard's gallery in Melbourne, marking the beginning of a long relationship. She shows works made with boards from soft-drink boxes, linoleum, newspaper, advertising logos, dried salsify and thistle stalks, shells and small stones, including two large floor pieces and several boxes. She continues to show at Pinacotheca until 1993.
- 1982 Rosalie is the first woman to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale, chosen by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts, where Nick Waterlow is director. She exhibits with Peter Booth. The experience is not a happy one because the promised pavilion was not ready and the exhibit was only properly displayed a month after the biennale opened. Despite this her work receives favourable attention from the international press. Rosalie travelled alone and stayed six weeks, escaping from Venice to visit *Documenta* — a different survey of international contemporary art — in Kassel, Germany, and making a brief stop in London on the way home. She lost the hearing in one ear while returning to Australia.
- The Australian National Gallery opens in October.
- 1983 Ben puts part of his retirement payout towards the construction of a studio next to the family house. Completed in June 1983, Rosalie now has the space to work on a larger scale and on several pieces at once.
- Rosalie travels to New Zealand for the opening of her major exhibition *Rosalie Gascoigne: Sculpture 1975–1982*, curated by Ian Hunter, at the National Art Gallery, Wellington, and afterwards touring the North Island. This was her first trip back since 1957 and her first as an artist. Coincidentally, Colin McCahon's work is also showing at the gallery and during her visit she buys a painting from McCahon's *Gate* series. She also shows five works in Tokyo in *Continuum '83: The First Exhibition of Australian Contemporary Art in Japan*.
- 1984 Rosalie's solo exhibition at Pinacotheca again included a mix of works in different formats and materials. It was the last time she showed boxes.
- 1985 Rosalie creates *Highway code* 1985, her first work using yellow retroreflective road signs. She includes it in her show *Rosalie Gascoigne: New Work*, curated by Mary Eagle, at the Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart. She also exhibits *Honey flow* 1985, her first work featuring yellow boards from Schweppes soft-drink boxes.
- 1986 Rosalie makes her first works using plywood formboard, *High country* [1] and *Shoreline*. From 1986 to 1995 Rosalie would use coated formboard to make fourteen works having a pictorial element suggestive of landscapes (as well as using it in other works).
- About this time Rosalie first engages an occasional studio assistant, initially Stuart Vaskos and, from 1989, Peter Vandermark. Ben gradually assumes a new role as Rosalie's archivist and in the late 1980s starts a database of her work.

- 1988 Rosalie's work is included by biennale director Nick Waterlow in the 1988 Australian Biennale exhibition *From the Southern Cross: A View of World Art c. 1940–1988* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, where it is displayed alongside the work of Colin McCahon. It is praised by the American curator and critic Dan Cameron, who includes Rosalie's work in his 1989 survey of international contemporary art *What Is Contemporary Art?* at the Rooseum in Malmö, Sweden.
- In November Rosalie acquires a tradesman's bandsaw, which she uses to cut the wooden slats of her dismantled soft-drink boxes, creating the fine, slightly curved slivers of wood employed in works such as *Monaro* 1988–89. Her solo exhibition at Pinacotheca for the first time includes works using red/orange reflective road signs, along with works utilising hand-painted 'for sale' signs from roadside stalls.
- Visits New Zealand in November for the Colin McCahon retrospective at Auckland Art Gallery.
- 1989 Rosalie exhibits at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, her first solo exhibition in Sydney since 1976. She continues to exhibit at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery regularly, until her death in 1999.
- 1990 The exhibition *Rosalie Gascoigne and Colin McCahon: Sense of Place*, curated by Louise Pether, is shown at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery in Sydney and Ian Potter Gallery in Melbourne. It marks 1000 years of Maori settlement and the sesquicentenary of Pakeha (European) settlement of New Zealand, and was opened in Sydney by Mr Geoffrey Palmer, Prime Minister of New Zealand.
- 1993 Rosalie begins using red, white, black and yellow cable reels as a source material.
- 1994 Rosalie embarks on two multi-piece installations on the theme of air: *Plein air* 1994 and *But mostly air* 1994–95. Her solo exhibition at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery comprises predominantly white works.
- Rosalie is honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her services to art.
- 1995 Rosalie is awarded the Grand Prize of the Cheju Pre-biennale in South Korea for her work *Set up* 1983–84.
- 1996 Rosalie holds her first solo exhibition in Adelaide at the Greenaway Art Gallery as part of the Adelaide Festival.
- 1997 A major survey of Rosalie's landscape-based work, *Rosalie Gascoigne: Material as Landscape*, curated by Deborah Edwards, opens at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. It is shown at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 1998.
- Rosalie shows four pieces in an exhibition of contemporary Australian art, *In Place (Out of Time): Contemporary Art in Australia*, at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, United Kingdom, curated by David Elliott and Howard Morphy. Her work attracts very favourable attention in the English press.
- 1998 A major monograph, *Rosalie Gascoigne*, by Vici MacDonald, is published by Regaro Press, Sydney. Film Australia's program on Rosalie in its Australian Biography series is broadcast for the first time.

- 1999 René Block includes eleven of Rosalie's works in his exhibition *Toi Toi Toi: Three Generations of Artists from New Zealand*, shown at the Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany and the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, New Zealand. Block had previously selected her work for the *8th Biennale of Sydney, The Readymade Boomerang: Certain Relations in 20th Century Art*, in 1990.
- Rosalie completes major works from her remaining stockpiles of Schweppes soft-drink boxes (*Great blond paddocks* 1998–99), retroreflective road signs (*Metropolis* 1999) and coated plywood formboard (*Earth* 1999).
- Rosalie travels to New Zealand in July to speak at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki on the occasion of the exhibition *Home and Away: Contemporary Australian and New Zealand Art from the Chartwell Collection* curated by William McAloon.
- Rosalie Gascoigne dies in Canberra on 23 October 1999. A memorial service is held at St Paul's Anglican Church, Manuka, Australian Capital Territory, on 5 November.
- 2000 The exhibition *From the Studio of Rosalie Gascoigne* curated by Mary Eagle is held at The Australian National University Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra. It is the first showing of *Earth* 1999. The exhibition catalogue includes memoirs of Rosalie by Ben and by Peter Vandermark and Marie Hagerty (her studio assistant and artist friends), and extracts from her letters to Martin in the 1970s about her art and the art world she moved in.
- 2004 The survey exhibition *Rosalie Gascoigne: Plain Air*, curated by Gregory O'Brien with Paula Savage, is held at the City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand. It is the first survey exhibition of Rosalie's work since her death. *Earth* 1999 is shown in Sydney at a solo exhibition at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.
- 2008 The first full retrospective of Rosalie's work, *Rosalie Gascoigne*, opens in Melbourne at the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, in December. It was curated by Kelly Gellatly.

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