Imagine that images of all Greg Johns’ work were to be presented in a dissolve sequence, earliest to latest work. A series of horizontal forms, first triangular then linear, whispering like a loose fine hose with wave energy gradually picking themselves up off the ground alternately spinning and spiralling or coalescing into circles which break and reform. Spiral nautilus rotate before collapsing into tandem vertical spirals, which shiver with kinetic energy. Squares suddenly morph into circles. A visible figure emerges insistent and as a daggar it dives, sweeps or hovers like a ministering angel. Outstretched arms boil with vitality, muscles ripple like a shaken carpet and flames lick at the edges, a single animated form writhes and thrashes like a creature at war within itself. Then a slow exhibition as the figure slides to the ground rippling like the swollen belly of a Boa tree. Tendril’s sprout from the arms and take root in stony ground. Soweds rear upwards to become the rampant prow of a boat run aground, then a saltladen land/surf skimming away from the coast lead by a spinning molar-like sun.

Of course in real life such things don’t happen. Viewers of any of the artist’s solo exhibitions will undoubtedly look from one work to another but note if anything the diversity of forms. Thus in this exhibition one encounters figurative forms alongside non-representational forms such as asymmetrical circles and wavelike fugal forms. Those more familiar with Johns’ work will recognize that some, less figurative forms, initially emerged in the early 1980s.

This raises the question of why the artist would choose to exhibit recently created work within a context of ideas formulated much earlier. The artist has once remarked that his ‘investigations’, Johns has developed sculptural forms and motifs that are visual metaphors for his belief that everything in the cosmos from subatomic particles to individual lives, entire human societies and cosmic galaxies are interconnected. By the early 1990s related investigations had become reflexively embedded in his practice as an operating principle of art based on nature’s governing systems. In broad terms, he sees these systems as/wave/particle change, interconnection and complexity.

What makes this process particularly interesting is that over the last decade his work has become more ‘inland-centric’, motivated to a significant degree by the artist’s purchase of and sculptural engagement with a rainshadow rural property at Adelaide. Here in this bespoke environment sculptural forms developed years earlier from deliberations on particle theory and archetypal spirit shapes representing the presence of humanity in Australia, both past and present, sit side by side, as they do in this exhibition.

The Yin Yang dynamics of Patten 11 reflect pattern-based investigations of the mid 1990s which give expression to the idea of meaning being found in a chain of events rather than in random, individual occurrences. As one walks around this work it also manifests in constantly unfolding and ‘flip-flopping’ viewpoints the idea of infinite change within a closed system. Similar perspectives can be applied to Guardian Figure with its referencing of a fugal melodic theme subject to constant imitation and overlay and even to the more asymmetrical, Whirling Circle. The journey to the outer reaches of what is possible or imaginable is extended in Beyond the Flatlandscapes (Mover/Re mover) in which the artist’s most faithful of companions, the fractal Hymn unit, is entrusted with the task of creating what can be best described as ‘wormholes’

Central to this ideas base has remained the idea of everything being interconnected. He has stated that, “Holistic notions are clearly a central paradigm at the heart of my sculpture. It is an area of philosophical investigation which does not view the world solely in a mechanistic, random fashion. It presents a paradigm where interconnectedness, patterning, symbolism, timeliness, the unfolding of subtle and more complex systems, questions of spirit as well as physical systems and randomness all exist in an integrated manner.”

In the process of what the artist describes as “his investigations”, Johns has developed sculptural forms and motifs that are visual metaphors for his belief that everything in the cosmos from subatomic particles to individual lives, entire human societies and cosmic galaxies are interconnected. By the early 1990s related investigations had become reflexively embedded in his practice as an operating principle of art based on nature’s governing systems. In broad terms, he sees these systems as/wave/particle change, interconnection and complexity.

What makes this process particularly interesting is that over the last decade his work has become more ‘inland-centric’, motivated to a significant degree by the artist’s purchase of and sculptural engagement with a rainshadow rural property at Palmer, east of Adelaide. Here in this bespoke environment sculptural forms developed years earlier from deliberations on particle theory and archetypal spirit shapes representing the presence of humanity in Australia, both past and present, sit side by side, as they do in this exhibition.

The tenfold-like extremities of Horizon Figure and the ‘pliedrock’ character of Mentor (The Old Mob) are indicators of trends which emerged in Johns’ investigations within the last decade in which questions about relationship with place and the Australian inland in particular were emerging. The rocks in Mentor are inspired by ridge escarpments observed while travelling inland. The drooping extremities of Shredding Figure reference the appearance and action of bark stripping from a tree. Most recently this idea of being defined by real, local events and environments has taken a biographical twist in Monument to Mulga Bill and Neighbour, in which Johns reflects on the lessons of his own grandfather’s (William Johns) 1911 extraordinary encounter with an Aborigine man (known as Neighbour and also recorded as Malbyakewa and Ayaa-gal).
MENTOR (THE OLD MAB), 2010
CORTEN STEEL
240 x 89 x 9 CM

LIGHTNING FIGURE, 2010
CORTEN STEEL
240 x 36 x 34 CM
MONUMENT TO MULGA BILL & NEIGHBOUR, 2010
CORTEN STEEL
195 x 80 x 50 CM

HORIZON FIGURE 1, 2009
CORTEN STEEL, IRONSTONE
210 x 422 x 20 CM
MENTOR (THE OLD MOB), 2008–2009
CORTEN STEEL
99 PIECES ASSEMBLED BY HAND
240 x 115 x 57 CM

AT THE CENTRE (THERE IS NOTHING), 2009
IRONSTONE
130 x 130 x 70 CM
TOP, FRONT VIEW
BELOW: SIDE VIEW
RETURNING FIGURE
2010
MILD STEEL
69 x 4.5 x 6 CM

HORIZON FIGURE
2010
CORTEN STEEL
114 x 24 x 144 CM
EMERGING-MERGING FIGURE
2009
CORTEN STEEL
117 x 96 x 40 CM

SHEDDING FIGURE
2009–2010
CORTEN STEEL
225 x 37 x 38 CM
DRI Y COUNTRY MANDALA, 2010
MILD STEEL
45 x 65 x 9.5 cm
TOP: FRONT VIEW
BELOW: SIDE VIEW

MENTOR (THE OLD MCB MAQUETTE), 2009
MILD STEEL
75 x 6.5 x 9 cm
WOVEN-INTERWOVEN
[BEYOND THE FLATLANDERS], 2009
MILD STEEL
60 x 150 x 86 CM

WAVERING CIRCLE, 2005-2009
CORTEN STEEL
150 x 140 x 60 CM
GUARDIAN FIGURE, 1979
CORTEN STEEL
210 x 150 x 150 CM
INSTALLED 2009,
PRIVATE COLLECTION, ENGLAND

FLOATING FIGURE, 2003
CORTEN STEEL
HEIGHT 4m
INSTALLED 2009
NEWMAN, PIBARA REGION,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

RECENT COMMISSIONS
RETURNING FIGURE, 2005
CORTEN & STAINLESS STEEL
600 x 35 x 75 CM
INSTALLED 2008
ONE OF 13 PUBLIC WORKS IN IBIZA, SPAIN

WAVERING CIRCLE, 2008
CORTEN STEEL
400 x 350 x 350 CM
PRIVATE COLLECTION, VICTORIA
IMAGE TAKEN AFTER VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE, FEBRUARY 2009
PHOTOGRAPH: KARL VON FASER
Greg Johns was born in Adelaide in 1953. He trained at the South Australian School of Art from 1973-78, graduating with a Diploma of Fine Arts and has worked full-time as a sculptor since 1978.

**Solo Exhibitions**

2010 Landings, Australian Art Resources & Asia Modern Art, Melbourne

2008 Australian Art Resources, Melbourne

2007 Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, 30 Year Retrospective

2006 Australian Art Resources, Sydney

2006 Adelaide Festival Exhibition

2005 Australian Art Resources, Sydney

2004 Australian Art Resources, Melbourne Aptos Cruz Gallery, Adelaide

2003 Australian Art Resources, Sydney Gombarc Gallery, Western Australia

2002 Australian Art Resources, Melbourne Aptos Cruz Gallery, Adelaide

2001 A Small Sculpture Garden – Opening of a sculpture garden at the artist’s studio with permanent and changing pieces Robert Steel Gallery, New York

Robert Gibson Gallery, Sydney

BVG Gallery, Adelaide

2000 Aptos Cruz Gallery, Adelaide

25 Year Retrospective

Australian Art Resources, Melbourne

1999 Robert Gibson Gallery, Sydney

1998 Greenaway Gallery, Adelaide

1997 Robert Steel Gallery, New York

**Selected Arts Prizes / Competitions**

2010 Artopia, Byron Bay, NSW

2005 Bonython – Mawooroo Gallery, Adelaide – Festival Exhibition, 3 large outdoor sculptures Bridge Street Gallery, Sydney

2001 Bonython – Mawooroo Gallery, Adelaide, Survey Exhibition

2007 Bonython – Mawooroo Gallery, Robin Gibson, Sydney

1993 Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

Bonython, Adelaide, Gallery

1981 Roundspace Gallery, Adelaide

1980 Bonython Gallery, Adelaide

1978 Bonython Gallery, Centre, Survey Exhibition

1996 Robert Gibson Gallery, Sydney

Greenaway Gallery, Adelaide

1995 Anima Gallery at the Australian High Commission, Singapore

1994 Solander Gallery, Canberra

Mawooroo Gallery, Melbourne, Survey Exhibition, 1976-1994


Greenaway Gallery, Adelaide

2009 Mi Gambier Limestone Sculpture Symposium

2008 Contempo, Docklands, Victoria

2005 Finalist Kajima Sculpture Competition, Tokyo, Japan

2004 Selected finalist for McCullough Sculpture Award, Victoria

2003 Selected finalist for McCullough Sculpture Award, Victoria

2002 Selected finalist for McCullough Sculpture Award, Victoria

2001 Stonnington Landscape Award, Melbourne Joint award for sculpture “Grain” and to landscape Architects for surrounding landscape

2000 Award of Merit, Collaborative with TECTUS Architects for renovation of Dawson home

**Group Exhibitions**

Greg Johns has participated in over 200 group exhibitions in Australia, USA, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

**Major Commissions**


**Collections**

Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, England

Aneityum International, Aneityum

Alsace Museum, Germany

Royal Meridan Hotel, Bahrain

Tuftoh Collection, England

Coen Collection, New York

Fushe Collection, USA

Fraser Collection, France

Maiton Collection, Connecticut, USA

Wing Art Collection, Singapore

Maasda Environmental Art Co. Collection, Japan

Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park, Hamilton, Ohio, USA

Australian National University Art Gallery of SA

Glenside Council, SA

Cameo Hill, Australian Park, SA – Stone Collection

Whollyra Arts Council, SA

Aitkin Collection

Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria

Commonwealth Bank Collection, Adelaide

Adelaide University Collection

St. Vincent’s Hospital Collection, Sydney

Holmes a Court Collection

Sculpture Park, 1988; Gallery 460, NSW

Mich Lilly Botanical Gardens Collection, SA

Penleigh School, Adelaide

City of Brisbane Council

Manchester Unity-Hibernian Collection, Adelaide

Tasmanian University Collection, Hobart

Port Prise Collection, SA

Wytat Benevolent Trust Collection, Adelaide

S A N.T.O S. Collection, Adelaide

Olhvart House Collection, Adelaide

Myer Collection, Melbourne

Gardel Collection, Melbourne

Kym Bonython Collection, Adelaide

Faulding Collection, Adelaide, USA, England

Kristen Collection, USA and Australia

War Memorial Institute, SA

Diana Lockhart, Honorary Minster for the Arts Collection, Adelaide

Best Collection, Jersey, Channel Islands

Barlo Collection, Melbourne

Srivakov Collection, Melbourne

City of Port Adelaide, Enfield

Kidill Collection, Adelaide

Tweddall Collection, Adelaide

Nicholas Collection, NSW

O’Connor Collection, USA

Cousins Collection, NSW

Chadstone Shopping Centre, Victoria

Thyer Collection, Adelaide

Carr Collection, England

Ziegler Collection, Melbourne

Adler Collection, Adelaide

Bankers Trust Collection, Maritime Trade Tower, Sydney

Riverbank Collection, Adelaide

City of Marion Collection

Arts SA Collection

TAB Collection, Sydney

33 York Street, Sydney Collection

Goldfield Ball & Graham Fisher Architects

BT Funds Management

Wangaratas, Victoria

Mistletoe Winery, NSW

Shoalhaven City Council

Flinders Council

Deutsche Asset Management

HBS

Bluescape Steel Limited

Pero

Mullins Collection

Australian National University

330 Collins Street, Melbourne

Palmer Environmental/Sculptural Landscape

1-10 Major works

Lord Harwood Collection, England

Crown Casino, Southbank, Melbourne

Crown Casino Hotel, Melbourne

Clarke Collection, England

Banyoneraion Collection, Florida, USA

Neil Collection, Victoria

Pechon City Collection, Korea

Danf-Ebra Collection, Spain

Cotton Collection, NSW

Philip Adams Collection

Fresh Water Collection, Southbank, Melbourne

Poiio Shopping Centre, Poro, England

Cross Collection, Adelaide

Armitage Collection, Adelaide

Frail Collection, Melbourne

FHP Collection, Melbourne

Docklands Collection, Melbourne

Priva Collection, Australia, New Zealand, USA, England and Singapore.