

# IKON

## Exhibition Guide

4 December 2013 – 9 February 2014

**Tim Johnson**  
***The Luminescent Ground***  
**First Floor Galleries**

This is the first European survey of work by Australian artist Tim Johnson (born 1947, Sydney). It reveals the influence of many different visual cultures and the artist's sincere belief in the possibility of enlightenment. He makes paintings, sculptural pieces and performances that literally involve light. Johnson explains the eclecticism of his work, "like a poem, every part doesn't have to be logical or located in the same time-space continuum. A painting can create a fragmented reality that is interpreted by the viewer."

Johnson abandoned painting in the late 1960s and pioneered performance art and photography in his native Sydney. *Installations 1970–1971* documents 120 art 'actions', some performed during a trip to the UK, France and Germany. A fascination with the anarchic potential of performance made Johnson sympathetic to the Sydney punk-rock scene in the late 1970s. A shared contempt for the establishment and a DIY approach to cultural production explains his 1979 canvas *New Music* and his interest in the band Radio Birdman.

Around this time Johnson developed an interest in Buddhist theology and began his search for the religion and visual culture of the Hindu and Buddhist East. Johnson's approach to landscape painting is also heavily influenced by ancient Chinese

wall painting – a way of showing multiple narratives in one pictorial field, exemplified by *Shakyamuni I* (2012).

The dot painting technique visible in *Two Dancing Men* (1989) and many of Johnson's works are the result of lessons and collaborations with Aboriginal painter friends at Papunya, most notably Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. Johnson describes this as "...one of my most meaningful experiences ... I was taught how to paint dots, ideas about painting in plan view, new ways of using scale, narrative and colour ... contextualised by a rich cultural function." Johnson's more recent collaborations and interest in ufology reveal his desire to "make art that is transcendent" and to look at the unexplained and the unknown.

This exhibition is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition priced £15, special exhibition price £12.

**David Tremlett**  
**3 Drawing Rooms**  
**Second Floor Galleries**  
**Exhibition continues to 21 April 2014**

British artist David Tremlett (born 1945) has a long history of drawing on walls and has created many site-specific works, including pieces for Tate Britain, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, chapels, embassies and historic buildings in Italy. He has made many journeys to the Americas, the Middle East, Europe and Asia, and enjoys the solitude of travel. These experiences are reflected in his drawings, influencing their colour and configuration. The vast installation here at Ikon alters our perception of the architecture it occupies.

The first room is based on observations of high-rise buildings and city landscapes Tremlett made whilst in Japan in 2011. Tokyo and Osaka in particular inspire the abstract geometry, creating “a sense of being overpowered by the big city”. Tremlett draws from the ceiling down and from the floor up. Darker areas consist of varnish mixed with graphite which is then polished to create a metallic finish. The reds and blues provide dramatic contrast and Tremlett and his team of assistants spent many days applying the pastel pigments by hand.

For the second room Tremlett has used black graphite grease, a residue from motor car engines that he describes as a “very sombre, strange, industrial material”. Tremlett deliberately leaves traces from the process of application, including hand prints, on the wall. This is, according to the artist, “a transition space” between the two lighter rooms and there is a calculated use of perspectival drawing on the walls.

The third room is entitled *Pileup (drawing 2, Skolkovo)* and refers to an unrealised project for a Russian business studies institute in Skolkovo, designed by British architect David Adjaye. Here at Ikon Tremlett has created another version of this piece with forms that dramatically expand the way we see the space.

3 *Drawing Rooms* is supported by The Abbey Harris Mural Fund.

A small publication accompanies the exhibition priced £1.

## **Amikam Toren**

### **Carrots**

### **Tower Room**

Israeli/British artist Amikam Toren returns to Ikon with two film selections, *Carrots*

(2008) and *Refreshments* (2009). Based on true stories, narratives of experience from the artist’s life, they are strangely moving tales touched with both humour and melancholy.

The Tower Room is only accessible via a number of steps.

## **Dean Kelland**

### ***The Englishman’s Panacea***

### **Offsite**

### **Fletcher’s Walk, Birmingham B3 3HJ**

British artist Dean Kelland works with performance, photography and film to explore portraiture and cultural identities. Preoccupied especially with British sitcom of the 1960s, here in an ideal setting he makes reference to the iconic British character Harold Steptoe.

Fletcher’s Walk is a 5 minute walk from Ikon, towards New Street station.

**Visit the Resource Room where you can find a selection of books, audio and film.**

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