

31 October to 28 November 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

Richard Dunn: *Thinking Pictures*



The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery presents ***Richard Dunn: Thinking Pictures***, an exhibition of works by Australian artist and educator Richard Dunn (1944–2024).

Known for his intellectual rigour and curiosity, Dunn developed a body of work that questioned how meaning is formed and how history, culture and identity shape our understanding of the world. Drawing on philosophy, psychoanalysis, architecture and contemporary art, his practice encouraged audiences to look beyond accepted narratives and consider the complexities and contradictions that underpin modern life.

Throughout his career, Dunn approached painting as a form of enquiry, using it to explore perception, meaning and human experience. The exhibition features significant works from key series, including *Names* and *After Albert Namatjira*, through which Dunn examined language, migration, colonial histories and cultural inheritance. Rather than offering definitive answers, his work sought to provoke thoughtful enquiry and critical reflection.

As Peter McKay writes in the catalogue essay accompanying the exhibition, Dunn believed that “how we see is never neutral: our perception is shaped by histories, interests, identities and inheritances.”

Bringing together significant works from across his career, the exhibition highlights Dunn's sustained engagement with perception, history, identity and the complexities of contemporary life.

Short Statement:

31 October – 28 November 2026, the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery presents a selection of works by Richard Dunn (1944–2024). Featuring key works from the *Names* and *After Albert Namatjira* series, the exhibition explores language, perception, migration and colonial history through Dunn's intellectually rigorous and deeply enquiring artistic practice.

Gallery opening times:

Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm

Social Media:

 <https://www.facebook.com/gcsgallery>

 @gcsgalley

MEDIA contact:

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High resolution images are available.



Richard Dunn
Redbank Gorge, MacDonnell Ranges c.1936-37
(after Albert Namatjira) *Blasted Geometries*
2018
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 165 cm



Richard Dunn
Talipate, Western MacDonnell c.1945-53 (after Albert Namatjira)
2014
Acrylic on canvas
240 x 200 cm



Richard Dunn
Names No 3 (Eskine)
1987
oil on canvas
115.5 x 127 cm



Richard Dunn
Names No 4 (Anderson)
1987
oil on canvas
115.5 x 127 cm

Artist Biography

Richard Dunn (1944-2024) was born in Sydney and studied architecture at the University of New South Wales, sculpture with Lyndon Dadswell at the National Art School, Sydney, and painting at the Royal College of Art, London (1966-69) with Roger de Grey, Jim Dine and Peter Blake. He also studied history of ideas with Frederic Samson and structural film with Raymond Durgnat.

He was awarded the NSW Travelling Art Scholarship in 1966, judged by artist John Brack. He lived and worked in London and Paris from 1966 to 1977, and in New York from 1984 to 1985 as a P.S.1 International Studio Program Fellow at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1). Dunn received four grants from the Australia Council for the Arts. He was Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Visual Art at the University of Sydney and lived and worked in Sydney and Melbourne.

He taught painting and film theory at Sydney College of the Arts from 1977 to 1988 and was a key founding member of the institution. He subsequently served as the founding director of the new Sydney College of the Arts from 1988 to 2001, before becoming Professor of Contemporary Visual Art and University Artist-in-Residence at the University of Sydney, a position he held until 2011.

Dunn lived for extended periods in Düsseldorf, Berlin, Chemnitz and Edinburgh. He participated in Peter Cook's Städelschule Architektur Klasse jury in Frankfurt am Main during the 1980s. He was Visiting Professor at Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo in 2000; Artist-in-Residence at Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Germany, in 2000; Guest Professor at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 2003 to 2004; Artist-in-Residence at Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi, India, in 2010; and External Examiner for the Art, Space and Nature programme at the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Edinburgh, from 2009 to 2014.

Richard Dunn participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including five international biennales. He was the subject of two major solo exhibitions in German museums, the largest representation of an Australian artist in Germany, and major career survey exhibitions at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Monash University Museum of Art.