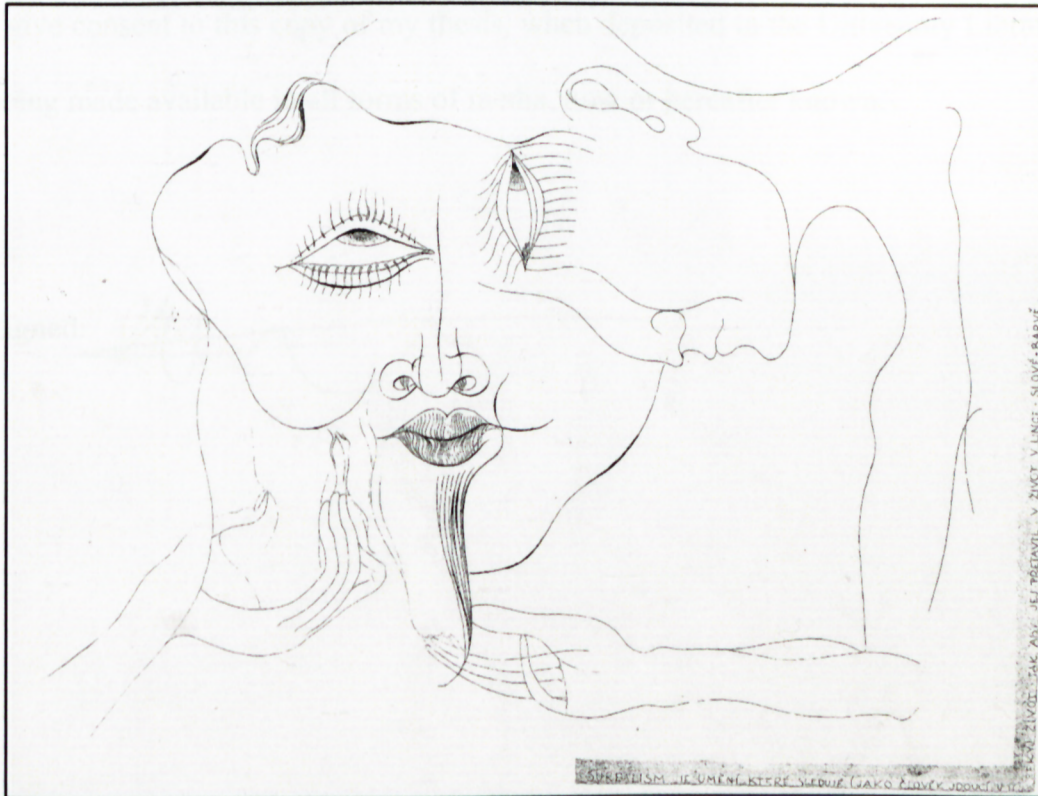


Deep and Defiant

*Dušan and Voitre Marek; Two European Émigré
Artists in Post-War (South) Australia*



Voitre Marek c.1952

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of Master of Arts (Studies in Art History),
School of History and Politics of the University of Adelaide.

February 2007

Declaration:

This work contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree or diploma in any University or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now or hereafter known.

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Abstract:

The two émigré artists Dušan Marek (1926-1993) and his elder brother Voitre Marek (1919-1999) chose different modes of expression, Dušan becoming a painter and film-maker and Voitre a sculptor. Each worked in the surrealist style until 1960, when Voitre's career took a different direction. He then made the decision to devote himself to ecclesiastical sculpture. Voitre's major religious work can be described as a synthesis of the Byzantine and Romanesque influences.

Educated as professional artists in Prague, Czechoslovakia, during the years of World War Two, Dušan and Voitre chose to escape the communist regime under the hammer of Stalin in 1948, arriving in Australia in the same year. They exhibited together for the first time in Australia in the following year. An underlying religious dimension in their lives propelled them each on a different path towards spiritual fulfillment, which found expression in their art. Their inevitable and relentless search for this fulfillment began with their father's influence and their shared cultural backgrounds.

The brothers' spirituality was deep and their commitment in the face of their initial critical reception in Adelaide, defiant. The thesis *Deep and Defiant* explores the different paths taken by each of the brothers, through a close examination of their drawings, paintings and sculptural works. The other media with which they worked, silver-smithing and film-making in Dušan's case, and print-making and jewellery-making in Voitre's case, is not considered in detail in the thesis.

Dušan's was not a conventional spirituality, pursuing a spiritual path instead through the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, the psychologists Sigmund Freud and

Carl Jung, philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, and reading religious works such as the Bible, the Koran and other major tomes, expressing himself in a variety of stylistic and technical ways which included surrealism and film-making. His restless search led him to develop a quasi-religious reverence for nature and a distinctive imagery which reflected his intellectual, artistic and spiritual quest.

Voitre's path was more conventional, finding spirituality in his Christian faith through the Catholic religion. He explored spirituality initially through his study of philosophy and comparative religion. Later, after an epiphany at the age of twenty, his surrealist style began to find expression in religious subjects, until in 1960, at the age of forty-one he made the decision to devote himself entirely to ecclesiastical sculpture.

The thesis concludes that spirituality and religiosity were defining aspects in the brothers' art. The combination of their previous artistic experiences and religious and philosophical interests, and the new landscape and critical environment they found in Australia, sharpened the religious and spiritual aspects of their art. Although their journeys were different, and they each followed different modes of expression, I argue here that their spirituality was central to their artistic expression.

Acknowledgements:

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I also thank my supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Catherine Speck.

INTRODUCTION:

The brothers Dušan Marek (1926- 1993) and Voitre Marek (1919-1999) were two émigré artists who fled Stalin's communist regime in Czechoslovakia in March 1948, to arrive in Australia in December of the same year. Both émigrés graduated from the Academy of Fine Art in Prague¹ before their escape, Dušan attending between 1942 to 1948, and his older brother Voitre from 1939 to 1944. Both worked in the surrealist style at the time.

Both of the brothers established careers as artists in Australia, Dušan as a painter and film-maker and Voitre as a sculptor. For Dušan, who explored the different modes of painting, silver smithing, drawing and film making², and Voitre who explored sculpture, painting and drawing, the spiritual and religious aspects of their art were defining points in their relationship as artists and brothers. Surrealism was a crucial mode of expression for both.

The focus for this thesis is to explore how the artists' spirituality and religiosity had an origin in their childhoods in Czechoslovakia, and how these were reflected in their art. For the purpose of the thesis I will take the definition for 'spiritual' as 'of spirit as opposed to matter,'³ and the definition of 'religion' as 'one of the prevalent systems of faith and worship'⁴

¹ McCulloch, A., McCulloch, S. and McCulloch Childs, E. *The New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, fourth edition, Melbourne, Miegunyah Press, 2006, p.661.

² Dušan Marek completed twelve films over a period of almost thirty years, receiving many awards including a Gold Medal from the Australian Film Institute and the Grand Prix, for *Adam and Eve*, the first time it was awarded to an Australian film, in 1963.

³ *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, London, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.1236.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.1048.

The thesis examines how their art was critically received in Australia subsequent to their arrival, and how this critical reception impacted on their lives and their art.

In examining these issues it is necessary to first establish a definition for surrealism, which was the artists' primary stylistic influence. A secondary issue is to address the lack of published information on both artists. Accordingly, information on the artists prior to their escape from Czechoslovakia could only be obtained in any detail from primary sources, so this needs to be addressed. In contrast to Dušan, who exhibited his work in galleries throughout his lifetime (Appendix 1), Voitre's later work, from the 1960s, was largely ecclesiastical in nature, and not subject to the same degree of critical appraisal that attends regular exhibition schedules. In addition, very little of the material produced by Dušan has been subjected to visual analysis,⁵ and almost none by Voitre.

This situation regarding published material has therefore made it even more important to obtain information from primary sources. Extensive interviews with both Dušan's widow, Helena Marek, and Voitre's widow, Vera Marek, as well as interviews with Voitre and Vera's daughter, Olga Sankey, and granddaughter, Linda Marek, have afforded a unique opportunity to document original source material on both artists.

⁵ The notable exceptions to this are the small publication written to accompany a major exhibition of paintings during the Third Biennale of Sydney in 1979, *Dušan Marek*, by Bernice Murphy, Sydney, Macquarie Galleries, 1979. Murphy critically analyses twenty-six of Marek's works, painted between 1948 and 1979. Daniel Thomas comments on nine of Marek's works as well as his *Eye of the Heart* painted in 1990 and *Homage to the Sun* series painted in 1984, in his catalogue essay, 'Dušan Marek: Seeing the World', Adelaide, Contemporary Art Centre, 1993.

Methodology

A number of methodologies have been employed in the writing of this thesis. The artists' surviving family members who made themselves available for interviews and also provided access to material gathered by the families over many years, constituted a major source of information.

As this thesis requires critical analysis of the work of the artists, Panofsky's proposed iconographic methodology is appropriate⁶. This approach applies three levels of iconographic analysis: the basic pre-iconographic analysis which makes no reference to outside sources, iconographic analysis which identifies the image as recognisable or known, and iconological analysis in which the meaning of the image is interpreted.

The biographical methodology⁷ has also been applied to this thesis. This method considers the meaning of a work from conception to execution as ultimately determined by the artist, with social and economic factors secondary. It relies heavily on information concerning the artist's life, assuming a direct connection between artists and their work.

As surrealism features greatly in the work of both artists, a definition was deemed appropriate. The following definition has been taken from the *Oxford Companion to Art*:

⁶ D'Alleva, A. *Methods and theories of Art History*, London, Laurence King, 2005, p.22.

⁷ Adams, L. *The Methodologies of Art*, Colorado, Westview Press, 1996, pp.101-132.

A movement in art and literature which took over some of the attitudes of Dadaism within the framework of a more positive creed. Although like Dadaism and Futurism it claimed to be a way of life rather than a new artistic style, it became the most widely disseminated and controversial aesthetic movement between the First and Second World Wars. Basically Surrealism sought to explore the frontiers of experience and to broaden the logical and matter-of-fact view of reality by fusing it with instinctual, subconscious, and dream experience in order to achieve an absolute or 'super' reality. Within this general aim it combined a large number of different and not altogether coherent doctrines and techniques, the most characteristic of which were the various attempts to breach the dominance of reason and conscious control by methods designed to release primitive urges and imagery.⁸

The thesis *Deep and Defiant* will begin by examining the literature consulted in writing this thesis, revealing gaps and opportunities for further research. The second chapter will examine the origin of the brothers' search for spirituality which began with the belief systems embodied in their cultural heritage, and will look also at the time Dušan and Voitre Marek spent in Prague as students and practising artists before fleeing their homeland. The third chapter will examine the critical reception the artists' received on their arrival in Adelaide. The fourth chapter will focus on Dušan Marek, and the last on Voitre Marek.

For the purpose of the thesis, because the artists share the same surname they will at times be referred to as Dušan and Voitre.

⁸ Osborne, H. *Oxford Companion to Art*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p.1115.

CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This dissertation covers a period from 1919 to 1999. Voitre was born in 1919 and died in 1999, while his younger brother Dušan was born in 1926 and died in 1993. The sources consulted include books, journal articles, newspaper articles and exhibition catalogues.⁹

Modernism in Australia

An exploration of *Australian Painting 1788 – 2000*¹⁰, by Bernard Smith, Terry Smith and Christopher Heathcote is necessary for the study of modernism in Australia. Chapter 10 entitled ‘The Art Scene of the 1960s’ makes special mention of the contribution made by the post war émigré artists coming from Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. The book precedes the critical discourse that reinforces the view that the migrant artists contributed significantly to the climate of artistic opinion during the 1950s and 1960s.

A publication specifically devoted to the work of émigré artists in Australia is *The Europeans: Émigré Artists in Australia 1930 – 1960*¹¹, a collection of writings on selected artists, edited by Roger Butler. The period covered by the book encompasses the three major phases of immigration between 1930 to 1950. The book canvases a deliberately eclectic mix of subjects, as many émigré artists worked across media. *Bird Ashtray*, 1951, an embossed ashtray made of silver foil, is featured in this publication, with an accompanying paragraph which

⁹ It is of note that Stephen Mould, Director of Music, Opera Australia, is currently undertaking the preparation of a catalogue raisonnée of Dušan’s work.

¹⁰ Smith, B., Smith, T., Heathcote, C. *Australian Painting 1788 – 2000*. 4th ed., Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2001.

¹¹ Butler, R. ed. *The Europeans: Émigré artists in Australia 1930-1960*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1997.

comments on Dušan's jewellery-making.¹² This source provides background information to the topic of this thesis.

Jane Hylton's book *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting of the 1940s*¹³ is invaluable in establishing the context of the Adelaide art scene when Dušan and Voitre joined the Royal South Australian Society of the Arts (RSASA), soon after their arrival. As Hylton writes 'one major effect of the war on the South Australian art world was an influx in late 1948 and 1949 of refugee artists from Europe'.¹⁴ Hylton outlines the emergence of the Adelaide Angries group in the 1940s, describing the circumstances and main protagonists in its development. Biographical information is provided for Dušan¹⁵ but not for Voitre. Two of Dušan's paintings, *Perpetuum Mobile*, 1948 and *Equator*, 1948 are illustrated in a catalogue of artists' works.¹⁶ A paragraph gives a short description of Dušan's existential beliefs and account of the 'banning incident', which is covered in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.¹⁷

Adam Dutkiewicz's thesis *Raising Ghosts: Post-World War Two Émigré and Migrant Artists and the Evolution of Abstract Painting in Australia with special reference to Adelaide, ca. 1950 to 1965*,¹⁸ makes a major contribution to the study of the history of post war émigré artists in Australia. Its relevance to the thesis *Deep and Defiant* is in terms of an examination of the nature of modernism

¹² Ibid. p.205.

¹³ Hylton, J. *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting in the 1940s*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1989.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.40.

¹⁵ Ibid. p.73.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.41.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.59.

¹⁸ Dutkiewicz, A. *Raising Ghosts: Post-World War Two European Émigré and Migrant Artists and the Evolution of Abstract Painting in Australia With Special Reference to Adelaide ca. 1950-1965*. Doctoral thesis submitted to the University of South Australia, December 2000.

operating in the Adelaide art scene at the end of World War Two as well as specific information pertaining to both Dušan and Voitre Marek. Chapter 5, Section 1 is entitled ‘Two Czech Brothers and a Yugoslav 1949 to 1954.’¹⁹ It provides an outline of the Marek brothers’ entrée into the Adelaide art scene, giving an important insight into the critical reception of their work at the time, and a thorough account of the circumstances surrounding the banning of Dušan’s paintings from an exhibition organised by the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), as previously mentioned. Dutkiewicz also makes a number of important and insightful comments on Dušan’s surrealist philosophy, commenting also on the contribution made by both Daniel Thomas and Bernice Murphy to the discourse on Dušan’s art²⁰. Less is written about Voitre.

*Ivor’s Art Review*²¹ is a series of small collections of articles on art in Adelaide, edited by artist and art critic Ivor Francis. It was published on a monthly basis for a limited period from 1956 to 1960; however the issues contain articles relating to the critical reception of Dušan and Voitre’s work in their early years in Adelaide.

Surrealism

In *Australian Surrealism: the Agapitos/Wilson Collection*,²² Bruce James makes important comment on Australian surrealism in documenting the collection of James Agapitos and Bruce Wilson. The collection covers the period from 1925 to

¹⁹ Ibid. pp.214-223.

²⁰ Dutkiewicz suggests that while both Thomas and Murphy both commented on Dušan Marek’s interest in time and space; it was Thomas who isolated Pytor Ouspensky’s ideas on the Fourth Dimension as a seminal influence in Dušan’s surrealist philosophy. Ibid.p.218.

²¹ *Ivor’s Art Review*, 1956-1960. This small publication was produced in Adelaide for only four years.

²² James, B. *Australian Surrealism: the Agapitos/Wilson Collection*. Roseville, New South Wales, Beagle Press, 2003.

1955. The publication includes an important section entitled 'Influential Émigrés', in which six of Dušan's major paintings are described.²³ This account is supplemented by a comprehensive account of Dušan's career in the section entitled 'Artists Biographies'.²⁴

*Surrealism: Revolution by Night*²⁵ was produced as a catalogue accompanying the exhibition organised by the National Gallery of Australia, which toured Australia in 1993. The substantial catalogue includes a chapter entitled 'Surrealism in Australia' by Christopher Chapman, which was also published separately in the same year. It features five of Dušan's early paintings, executed in 1948 and 1949.²⁶

Dušan Marek

Dušan Marek,²⁷ the catalogue essay written by Daniel Thomas for the retrospective exhibition held by the CASSA, for Dušan from 2 July to 1 August 1993, gives a brief but important insight into Dušan's world. Daniel Thomas examines nine of Dušan's paintings and comments on his two major series, *Homage to the Sun*, 1984 and *Eye of the Heart*, 1990. He also makes the observation that among Dušan's favourite books was Pytor Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum: a key to the enigma of the world*.²⁸

²³ Ibid. pp.85-89.

²⁴ Ibid. p.187.

²⁵ Loyd, M., Gott, T. and Chapman, C. *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1993.

²⁶ Ibid., p.253. Chapman comments on *On the Beach*, 1949, *Perpetuum Mobile*, 1948 and *Equator*, 1948. *Birth of Love*, 1948 and *The Voyage*, 1948, are illustrated on page 254.

²⁷ Thomas, D. 'Dušan Marek: Seeing the World', Catalogue essay for the exhibition, *Dušan Marek*, 2 July- 1 August, 1993. Adelaide, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, 1993, unpagged.

²⁸ Ibid.

Dušan Marek,²⁹ is a small publication by Bernice Murphy which provides an insightful analysis of twenty-six of Dušan's works. The paintings, drawings, and three dimensional works, are taken from the time of Dušan's internment in the Dillenberg Displaced Persons Camp in Germany through to 1975. Murphy mentions Dušan's preoccupation with time and his endeavour to embrace the hidden fourth dimension in his work.³⁰ Only three paragraphs in Murphy's book are devoted to Dušan's film making. As the theme in a number of Dušan's paintings is strongly echoed in his films, this may be seen as a shortcoming of the book, although it should be remembered that it was written essentially as a catalogue.

Film

Somewhat addressing this gap in the literature is a monthly publication *Cantrills Filmnotes*³¹ [sic] which provides reviews of independent cinema and video. It is written by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, with the focus essentially on Australian experimental film and video. *Cantrills Filmnotes* provides a valuable insight into the films Dušan produced, making important comment on both their content and critical reception.

Cantrills Filmnotes June 1996, is a Twenty-fifth Anniversary double issue which contains a substantial section written by Arthur Cantrill. It is entitled 'Adelaide – Experimental Film in the 1950s and 60s'. This particular article comments extensively on the film career of Dušan and provides critiques of his major works,

²⁹ Murphy, B. *Dušan Marek*, Sydney, Macquarie Galleries, 1979. The publication was written essentially as a catalogue accompanying the Third Biennale of Sydney.

³⁰ Ibid. p.34.

³¹ *Cantrills Filmnotes*, June 1996, October 1993, December 1999 to January 2000.

many of which have strong connections with his paintings, both film and painting reflecting his spirituality.

Cantrills Filmnotes December 1999 to January 2000, contains a review entitled 'Sydney, 1967'. It specifically comments on the blinding scene in Marek's film *Cobwebs on a Parachute*, 1967, drawing an analogy with the painting *Ego* in which the face is missing an eye. Surrealism has always had a strong connection with sight, and the loss of it. This issue also makes the important comment that Dušan was strongly attracted to film as a medium, which lent itself easily to surrealism while at the same time being aware of the problem of inaccessibility for audiences who were then accustomed only to mainstream film language. Dušan's painting expanded his work to a wider audience. Importantly, Cantrill calls for:

...a reassessment of Dušan Marek as animator ... in light of the reappearance of the early films, most of which have not been publicly seen ... he was obviously a leading Australian animator, although not working in the mainstream.³²

Although this thesis does not attempt to cover Dušan's film making within its scope, the material found in *Cantrills Footnotes* has been a valuable source of information relating to his other major artistic output, notably his paintings.

The thesis fills a gap existing in the literature to date by establishing a link between Dušan's work and the theories of Friedrich Nietzsche, through the process of examining the artists' spiritual development, and looking at how it found expression in their art. The thesis also addresses a gap in the literature in

³² *Cantrills Filmnotes* December 1999 to January 2000, p. 50.

regard to the visual analysis of some of Dušan's later works (1979-1993), not covered by Thomas.³³

An additional gap in the literature exists for the work of Voitre Marek. Apart from newspaper and magazine articles, prior to this thesis nothing has been written of substance which documents or analyses his body of work to date.

³³ Daniel Thomas examines *General Anaesthesia*, 1989-90, *The self observing the self*, 1992, *Renascence*, 1992, *Rabaul Revisited*, 1992 and *Karu and Karlu*, 1993, in his catalogue essay.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND IN EUROPE

To understand the surrealist artists one must be aware that they all believed that art was not an end in itself, but a method of creating awareness of all that is most precious, most secret and most surprising in life....Surrealism is based on the belief that there are treasures hidden in the human mind.³⁴

Dušan and Voitre both read widely in religion and philosophy and expressed themselves artistically in the surrealist style. Dušan looked to philosophers such as Nietzsche, and the Russians Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, for ways to unlock the ‘treasures hidden in the human mind.’³⁵ This chapter will explore the origins of the émigrés’ search for personal spirituality, and how it found expression in the surrealist style, which was in currency in the art schools of Prague at the time they were both students there. Writing on Dušan, Thomas suggests, ‘Surrealism was simply the language of his time, in his art school in Prague as well as in the Contemporary Art Society’s little world that he found in Adelaide.’³⁶

This chapter will ask the questions of what propelled Dušan and Voitre on their course towards spiritual fulfillment and how their early search found expression in their art. It will address what influenced their modes of expression and what influences played a part in the development of their interest in surrealism.

In order to answer these questions I will explore the following aspects with regard to the impact they had on the artists’ work: 1) the familial backgrounds of both Voitre and Dušan, 2) their escape from Czechoslovakia into West Germany, 3) their voyage to Australia, and 4) the early spiritual connection, as demonstrated in the imagery of six paintings by Dušan. The two paintings by Voitre which were

³⁴ Alexandrian, S. *Surrealist Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1997, p.8.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Thomas, D. op.cit.

completed en route to Australia, *Gibraltar IRO* (figure 7) and *My Gibraltar*, (figure 26), did not reveal the religiosity which later became characteristic of his work.

In Bohemia

Three sons, Voitre, Eugene and Dušan were born to Hermina and Vojtech Marek in Bitouchov, a village in the mountains of Bohemia, Czechoslovakia in the early years of the twentieth century. Voitre was born two years, and Dušan nine years, after the French poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire first coined the word 'surrealist' to describe his own play *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* in 1917. The brothers were born during a time in the history of art when the rapid succession of art movements throughout Europe remains unparalleled. Czechoslovak surrealism, which was formed in 1933, grew out of the *Devetsil Group*.³⁷

The eldest son Voitre, was born in 1919, a year after the final year of the Great War, while Dušan, the youngest son was born in 1926. Being seven years older, Voitre took the role of the more serious, responsible elder child, while Dušan was permitted more freedom by his father, at times escaping school to draw, and escaping the discipline which was meted out to the others.³⁸ These two sons were destined to be artists who became and remained influenced by the surrealist movement.

³⁷ The *Devetsil Group* is the name of a left wing avant-garde group of architects, painters, writers and poets active in Czechoslovakia between 1920 and 1931. Demsey, A. *Styles, Schools and Movements*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2002, p.291.

³⁸ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

The war had a profound effect on Vojtech Marek, as outraged and disillusioned by the Pope's blessing of the guns during the Great War, and disapproving of the comfort in which the priests lived relative to the ordinary person, he abandoned the traditional Catholic faith. However his wife, Hermina, insisted on the baptism of their eldest child, Voitre. This could be seen as a prophetic act in view of Voitre's later spiritual direction. Vojtech encouraged his three sons to explore different religions, and the boys were exempted from the traditional Catholic religious instruction during their school years. At home they were encouraged to read widely from their father's extensive library of books on many subjects including philosophy and religion.³⁹

In 1935 the Marek family moved to Pelesany, another small village near Turnov, and finally to Masov, which was surrounded by pine and spruce forests. Here as they explored the countryside, Voitre sculpted figures into the rocks while Dušan drew the old ruined castle of Valdstejn and its surrounds.⁴⁰ It is quite probable that it was here in the woods and forests of the breathtakingly beautiful Bohemia of their childhood, that Dušan and Voitre began their spiritual journeys.

Voitre completed his primary and secondary schooling in Turnov and then undertook an apprenticeship in metal engraving between the First and Second World Wars, which reinforced his natural inclination towards sculpting. As the village which was home to the Marek family was famous for its semi-precious stones, it was decided that Voitre would learn metal engraving while Dušan

³⁹ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

⁴⁰ Correspondence from Mirek Koliaš to Stephen Mould, 29 November 2006. Mirek is the son of Milena Koliaš, the cousin of Dušan and Voitre who assisted their escape from Czechoslovakia in 1948.

studied silver smithing, to give both sons a trade which would earn them an income in their adult lives.

When the German tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia in 1938, Voitre was in the final year of his apprenticeship. Dušan was twelve years old and hosting his first exhibition in a local bookshop. In the following year, Germany invaded Poland, and when World War II was declared in 1939, at the age of twenty, Voitre left the family home in Bohemia to study Sculpture and Art History at the Prague Academy of Applied Art, the only such institution the Nazis permitted to continue operating.

In Prague

In Prague Voitre studied under Professor J. Horejc for five years, graduating with a Diploma in Sculpture and Applied Art in 1944. It was after an epiphany at the age of twenty, when Voitre heard the Lord's Prayer for the first time that he began to develop his interest in religious art, becoming a frequent visitor to the beautiful old churches of Prague. However there was little scope here for him to create religious sculpture in the centuries-old tradition of the Prague churches, and Voitre was restricted to sculpting busts and figurative works.⁴¹ In addition, as outlined in Chapter 5, the Socialist Realism movement promoted under communism left no scope for Voitre's religious inclinations.

During the war years, at sixteen, Dušan began his formal training as an artist, at the School of Fine Art in Turnov and Jablonec and finally at the Academy of Fine

⁴¹ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

Arts in Prague. From 1942 to 1948 Dušan was taught by the eminent Surrealist proselytizer, Professor František Tichý, an admirer of the artists of the Ecole de Paris, and an open opponent of the propaganda of the Soviet Social Realist agenda.

It was also during the German occupation that Voitre met his future wife, Vera. Both were put to work by the Germans packaging drugs in a pharmaceutical factory.⁴² They shared an interest in philosophy and religion and studied together at the University of Prague. Voitre also worked as a freelance sculptor, exhibiting his work in Prague between 1945 and 1947 as a member of the Czech Union of Creative Artists.

To further his knowledge of the Christian faith Voitre joined a retreat, while becoming increasingly concerned about the communist regime, which did not permit religious freedom.⁴³ Artistic freedom was also becoming increasingly restricted. Vera remembers Voitre's cherished library of Czech translations of many books on art, philosophy and religion, which he was forced to leave behind in his atelier when he fled from the Communists in 1948.⁴⁴

It is probable that Voitre and Dušan were among the unprecedented crowds of people who attended the major exhibition of works by the French Surrealists held

⁴² According to Vera, as an artist Voitre was singled out for this type of 'light' work, and as she was only sixteen years old at the time and the schools were closed, she was also put to work in the pharmaceutical factory.

⁴³ A friend of Voitre's was later executed by the communist authorities because of his Catholic faith.

⁴⁴ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 October 2006.

in Prague's famous Manes Hall following the War in the mid-1940s.⁴⁵ Cultural life was returning to Prague and the influence of this one exhibition was widely felt. Vera recalls that the critical reception for this exhibition was guarded, with comments like 'Such art is difficult to evaluate', appearing in the newspapers at the time.⁴⁶

Under Communism

Following the defeat of the Nazis and Europe's liberation from Hitler's fascist regime, war-ravaged Czechoslovakia enjoyed just two short years of freedom before the takeover by Stalin's armies in January 1948.

After the Nazi occupation all the students attending the various art schools would have fully understood the implications for an artist living under yet another form of totalitarianism. Examples of propaganda art were aggressively promoted in the exhibition of Social Realist art which took place in Prague in 1947, and after the Communist takeover every member of the Czech Union of Creative Artists was required by the authorities to become a member of the Communist Party. Exhibitions by artists who were non-party members were forbidden.

The Escape

In March 1948, with artistic and religious freedom increasingly restricted, Voitre, his fiancée Vera and his brother Dušan, escaped over the Czech border into Germany as part of the first wave of Czechoslovakian refugees to escape to freedom from the communist take-over. As a young man, aged twenty-two, Dušan

⁴⁵ Cantrill, A. *Cantrills Filmnotes*, numbers 81-82, June 1996, p.47.

⁴⁶ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 30 October 2006.

had just completed his professional education as an artist, while at twenty-nine, Voitre was already working as an established artist, making small sculptural works on commission.

They were accompanied on the escape by an American guide who had been paid by the Mareks' cousin Milena Koliaš⁴⁷ to take them safely across the border into Allied occupied Germany. After an arduous journey through mountainous terrain, eating snow when their meager food supply ran out, as soon as the fugitives were in reach of safety, the guide disappeared into the forest. Dušan, Voitre and Vera were picked up by German police who delivered them to the American authorities, and the Czechs travelled on together to freedom in the West. Having reached the safety of the American zone, Dušan and Voitre spent nearly five months from March to July, in a West German displaced persons' camp at Dillenberg, a converted concentration camp. Vera was accommodated nearby and made the voyage to Australia separately, departing shortly after the Mareks.

As their journeys to freedom in the West began, Dušan and Voitre were faced with the prospect of rebuilding their lives in a strange, new land. Each was confronted with issues of displacement from their country of origin, dispossession from their homes and family, and the prospect of re-establishing their careers as artists and placing their families on sound financial footings.

⁴⁷ The Marek brothers' cousin Milena Koliaš was instrumental in assisting around 240 people in escaping to freedom in the West. After she was arrested by the authorities she was imprisoned for twenty-two years, of which she served ten years in prison. At the time of the writing of this thesis, she is still alive and living in Prague.

At the same time Milada Jakubova, (later to become Dušan Marek's wife and lifelong companion, Helena) set off to cross the Czech border into Germany to the south. The Mareks and the other émigrés were setting off on what was initially conceived as a short sojourn in a free country, lasting until it was safe to return to their homeland, but this turned out to be a permanent relocation. The Communists did not leave Czechoslovakia for forty years.⁴⁸

In Dillenberg

In Dillenberg, Voitre completed a number of small sculptures, busts and portraits for the officers in charge of the camp. All were left behind in Germany. Dušan's only extant work from this time was painted on a wooden plank stripped from the base of his bunk-style bed. *Birth of Love*, 1948 (figure 1) is an example of Dušan's compelling desire to paint in even the most adverse circumstances. It also displays his interest in objet trouvé and his resourcefulness in the face of the wartime scarcity of materials. It remains the first testimony to his commitment to surrealism, and demonstrates an early expression of his inclination towards the non-material world.

The format of *Birth of Love* is horizontal, the composition following the planes of the wooden plank, its imagery stretching across the picture plane. A large round form to the left is counterbalanced by another form to the right. They are linked across the picture plane by a string of other, smaller forms.

⁴⁸ The 'Velvet Revolution' heralding the collapse of communist rule in Czechoslovakia, was completed without violence in December 1989. Grenville, J. *The Collins History of the World in the Twentieth Century*, London, Harper Collins, 1994, p.387.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 1



Birth of Love
1948, Dillenberg Displaced Persons' Camp
oil on board
14.6 x 71.7 cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

A large, demonic creature with one eye and one nostril, reminiscent of Bosch, is placed in the far left of the composition, as if seeking to make its way out of the sight of the viewer. It creates a strong tension with the female figure polarized to the far right of the painting, and is joined with a labyrinthine progression of anatomical forms and heart shapes originating from the navel of an embryonic form inside the demon. This holds in tension the beautiful face of the female figure to the far right of the composition. Central to the picture is a face in profile, from whose mouth issues the largest of the hearts, making its way to an open, organic, womb-shape painted in flesh colours reminiscent of internal organs, to the foreground of the female figure.

The female figure in the painting may be that of Milena Koliaš, with whom Dušan was in love at the time he escaped from Czechoslovakia.⁴⁹ The demon-like creature evokes a sense of the inner figure's vulnerability as it protectively encloses the male embryo, which appears to be drawing a string-like form from the area of its scrotum. Read in connection with the demonic imagery, it may be an intensely personal reference to the anguish resulting from a devastating accident which Dušan sustained as a child. The tiny head is tied with string, denying sight, a recurring image in Dušan's works,⁵⁰ and the faceless head opens its mouth as if unleashing a silent wail, while a heart shape balances on its small male thigh. The conjoined subjects suggest a tortuous connection with the futility of the love he felt for his cousin, and the reasons for his decision to leave his homeland. The subject matter from Dušan's time as a student was otherworldly, as demonstrated in the student work *Zušlechtění Hudbou*, c.1946 (figure 2).

⁴⁹ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 16 July 2006.

⁵⁰ Blindness was a favourite theme for the Ecole de Paris surrealists.

In *Zušlechtění Hudbou* the picture plane is dissected by random lines forming triangular planes against which two vertical forms are placed to the outsides of the composition. Inside the parameters of the verticals are a number of additional forms differing in size. The smaller shapes seem to float in space around a larger shape. The vertical forms suggest trees and the smaller shapes floating across the composition, insects. The large central insect shape stands along a horizontal line, representing the ground. The background to the composition shows a Cubist influence which appears in Dušan's later painting of Helena, *My Wife*, (1951).

The Voyage

The émigrés began their voyage to Australia in March 1948, and when the SS Charleton Sovereign embarked on its voyage south, Dušan, Voitre and Helena Jakubova were among the forty or so Czechoslovakian émigrés who were outnumbered by the large contingent of Poles, Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians aboard ship. Helena recalls Dušan joining her to recite Czech poetry, as faces to the wind in the bow spray of the ship, the SS Charleton Sovereign breeched the waves of the Atlantic on its way to Australia. This moment remains one of the surreal portents which punctuated Dušan's life. The two became companions from that point and were later to marry in Adelaide, in January 1951.⁵¹

⁵¹ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 30 July 2006.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 2



Zušlechtění Hudbov (Enlightenment through music)

c. 1946, Prague

oil on board

28.0 x 53.4 cm

private collection

The arduous trip to Australia⁵² resulted in another painting by Dušan, *The Birth of Love*'s companion, *The Voyage*, 1948 (figure 3). In this composition the imagery is comprised of a string of shapes which follow the horizontal line of the picture plane, at times integrated with background forms. The horizontal format causes the marine-like imagery to tumble across the bed-bunk surface. This painting again reflects the artist's mastery of coloration, and is eloquently evocative of the warmer climes of the Mediterranean Sea. Forms imitating mollusc, wave and seaweed seem to drift across the viewer's gaze. Seabed meets sea, and sea meets sky, as marine images intertwine with elements suggesting human organs, forming a point of reference with the obverse painting *Birth of Love*. The appearance of the mollusc is significant. It is an early reference to Dušan's interest in the evolutionary process. Dušan's search for spirituality had aroused in him an interest in the theories of Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche and others,⁵³ leading him to develop a spiritual reverence for nature.

Two other major works were painted by Dušan on the long voyage to Australia. They are *Equator*, 1948 (figure 4), and *Perpetuum Mobile*, 1948 (figure 5), the former completed as the SS Charleton Sovereign approached the 0 meridian in December 1948. *Equator* was used by the ship as a poster to celebrate the crossing. The words 'Equator' and 'Break the mirror to see who I am' are painted on separate strips of wood and attached to the painting with nails. In one of his many poems, Dušan wrote: 'Man is not privacy, Break the mirror to see what I am, Empty yourself to see what you are.'⁵⁴ The latter invitation marks an early

⁵² The one thousand émigrés on board the S.S. Charlton Sovereign were subjected to two lengthy delays, stopping in Gibraltar for engine repairs.

⁵³ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 July 2006.

⁵⁴ Marek, D. in de Ambrogi, L. Unpublished paper, 1952, unpagged, collection of Helena Marek.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 3



The Voyage

1948, SS Charlton Sovereign

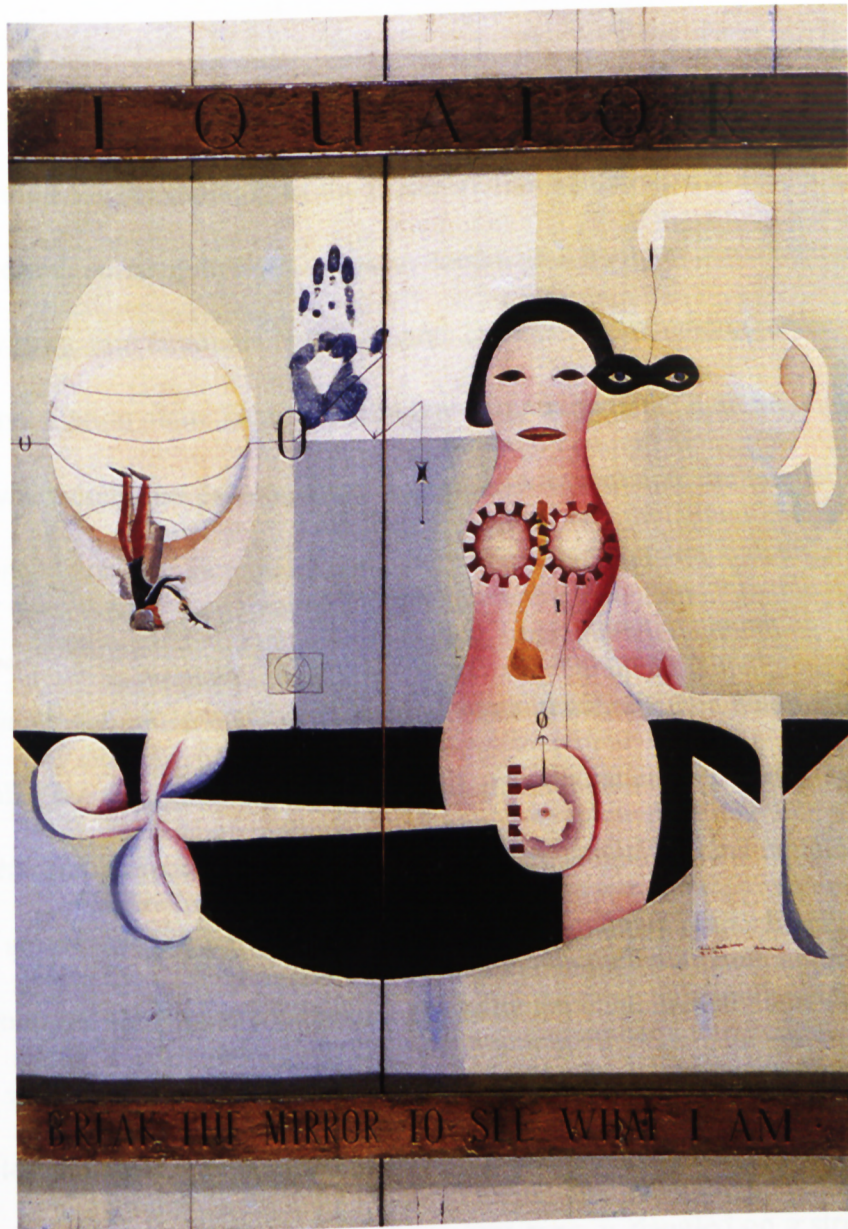
oil on board

10.7 x 71.3cm

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 4



Equator

1948, SS Charlton Sovereign
oil and enamel on wooden gaming table support

126.4 x 95.6cm

obverse of figure 5

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

reference to Dušan's lifelong interest in the subconscious and the spiritual realm which he inhabited.

The work was painted on a gaming table provided by the ship's staff in preparation for the crossing of the Equator. The figures and motifs in the painting are inverted, seeming to float in space. As the SS Charleton Sovereign approached the dividing line between Northern and Southern hemispheres there must have been speculation about hemispheric inversion and perhaps a sense of entering the unknown among the passengers, which is demonstrated in the surreal imagery in the work.

In *Equator* the picture plane is divided horizontally by two strips of wood and vertically by a gap in the planks of the gaming table. The main imagery sits between the horizontal divides and across the vertical. Other smaller imagery forms an arc around the main image. The central focus is the black ship's hull with enlarged flesh pink figurehead, the latter depicted as a stylized female nude figure with cog like breasts and womb, which forms a connection with the ship's propeller and shaft. The figure's left arm transmutes into the form of a rudder and a masquerade mask which adjoins the vacant eyes, is dangled on a string held by an arm suspended to the left.

Other imagery includes a little upside-down insect-like man taking aim at a floating target with a speargun, compass attached, which he holds with arm outstretched. The tiny figure makes a connection with the student work *Zušlechtění Hudbou*, which translated means 'Enlightenment through Music,

(figure 2). The painting remained in Czechoslovakia. In *Equator*, the insect figure is set against a globe of the Earth with the Equator, both Tropics, and Polar caps softly outlined. A handprint is the only evidence of a human presence. The mask is juxtaposed with vacant eyes and the viewer is invited to 'Break the mirror to see what I am.' The student work references Dusan's early reverence for nature.

Perpetuum Mobile is painted on the obverse of *Equator*, the same vertical divide resulting from a gap between the planks of wood. Two more verticals lead the eye downwards to a central area of the composition, within which smaller imagery revolves. Three figurative images form a triangle within this central space. The composition juxtaposes the warm, earthy, flesh tones of the landscape, with the clear, cobalt blue of the Mediterranean Sea. Around a central loggia revolves the narrative of a woman giving birth. The woman lying on the floor in the left middle ground flays her arms in the throes of childbirth. She is white, female and naked. To the right, assistance comes from a black man, his left arm extended to receive a bandage from a white arm bearing the Red Cross badge. The figure of the woman giving birth is counterbalanced diametrically by the inclusion of a Picasso-esque reclining nude. To the left of the woman a white rose marks Dušan's repeated reference to the regeneration of Nature. The irony is complete with the inclusion of a third figure symbolizing 'Blind Justice', which the artist has placed prominently in the foreground of the painting.

The blind human image is a recurring image and suggests the Surrealists' engagement with the concept of sight. The mollusc form to the upper left of the.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 5



Perpetuum Mobile
1948, SS Charlton Sovereign
oil and enamel on wooden gaming table support
26.4 x 95.6cm
reverse of figure 6
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

loggia makes another appearance in Dušan's painting. Once again Dušan signs the painting with a single handprint and the inscription 'Charleton Sovereign X 1948'

Another work completed by Dušan in the year following his arrival, *Gravitation - The Return of Christ*, 1949 (figure 6) continues the mirror theme begun with *Equator*. Its title relates to the underlying spirituality underpinning all his work. The composition is divided into foreground, middle ground and background by strong horizontal lines, four different forms leading the eye from one level to the other. A large dark shape inhabits the left, top corner of the composition.

The horizontal lines depict dark, rolling seas and desert dunes beneath an ominous sky. The Barbary ape features again, as an indicator of the origins of the evolutionary story. The ape holds above his head an armless creature as if to protect it from the dark, fearful image of the canon to the left of the composition. The body of a disgorged victim lies across the dunes, the imagery reminiscent of Michelangelo's depiction of himself in *The Last Judgement*, 1534-41. The narrative is a possible reference to Divine Deliverance.

Riding across the waves is a small boat, buffeted by the sea, inside which a small convex mirror sits, subsuming the viewer and the viewer's environment. In the foreground are the unmistakable surrealist references for the game of *Cadavre Exquis*.⁵⁵ The folded sheets are illuminated by the light of a bulb-headed form emerging from the bottom of the composition. This painting may be read in regard

⁵⁵ *Cadavre Exquis* was played by the Paris Surrealists as a party game.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 6



Gravitation – The Return of Christ

1949, Adelaide

oil and enamel with inset mirror

35 x 81cm

Agapitos/Wilson Collection

to Dušan's voyage to Australia, but another, deeper reading, as a reference to his inner journey, is suggested.

The circumstances of the voyages prevented Voitre from undertaking any sculptural work, but the *Gibraltar IRO*, 1948 (figure 7) was completed, and *My Gibraltar*, 1949 (figure 26) was begun en route to Australia and completed the following year in preparation for exhibition. While these works reflect the influence of surrealism, they do not hint at the religious epiphany which Voitre had experienced earlier and which was to continue to influence his life.

Gibraltar IRO, 1948 is a symmetrical composition in which a horizontal line transverses the top of the picture plane. Two figures are placed, one to the left and one to the right of two round forms which lead the eye to another form which stretches across the bottom of the painting, linking both figures. One of the figures is a man and one is a woman. They are both sitting in a boat shape bearing the inscription 'Gibraltar', 'Charlton', and 'Huelva'. A ship's compass and wheel is placed between the figures. The figures are those of Voitre and Vera, the ship representing the S.S.Charlton Sovereign in which they sailed to Australia, the painting a memento of their voyage. The palette is in a high key, expressive of the clear blue skies and calm sea of the Mediterranean, a memorable new experience for someone coming from a mountainous, land-locked country like Czechoslovakia. The painting shows evidence of extensive under-painting, white paint scumbled across the face of the compass, and the faces of the two figures. The skill of the trained artist is evident in the work.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 7



Gibraltar IRO
1949, SS Charlton Sovereign
oil on wood
29.0 x 20.5cm
Art Gallery of South Australia

In this chapter the origins of Dušan's and Voitre's course towards spirituality, in the influence of their father and their childhoods in the forests of Bohemia, has been outlined. Discussed also is how surrealism was the 'language' of the art schools in Prague where Dušan and Voitre studied and how their spirituality found expression in surrealism. The chapter also looks at the Mareks' escape in 1948 from the communist oppression in their homeland, Czechoslovakia, and at the paintings executed during their voyage to Australia. Noted is how while there were early signs of the spirituality which later characterized Dušan's paintings, the religiosity which later became evident in Voitre's work, did not appear in his early works. In the following chapter I will look at the émigrés arrival in Australia, at the art scene in Adelaide when they arrived there and at how the critical appraisal of their work and their new environment affected them in different ways.

CHAPTER 3: THE ÉMIGRÉS IN AUSTRALIA

This chapter will examine the émigrés' arrival in Australia, the art scene in Adelaide on their arrival; the critical appraisal of their work and how the new artistic environment they found themselves in, influenced them.

Dušan was aged twenty-two and Voitre twenty-nine at the time of their arrival. They had come to a country in which they had no social or familial connections, no financial support and no knowledge of the English language.

On disembarking in Australia, the two artists were among the first non-British European arrivals from war-torn Europe as part of the Displaced Persons Resettlement Scheme which was introduced by the Australian Government in 1947. They were part of the third wave of immigrants who came to Australia in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Having survived Hitler's war in Europe, the Mareks were among the thousands of refugees who made the decision to flee their homelands as Stalin's 'Iron Curtain' closed in across Europe.

On arrival in Sydney, the Mareks were transported to a migrant camp at Bathurst, New South Wales. From here they chose to travel to Adelaide, where they found an active, thriving, if somewhat rebellious art scene.

⁵⁶ Australia experienced three waves of immigration in the first half of the twentieth century. The first wave of migrants arriving in the 1930s, were mainly Jewish people fleeing ahead of the Nazi build up in Germany. The second group comprised those more directly affected by Hitler's regime, arriving in Australia when the Second World War was imminent, or arriving during the war as internees who had been detained because of their nationality. A third group of displaced persons, largely from the Baltic states and the countries of middle and eastern Europe, arrived in Australia after the war, ahead of the advancing armies of Stalin.

Although they were both practising artists before they fled Czechoslovakia, in Australia they were seen by the Government as healthy young men who satisfactorily filled the labour requirements of the economic policy tailored to modernise the country after the war. Their passage from Europe was paid for by the Australian Government in return for two years employment, after which the émigrés were free to apply for citizenship or return to Europe. The artists were part of the influx of migrants mainly from Middle and Eastern Europe who interestingly settled mainly in Sydney or Adelaide.⁵⁷

The Australia to which these émigré artists came in 1948 however, did not have the same great cultural tradition which was part of their heritage in Europe. In Australia there existed a longstanding belief in landscape painting as the dominant narrative of Australian art. Colonial artists such as John Glover had reflected the path of a nation seeking its identity from within a unique landscape.

Anne-Marie Willis describes this as ‘a compelling and dominating national narrative of the progressive discovery of the nation’s character through the efforts of its artists’, placing the climax of this narrative with the Heidelberg School.⁵⁸ These painters were seen to have connected with, claimed and painted the ‘real Australia.’ Willis claims that the depiction of landscape played an integral role in promoting connectedness to place, a vital function for people displaced from their countries of origin. Dušan and Voitre were both to experience and reflect this connectedness to the landscape as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

⁵⁷ Catalano, G. *The Years of Hope: Australian Art and Criticism, 1959-1968*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981, p.19.

⁵⁸ Willis, A. *Illusions of Identity: The Art of Nation*, Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1993, p.11.

As émigrés from Eastern Europe, the Mareks experienced many cultural differences in Australia, not the least of which related to the fact that since colonization, Australia had maintained an Anglo-Celtic dominance, with strong ties to Britain. In those days the local artists continued to look back to Britain, and perhaps France, as a representation of Europe for direction, acceptance and even to some extent a sense of origin and identity.

Angry Adelaide

At the time of the Mareks' arrival in Australia, Adelaide was deemed to be a place of artistic 'fermentation', emerging from what Barrett Reid named the 1930s-to-the-early-1950s, the 'Dusty Years'.⁵⁹ The artistic 'fermentation' may be seen as a reaction against the conservative attitudes of the art establishment in Adelaide at the time. Max Harris comments, 'All Australia knew that Adelaide was the frontline, and the battleground, on which the decadence of modernism could be crushed once and for all.'⁶⁰

Both émigré artists began exhibiting their surrealist works the year following their arrival in 'Angry Adelaide'. The rebellion was led by artists such as Dave Dallwitz, Ivor Francis, Douglas Roberts and Victor Adolfsson. Max Harris commented, 'What turned Nice Adelaides into Angry Adelaides was that we were a threat to accepted thought about identity, who we were and where we belonged.'⁶¹

⁵⁹ Daniel Thomas, in Hylton, J. *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting in the 1940s*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1989, p.6.

⁶⁰ Max Harris, in, Hylton, J. *Adelaide Angries: South Australian Painting in the 1940s*, Adelaide, Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1989, p.10.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

Frustration had been mounting for a number of years and the South Australian Chapter of the CAS was established in 1942, six years before the Mareks' arrival in Adelaide. In the catalogue of the *First Exposition*,⁶² statements by individual artists expressed great frustration with the entrenched, conservative attitudes opposing change in the Adelaide art world.⁶³

In addition, after the Second World War, Adelaide benefited greatly from the diverse influx of émigré artists such as the brothers Ludwig and Wladyslaw Dutkiewicz (arr. 1949, Poland), Stanislaus Rapotec (arr. 1949, Yugoslavia), Udo Sellbach (arr. 1955, Germany), Karin Schepers (arr. 1955, Germany), Anton Holzner (arr. 1955, Austria), Alex Leckie (arr. 1955, Scotland), Charles Reddington (arr. 1959, U.S.A.), Alun Leach-Jones (arr. 1959, Wales) and Berend van der Struik (arr. 1957, Holland).⁶⁴ These artists brought their different perspectives and experiences to the Adelaide art scene, including the teaching profession as most were already qualified, practising artists on arrival, as were the Mareks.

As an émigré in an Anglo-Celtic, predominantly English speaking culture, language can often be a crippling barrier to overcoming the sense of dislocation and dispossession which accompanies emigration. It served to reinforce the émigré or refugee identity for Dušan and Voitre. Dušan's great-niece, Linda Marek, remembers that as a child she struggled to understand Dušan's strong

⁶² The *First Exposition: Royal South Australian Society of Arts Associate Contemporary Group* opened on 9 July 1942 in the Royal Society of Arts Gallery.

⁶³ Hylton, J. cit. p.17.

⁶⁴ Dušan was later to form an enduring association with Holzner and Sellbach during his years in Tasmania, when all three held teaching positions at the Tasmanian School of Art.

Czech accent, as his native language was always spoken at home.⁶⁵ In respect to Linda's grandfather Voitre, the situation was different as Vera spoke fluent English and was able to assist with language in day-to-day matters. Later the arrival of their two children Olga and Ivan meant that English was spoken interchangeably with Czech.

Dušan's personal diary was written in the Czech language, and Czech alternated with English in inscriptions on his paintings. The Mareks' other 'language' being art, however, the brothers soon found their way to people of like sensibility and artistic appreciation, establishing close and valued friendships, some of which would last a lifetime.

Surrealism in Adelaide

Once settled in Adelaide, Dušan visited the National Gallery of South Australia with an English speaking friend. Here Ivor Francis's surreal painting, *Schizophrenia* (1943) immediately captured his attention, and subsequently he asked to meet Francis. A lifelong friendship began and it was through Francis that Dušan was introduced to Douglas Roberts and other members of Adelaide's inner circle of artists and art lovers. Through this small community of people who understood and appreciated art, the Mareks began to establish some connectedness, in the sharing of a common artistic language, intellectual thought and philosophical ideals.

⁶⁵ Interview with Linda Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 3 September 2006.

Surrealism was not new to Australia. Australian artists had first been introduced to the notion of surrealism by Gino Nibbi in his journal *Stream*, issue number 2, 1931. It presented a significant move away from the Australian tradition of landscape painting. Nibbi includes the metaphysical painter Giorgio De Chirico in a list of modern artists which supports an article commenting on 'the sense of claustrophobia that would soon inhabit the work of artists such as James Cant and Albert Tucker.' It reads,

[De Chirico] has created a race of shadowy mannequins with fragments of ruins and memories of buildings on their knees. These mannequins represent the impotence of men of spirit crushed beneath the debris of the past: fragments of temples, geometries, traditions, rhetoric – abominable symbols! Even apart from the subject, the actual painting is monotonous and anaemic. He is a cold satyr, full of significance. Before him we feel suffocated, and long for the open air.⁶⁶

However Australian surrealism had progressed beyond an assiduous imitation of its European counterpart, developing its own particular response in a body of works equally viable as that developed in any other country.⁶⁷

Francis was among the group of artists and writers in Adelaide who, in the early years, supported surrealism. Both Dušan and Voitre found support in their careers through Francis as outlined in the following chapters. Dušan and Ivor also shared a memorable irony involving the Art Gallery of South Australia's acquisitions policy. In his autobiography, 'Goodbye to the City of Dreams', Francis recalls the Gallery's purchase of his painting *Schizophrenia* with the quip, 'Still, it took

⁶⁶ Chapman, C. in *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 1993, p.218.

⁶⁷ Ken Wach, in James, B. *Australian Surrealism: the Agapitos/Wilson Collection*, Roseville, New South Wales, Beagle Press, 2003, p.60.

thirty-two years before the Art Gallery felt sufficiently reckless to let their hair down and purchase from me again.' Immediately he added,

It reminds me of Dušan Marek, who sold a painting to the Art Gallery for the first time in 1973; it was a work he had painted aboard ship on his way to Australia from Czechoslovakia in 1948. Commenting, he said wryly, 'You see how far I have progressed in the estimation of this country, after living and painting here for a quarter of a century?'⁶⁸

It was into this environment that the Mareks both began to exhibit their art immediately after their arrival in the RSASA's Seventh Annual Exhibition in 1949. (Appendices 1 and 2) Dušan worked by day as a factory worker and cleaner with the South Australian Railways, painting when he could. After several months Voitre began working for Sheppards Jewellers as an engraver. As a consequence of meeting like-minded artists such as Francis, both Marek brothers duly joined the CAS and eight paintings by Dušan and seven by Voitre were exhibited at the Society's Seventh Annual Exhibition in July 1949. Dušan writes:

I arrived in Adelaide in December 1948 and in early 1949, through Ivor Francis and Doug Roberts, joined the CAS. I participated at the Seventh Annual Exhibition of the CAS and two of my paintings were 'rejected on the grounds of obscenity' as quoted in the newspaper.⁶⁹

In 1949 the CAS declined to exhibit three paintings including *Equator* and *Perpetuum Mobile*, although they had already been approved for exhibition by Ivor Francis and listed in the catalogue⁷⁰ The third painting was most probably

⁶⁸ Francis, I. *Goodbye to the City of Dreams: An Autobiography*, Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia, 2004, p.196.

⁶⁹ Bruton, D. *Recollections: The Contemporary Art Society of South Australia 1942-86*, Adelaide, C.A.S.S.A., 1986, p.19.

⁷⁰ Dutkiewicz, A. cit. p.215.

Gibraltar (1948) which featured a nude female figure, or *Birth of Love* (1948) (Figure 1), which features nudity and embryonic imagery.⁷¹

Lisette Kolhagen, a foundation artist-member of the CAS and secretary of RSASA, placed the ban and relegated the works to the cellar, because the works did not meet framing requirements and she believed them to be 'obscene'.⁷² It is thought Kohlhagen was offended by the female nude in *Perpetuum Mobile*, which is meant to be giving birth.⁷³ The reason for the 'obscenity' label is thought also to relate to the cog-wheel breasts and womb of the ship's figurehead in *Equator* and to the nude female figure in *Perpetuum Mobile*. Dutkiewicz comments:

A review by Kohlhagen substantiates Helena's impression. Kohlhagen was clearly confused by the paintings, and criticised some unspecified work as 'unintelligible' and the brothers' paintings as 'the most extreme' in the exhibition, but discussed directly only their construction, and the rarity of the appearance of such work in South Australia.⁷⁴

Dutkiewicz suggests that if Kohlhagen did act in a selection capacity for the CAS, she did so unconstitutionally, because...

The very notion of selection was an anathema to the CAS, and was one of the reasons for instigating the Society and forming a body independent of the perceived strictures of the processes of the RSASA, where the Fellows vetted the work for display.⁷⁵

Daniel Thomas suggests that the offence may have been taken because the 'ship's figurehead, stylized woman image was given schematic cog wheels as breasts and

⁷¹ Ibid. p.216.

⁷² Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 13 August 2006.

⁷³ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 September 2006.

⁷⁴ Dutkiewicz, A. op. cit.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

womb instead of fleshy organs of generation.⁷⁶ The mechanical human interplay was used by other surrealist artists such as Marcel Duchamp in works including the *Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* (1915-23).

The brothers' attitude to the banning was defiant and in spite of being accepted to join the CAS, Dušan and Voitre decided to exhibit instead with the Adelaide Independent Group, which was formed in 1949.⁷⁷ Dušan never again exhibited with the CAS.

The membership of the Adelaide Independent Group (AIG) included Voitre, Cliff Avery, Yvonne Teakle, Eric Skuse, Peter King, Ivan Sofilkanic and Keith Shutter.⁷⁸

Dutkiewicz recounts that following the banning

... a small column in the press appeared, announcing that the two banned paintings would be exhibited in the University of Adelaide. The Mareks exhibited both the aforementioned works with the *Adelaide Independent Group (AIG)*, formed in 1949. The exhibition organizer, Mr. D. E. [Don] Thompson said 'Two paintings rejected by the Society of Contemporary Art on the grounds of obscenity would be included in an exhibition of Surrealist art to open at the University on Monday. But they are not obscene - it is bigotry. The pictures are regarded as obscene only because they are not understood.'⁷⁹

Vera recalls a Czech expression uttered by Dušan on the occasion of the opening of this exhibition, which, translated into English, meant that he did not wish people to view his work as a calf would stare at a new gate⁸⁰. Dušan understood

⁷⁶ Thomas, D. in Dutkiewicz, A. op. cit.

⁷⁷ Hylton, J. cit. p.42.

⁷⁸ 'Independent Group', *Advertiser*, 2 September 1949, p.11.

⁷⁹ Dutkiewicz, A., op.cit.

⁸⁰ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

that appreciation of his art required an educated audience and was impatient with those who did not understand. Dutkiewicz's subsequent comment lingers, 'Dušan's art was not concerned with the literal, and in its overlapping of experience, political thought and imagination seemed somewhat otherworldly to people not familiar with such an uncompromising approach.'⁸¹

Further evidence of the critical reception of Dušan's work at the time can be found in the published reviews of the art critic for the *Mail*, Esmond George and the *Advertiser* critic, Henry Fuller. Dutkiewicz comments that 'While Kohlhagen had problems with the Mareks' surrealism, the art critic for the *Mail*, Esmond George, had trouble comprehending any modern art.'⁸² Writing on Dušan's paintings, George's comments were insulting at the very least. Among his comments were:

Two Czechoslovakian brothers, Dušan and Václav Marek, have a weird collection of surrealist paintings and sculpture on exhibition in the Sir George Murray Library Building at the University. They are sure to arouse curiosity and mystification, if not admiration...To most people, however, they will remain puzzle picture curiosities, and will leave spectators unmoved by any reaction except, 'why?' There is a complete absence of design, colour, texture, or form that appeals to the eye. Nor is it discernable as to why these works should have been executed, much less why they should be exhibited.⁸³

Murphy refers to George's 'parochial critical pieties' that also deeply wounded the artist suggesting that George's statement on Dušan's work left the artist deeply affected by the depth of criticism.⁸⁴ Henry Fuller was similarly uncomplimentary,

⁸¹ Dutkiewicz, A. cit. p.218.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ George, E. 'Weird Art Display by two Czechs', *Sunday Mail*, 10 September 1949, p.10.

⁸⁴ Murphy, B. *Project 10: Dušan Marek*, Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1976, unpagged catalogue essay.

describing the works as ‘fanciful in the extreme.’⁸⁵ The banned works were bought by the Art Gallery of South Australia in 1971 and now hang on display with *Birth of Love* and *Voyage*.

However, Francis wrote of the banning incident:

... Dušan Marek, perhaps one of the only genuine surrealists Australia has had. I have an example of his work which will undoubtedly be a ‘gallery piece’ in the future. Unfortunately Australia, like England, has never taken kindly to surrealism, not even in Adelaide. Marek, in his only attempt to hold an exhibition, found his work ruthlessly censored by the Council, and although he still lives somewhere among us, has disappeared from notice, which is, I think, a great pity.⁸⁶

Program, 1948 (figure 8), was the first painting Dušan completed in South Australia. It was painted later on the obverse of *Gibraltar*, 1948 and was inspired by imagery experienced by Dušan at Port Said and Aden. Dušan continued the surrealist penchant for objet trouvé throughout his career, and also his interest in duality through the painting of double-sided works. With *Program* there is no deliberate front or back, possibly a reflection of his sensitivities about relationships and spatial dimensions, but also about himself and his identity, his dual or even multiple universes.

The composition is divided horizontally by three planes of different colour, rendering no obvious foreground, middle ground or background. Two large forms sit prominently to the top of the picture plane, with a smaller form overlapping the topmost horizontal. Other smaller shapes are scattered, bridging the two lower planes.

⁸⁵ Fuller, H. ‘Independent Group Exhibition’, *Advertiser*, 16 September 1949, p.5.

⁸⁶ Francis, I. in *Direction*, December, 1952, unpagged.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 8



Program

1949, Adelaide

oil and enamel on board

28.5 x 51.5cm

Agapitos/Wilson Collection

The black figures are seen in a subterranean location far below the white figure which floats supreme in juxtaposition to an ancient, weathered landscape. A faceless figure appears in the bottom left hand corner of the work, this time painted in black. To the right, human forms reminiscent of Ernst float in space. There are links also to the mechanical references in prior paintings, placed against the ancient white rock, to the upper right hand corner of the painting, which may also be read as a face in profile. The single word 'Program' sits across the projectile hand of the main figure in the painting. It marks the first use of the English language, used interchangeably with Czech inscriptions which suggest such filmic procedures as subtitling and credit listings.

As with much of his work *Program* deals with Dušan's existential belief in the mysterious order of the universe and the evolutionary and cyclical nature of existence. As his first Australian painting, it contains layers of meaning characteristic of his work. A fourth painting completes the series and continues the theme of duality that began with *Birth of Love* and *The Voyage*. *Program* is painted on the obverse of *Gibraltar*.

After Dušan left Adelaide in 1951, he did not exhibit again until he 'reappeared' at the Mack Gallery in Sydney, where he exhibited in 1953. (Appendix 1) Voitre continued his career in Adelaide where, having been baptized in Bohemia, he attended the Catholic Church, making the decision in 1962 to devote his life to ecclesiastical sculpture.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

Thus far I have outlined how Vojtech Marek instilled in his sons a liberal and inquiring approach to religion, how it is probable that Dušan began his spiritual connection with nature and the landscape in the forests of Bohemia, and how Voitre experienced an epiphany at the age of twenty which set his course towards Catholicism. I have discussed how both Dušan and Voitre were strongly influenced by the surrealist movement while they were students in Czechoslovakia and how their work was critically received in different ways in Adelaide. I have also outlined how the brothers reacted to the 'banning incident' which took place following their first exhibition with the CAS in Adelaide, by exhibiting the banned works with the AIG.

The following two chapters will examine how the emigrés lives and careers diverged from this time, as each reacted differently to the way their work was critically received. The following two chapters, on Dušan and then Voitre, will look also at how in the new landscape and artistic environment in which they found themselves, the religious and spiritual aspects of their art were intensified.

CHAPTER 4: DUŠAN MAREK

This chapter will outline how Dušan's spiritual journey took him around Australia on a search for the centre of the surrealist world, to New Guinea.⁸⁸ It will examine how his philosophies reflected those of the surrealist movement, how he applied it stylistically to find expression for his spirituality and his migration from Europe, and whether he made a spiritual connection with the Antipodean landscape. It will also address the question of whether his spirituality remained a constant factor in his life and continued to be reflected in his art.

A critical examination of sixteen of Dušan's works reveal the spiritual, or otherworldly imagery and multi-layering of meaning, which is characteristic of his work. This chapter explores the path Dušan took in his artistic practice informed by the writings of the Russian mystics George Gurdjieff and Pytor Ouspensky, and philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche. It will establish how his search for a higher consciousness through concepts such as the Fourth Way, the Eternal Recurrence and the Fourth Dimension were expressed in his art. It will follow the development of his imagery as it makes a connection with the Antipodean environment until towards the end of the artist's life, when it becomes increasingly spiritual, reflecting the disintegration of the artists' health in the face of terminal illness.

Following the 'banning incident' in Adelaide in 1949, Dušan left for Hobart and then Sydney, where he held an exhibition at the Mack Gallery in 1953.

⁸⁸ New Guinea was placed at the centre of the surrealist map of the world by the Ecole de Paris surrealists.

(Appendix 1). Dušan said he left Adelaide because people made no effort to understand his painting, and instead 'advised him to paint a copy of nature, which is not art.'⁸⁹ Leo de Ambrogi comments,

He was hailed at 23, as the artist with 'greater possibility than anyone else in Australia of becoming a world famous surrealist' ... He was exhibited, hailed, praised ... and censured. Then like one of the dream-like qualities of his work, he disappeared, leaving only the disturbance of his passage.⁹⁰

The banning incident was a deeply felt irony as Dušan had left Czechoslovakia because in his words:

I was not allowed to exhibit my work because it did not conform to the Government's requirements of 'socialistic realism'. Art cannot speak through nice social forms. It must not fear to speak publicly.⁹¹

After arriving in Hobart in early 1951, Dušan spent nine months working as a builder's labourer, and painting when he could, before moving on to Sydney where they were to spend the next few years. Here Dušan was assigned work in a factory by the Australian Government.

Adam Dutkiewicz comments on the dismissive comment of the Sydney critics, particularly those of Paul Haefliger. He aligned Marek's Surrealist 'phantasies' to those indulged in by 'gay students in the 1920s' and suggests a degree of bias towards his elitist *Sydney Group* and antipathy towards anything different.⁹²

⁸⁹ de Ambrogi, L. op. cit.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Dutkiewicz, A. cit. p.218.

Some indication of how Dušan received this criticism may be found in the iconic painting *Ego*, 1951-52 (figure 9) which was painted while he was living in Kings Cross, interestingly just three years after he disembarked in Australia. Subjected to some surface damage by the unfavourable climatic conditions of their next destination, New Guinea, it is now on display at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In keeping with the surrealist notion of painting-as-surrealist-object, it was the artist's wish that no repairs were to be carried out on the painting, and this wish has been respected by the curators and conservators at the gallery.⁹³ Dušan was unconcerned with materiality, spirituality being his focus.

In *Ego*, the picture plane is dominated by a large form set in the right foreground, balanced by a smaller form to the upper left of the composition. The smaller form is set against a darker plane. The larger form is that of a male figure dressed formally in black suit with blue bow-tie, and painted with a massive, oversized cranium which is cracked open and fissured, reminiscent of the surface of the ancient rock formation we saw in the earlier painting, *Program*. An eroded jaw continues the ancient, weathered theme, and the strongly defined teeth contribute to a leering smile, suggestive of a confident, smug persona. The eyes are reptilian.

⁹³ Helena Marek wrote to the Gallery in 1998 to give the following reasons, 'I know that Dušan did not want it restored. Dušan's attitude was determined by his surrealistic pleasure in the transitory nature of art works,' in Mould, S. 'Dušan Marek: a landlocked Czech Surrealist in the Antipodes.' Paper delivered at the symposium *Terra Incognita: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis and sexuality in the Pacific Region* held at the University of Melbourne, 1-3 September 2006, unpagged.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 9



Ego
1951-2, Sydney
oil on canvas
39.0 x 41.5cm
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

From the gaping crack in the skull oozes the flesh coloured substance of the figure's brain, which may also suggest a connection with the exposed brain in Ivor Francis' *Schizophrenia* 1943, and is an image repeated in other works such as *Maze* 1983. The gaping cranium, the flaccid hand and smaller form which is a rose set against a window, connect in colour and definition, taking the eye from one to the other, suggesting perhaps the artifice of the ego, the weakness of humanity, and the purity of nature, in turn.

The rose may also indicate a reference to Max Harris's surrealist poem, 'The Pelvic Rose (To Salvador Dali)'⁹⁴ which inspired paintings by Douglas Roberts and Ivor Francis' *The Rose* 1942. The rose became something of a mascot for the Adelaide Surrealists of the 1940s as a consequence of Harris's surrealist poem. The rose was also an image to recur in some of Dušan's later, intensely personal paintings, such as *Renascence*, 1992. In other works the rose was replaced by the lily or other flower species to become yet another of Dušan's recurring references to the sublimely surreal quality of nature and to the concept of eternal recurrence. A multi-layering of meanings is strongly characteristic of Dušan's work. At least two readings are suggested in respect to *Ego*, the first demonstrating a possible reaction to his critics. *Ego* may be read as a painting informed by Dušan's experiences of the weakness and corruptibility of human nature. His ethos did not sit well with the artificiality and egocentric nature of the art world and he did not want to become part of that.

⁹⁴ Kerr, D. and Harris, M. eds. *Angry Penguins*, Adelaide, Adelaide University Arts Association, 1940, pp.23-27. The poem is dated 3 November 1940.

James comments:

Throughout his life, Marek subscribed to the view that humanity was continually engaged in a struggle against its own baser tendencies. His was not a religious position, though the history of religion figured often in his thinking, but it did allow for moral judgements.⁹⁵

The painting may also be read in relation to the lifelong interest Dušan had in the interplay between the conscious and subconscious, the title referencing Freud's Ego and Id theory.

Thomas hints at Dušan's spirituality in his summation of Dušan's work:

Marek's joyful exploration of the multitudinous differences both within the self and related to the self from outside is a shining example for a world in which fundamentalism and separateness have scarcely improved since the bad days of his youth.⁹⁶

The Fourth Way

Dušan's art reflected a relentless search for ways to reach other levels of consciousness, to tap into the powers of the subconscious, to find other paths to spiritual freedom, other states of being. He was interested in achieving access to the power of the mind and its various states of consciousness, to achieve the full potential of his evolutionary possibilities.

In the following quotation, Thomas recalls a conversation with a film maker friend in which Dušan's philosophies were recounted,

⁹⁵ James, B. cit.

⁹⁶ Thomas, D. op. cit.

He believed in an evolution of consciousness from rocks and minerals, through plants, animals and up through man; and [that] his shadowy side, with its fears and instincts, was the only path to the self of higher consciousness, and [that] he liked to immerse himself in silence to concentrate on a world that is beyond.⁹⁷

Dušan read only non-fiction, and among the philosophers, intellectuals and mystics whose works he read were those of the two Russian mystics George Gurdjieff and Pytor Ouspensky.⁹⁸ Thomas suggests that 'his favourite books eventually included Peter [sic] Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum: A key to the enigmas of the world* (1912).⁹⁹

However it was Gurdjieff¹⁰⁰ who introduced Ouspensky to his 'Powerful ideas of the Fourth Way', which Gurdjieff explains in terms of:

You do not realize your own situation. You are in prison. All you can wish for, if you are a sensible man, is to escape. But how? No one can escape from prison without the help of those who have escaped before. An organization is necessary.¹⁰¹

Gurdjieff says that giving up one's normal 'conditions of life' is not required in order to follow the Fourth Way. He continues:

When you find a Fourth Way School that is led by one that has broken the chains of sleep and attained a higher level of consciousness, you are instructed to reach the full potential of your human evolutionary possibilities. You are taught to free

⁹⁷ Thomas, D., op.cit.

⁹⁸ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 July 2006.

⁹⁹ Thomas, D. op.cit.

¹⁰⁰ George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1872-1949) was a Greek-Armenian mystic and spiritual teacher who established a school for spiritual development called The Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. Gurdjieff claimed that the teachings he brought to the West from his own experiences and early travels, 'expressed the truth found in other ancient religions and wise teachings relating to self-awareness in one's daily life and humanity's place in the universe.' One of his travels took him to the monastery of the Mevlevi Order of Sufis in Istanbul. Gurdjieff is best known through the published works of his pupils including those of Pytor Ouspensky.

¹⁰¹ Gurdjieff, G. in Taylor, M. 'P.D. Ouspensky: A Biographical Outline', *Gurdjieff International Review*, Winter 1998/1999, unpagged.

yourself from the sleep-induced power of your stimulus-response machine. You are taught to awaken.¹⁰²

In this quotation Gurdjieff speaks of a means by which an individual may achieve his or her full evolutionary potential by achieving spiritual freedom from the bodily demands of sleep. Spiritual freedom was the theme of a number of Dušan's paintings, including *Prisoner*.

Prisoner, c.1950 (figure 10), marks Dušan's first reference to the theme of freedom. The composition is dissected by a series of strong vertical forms which lead the eye back to a black void which is central to the composition. Two figures placed to the left, one upright and another upside-down, follow the verticals, while the outline of a third form completes the triangular link with the others. These human figures seem to float in the composition, suggesting perhaps a loss of their ability to determine movement. The figure in the left foreground, brain exposed, gazes across the picture plane, looking without expression towards the viewer, while the remaining figures appear lifeless. The monochromatic palette reinforces a sense of loss of free will, of both physical and spiritual imprisonment. *Prisoner* is more architectonic than other paintings of the period and the exposed brain imagery of the earlier painting, *Ego*, is repeated in this and later works.

Bruce James makes a connection between this painting and the announcement of an International Competition for a monument to *The Unknown Political Prisoner*, won in 1953 by Reg Butler.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ James, B. cit. p.106.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 10



Prisoner
1950-51, Adelaide
oil on canvas
51 x 41cm
private collection

As the writings of Pytor Ouspensky and George Gurdjieff,¹⁰⁴ were part of Dušan's extensive library¹⁰⁵ a connection suggests itself with the Fourth Way theories in respect to *Prisoner* and other paintings which have the theme of freedom. As a political refugee himself, unable to return to Czechoslovakia for fear of arrest, Dušan was greatly concerned with political freedom, however he was also greatly concerned with spiritual freedom.

The importance of freedom, was again reflected in one of his last paintings *Do Not Shoot the Angels*, 1993 (figure 11). The picture plane is divided by unsettling diagonal and vertical lines delineating two heavy background forms. Between these forms is a glimpse of a lighter ground against which is set the dissected body parts of a female figure. The female angel figure is hovering between the physical and spiritual realms, out of both range and possibility of the formidable guns to the left of the composition and the ferocious animal to the right.¹⁰⁶

Some insight into the motivation for the painting comes from Thomas's comments on *Do not shoot the angels*:

He despaired for the dreadful fundamentalisms which had set his fellow Slavs on the path of mutual genocide in Bosnia. During the last year of his life, a final burst of painting, before Marek's death in Adelaide on 9 March 1993, is full of guns.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Born in Moscow in 1878, Ouspensky became interested in dreams and consequently psychology as a thirteen year old, reading the works of Nietzsche at sixteen. When he was eighteen he began his travels through Russia, the East and Europe, and began to write. He became increasingly interested in the Fourth Dimension and wrote his first novel *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, which was based on the idea of Eternal Recurrence, in 1905. *The Fourth Dimension* followed in 1912, establishing him as a major writer on abstract mathematical theory. *Tertium Organum: a key to the Enigmas of the World*, published in 1912, was based on Ouspensky's personal experiments with consciousness. Taken from: Taylor, M. 'P.D. Ouspensky: a biographical outline,' in *Gurdjieff International Review*, Winter 1998/1999, pp.1-8.

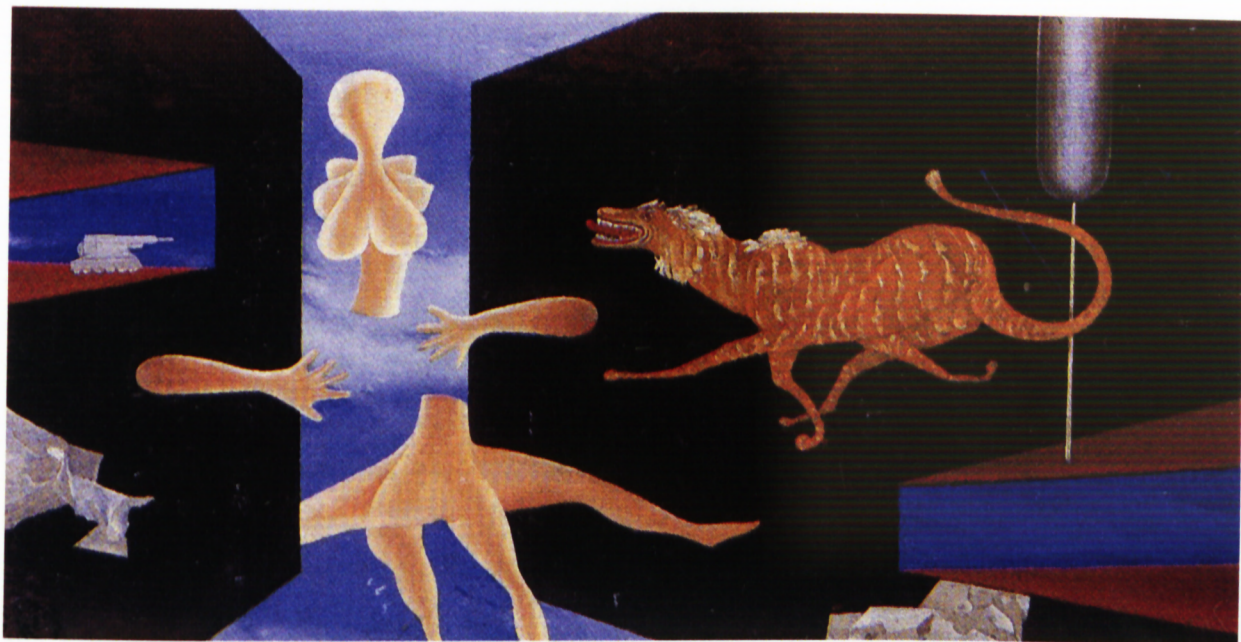
¹⁰⁵ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 28 September 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 12 January 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, D. op. cit.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 11



Do Not Shoot the Angels
1993, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on plywood
31 x 51cm
private collection

It is of interest to note here that in addition to Dušan exhibiting his paintings the year after he arrived in Australia, he also launched into film making soon after his arrival. Ten years later his film was represented in the Ninth Sydney Film Festival and one year later in 1963, he was awarded the Australian Film Institute Grand Prix for his abstracted animation *Adam and Eve*.¹⁰⁸ Arthur Cantrill comments:

Marek's design and animation techniques were formidable by this time - his sense of timing and characterization is brilliant. In fact, a re-assessment of Dušan Marek as animator is required, in light of the re-appearance of the early films, most of which have not been publicly seen - he was obviously a leading Australian animator, although not working in the mainstream.¹⁰⁹

Dušan makes a direct connection with the ideas of levels of being as expressed by the Sufi poet Jalal u'din Rumi in the thirteenth century,¹¹⁰ in the film *And the Word Was Made Flesh* which he made in 1971. The text supplied by the filmmaker at the First Australian Filmmakers' Festival summarises the film's theme:

I died a mineral and became a plant / I died a plant and rose an animal / I died an animal and I was man / why should I fear / when I was less by dying / I shall become that which no mind ever conceived / let me not exist.¹¹¹

This summation was taken in part from the idea of levels of being, expressed by the Sufi poet. Cantrill comments that the aim of the film was 'to affirm the importance of retaining one's inner freedom, despite the pressures and distractions

¹⁰⁸ This was the first time the Grand Prix had been awarded in the seven years since its inception. Many other awards followed including at festivals in Vancouver, Venice and Chicago.

¹⁰⁹ Cantrill's Filmnotes, June 1996, p.51.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p.52.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

of everyday life', quoting Dušan as saying 'I think one should allow the outside to be modelled with.'¹¹²

Dušan also read translations of major works from the Eastern religions¹¹³, and an examination of the full text of the poem gives us an understanding of the direction in which his spiritual path led him and a connection may be made with *Do not Shoot the Angels* and also the iconography in his other paintings. It reads:

I died a mineral and became a plant.
I died a plant and rose an animal.
I died an animal and I was a man. Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar with the blessed angels.
But even from angelhood I must pass on.
All except God perishes.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become that which no mind has ever conceived.¹¹⁴

In two films, *Light of the Darkness* and *Cobweb on a Parachute*, the settings are reminiscent of De Chirico. The latter film is an intensely personal statement in which a figure wearing a De Chirico-like mask appears representing Dušan's subconscious or alter-ego in conflict with his conscious. A blinding incident provides a resolution to the crisis and with a feeling of release and liberation, Dušan comments 'And so now I am free. So much part of nature, yet full of excitement.'¹¹⁵ The comment expresses Dušan's sentiments regarding spiritual freedom and his reverence for nature. The film produced in 1971, *And the Word Was Made Flesh*, also strongly connects to Dušan's surrealist paintings.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 July 2006.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, M. cit. p.7.

¹¹⁵ Cantrill. op. cit.

Time: the Fourth Dimension

Dušan was also greatly interested in the fourth dimension, time. A number of his paintings on the theme include *The Time Man Becomes Invisible*, 1963, *Zone*, 5 p.m. 1977, *Time Sealed*, 1975, and *When is Now?* 1975. Dušan enjoyed exploring theories on time and his interest in the art-as-surrealist-object concept, led him to keep records of how long it took to complete a work, how long it took for deterioration to begin, and so forth.¹¹⁶

Dutkiewicz suggests that Pytor Ouspensky's theories on the Fourth Dimension were in currency in the Adelaide art scene when Dušan was in Adelaide between his arrival in 1948 and his departure for Hobart in 1951.¹¹⁷ He notes also that both Thomas and Murphy commented on Dušan's interest in time and space, but that it was Thomas who 'isolated Ouspensky's writing on the Fourth Dimension as a seminal influence on his Surrealist Philosophy.'¹¹⁸

Four Dimensional Drama Without Words, 1975 (Figure 12) progresses the dimensional theme of box-like mixed media constructions, in a two-sided work with polished brass elements executed by Ragnar Hansen. In this work there are three pictorial spaces in which narratives are played out. In the first space, a faceless marionette figure creeps out into the stage like-composition, and is set in tension with a pair of red and gold hands which reach out towards it from the left. Looming overhead is a biomorphic shape, while the space outside features a brass torso and auricular, mollusc form, all recurrent features of Dušan's iconography.

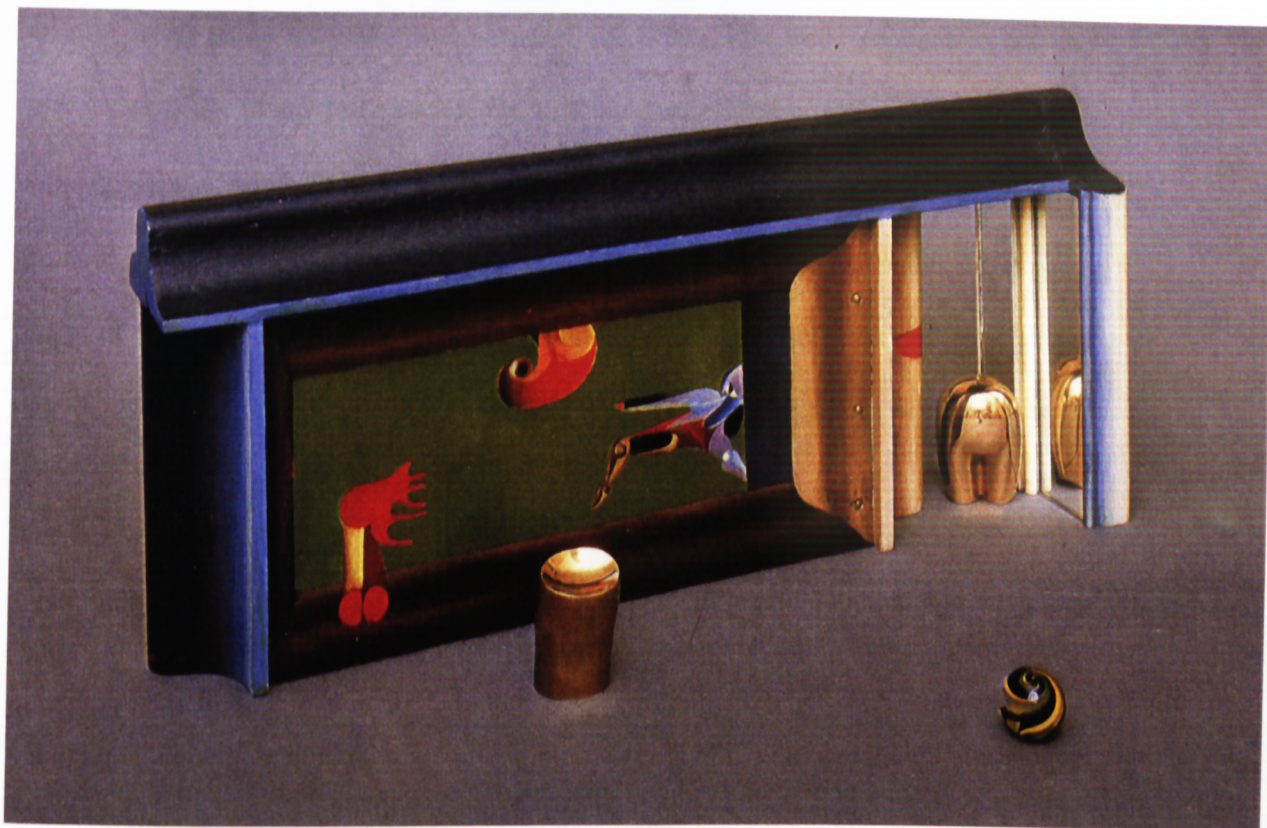
¹¹⁶ Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 July 2006.

¹¹⁷ Dutkiewicz, A. cit. p.218.

¹¹⁸ Dutkiewicz, A. op. cit.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 12



Four Dimensional Drama without Words
1975, Margate, Tasmania
three dimensional painting with mixed media
18.4 x 42.9cm, 8cm depth
polished brass elements by Rangar Hansen
private collection

The second space, the alternate side, depicts the same figure dragged backwards and into a wall which presents a barrier dividing the figure from a large hand holding in its palm the same ancient mollusc form. The third space is open and reflects with the small mirror end, the outside space inhabited by the viewer and activity, which inhabits the fourth space; the dimension of time. Titles were of great importance to the surrealists, and the reference to language in the phrase 'without words' hints at Dušan's difficulty with the English language, also referenced by Cantrill in relation to the difficulties Dušan experienced with soundtracks for his early animations.¹¹⁹

During a second period in Sydney (Appendix 1), during which Dušan was involved in a film-making venture with Fontana Films, he produced the charcoal on canvas work, *Absit Invidia*, (Let there be no ill-will) 1968 (figure 13).

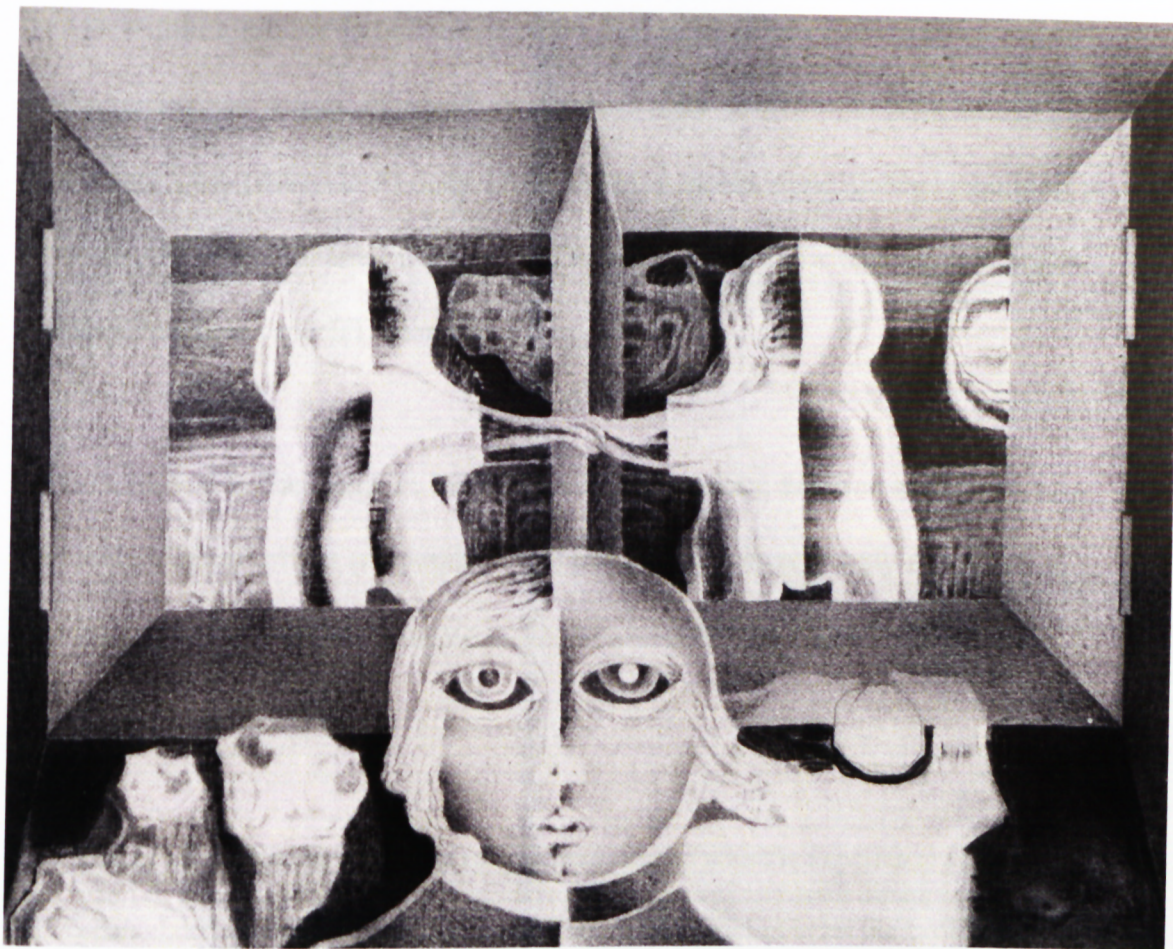
The composition places a picture within a picture. To the back, which is divided into two planes, are two forms joined across two interior picture planes. In front, to the lower foreground, and overlapping the background composition is another form, that of a human figure which directly meets the gaze of the viewer. In this figure, Dušan incorporates his persona image and the two outlined figures in the background pictures suggest the conscious self and subconscious with which Dušan was greatly concerned.

Absit Invidia is significant in depicting the emergence of the persona image which recurred throughout Dušan's surrealist and abstract work. The personal

¹¹⁹ Cantrills *Filmnotes*, June 1996, p.49.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 13



Absit Invidia
1968, Sydney
charcoal on canvas glued to plywood
102.4 x 127.0cm
private collection

significance is enduring and suggests the binaries of conscious and subconscious, as well as Dušan's dual cultural identity. The surrealist technique of placing a picture within a picture is perhaps used by Dušan to define two different worlds, environments, or states of mind or matter, with which his art was greatly concerned. This period in Sydney brought many stresses for Dušan, including a bitter dispute with Fontana Films, as well as some family tensions. The title of the painting thus holds special meaning.

After he moved to Tasmania in 1973 to take up a teaching position at the Tasmanian School of Art (Appendix 1), Dušan became increasingly interested in time both as a theme in his painting and as an element in the activity of painting itself. Murphy comments,

Dušan Marek has become increasingly preoccupied with the experience of time itself in painting and has attempted to embrace the hidden fourth dimension, the open-ended and multi-layered ebb and flow of ideas that informs the evolution of a painting itself, in the cumulative experience projected through a completed work.¹²⁰

The Eternal Recurrence

Another concept which strongly informed Dušan's painting and film making and which, prior to the research for this thesis, has not previously been identified, is that of the Eternal Return, or Eternal Recurrence, a major theme in the writings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. The theory can however be traced further back to the writings of Nietzsche,¹²¹ a connection previously undiscovered.

¹²⁰ Murphy, cit.p.34.

¹²¹ Kaufmann, W. cit. pp.307-333.

The concept of eternal recurrence explores the notion that even if one is given the free will to alter the course of life's existence, the same events would occur regardless. The concept posits that the universe is recurring and will continue to recur, in the same form, an infinite number of times. The basic premise is that the extent of the universe is infinite. There is no beginning nor end to the universe, while matter changes an infinite number of times, so that eventually the same state will recur.

Kurt Reinhardt describes Friedrich Nietzsche's theory in the following terms:

For the modern mind – so ran Nietzsche's argument – the concept of *infinite time* is as much a scientific postulate as is the conservation of energy and of matter. Consequently, the universe can have had no beginning in time; there must have been from all eternity infinite action of equal energy upon an equal sum total of matter; and there must have been infinite cycles of an immeasurable and yet definite number of combinations, changes and situations. The life of the individual may thus be likened to an hour-glass that is being turned about an infinite number of times, that will run out again and again within the course of the cyclical movement of the universe.¹²²

Reinhardt then postulates on the consequences of Nietzsche's theories of Eternal

Recurrence on mankind...

Once this idea will be embodied in a new faith, it will bring about a radical transformation of man; it will engender a new concept of eternity, more sublime than any belief in a 'future life' has ever been, and thus there will come into being the new religion of the freest, happiest and loftiest souls.¹²³

¹²² Reinhardt, K. in Nietzsche, F. *Joyful Wisdom*, New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1960,

p.5.

¹²³ Ibid.

In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,¹²⁴ Nietzsche confronts his aforementioned demon and proves to him the reality of eternal recurrence, leading him to a self-awakening in which the inner demon is exorcised. Dušan harnesses this concept in his film *Cobweb on a Parachute*, which documents his conflict with his alter-ego, or subconscious, and his ultimate freedom. Nietzsche also described himself as the 'bringer of eternal recurrence', in *Twilight of the Idols*.¹²⁵

The concept of eternal recurrence is very prominent in the dharmic religions, including Buddhism and Hinduism, with which Dušan was familiar. The Wheel of Life is also a concept which is based on the endless cycle of birth, life and death, from which freedom is longed for. In addition, the theme of eternal recurrence has been used by other writers including James Joyce (*Finnegans Wake*), Stephen King, (the *Dark Tower Series*), Albert Camus, Milan Kundera, (*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*) and the Czech-American scientist Itzhak Bentou (*Stalking the Wild Pendulum*).

Although the influence of the Eternal Recurrence is seen in Dušan's early paintings, it was during the 1970s, when Dušan was occupied with animation and film making as well as painting, spending time in Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart and a year in Canberra, that Dušan was to produce the seminal work, *The Eternal Return*, 1972 (figure 14).

¹²⁴ The evolution of Nietzsche's thought may be distinguished by three periods. The third period begins with an introductory exposition of the theory of eternal recurrence, which is mentioned for the first time in *Joyful Wisdom* (1960) and further elaborated in *Thus spoke Zarathustra* (1882-85). Nietzsche's exploration of the concept ends with *Twilight of the Idols* (1889). Reinhardt, K. cit.

p.1.
¹²⁵ Ibid.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 14



The Eternal Return

1972, Adelaide

oil on board

17.4 x 65.0cm

private collection

The Eternal Return places a picture within a picture, a technique favoured by Magritte, whose work Dušan held in highest regard. A box-like construction frames the inner picture in which the plane is divided into four separate spaces. The composition is divided horizontally and three forms diminishing in size to the top of the picture give the impression of foreground, middle ground and background. A major form is placed in the left foreground.

With the large form, the iconic hooded, faceless persona recurs, duality inferred once again by the soft outline which bridges the two picture planes. In the same space, a large sailing ship sits motionless, beneath a clouded blue moon with rays of moonlight softly illuminating both the ship and the horizon. The persona figure's hands are pressed up as if against a dividing barrier of glass. The figure, sightless, unable to speak, or even possibly hear could be the artist's reference to the situation of an émigré in an unfamiliar country. The passing of time is ever so subtly suggested by the artist's recurring iconography. It is probable the painting references Nietzsche's theory of the Eternal Recurrence, or Return, in which everything in the universe recurs, the mysterious sailing ship a possible metaphor for return.

The littoral landscape and the Antipodes

Dušan's spirituality also found expression in his landscape paintings, which best reflect his connection with his Antipodean environment. The vast and ancient landforms which comprise the diverse Australian landscape invite a surreal approach, and Dušan formed a spiritual connection with the country in which he was to spend the rest of his life.

Hylton comments on the situation in Adelaide in the 1940s, suggesting that:

South Australia's sun-drenched beaches were attractive subject matter for Shirley Keene, Jacqueline Hick, Jeffrey Smart and Douglas Roberts, and later Dušan Marek, all of whom gave new expression to an Australian subject first popularized in the late nineteenth century in the spirit of nationalism.¹²⁶

Dušan's interest in the coastal landforms and the unfamiliar sea is evident in his many littoral works. Thomas comments 'The seashore as a zone of strange transformation was a frequent theme in Surrealist art, and this sea-starved Czech Surrealist took eagerly to the strange Australian realities.'¹²⁷

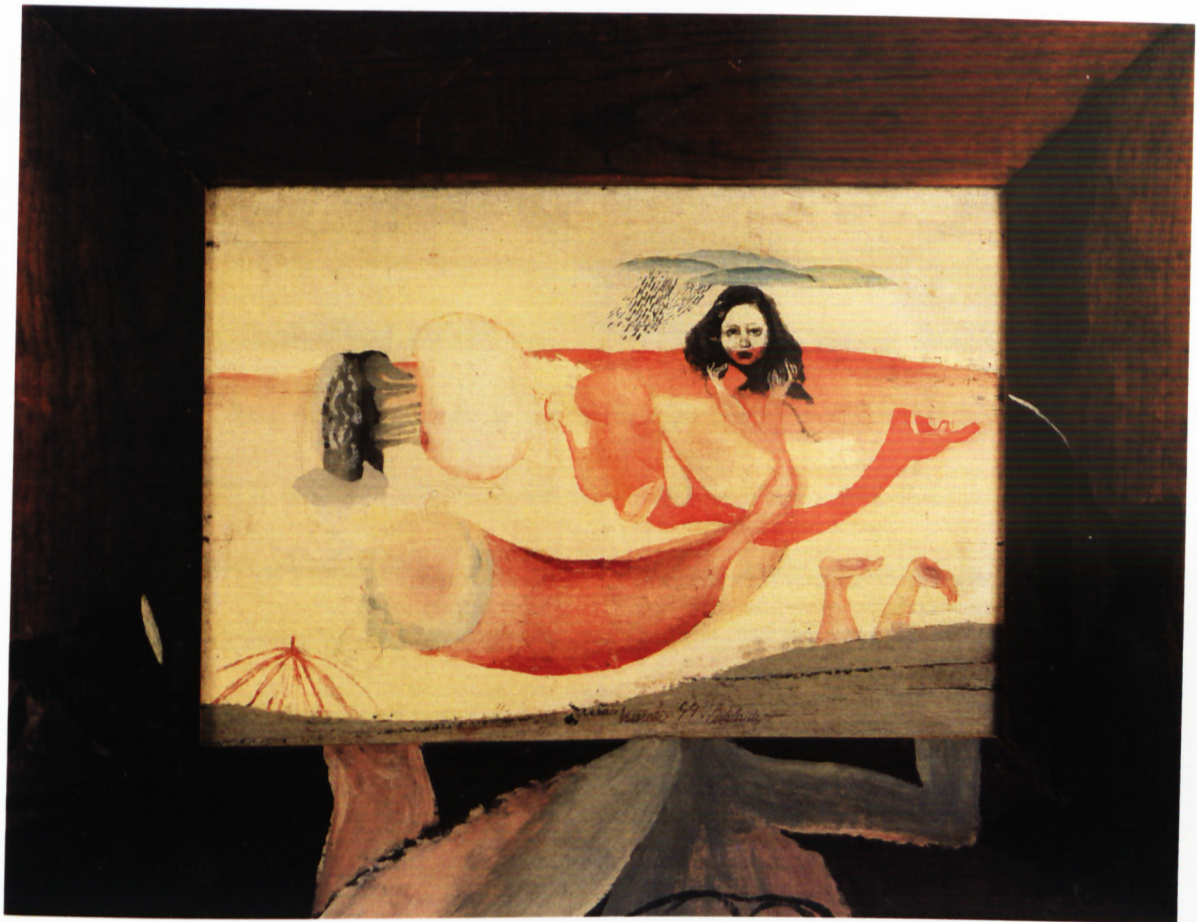
The first painting Dušan completed in Australia, and the first to record his encounter with the Australian landscape is *On the Beach*, 1949 (figure 15), which Francis was to acquire and bequeath to the Art Gallery of South Australia on his death in 1993. The composition is divided by horizontal forms, the uppermost suggesting a background separating the foreground. Another form painted outside the picture frame bridges the gap with the main composition. Suggested by the forms and the palette is white sand, hot sun and cool summer rain stretching across the picture plane in horizontal drifts. Body parts treated in a style reminiscent of Ernst flow across and out of the composition. A lower torso, sliding under the frame, legs splayed, seems to be giving birth to the painting. The beautiful face framed by flowing dark hair is thought to be an interpretation of

¹²⁶ Hylton, J. cit. p.25.

¹²⁷ Thomas, D. loc. cit.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 15



On the Beach
1949, Adelaide
oil on board
39 x 50cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Ivor Francis Bequest

Helena, who had become a constant companion, and was to become his wife in 1951, prior to their departure from Adelaide. The painting expresses Dušan's joy in the Australian littoral landscape.

Making their home in Adelaide marked the beginning of an enduring love affair with the beach and the littoral landscape, which is not far from any destination in Adelaide, a city flanked by hills and sea. When Dušan and Helena lived in South Australia, and then in Sydney, they made regular trips to the Coorong, at the mouth of the River Murray, south of Adelaide, where Dušan was able to float in the silence, transcending reality, immersing his senses, listening to the quiet as he often did, and defying gravity in the soft, buoyant drifts of the sea. The Mareks adored this place of peace and spiritual restoration.

Listening, 1989 (figure 16), masterfully captures the transcendental spirit of the inner sanctuary of the Coorong. The composition is divided horizontally into three planes representing foreground, middle ground and background. In the middle ground another pictorial space is suggested inside which a composite of four different forms is enclosed. Two of the forms which are linked visually suggest a head and body. The image inside the blinded, hooded, faceless head reflects the tidal waters of the Coorong. A figure is holding a circular mollusc form in the right hand, the shape echoed in the two breast forms, referencing the life force, universal regeneration, evolution. The mollusc form is among the recurring iconography in Dušan's painting informed by his spiritual reverence for nature and interest in the theories of evolution. This painting testifies to Dušan's connection with the Australian landscape.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 16



Listening

1989-90, Eden Hills, South Australia

oil and acrylic on canvas board

60.9 x 91.4cm

private collection

This spiritual connection is evident in Dušan's films too. Cantrill comments that it was particularly in the film *And the World Was Made Flesh* that Dušan's

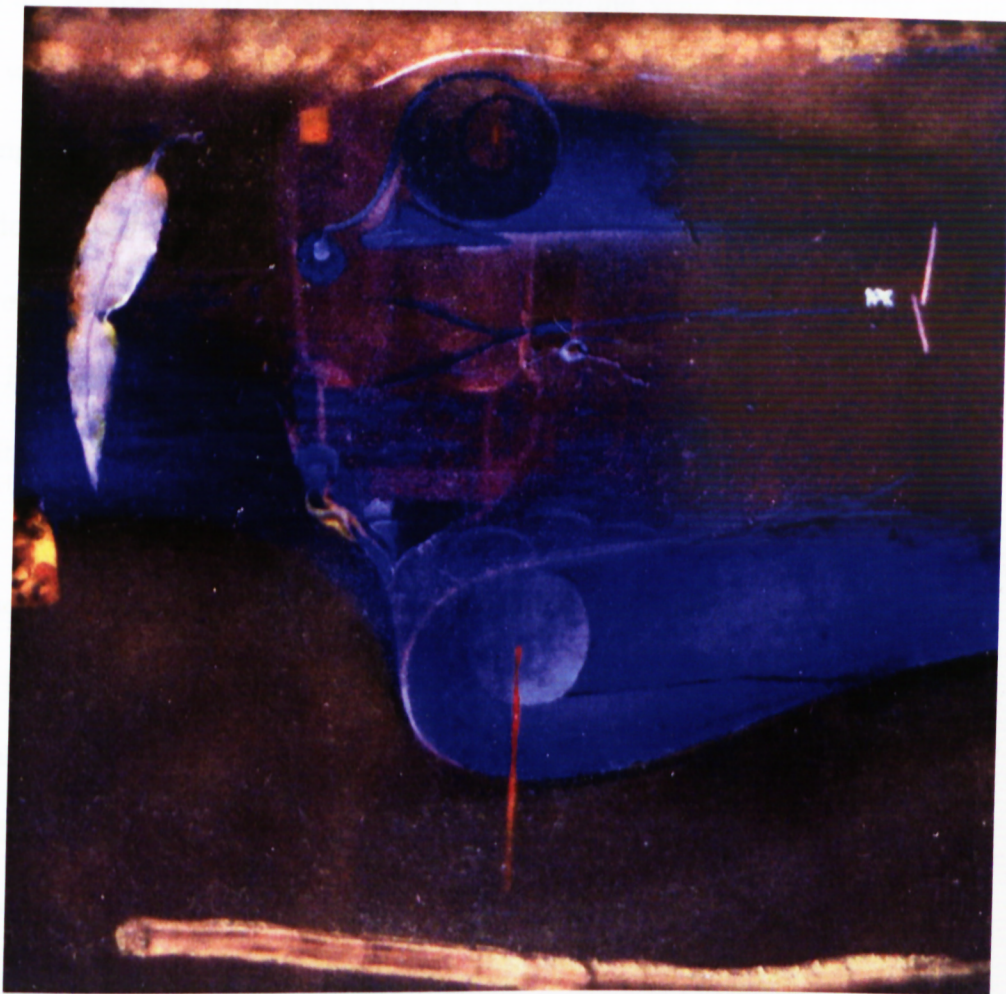
delight in the Australian landscape and its un-European qualities is evident. He found surrealist resonances in the details of the bush, such as the giant phallic seed-pod or chrysalis which houses the form of the woman in the film.¹²⁸

Another painting speaks eloquently about Dušan's spiritual connection with the Australian landscape. The small work *Forever Now*, 1979 (figure 17), was painted not long after Dušan learned of his terminal illness. The composition is comprised of a number of forms which although different in size and shape, seem to float, connected, in a common space. Painted in a low key, it hints at the spiritual, the unknown, but carefully placed to the left of the painting, floating just below the horizon is the delicately rendered detail of a gum leaf. The spiritual significance of both the title and the leaf is poignant.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 17



Forever Now
1979, Margate, Tasmania
oil and acrylic on plywood
18.7 x 19.1cm
private collection

In New Guinea 1954-59

Other works which drew heavily on the Antipodean landscape were completed while the Mareks lived in New Guinea between the years 1954 to 1959, while some works revisited the New Guinea experience later in the artist's career. The paintings and sketches drawing on this period deserve special mention, as they provide a direct comparison between Dušan's early period as an émigré artist, with renderings of the same subject matter presented in two paintings completed in the last months of Dušan's life, when his thoughts vacillated between past and present.

Whether Dušan was familiar with the 1929 'Surrealist Map of the World', which places New Guinea at its epicentre when he made the choice to travel to Australia is unsubstantiated¹²⁹ although Bruce claims that Dusan embarked on the voyage to Australia 'with the rather exoticist intention of making his way to New Guinea', describing Australia as 'a mere port-of-call he hoped would deliver him to his goal, New Guinea.'¹³⁰ James writes:

New Guinea and the islands surrounding it held a special fascination, and possessed a special glamour, for many intellectuals and artists at the turn of the 20th century, when their coasts, hinterlands and mist-shrouded mountains were first being significantly travelled by outsiders.¹³¹

In 1954 Dušan travelled north to Cooktown, Queensland intending to make a canoe with two friends, in which they were to sail to New Guinea on an

¹²⁹ Interview with Helena by Cheri Donaldson, 30 July, 2006.

¹³⁰ James, B. *Australian Surrealism: The Agapitos/Wilson Collection*, Roseville, N.S.W., Beagle Press, 2003, p.187.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, p.78.

expedition which was to be filmed as a documentary.¹³² Unfortunately Dušan severed an artery in his leg in the process of making the canoe, and the trip had to be abandoned. They later travelled to New Guinea together. For the next five years Dušan filmed and photographed, counted coconut trees to enable the plantation owner to secure a bank loan, and with no prior knowledge of marine engineering, worked as an engineer on copra boats which plied the coast. Helena comments that while there, they no longer felt like émigrés in the land of the Other. The Mareks left New Guinea as Independence drew near, fearing the consequences for non-indigenous people who stayed on. The adventure parallels the Australian abstract painter, Ian Fairweather's hazardous journey to Timor in 1952, on a raft he had built himself. He was similarly fascinated with indigenous cultures.

The only extant painting from this time, *Rabaul*, 1956 (figure 18), shows the copra boats on which Dušan worked, moored in the shallow waters of the little, sheltered port of Dušan's second destination in New Guinea. The composition is divided into foreground, middle and background. Smaller interconnected forms feature in the foreground, while the eye is drawn back towards larger forms in the central area and background.

¹³² Interview with Helena Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 30 July 2006.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 18



Rabaul

1956, Rabaul, Papua New Guinea

oil on board

33.6 x 45.5cm

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

The lush, tropical vegetation in the foreground, rendered in surreal colouration, is suggestive of the impenetrable barrier which the native vegetation presents to both the viewer and the traveller in New Guinea. The treatment of the vegetation in this and the later painting *Rabaul Revisited* which he painted shortly before his death in 1993, is evocative of the French painter, Henri (Le Douanier) Rousseau (1812-67).

The same harbour dominated by the grumbling, smoking volcano to the right middle ground is revisited towards the end of the artist's life with *Rabaul Revisited*, 1993 (figure 19). As in the previous work, this painting is divided pictorially into three planes to suggest perspective. The same interconnected forms feature in the foreground and the eye is taken back to larger forms in the middle and backgrounds. The smaller forms suggest lush tropical foliage, while the eye is drawn back across the area of the sea to the mountains at the back. This time the images of boats have been replaced by aircraft, possibly as a deliberate reference to time passed.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 19



Rabaul Revisited
1993, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on canvas board
50.8 x 60.9cm
private collection

The Inner Being

The landscape theme is further developed in The 'Homage to the Sun' Series' which stylistically follows the type of gestural abstract painting which sought to source its energy from the 'inner being'. Dominating the international art world from the mid-1940s until the late 1950s, it was known as Art Informel.¹³³

The 'Homage to the Sun' Series was painted in a response to the power of the sun to generate bushfire. After he returned to his home in Eden Hills, South Australia following an overseas tour, the devastating South Australian bushfires of 1983 had a deep impact on Dušan, resulting in the dramatic series of abstract paintings produced in 1984. Ten paintings from the series were shown at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, 2 July to 1 August 1993, in an exhibition to honour Dušan in the year of his death. In the catalogue essay, Thomas comments on the series *Homage to the Sun*, declaring:

They are abstract landscapes, chiefly however, they are paintings of energy. Blazing red backgrounds thrust forward a dance of death and regeneration with surface dabs of yellow, brown, blue and green; with the colours of nature.¹³⁴

Homage to the Sun, 1984 (figure 20) exemplifies the Art Informel style of Abstract Expressionism which Dušan used in this series of paintings. Small forms dance across the composition in a random arrangement. Set on a striking

¹³³ Informel artists were celebrated for their individualism, authenticity, spontaneity and emotional and physical engagement in the process of creating images which depicted the artist's 'inner being'. They were much influenced by the Existentialist philosophies of the era. Some artists are Frenchman Camille Bryen (1907-77); Hungarian-born Simon Hantai (b.1922); Czech-born Jaroslav Sossuntsov (1922-76); German Hans Hartung (1904-89) and Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schultze, known as Wols (1913-51).

¹³⁴ Thomas, D. op. cit.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 20



Homage to the Sun
1984, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on wood
91.5 x 183.0cm
private collection

vermillion red ground, the forms are daubs of bright colour with black and white, applied in a number of ways, from scumbling to thick impasto, injecting the work with perpetual energy and overwhelming vigour. Dušan's series of paintings, was a gesture of homage to the sun's immeasurable power. It is easy to image Dušan dosing in the sun in his Eden Hills home, convalescing from his illness, with the images which inspired the series churning around in his mental landscape.

Dušan's 'Homage to the Sun' series seemed to reach a crescendo with a monumental work *2000*, 1987 (figure 21). It is a seminal work of powerful, dynamic activity, which realizes the return of the spiritual persona image. The composition is filled with forms differing in size, a larger form more dominant than the others, set to the bottom right hand corner. Against a ground of saturated vermillion red, abstract shapes and forms swirl across the picture plane, accented by vigorous, impasto daubs of the artist's brush to give the work a strong textural quality. The strong directional flows which the artist has superimposed with slashes of vermillion, add to the sense of an out-of-control Universe which is set on a collision course. This notion echoes the process of Eternal Recurrence and of the non-material world referenced throughout Dušan's oeuvre.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 21



2000
1987, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil on plywood
91.7 x 206.9cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

The large mollusc shape alludes to the beginning of the life form itself, recurring significantly in *2000*, as do the signature outstretched hands. Present too is another morphed, winged bird/creature, and the architectonic form referencing man's activity present in many other works. Taking on a space age appearance in this work, the hooded figure dominates the foreground of the composition, sitting just inside the picture plane to the bottom right. In this work the figure has one eye which seems to be looking sideways to its left. To the right, the hands of the figure reach out to the bird creature and to the left, within the range of the figure's sight, as though suspended in space, floats the rose. It is remarkable to note that Dušan's painting *2000* was executed in 1987, some years before most people would have given a thought to the uncertainties of the impending New Millennium.

The last series of paintings by Dušan was executed during the final years of his illness. The beautiful, lyrical rendering of Dušan's *Eye of the Heart* series were painted in response to the artist's homecoming following surgery. Four paintings from the series, which took its name from a poem written by a neighbour, were included in the CAS's retrospective exhibition following the artist's death in 1993.

In the painting *Eye of the Heart No. 12*, 1989 (figure 22) the composition is dissected by large central forms which dominate the picture plane. The forms are intertwined suggesting one entity. They are abstracted female forms clutching profusions of large white lilies which grew in the garden of the Marek's Eden Hills home. The forms suggest the nurturing presence of Helena as she attended to the daily needs of the convalescing patient. The palette suggests a comforting

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 22



Eye of the Heart No. 12

1989, Eden Hills, South Australia

oil and acrylic on wood

90 x 120cm

private collection

warmth. Flowers and figure intertwined suggest the familiar encroaching of the garden and of Helena on Dušan's conscious world. The series draws imagery from the garden pond, its goldfish, the native trees and bushes with birds and birdsong, and other things familiar and comforting to the convalescing patient.

Personal Revelation

In the final years of his illness, Dušan's paintings divulge intensely personal revelations of his physical and emotional suffering.

In *General Anaesthesia*, 1989-90 (figure 23), the composition is divided by interwoven forms placed centrally. A horizontal line to the top of the picture plane suggests a grounding in perspective, while the forms suggest human body parts. The hands, which recur in Dušan's paintings, are given a representational interpretation here, and appear to be inserted inside the human form. The soft palette conjures a dream-like quality suggestive of the loss of consciousness in which reality is lost. The disintegration of matter deepens in intensity, towards a spiritual state appearing increasingly in Dušan's late paintings. *General Anaesthesia* is a deeply personal painting conveying the intrusive and uncertain realities of surgery.

The self observing the self, 1992 (figure 24), features two strong forms which are placed central to the picture plane. The two forms are both set on flat planes of colour, in which the triangular plane to the foreground seems to have a cavity. The forms are human figures and the bottom figure appears to balance tenuously over the hole in the ground below him. The painting tells of the introspection of the terminal patient. In this work, the dismembered legs cling to the precipice while

DUŠAN MAREK

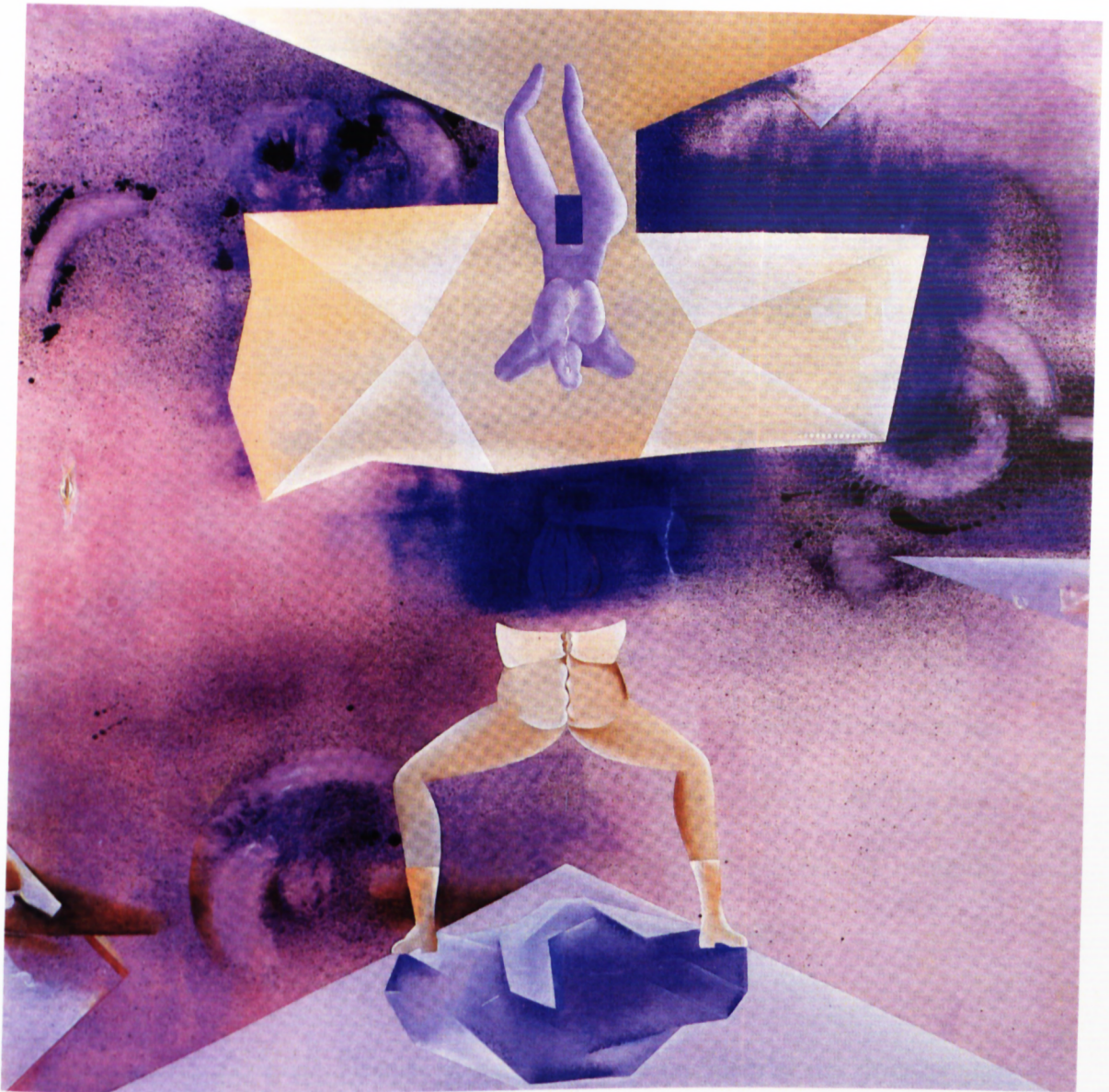
Figure 23



General Anaesthesia
1989-90, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on plywood
46 x 90cm
private collection

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 24



The Self Observing the Self
1992, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on plywood
91 x 91cm
private collection

the body of another, or another consciousness, floats upside-down, above. The surrounds, rendered in wash, are indeterminate. The palette is muted and softly mysterious.

Escape, 1992 (figure 25), suggests the theme of Dušan's 1948 escape to freedom. The composition is divided into four planes against which two main forms are placed. The planes suggest perspective which draws the eye past the form in the foreground to the second in the background. This form suggests the coated figure of a man while the figure in the front is that of a woman.

The figure dressed in coat and cap may be Dušan himself as an émigré escaping to freedom, floating in a sea of swirling forms, while the female figure, partially formed or partially dismembered, suggests the familiar, nurturing Helena of his present or the young Milena of his past. The figures are all targets of the four gun-like forms blasting towards them. Dušan's customary multi-levels of meaning may also suggest a metaphor for the 'final' escape from his illness.

Dušan was planning a return visit to the country of his birth at the time of his death in 1993, just four years after the Communist Rule of the Czech Republic was finally over and one year after the Czech Republic was proclaimed.¹³⁵ His illness prevented this from happening but as an artist who had forged his career and lived most of his life in Australia, he planned to return to his home in the Adelaide Hills, after his trip to the Czech Republic.

¹³⁵ Communist rule of Czechoslovakia came to an end with the Velvet Revolution in December 1989. The bloodless separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia was complete in late 1992.

DUŠAN MAREK

Figure 25



Escape

1992, Eden Hills, South Australia
oil and acrylic on canvas board
30.5 x 40.6cm
private collection

Bohemia regained

After Dušan's death in March 1993, Helena carried his ashes back to the forest in northern Bohemia, where he had played as a child. Accompanied by a cousin, Helena buried his ashes beneath a moss covered rock in the forest, as the participants shared champagne and celebrated the life of an artist.

Forty-four years after they had been banned by the CAS in Adelaide, and in the year of his death,¹³⁶ Dušan's paintings received the accolade of being included in Australia's first significant Surrealist exhibition, *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*, at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, in 1993. This exhibition was the first to review in depth the influence of surrealism on Australian art.

In this chapter I have shown how painting was for Dušan far more than artistic expression alone, and discussed how he used surrealism stylistically to express his relentless spiritual search. I have also outlined how he explored the ideas of intellectuals in order to pursue this thirst for spiritual fulfillment.

I have established for the first time the connection between the theories of Nietzsche and the concept of the Eternal Recurrence, with the iconography of much of Dušan's work and in particular the seminal painting *The Eternal Return*. I have also established a connection between his paintings and his films, which were bound by surrealist imagery and the poetry of the Sufi Jalal u'din Rumi. I have also outlined how the imagery of his art reflects the spiritual connection he felt for the Antipodean landscape and how like André Breton, surrealism became

¹³⁶ Dušan died on 9 March 1993 and the exhibition opened on the 10 March 1993.

an almost religious mode of self expression for him.¹³⁷ I have visually analysed twenty-four of Dušan's paintings dating from his student days to the last months before his death.

The next chapter will examine how Voitre's spiritual journey led him on a different path from his brother towards developing his career as an ecclesiastical sculptor.

¹³⁷ Sarane, A., cit. p.47.

CHAPTER 5: VOITRE MAREK

Then the Lord said... 'I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.'¹³⁸

This chapter will address how Voitre reacted to the 'banning' incident' in a different way to Dušan and how their careers subsequently took different paths. It will also examine how the spiritual background of Voitre's childhood in Bohemia and his religious searching in Prague led him to find expression in ecclesiastical sculpture in Australia in a synthesis of Byzantine and Romanesque styles. The chapter will also address the question of whether Voitre, like Dušan made a connection with nature and the Australian environment.

This chapter will critically examine ten of Voitre's drawings and discuss eight of his major ecclesiastical works. It will look at evidence of the critical reception of his work, through the articles of the two prominent art critics of the time, Ivor Francis and Elizabeth Young. It will also discuss his family circumstance, look at how it differed from Dušan's and examine how this influenced his art.

Following the controversial 'banning incident', Voitre exhibited again with the RSASA with the resultant critique by Lisette Kohlhagen, the same person who had in the previous exhibition relegated two of Dušan's paintings to the cellar.

¹³⁸ Thompson, F. *The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible*, 2nd edition, Indianapolis, Indiana, Kirkbride Bible Company, 1990, Exodus 31:4.

This time Kohlhausen wrote:

The most extreme pictures of modern art in the current show are by the Czech artist, V. Marek – pictures painted on small pieces of wood, and given the titles, “Gibraltar”, “Court of Justice”, “Reminiscence”.¹³⁹

In the same article Kohlhausen called for ‘written statements, attached by the contributor, which would be instructive to the visitor to the gallery,’ claiming that ‘this sort of thing has been tried in an American exhibition of Surrealist art.’ Kohlhausen added ‘Running commentaries might explain what seems unintelligible to the average spectator.’¹⁴⁰ This practice is now, of course, standard practice in art museums, but it does not remove the capacity for personal interpretation on behalf of the viewer.

Among the paintings exhibited was one which Voitre began painting en route to Australia, on board the SS Charleton Sovereign in 1948 and completed the next year. It was executed with the remnants of paint Dušan had managed to smuggle with him and materials offered by the ship’s stewards.

My Gibraltar, 1949 (figure 26) is traversed by four horizontal lines. In the central section of the painting is a large form which is divided into two by a vertical line. An asymmetrical form sits atop the large image and across the topmost horizontal. The form central to the composition is that of a human face, male to the left and female to the right of the dividing vertical line. The form on top of the human head is a probable depiction of the Rock of Gibraltar, where the ship was delayed

¹³⁹ Kohlhausen, L. ‘Extreme Modernism In Show by Contemporary Society’, in *The Express*, 8 July, 1949, unpagged.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 26



My Gibraltar
1949, S.S. Charlton Sovereign
oil on wood
29.0 x 20.5cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

for repairs to its engine. The ship to the left a probable depiction of the SS Charlton Sovereign. The two faces are those of Voitre and Vera.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Dušan was greatly discouraged by the 'banning incident' and responded by exhibiting the 'offending' paintings with the AIG, in which Voitre also participated. Shortly afterwards Dušan left Adelaide firstly for Hobart, then Sydney. Dutkiewicz comments on the conservative environment into which the 'first of the émigré modernists', the Marek brothers came, suggesting that...

...it became quickly evident that it was difficult to sustain an existence in the Adelaide community without holding down a job, and that implied sacrificing one's artistic ambitions to a significant extent. Perhaps this reality more realistically explains why Dušan left.¹⁴¹

However Voitre remained in Adelaide, exhibiting another six times with the RSASA. He continued to engage with the Adelaide community, displaying quite a different reaction than Dušan to the less than accommodating artistic climate prevailing at the time. Vera and Voitre married in Adelaide in 1950. Subsequently his family circumstances meant that his life became, of necessity, more firmly entrenched there. Their daughter Olga was born in 1950 and son Ivan in 1953. His devotion and allegiance to his family was expressed in the many drawings in which he included Vera and sometimes his children.

Working under the Displaced Persons Employment Scheme, Voitre like Dušan was assigned to different 'pot boiling' jobs such as railway porter, cleaner and

¹⁴¹ Dutkiewicz, cit. p.221.

storeman which meant that at times he and Vera were forced to live many miles apart. Vera was employed at the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Enfield.¹⁴²

Fluent in English, Vera approached Sheppards Jewellers on Voitre's behalf to ask for a job more suited to his professional training in metal engraving. Voitre's lack of English and indenture as a migrant worker both served to entrench his status as émigré. Sheppards Jewellers subsequently offered Voitre a position (Appendix 2) where he worked from 1949 to 1950. Through the kindness of Joan Watson,¹⁴³ then head of employment for displaced persons and also involved with the RSASA, Vera was also released from her indenture.

In 1950 Voitre began working in a joint business venture as self employed jeweller/engraver with his brother Dušan. The Mareks operated their business 'Marko' from the house they rented in Kent Town.¹⁴⁴ The name was inspired by the popular marquise jewellery the Mareks made at the time. Not long after this when Dušan left Adelaide in 1951, their paths took irrevocably different directions.

Voitre held a solo exhibition at the Curzon Gallery in 1952. In his critique, Francis acknowledges the influence of Voitre's cultural background on his art as well as the religiosity reflected in his subject matter.

¹⁴² Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 30 November 2006.

¹⁴³ Joan Watson later married Polish artist Wladyslaw Dutkiewicz.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Helena Marek, 30 July 2006.

Francis comments:

In the drawings and sculpture of V. Marek... one sees work which approaches very near to surrealism and quite often is. Most of the time however, Marek is a symbolist, and if his work is difficult to understand, it is because his symbols relate to things that have greater significance in his own national background than in ours. For instance, he places special emphasis on the biblical washing of feet to bring out the idea that man cannot afford to be unmindful of things that effect him, even if they seem a distant part of him.¹⁴⁵

In 1953, Voitre began work as director of the New Gallery of Fine Art at 75 Rundle Street, Kent Town.¹⁴⁶ At that time there were only two galleries in Adelaide and demand for exhibition space exceeded suitable accommodation.¹⁴⁷

Voitre held a solo exhibition in the New Gallery in the same year, mainly of small plaster busts and sculptures and Indian ink drawings, mostly surreal or religious.¹⁴⁸ It was at this point that Voitre discontinued painting and began to focus on sculpture and drawing. Three of the works listed in the catalogue of the New Gallery exhibition are *Corobooro* 1951 (figure 27), *Madonna and Beasts*, 1952 (figure 28) and *Victim of the World*, 1952 (figure 29).

Corobooro, 1951 (figure 27) testifies to the early interest Voitre had in Indigenous art. The Indian ink drawing places the figure central to the composition. The male figure suggests a dancing position which may be used by the initiates in a corroboree ceremony. Line is used to imitate the body painting

¹⁴⁵ Francis, I. 'Artist runs surrealism very close,' in *The News*, 16 December 1952, unpagged.

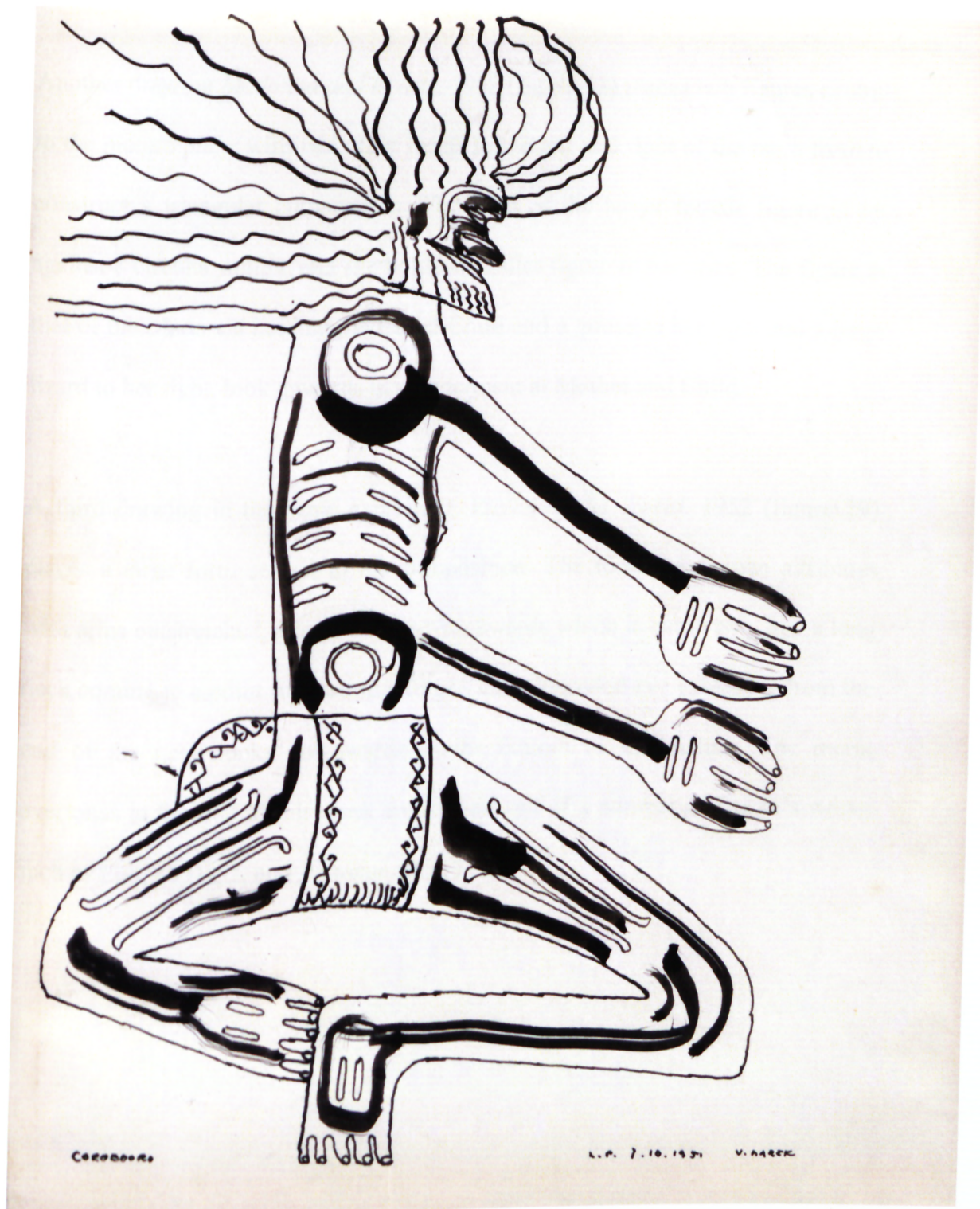
¹⁴⁶ Francis, I. 'A new gallery', in *The News*, 8 August, 1953, p.9.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Catalogue for exhibition of V. Marek, New Gallery, 20 – 30 October 1952, collection of V. Marek.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 27



Corobooro
1951
pen and Indian ink
25 x 20cm
private collection

applied by the participants. Vera recalls that the brothers were well aware of Australian Aboriginal art prior to their departure from Europe in 1948.¹⁴⁹

Another drawing *Madonna and Beasts*, 1952 (figure 28) places two figures central to the picture plane with two other forms to the left and right of the main form to construct a triangular composition. The head of the larger female figure is set against a circular outline and she holds a smaller figure in her arms. The figure is that of the Madonna holding the Christ Child and a goose to her right and a large lizard to her right, look upwards in wonderment at Mother and Child.

A third drawing in the same exhibition, *Victim of the World*, 1952 (figure 29) places a large form central to the composition. The form has human attributes with arms outstretched, a body bending backwards which is cut in two, and a long neck coming to a point suggesting a finger. One distended eye extending from the end of the neck looks downwards to the bottom of the picture. The moral overtones in the title of this work are reminiscent of a number of Dušan's works such as *Ego*, 1951-52, and *Prisoner* c.1950.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 28



Madonna and beasts

1952

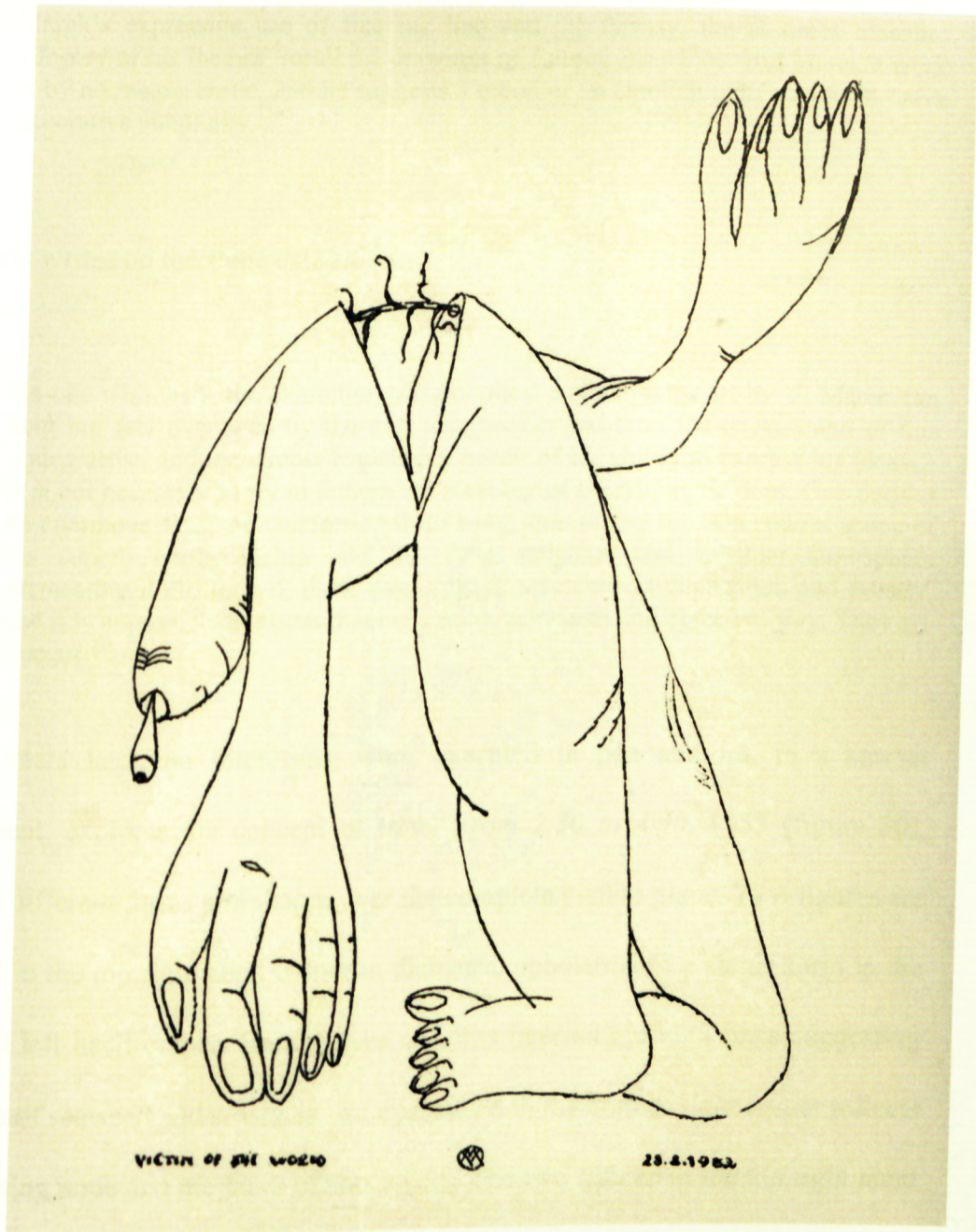
pen and ink on photographic paper

25.1 x 20.1cm

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 29



Victim of the World
1952
pen and ink on photographic paper
25.1 x 20.1cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

In a critique following the exhibition, Young comments...

Marek's expressive use of fine ink line and the fantasy, the at times macabre allegory of his themes, recall the drawings of Aubrey Beardsley. But Marek's work is by no means erotic, and he suggests a mood or an emotion with an almost naïve decorative simplicity.¹⁵⁰

Francis writes on the same exhibition...

No-one who visits the exhibition of symbolical and surrealist art by V. Marek can help but feel overawed by the rich imagination and crowded background of this young artist, and the almost frightening power of his ability to express his ideas... It is not necessary to try to fathom the meaning of everything he does. One derives an enormous sense of satisfaction from being able to feel the tremendous scope of his superb craftsmanship and the deep religious and spiritual atmosphere permeating it all. Indeed, these works speak reverence in conception and artistry, and it is impossible to assess them in a mere individual and objective way. They are true art.¹⁵¹

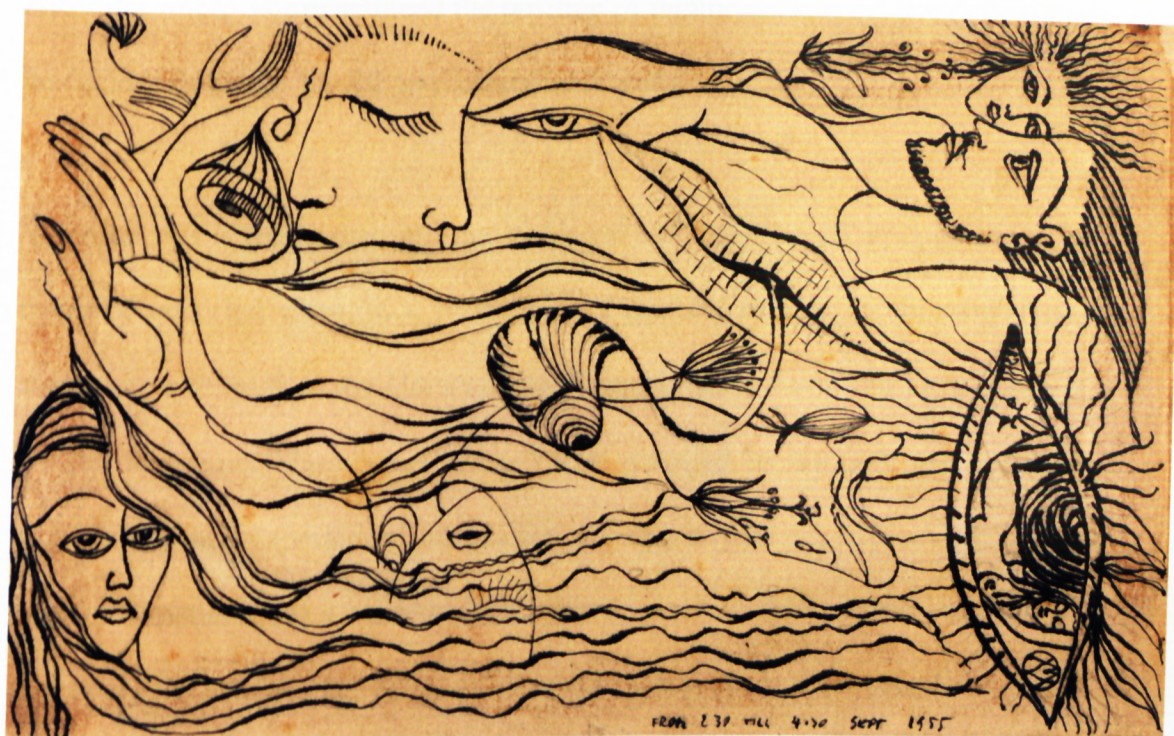
Two years later, an interesting work executed in pen and ink in a surreal treatment, explores the concept of time. *From 2.30 to 4.30*, 1955 (figure 30), places different forms and shapes over the complete picture plane. Two figures are placed in the top right hand corner in diametric opposition to a single form in the bottom left hand corner. Hands, eyes and lips intermingle with lines suggesting strands of seaweed and seashells. An eye placed in the bottom right corner reflects a reclining nude and the faces of two lovers. The two figures in the top right hand corner are probably those of Voitre and Vera. The iconography combined with the title of the work suggests an afternoon at the beach. Voitre's drawings show an early indication of Voitre's interest in Byzantine and Romanesque art fostered by the many visits he made as a young art student to the historic churches of Prague.

¹⁵⁰ Young, E. 'Exhibition by Voitre Marek', in *The Advertiser*, 22 October 1953, unpagged.

¹⁵¹ Francis, I. 'Young artist shows rich imagination,' in *The News*, 21 October 1953, unpagged.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 30



From 2:30 to 4:30

1955

pen and Indian ink

21 x 13cm

private collection

The Island

Between 1956 and 1960 Voitre and his family moved to Kangaroo Island, South Australia where Voitre assumed the position of lighthouse keeper. It was here that he decided to devote his life to ecclesiastical sculpture.¹⁵²

When he was a young man in Prague, Voitre had experienced an epiphany. The epiphany occurred when, as a young twenty year old student of philosophy and comparative religion at the University of Prague, Voitre heard the Lord's Prayer for the first time. Many years later, Voitre revealed to his wife the powerful emotions he had experienced on hearing the Prayer. His experience led him to explore Christianity on a weekly basis with a group of Catholic monks in a nearby monastery in Prague, the 'City of Baroque Churches.' Vera recalls Voitre's extensive library of books on art, philosophy and religion filling the shelves in his small atelier.¹⁵³ However, at that time there was no scope in Czechoslovakia for the type of religious art Voitre wanted to create. Years later he commented, 'It was the time of socialistic realism when we sculpted nothing but miners.'¹⁵⁴

A similarly profound experience occurred while Voitre worked as a lighthouse keeper at Cape du Couedic, on the south-western tip of Kangaroo Island, and he consequently made the decision to devote his life to ecclesiastical art.¹⁵⁵ In December 1966, a newspaper article makes reference to this spiritual experience of nature and the sea, and the author Max Fatchen comments, 'Australia has affected him tremendously', quoting Voitre as saying

¹⁵² Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 December 2006.

¹⁵³ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 23 October 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Kerr, N. 'Unusual stations of the Cross', in *The Advocate*, 21 April 1960, p.15.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 30 October 2006.

I enjoyed European culture, but in Europe everything seemed too man-made. There nature seemed to be subservient to man. Here you feel a sense of eternity. When you go from the city into the outback it is as if you were in Old Testament country. It reminds you of the Psalms and of the old, wandering tribes. This land is rugged and mighty.¹⁵⁶

Unable to work as a sculptor on Kangaroo Island because of a lack of facilities, Voitre turned his hand to the old Czech tradition of puppetry¹⁵⁷ to amuse his children and those of neighbours, as Dušan had done for some of his film-making. The time spent by the family on Kangaroo Island was a unique experience for the two growing children. Olga is now an artist herself and lecturer in art and Ivan also teaches art. Voitre also completed many drawings which displayed a religious theme and surrealist treatment. Three examples are *All Secrets Remain Hidden*, c.1956 (figure 31), *Lord Have Mercy on Me*, c.1956 (figure 32), and *Untitled*, c.1956 (figure 33).

In *All Secrets Remain Hidden* a strong vertical direction is created across the centre of the composition, with a band of line linking a large figure with another smaller figure which progresses to another form placed to the bottom of the picture. To the lower right of the picture plane is the outline of another form, inside which sits a smaller form. The larger figure is that of a woman, the smaller figure appears to be that of a little girl. The outlined form is that of the skull of an animal inside which a lamb is standing. The band of line leading the eye to the two figures suggests a curtain which is tied back by the beak of a hovering bird.

¹⁵⁶ Fatchen, M. *Sunday Mail*, December 1966. Source: AGSA Library.

¹⁵⁷ The strong Czech tradition of puppetry influenced both Dušan and Voitre as they were growing up. In 1938 there were 1500 puppet theatres in Czechoslovakia. The revival of interest in all types of folk artistry had occurred as a reaction against the loss of Czech heritage while under Austro-Hungarian rule.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 31



All Secrets Remain Hidden.

c. 1956, Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

pen and ink on photographic paper.

25.1 x 20.1cm.

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

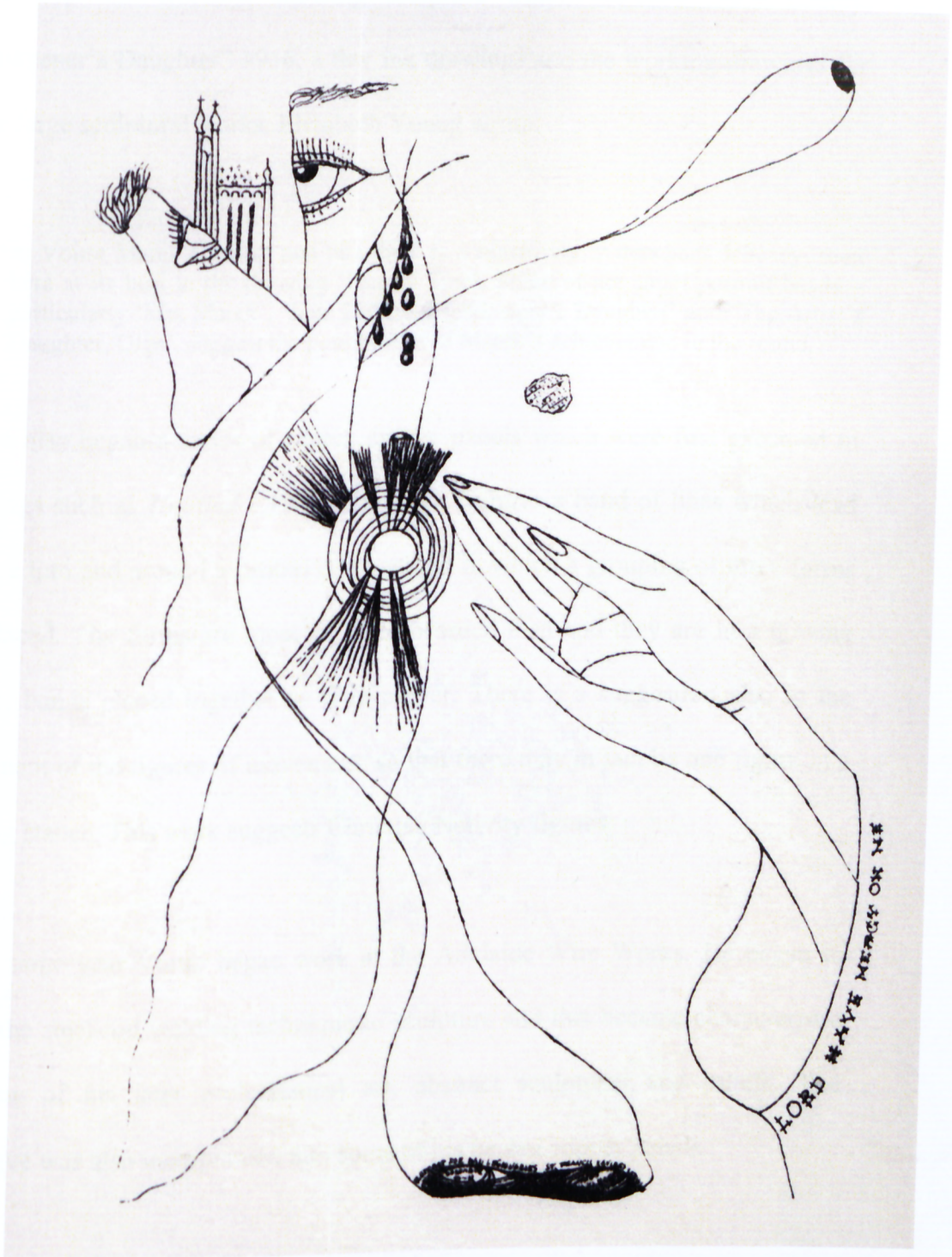
The curtain partially covering the woman's face makes a connection with the secrecy suggested in the title of the work.

Lord Have Mercy on Me is a surreal rendering of a collection of forms which stretch diagonally across the composition, filling the picture plane. The forms include two hands placed together in supplication, a religious symbol which became a characteristic of Voitre's work. The profiled face of a woman is torn in halves to reveal the outline of a Byzantine style church, another religious symbol. A single line stretches out to the top right hand corner, to open out into a shape suggesting an eye; sight being a favourite surrealist theme which was also used by Dušan.

Although Voitre's approach to spirituality, through established religion, was more conventional than Dušan's, his interpretation of religious subject matter was unconventional. As seen in these drawings, Voitre's treatment was both abstract and surrealist.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 32



Lord Have Mercy on Me.
c. 1956, Kangaroo Island, South Australia.
pen and ink on photographic paper.
25.1 x 20.1cm.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

Return to Adelaide

The Marek family returned to Adelaide in 1960 and in August, Voitre exhibited again with the RSASA, showing sculpture which included 'Jane Lethby, Lightkeeper's Daughter' 1956, a few ink drawings and the working drawings for some large sculptural works. Elizabeth Young wrote:

In Voitre Marek's use of pen line there is a sensitivity, a trenchant delicacy, seen here at its best in the drawing 'Family Tree'. Some of the small portrait heads – particularly 'Mrs Marek', 'Jane Lethby, Lightkeeper's Daughter' and 'The Artist's Daughter, Olga', suggest the possibilities of Marek's achievement in the round.¹⁵⁸

Voitre also began a series of beaten copper panels which were first executed in drawings such as *Untitled* c.1960. The work features a band of lines which lead the eye into and around a central composition in which a grouping of three forms are placed. The forms are those of three bearded men and they are in a bowing stance, hands placed together as if in prayer. There is a suggestion also in the placement of the figures of movement, so that there may in fact be one figure in a bowing stance. This work suggests Christian Nativity figures.

In the same year Voitre began work at the Adelaide Wire Works. He began to apply the steel-rod welding technique to sculpture and this became characteristic of some of his later ecclesiastical art, abstract sculptures and reliefs. The technique was also incorporated into some of his beaten copper panels.

¹⁵⁸ Young, E. 'Jeweller turns sculptor', in *Advertiser*, 6 August 1960, unpagged, collection of Vera Marek.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 33



Untitled
c. 1952
pen and ink on photographic paper
20.1 x 25.1cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Voitre describes the origin of his inventive use of steel rods in his sculptural work, with the explanation, 'I was spot welding...it was very boring work, so I asked if I could experiment with the iron rods during my lunch hours,'¹⁵⁹, suggesting that the wrought iron gave his work its early Christian influence through its icon-like lines.

Commissions 1961 - 1973

The 1950s and 1960s was a period in Adelaide's history of rapid urban growth, a result of the large volume of immigrants to Australia since the end of World War II and of the 'baby boom' accompanying the end of the war. A subsequent increase in the numbers of churches built of different Christian denominations was advantageous to Voitre as it led to many commissions for his work. Voitre's approach to the issue of different denominations was an ecumenical one. In addition, a decree by the Vatican Council in 1965 meant that Catholic priests must no longer stand with their backs turned to their parishioners, necessitating the remodelling of many churches. This also placed greater demand. Voitre's services

In the same article in which he was interviewed by Nicholas Kerr, Voitre gives some insight into his spiritual beliefs...

Everything in a church should talk to people, reminding them they are in God's house. It should help bring them to God. The Church should be a leader in every field of culture. God wants people to be perfect as He is perfect. Perfection in expression can lead to God. God is beautiful and people should experience beauty when they come into His house. God is there and they should feel as much of the joy and happiness of heaven as people on earth can. Designers should work to achieve complete harmony with God when they plan a church and there should be frequent conferences between priest, architect and artist.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Kerr, N. 'Works of art in iron', in *Southern Cross*, 6 November 1964, unpagged.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

The 1960s and early 1970s until his accident was a period of intense activity for Voitre and the demands of sculptural commissions allowed little time for any other forms of art. A number of drawings however, date from this time including a small untitled work executed in September 1961. They date from a brief period before Voitre began to work as a self-employed artist. It was only then that he had the time and energy to draw in the evenings, after a day at work. When he worked for himself even the evenings were taken up.¹⁶¹

Untitled, 1961 (figure 34) places a collection of interwoven forms to cover the picture plane. Lines and forms lead our eye in from the perimeters of the composition. The central form is a young female face with her chin resting on a hand which enters from the right corner of the picture. The nose extends into the body of a pig which stands with one foot placed along the base of the composition. A bird sits with wings outstretched on the brow above the carefully articulated eye. The face is that of Vera, who appeared in many of his drawings.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Vera Marek by Cheri Donaldson, 1 February 2007.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 34



Untitled
1961
pen and ink
13.0 x 9.5cm
private collection

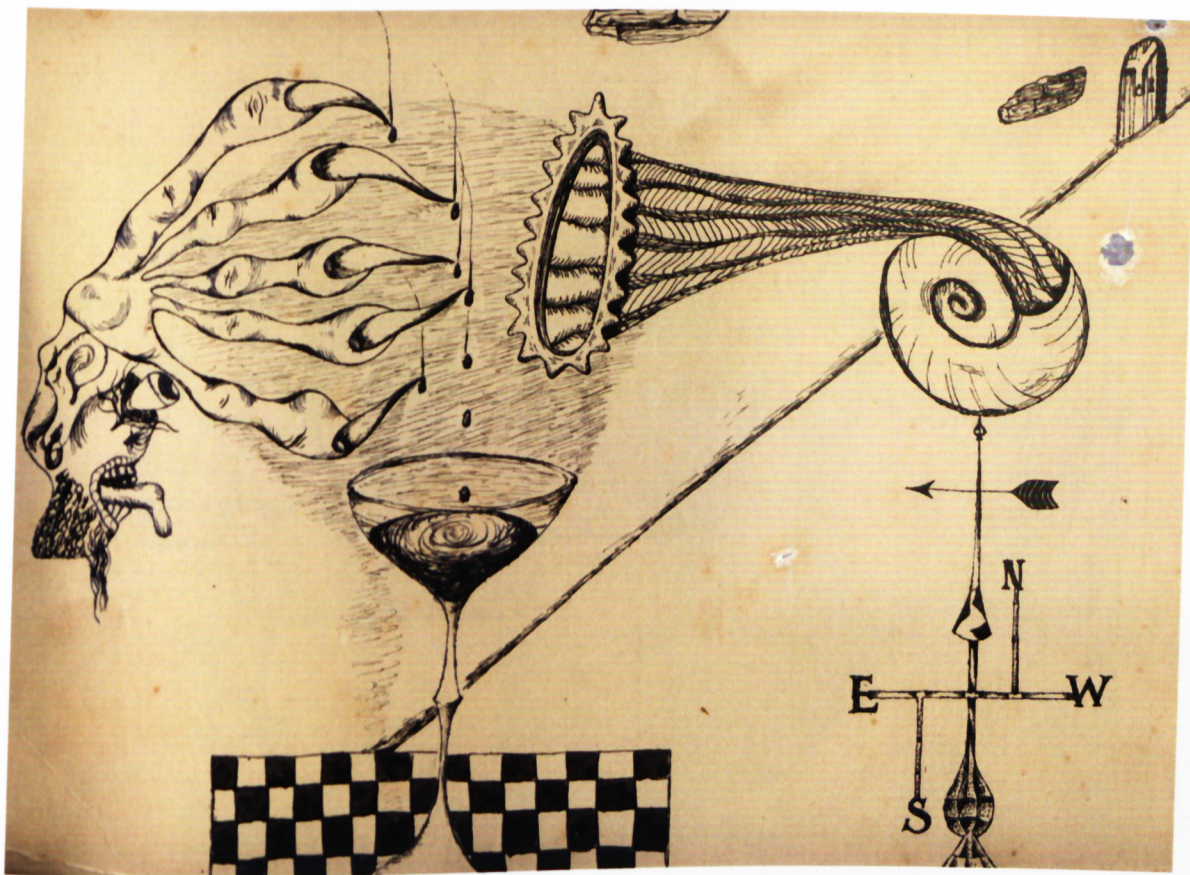
This drawing is showing signs of deterioration due to the attachment of cellotape to the corners and bottom of the image. This has left a residue on the paper.

Two more works which date from this time reveal Voitre's inclination for the surreal. The picture plane of *Untitled*, 1960 (figure 35) is dissected diagonally by a line which cuts across two large forms. These create a triangular configuration with a third form taking up the area to the top left of the composition. The shape which is placed to the bottom left sits on a chequered ground. Forming the triangle are a claw-like hand, which appears to be growing out of a grotesque one-eyed head, a wine glass into which droplets appear to pour from the claws, and a mollusc form which extends into a trumpet shape. The mollusc was often used by Dušan in his paintings. A weather vane is placed in the bottom right of the composition. A door and two patches of exposed brickwork on one of the diagonal planes suggest the wall of a building in a surreal landscape.

Another work also suggesting a surreal landscape is *Untitled*, c.1960 (figure 36). In this work the picture plane is divided by strong diagonals into foreground, middle ground and background. In the foreground the flat plane is interrupted by a form placed to the bottom left of the composition. In the middle ground, three large forms are placed side-by-side. Four small forms float across the background. The flat plane in the foreground suggests a wall against which a male figure is standing, handkerchief in hand. The central form in the middle ground appears to be part human, a man in a belted pin-striped suit which changes into roof tops as it moves into the background. To the right are more rooftops and to the left a castle. A mechanical bird-like creature flies across the background sky to the top left of the composition.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 35



Untitled
1960
pen and ink
25.4 x 31.7cm
private collection

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 36



Untitled
c. 1960
pen and ink
25.0 x 30.4cm
private collection

There are elements in the surreal landscape of this drawing which are strongly reminiscent of the rooftops of Prague, Czechoslovakia.

An exhibition of Voitre's work at Mercedes House, Adelaide in 1966 (Appendix 2), resulted in another article written by Young. It reveals a different attitude towards his work from that written in 1949 by Lisette Kohlhagen. Young suggests that Voitre is among a very few ecclesiastical artists in Australia, and that he has gradually won recognition for his work since his arrival in Australia in 1948. She comments specifically on Voitre's 'hammered bronze and welded metal sculptures', suggesting that ecclesiastical bodies have been wise to commission his works.¹⁶²

The works in the exhibition were almost all commissioned works loaned by private individuals and various churches. The article also comments that Voitre 'has achieved a style which is almost Byzantine in its simplicity and richness of colour and is well adapted to the character of contemporary ecclesiastical architecture.'¹⁶³

Head of Christ, c.1967 (figure 37) has been modelled with plaster and finished with a thin paint wash. Voitre continued to execute beaten copper panels which depicted both religious and surreal subjects during this time. Among them are *Mother and Child* c.1969 (figure 38) and *The Lord's Supper* c.1969 (figure 39). *Mother and Child* tells the story of a mother who takes out her own eye to give to her child so that it might see. Another panel *Parasites* c.1969 tells a story of man's darker side. Both Dušan and Voitre expressed a strong social conscience in their work, and compassionate regard for humanity. The religious works were still

¹⁶² Young, E. 'A pleasant surprise', in *The Advertiser*, 1966, unpagged.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 37



Head of Christ
c. 1967
painted plaster
height 24cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 38



Mother and Child
c. 1969
copper
81 x 66cm
private collection

The surrealist treatment in this work contrasts to the more traditional treatment in the following religious work. (figure 39) They were executed at approximately the same time.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 39



The Last Supper
c. 1968
copper
50 x 73cm
private collection

in demand with commissions coming from many different churches in different states of Australia. (Appendix 2)

Father Owen Farrell, parish priest of Marion and a strong supporter of the C.A.S.¹⁶⁴ was one of Voitre's main supporters and was instrumental in securing a number of commissions for the sculptor. He comments on Voitre's work, saying:

Marek's work is uniquely original and deeply religious. I can think of no other work being done in wrought iron. We are used to other media like stone, wood and bronze, but to achieve a devout and powerful work with strings of wire would seem an improbable thing to bring off till Marek creates one of his works. Everyone can appreciate his craftsmanship.¹⁶⁵

Voitre's ambition too was to design the complete interiors of churches. He writes:

I would like to be given a church to design and furnish. Le Courbusier built a monastery chapel in France which is in effect sculpture in concrete. If an architect can create sculpture, why can't a sculptor be an architect?¹⁶⁶

This ambition was at least partly realized with a number of churches for which Voitre designed major sculptures and church furnishings, including the Church of the Holy Name, East Preston, Melbourne, (figure 40) which is said to have 'some of Voitre's most avant-garde ecclesiastical sculpture, in enamelled copper.'¹⁶⁷ A large, modernistic mural (figure 40) still stands in the front of the church. It is constructed in the steel rod technique Voitre perfected while he was working at the Adelaide Wire Works.

¹⁶⁴ Bruton, D. cit. p.16.

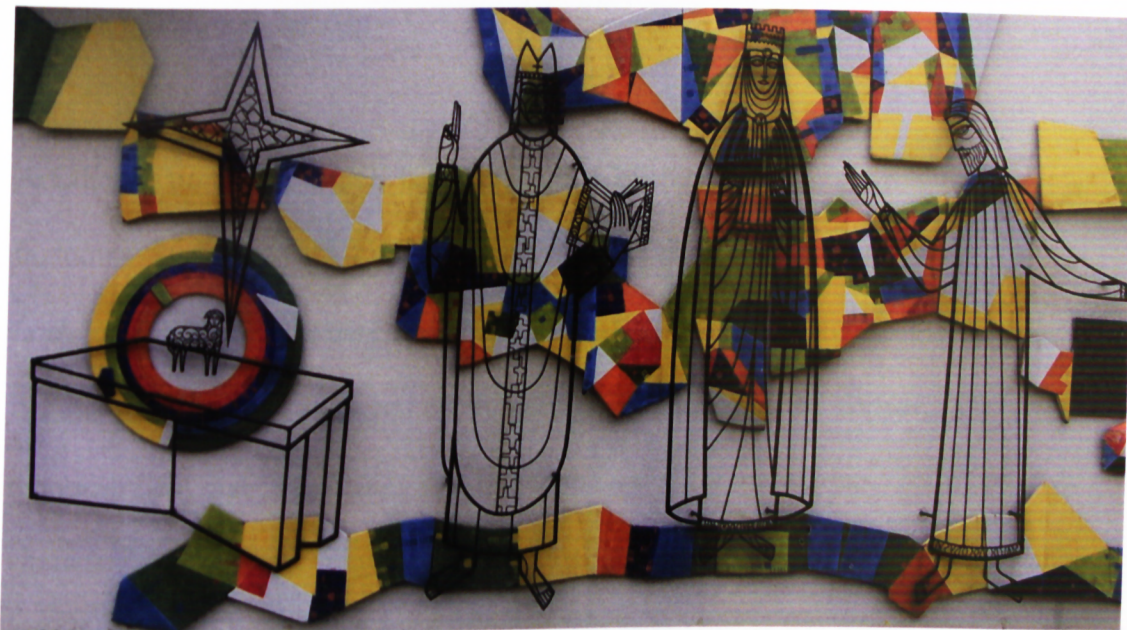
¹⁶⁵ Young, E. cit..

¹⁶⁶ Murray, J. 'Sculptor who prays in metal', in *Walkabout* undated, unpagged. (Source: Vera Marek).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 40



Mural
1969
Church of the Holy Name, East Preston, Victoria
enamelled copper and metal
3 x 6m

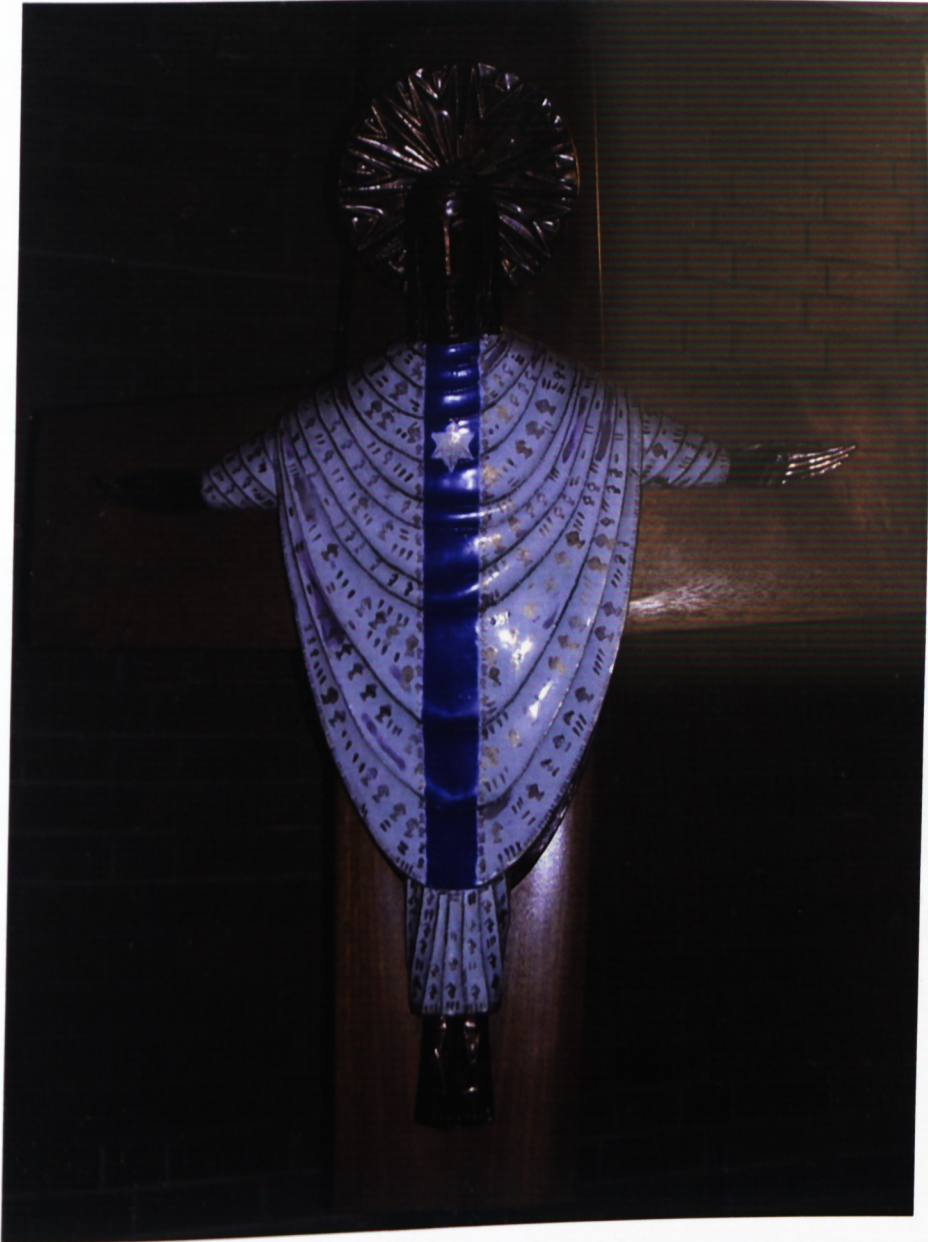
The mural is based on the apparition which occurred at Knock, Ireland on 21 August 1879. An accompanying inscription reads: 'Then He showed me the river of the water of life bright as crystal flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Apoc.22.1.'

The wire figures depicting the Apparition at Knock, Ireland on 21 August 1879, are set against abstract plates of enamelled and oxidised copper. The sculpture is attached to a rendered wall.

Another major work which is accompanied by many of the church furnishings including Stations of the Cross, is the *Christ on the Cross* (figure 41) at the *Our Lady of the Nativity Church* at West Essendon, Victoria. The sculpture stands behind the altar and is executed in enamelled and oxidised copper. The work demonstrates the synthesis of Byzantine and Romanesque styles which characterises Voitre's major ecclesiastical works. In the same church, the technique is used again in the Stations of the Cross (figure 42) which accompany other more minor church furnishings. The beaten copper beneath the enamelled finishing sets the iconography out in relief from the background of the panels.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 41



Christ on the Cross

1969

Our Lady of the Nativity Church, West Essendon, Victoria

enameled and oxidised copper

height 1.05m

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 42



Stations of the Cross

1969

Our Lady of the Nativity Church, West Essendon, Victoria

enamelled and oxidised copper

6 panels measuring 73 x 69cm each

The works comprising the Stations of the Cross total 12 panels. The above illustrates 6 of the panels.

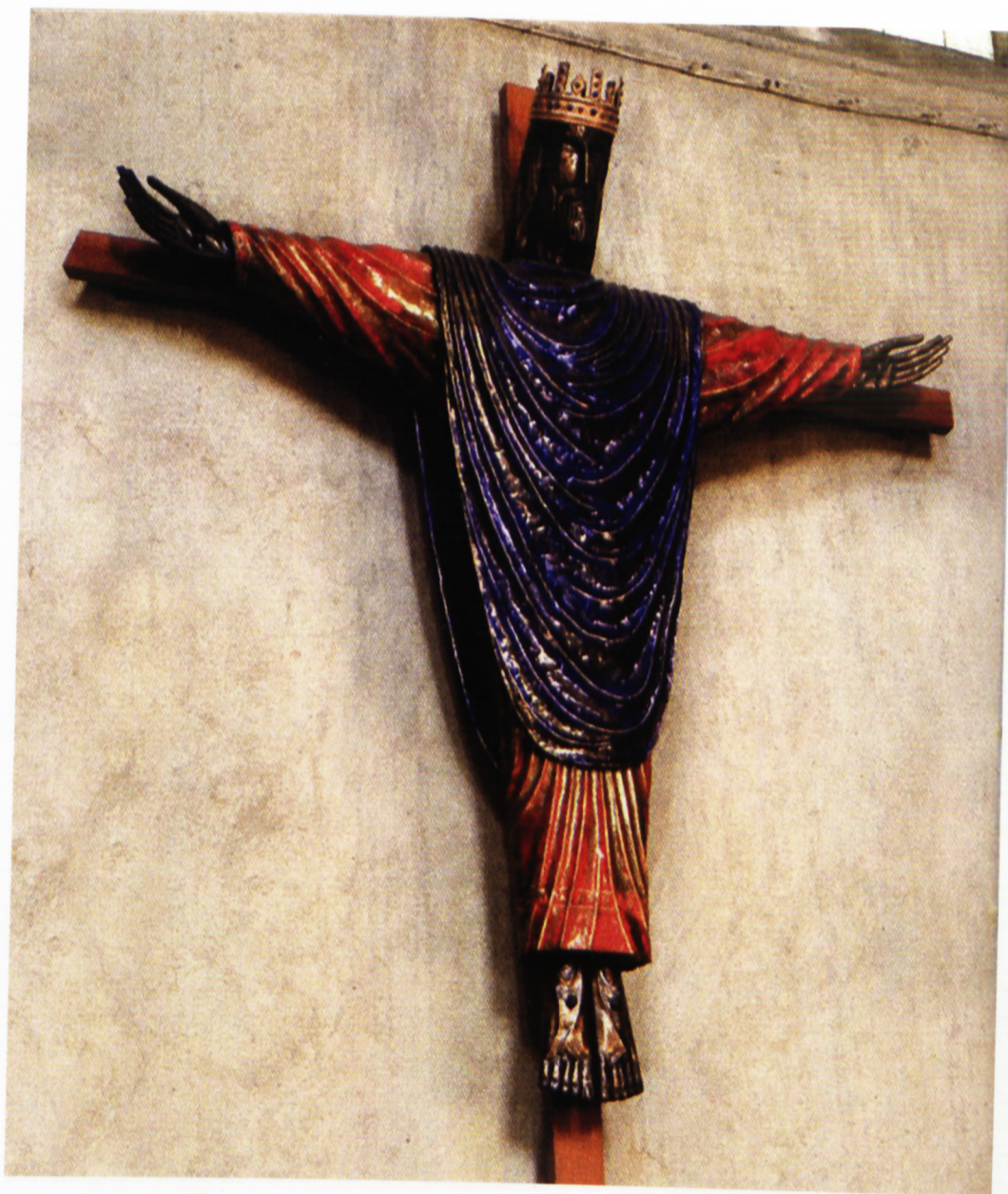
In South Australia, Voitre's contribution to St. Peter's Cathedral, in Adelaide, is powerful and considerable. The *Christus Rex*, 1966 (figure 43) stands against the southern wall of the Cathedral, an imposing 2.7 metres in height. In the Lady Chapel, which is a small room for private prayer, a smaller work *Mary, Mother of Jesus*, 1977 (figure 44) stands elevated, against a wall, adjacent to the entrance. Both works are executed in enamelled and oxidised copper. A third work, *The Aumbry*, 1976 (figure 45) is housed behind wooden doors in a small cupboard adjacent to the altar. This work is of beaten copper and the heart of the pelican is enamelled. The Aumbry features the Eucharistic symbol of the Pelican, which tears open its heart to feed its young with its own blood. This work was constructed in 1976.

Voitre's major sculptural works reflect the synthesis of Romanesque and Byzantine art. In 1969 Voitre was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study in Europe, The United Kingdom and the United States. John Miles comments that Voitre felt 'Byzantine art is beautiful, spiritually strong, and has discovered a form which expresses church teaching in an effective way.'¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Miles, J. 'Faith of an artist,' in *The Advertiser*, 22 December 1969, unpagged.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 43



Christus Rex

1966

St. Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide
enameled and oxidised copper
height 2.7m

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 44



Mary, Mother of Jesus

1977

St. Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide
enamelled and oxidised copper
height 1.06m

This sculptural work stands in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. The small Chapel is for private prayer.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 45



The Aumbry

1976

St. Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide
enamelled and oxidised copper

46 x 39cm

The Aumbry features the Eucharistic symbol of the Pelican which tears open its heart to feed its young with its own blood. It is symbolic of the Divine Love of Christ whose blood took away the sins of the world. The Aumbry cabinet holds the hosts which are used in the ceremony of the Eucharist. It is locked with a small key.

Tragedy

Voitre had completed approximately twenty-six major works in seven states around Australia (Appendix 2) and was in demand for major ecclesiastical sculptural works when tragedy struck in 1973. He was involved in a serious car accident from which he sustained serious, debilitating injuries. Two outstanding commissions were completed with the assistance of his family and several workshop assistants, for the Church of the Holy Trinity, Curtin, A.C.T., and for the Anglican Church in Coffs Harbour, N.S.W. in 1974. However, as the years progressed, Voitre's condition deteriorated until he was completely unable to work as an artist.

Voitre's last major commission was a statue in beaten copper, *Christus Rex* (figure 46) for the Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, Plympton, South Australia, in 1979. The imposing 2.5 metres high sculpture stands behind the altar, hands upturned as if to hold the weight of the church. It was completed with the help of Vera and Voitre's assistants. In keeping with the liberal attitude to religion with which he had grown up, Voitre's approach to religion was ecumenical and sculptures were produced for many different Christian faiths. Voitre died in November 1999, six years after Dušan.

VOITRE MAREK

Figure 46



Christ the King

1979

Church of the Good Shepherd, Plympton
South Australia

enameled and oxidised copper

height 2.5m

The sculpture stands behind the altar and the upturned hands appear to hold the weight of the church. This was the last major work undertaken by Voitre Marek.

In this chapter I have discussed how Voitre reacted to the 'banning incident' in a different way to Dušan, by engaging with the Adelaide art community while still pursuing a surrealist style, encouraged by the reviews of Ivor Francis and Elizabeth Young. I have shown also how his spirituality led Voitre on a different path to Dušan and how his familial situation took him on a different artistic path as he addressed the financial security of his family. I have described how Voitre made a spiritual connection with the Australian environment, as his brother Dušan had done, during his time in relative isolation working as a lighthouse keeper on the South Australian coast. I have completed the visual analysis of ten of Voitre's drawings, not previously documented, six of which were completed prior to 1960 after which Voitre devoted his time primarily to sculpture. Eight of Voitre's major sculptural works are also analysed.

CONCLUSION

Deep and Defiant documents the artistic history of the brothers Dušan and Voitre Marek, who grew up in Bohemia, northern Czechoslovakia and emigrated to Australia in 1948. The brothers had a stern, authoritarian father whose liberal attitudes to religion and encouragement to read widely continued to influence their lives. They both grew up with a thirst for knowledge on religion, spirituality and philosophy and the books with which they surrounded themselves influenced their art. As surrealism was a movement looking for a universal audience at the time they were growing up, it became the 'language' of their artistic expression when the brothers were both art students in Prague. This thesis concludes that the shared influence of their father and their upbringing in Czechoslovakia profoundly affected the lives of the two brothers, setting them on a search for spiritual fulfillment which found expression in their art.

While both took spiritual paths, Voitre, the only son who had been baptized in the Catholic faith, chose to pursue mainstream Christian faith while Dušan embarked on a relentless search for spirituality through the diverse theories of philosophers such as Nietzsche, mystics such as the Russians Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, poets such as the Sufi Jalal u'din Rumi and major religious tomes such as the Bible, the Koran and writings on Eastern religions. It is very probable that Dušan was familiar with the writings of Nietzsche while he was still a student in Europe.

The brothers were both influenced greatly by the surrealist movement, which spread across Europe into Czechoslovakia, gaining momentum with the establishment of the *Devetsil* group in 1933. During their student days in Prague,

surrealism was the 'language' of the day and continued to influence their careers after they escaped the communist regime in their homeland where the Soviet Social Realist agenda was enforced.

Their experience as émigrés was another major influence on the artists as they arrived as non-English speaking migrants in Adelaide in 1948, exhibiting their surrealist works in the following year to a mixed reception which perhaps reflected the conservative climate of Adelaide. The 'banning incident' which involved Dušan's paintings proved to be a pivotal incident in the brothers' lives. It was two years later that the younger brother Dušan married Helena and left Adelaide in the same year, free spirits beginning their travels around Australia and Papua New Guinea, following a spiritual path of intellectual and artistic discovery. Voitre remained in Adelaide to engage with the art community there and to establish himself and his family, to which he showed great loyalty and responsibility, the religiosity in his work becoming even more pronounced in his later ecclesiastical sculpture.

While surrealism was clearly Voitre's mode of expression in his early drawings, his later ecclesiastical sculpture became a synthesis of the Romanesque and Byzantine styles, while some incorporated abstraction. Dušan's paintings also bridged abstraction and surrealism, with his *Homage to the Sun* series of the 1980s suggesting the *Art Informel* style which was influenced by Existentialism. The religious and spiritual aspects of their work remained strongly evident in the work of both artists.

New undocumented information which has come to light in the research for this thesis "Deep and Defiant", pertains to the connection between Dušan's iconography and Nietzsche's theories of the Eternal Recurrence, the connection with the Russian philosopher Gurdjieff's theories of the Fourth Way, and the connection between Dušan Marek's paintings and his films. These connections have been made in the process of the research for this thesis, and documented herein. In addition, Voitre Marek's work has now been documented for the first time in the process of research for this thesis, a selection of his works subjected to visual analysis, and his exhibitions and commissions documented in Appendix 2.

An area which suggests a need for further research is that of Dušan's film making, particularly in regard to animation, which was a seminal part of his career. Another area which invites further research is that of Voitre's religious works which began with drawings of a religious theme and culminated in major ecclesiastical sculptural works commissioned by churches and religious organizations around Australia.

The thesis concludes that although Dušan and Voitre took different spiritual and career paths, it is spirituality and religiosity which are the major defining points in their art.

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'Beyond the Shattered Glass' - Deakin University, 1982. 38mins.

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Helena Marek

16 July 2006, Bellevue Heights.

23 July 2006, Bellevue Heights.

30 July 2006, Blackwood.

13 August 2006, Unley.

23 September 2006, Unley.

28 September 2006, Unley.

8 October 2006, Unley.

Vera Marek

23 October 2006, Seacliff.

30 October 2006, Seacliff.

30 November 2006, Seacliff.

1 December 2006, Seacliff.

19 January 2006, Seacliff.

1 February 2006, Seacliff.

Linda Marek

3 September 2006, Brunswick East, Victoria.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DUŠAN MAREK

Biography:

- 1926 Born 7 March, Bitouchov, Czechoslovakia.
- 1942-48 Studied art in Turnov, Jablonec and Prague.
- 1948 Arrived in Australia.
- 1948-51 Adelaide. Cleaner with the South Australian Railways, factory worker.
- 1951 Hobart. Builder's labourer.
- 1952-54 Sydney. Factory worker.
- 1954-59 Port Moresby and Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. Photographer, engineer on coastal copra boats.
- 1959-63 Assistant at Bonython Art Gallery, North Adelaide.
- 1963-68 Sydney. Fontana Films, animation and painting.
- 1969-73 Adelaide. Part-time tutoring in animation at Flinders University, Adelaide.
- 1973 Hobart. Lecturer in Painting and Film-making, Tasmanian School of Art.
- 1977 Awarded Fellowship in Creative Arts, Australian National University, Canberra.
- 1978 Lecturer, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart.
- 1979 Study tour: New York, London, Holland, France, Germany, Italy.
- 1982 Retired from lectureship due to illness. Painted in Italy and France. Returned to studio in Eden Hills, South Australia.
- 1985 Travelled and painted in France, 3 months. Returned to Eden Hills.

1993 Died 9 March after a long illness.

Solo Exhibitions:

- 1939 Paintings and Drawings, Turnov, Czechoslovakia
- 1949 7th Annual Exhibition of the R.S.A.S.A.
George Murray Gallery, University of Adelaide
- 1953 Mack Gallery, Pitt Street, Sydney
- 1954 Red Cross Hall, Port Moresby, Papua
- 1963 Bonython Art Gallery, North Adelaide
- 1970 Lombard Gallery, Adelaide
- 1971 'Manoah', Upper Sturt
- 1972 Hawthorn City Art Gallery, Melbourne
Open Studio Exhibition, Bridgewater, S.A.
- 1973 Stirling Galleries, Stirling, S.A.
- 1974 Stirling Galleries, Stirling, S.A.
- 1975 Art Gallery of N.S.W., Sydney, Project 10
- 1976 Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre, Victoria
Fine Art Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart
- 1977 ANU, Canberra, Open studio Exhibition
- 1979 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
Third Biennale of Sydney
Salamanca Place Gallery, Hobart
- 1982 Ronald Adams Gallery, Victor Harbor, S.A.
- 1983 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney

- 1985 Bonython-Meadmore Gallery, Adelaide
 Anvil Art Gallery, Kergunyah, Vic.
- 1986 Bonython-Meadmore Gallery, Adelaide
- 1990 Tynte Gallery, Dulwich, S.A.
- 1993 Contemporary Art Centre, Parkside, S.A.
- 2000 Kensington Gallery, Adelaide. Dušan Marek Retrospective
 Exhibition

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 1949 7th Annual Exhibition of the R.S.A.S.A., Adelaide.
 Adelaide Independent Group
 Laubman & Pank Gallery, Adelaide
- 1959 University of Adelaide
- 1966 Hungry Horse Gallery, Sydney
- 1967 ‘The Australian Painters 1964-1966’, contemporary paintings from
 the Mertz Collection, Austin, Texas, U.S.A.
- 1968 Bonython Art Gallery, Paddington, Sydney
- 1970 Summertown Gallery, S.A.
- 1973 Gallery 2, Salamanca Place, Hobart.
 Tasmanian School of Art
 Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania.
- 1974 George Invitation Art Prize
- 1975 19th Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery Exhibition, Hobart
 Tasmanian School of Art Exhibition
- 1976 Ronald Adams Gallery, Victor Harbor, S.A.
 Design Centre of Tasmania, Launceston, Tas.

- 1977 Georges Invitation Art Prize, Melbourne
- 1978 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney. 'Drawing Conclusions'.
AGDC Exhibition, 'Landscape and Image', Indonesia 27 July-10
September.
Tasmania House, London. Drawings
- 1980 Burnie Art Gallery, Tasmania. 'Burnie Works on Paper'.
Macquarie Galleries, Sydney. '4 Men'.
School of Art, Hobart, Tasmania. Works by lecturers from the
Tasmanian School of Art.
Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart. 'Recent
Tasmanian Sculpture and 3D Art'.
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, Tas. 'Recent
Tasmanian Sculpture and 3D Art'.
- 1981 NGV. The John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize
Tasmanian Art Gallery, Hobart. 'Tasmania Visited'.
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Tas.
'Tasmania Visited'.
- 1983 AGSW, Sydney. 'Australian Perspecta'.
District Court, Adelaide. 'Australian Perspecta' touring exhibition.
University Art Museum, University of Queensland, Brisbane.
'Recent Acquisitions 1973-1983'.
- 1986 Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. 'Modern Australian
Paintings'.
- 1987 Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. 'Works on Paper'.

- 1988 Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. 'Modern Australian Paintings'.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. 'Recent South Australian Art: new acquisitions'.
- 1989 Tynte Gallery, Adelaide. 'Works on a small scale'.
Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. 'Works on Paper, Australian Watercolours, Drawings, Prints, 1935-89'.
- 1989-90 'Adelaide Angries: South Australian Paintings of the 1940s'.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
Heidi Park, Melbourne.
Riddoch Art Gallery, Mt. Gambier, S.A.
- 1991 Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. 'Australian Surrealist Paintings'.
- 1992 Contemporary Art Centre of S.A., Adelaide. 'Being Contemporary'.
- 1993 'Surrealism: Revolution by Night': National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.
Art Gallery of N.S.W.
'Surrealism in Australia' NGA Touring Exhibition:
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 1994 Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. 'After the Spring: Contemporary Czech and Slovak Art'.
- 1997 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and other galleries

throughout Australia. 'The Europeans: Emigree Artists in Australia 1930- 1960'.

1998 Maison Communale, Bruxelles, Belgium. 'Un regard sur surrealisme tcheque'.

2000 Centre Culturel La Villa, Bruxelles, Belgium. 'Surrealisme tcheque'.

Touring Exhibition of various galleries throughout the Czech Republic. 'Surrealism and Freedom'

Kensington Gallery, Adelaide. 'A century of South Australian Art 1900-2000'.

2006 'Australian Surrealists: James Gleeson and Dušan Marek,'

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

'SA Icons An Exhibition of SA Iconic Artists from the last 150 Years who have been members of the RSASA, representing 1856 – 2006.'

APPENDIX 2: VOITRE MAREK

Biography:

- 1919 Born 30 May, Bitouchov, Czechoslovakia.
- 1925- 35 Primary and Secondary Schooling.
- 1935- 39 Apprenticeship in metal engraving.
- 1939- 44 Studies in Sculpture and History of Art, Prague Academy of Fine Art.
- 1944 Graduated with Diploma in Sculpture and Applied Art.
- 1944-48 Freelance sculptor, exhibiting in Prague 1945-47 as a member of the Czech Union of Creative Artists.
- 1946 Second Prize in competition for commemorative plaque for Village of Lezaky.
- 1947 First Prize in portrait competition with *Head of a Young Girl*.
- 1948 Leaves Czechoslovakia after the Communist takeover for ideological reasons, in March. Arrives Australia in October. Begins employment with Sheppards Jewellers as jeweller and engraver.
- 1950- 56 Works as self-employed jeweller/engraver.
- 1956- 60 Lighthouse Keeper at three different locations in South Australia.
- 1960 Works at Adelaide Wire Works. Begins to use the steel-rod welding technique for sculpture which becomes characteristic of later ecclesiastical art, abstract sculptures and reliefs. Decides to devote life to ecclesiastical sculpture.
- 1966 8th Summer School of Art, Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide.
- 1969 Awarded Churchill Fellowship for the study of religious art in Europe and the U.S.A.

- 1970 Churchill Fellowship Study Tour
- 1973 Sustains permanent injuries from serious car accident which curtails his career.
- 1997 Papal Blessing bestowed by Pope John Paul II in recognition of the artist's contribution to ecclesiastical art in Australia.

Exhibitions

- 1945-47 Exhibits in Prague as member of the Czech Union of Creative Artists.
- 1949 R.S.A.S.A. Seventh Annual Exhibition. Paintings.
Adelaide Independent Group. Paintings.
Laubman and Panks Gallery. Paintings.
- 1952 Curzon Gallery. Sculptures, drawings and busts.
New Gallery. Sculptures, drawings and busts.
- 1953 R.S.A.S.A. Prints and drawings exhibition.
- 1955 Architecture Convention Exhibition. Sculptures.
Advertiser Open Air Exhibition
- 1960 R.S.A.S.A. Solo exhibition of sculptures and drawings.
- 1962 R.S.A.S.A. Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Migrant Artists.
- 1964 R.S.A.S.A. Awarded sculpture prize for *Christus Rex*.
- 1965 R.S.A.S.A. Exhibition.
- 1966 Adelaide Festival of Arts Exhibition, MercedesHouse, Adelaide
- 1968 Exhibition of Liturgical Art, Melbourne.
- 1969 Advertiser Open-Air Exhibition by Invitation.

- R.S.A.S.A. Fellows Exhibition.
- 1972 C.A.S. Exhibition
- 1997 '150 Years of Anglican Art' Exhibition, Art Gallery of South Australia
- 1998 'Exploring Australian Spirituality' Exhibition, Adelaide College of Divinity, Adelaide.

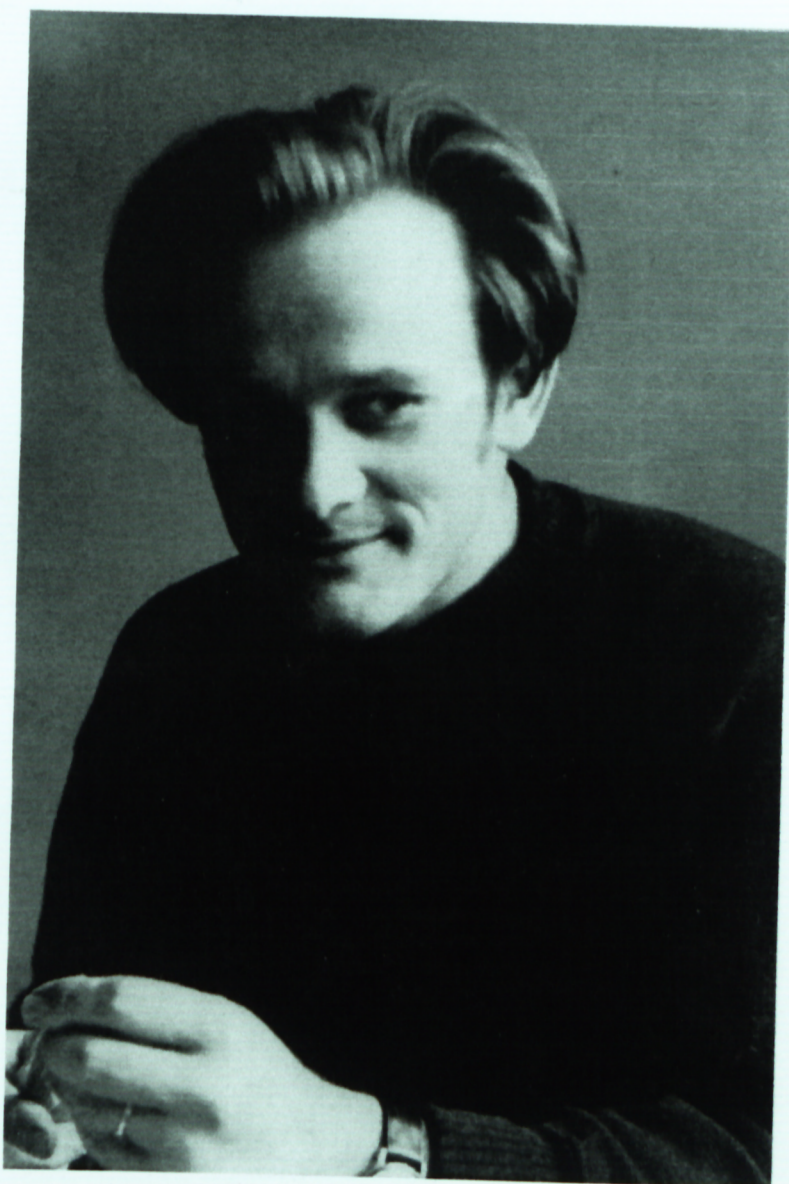
Commissions:

- 1950-58 Private commissions to sculpt busts.
- 1959 Private commission for copper fountain.
- 1961 Mary-Mount Convent, Seacombe Gardens, South Australia.
- 1963 St. Judes Church, Brighton, South Australia.
Marion Catholic Church.
- 1964- 65 Church of the Resurrection, Goodwood.
Church of the Good Shepherd, Clearview, South Australia.
- 1965 Anglican Church, Berri, South Australia.
St. Joseph's Church, Tranmere, South Australia.
St. Joseph's Church, Brighton, South Australia.
Church of Our Lady of Dolours, Kingswood, South Australia.
Christian Brothers Aquinas College, Perth.
Lutheran Church of St. John, Hamilton, Victoria.
Church of the Holy Name, East Preston, Victoria.
Greek Orthodox Church, Woodville.
St. Barnabas Chapel, Belair, South Australia.
- 1966 St. Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.

- 1966-67 Our Lady of the Nativity Church, West Essendon, Victoria.
- 1967 Catholic Church of Cleve, South Australia.
 St. Ignatius College, Athelstone, South Australia.
 Monastery, Glen Osmond, South Australia
- 1968 Church of St. Margaret Mary, Croydon, South Australia.
 Christ the Worker Church, Mitchell Park, South Australia.
- 1969 Church of the Holy Name, East Preston, Victoria.
 Church of the Holy Cross, Goodwood, South Australia.
 Electricity Trust of South Australia. (Christmas mural)
- 1971 Church of the holy Trinity, Curtin, A.C.T.
 Commission for sculpture, Lady Harrison.
- 1974 Anglican Church at Coffs Harbour, N.S.W.
- 1976 St.Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.
- 1977 St.Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.
- 1979 Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, Plympton, South
 Australia.



Dušan Marek



Voitre Marek