

"HOPELAND" JUNGLE PHILLIPS

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I don't remember the first time I was attracted by a strange and compelling art that didn't seem to fit what was appearing in the galleries of New York, London, or even Sydney, but it was a long time ago. It was more than likely something from Gugging, or maybe the detailed scribblings of Scottie Wilson, but whatever it was, the joys of these discoveries still get me in the metaphorical solar plexus even today.

The names for this art are myriad: They can be all encompassing (naïve, naïf, outsider, self-taught); sometimes narrowly specific (visionary, obsessive, homeless); sometimes misleading (folk, raw, primitive); and vary from continent to continent (art brut). My personal favour is for 'outsider' as, to me, it covers the main ingredients of being outside the established systems, both personally and culturally. My choice. But whatever terminology you may feel comfortable with, there is an amazing and wonderful world out there - of art and practitioners - that sometimes falls through the cracks of the accepted highways and byways of our cultural lives. A world full of people compelled, for whatever reason, to make sense of their lives visually. Jungle is a fabulous South Australian example.



Not only does a whole cosmos exist in his colourful and detailed paintings, but these paintings join and mount together to form another universe in which the painter himself lives. Jungle's house is one of the great local art attractions: The gallery tree outside hung with delightfully weathered examples of the artist's work, the signage on the front door explaining to the casual visitor the fare on offer, the initial opening into the darkened hallway, and the amazing rooms that open from it; all reveal the prodigious array of Jungle's talent. And let's not forget the friendly and attentive presence of our host. This is a good art moment: I've had a few over the years, but this always gives me a genuine thrill. Trust me, and go and visit my friend Jungle. Particularly as he has to move soon. Some regrets here, but not the end of the world. Good people are making sure Jungle has a new canvas in which to live and work. Pay a visit and enjoy the results of Jungle's labour, and maybe make a small purchase. The money will help with the move and it will be one less masterpiece to ship.



Garth Pye

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22nd February 2006