HOW SOON THEY FORGET
the art of Roy Kennedy

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Cover
Mission bay dreams 2005 transposed to the wall of the Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care facility Redfern
Roy Kennedy looks beyond the Police Paddock gate to the mission of his childhood.
HOW SOON THEY FORGET
the art of Roy Kennedy

Philippa Scarlett
How soon they forget

I named this print because so many people asked me how I know so much about Darlington Point. Little do they know that I was reared up on this mission back in the late 1930s and late 1940s. Warangesda mission was closed down in 1925. My mother was born on Warangesda Mission. The mission on the other side of the river is where I was brought up, called Police Paddock mission. Both these missions are at Darlington Point.
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I say KENNEDY
Really like this way that
This line is putting this
Book together. About my
Mom's Mission along with
Mini at Darlington Point
And also about my etchings
Which I do about my Mission
And things which happened
Along this way.

Thank you

[Signature]

Friday 4-9-09
Acknowledgements

This commentary on the art of Roy Kennedy has been enhanced by the inclusion of relevant illustrations and I am grateful to those people who helped me to obtain them. I would particularly like to thank Julie Cracknell, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Geoff Huston, Gavin Jones, Peter Lonergan, Matt Poll, the National Gallery of Australia, Sophie Verrecchia and Noel Williams for allowing me to reproduce photographs and images of Roy’s work and the places it describes. Thank you also to Yvette Andrews, Andrew Edquist, Eugenie Edquist, Isabella Edquist, Darryl Griffen, Denise Hayes, Michele Huston, Jonathan Jones and Elaine Syron who either facilitated my access to images or gave helpful comments and advice.

Most of all I must thank Roy Kennedy for permitting me to reproduce his work and for sharing with me the stories of his two missions.
Left - Right
Billboy Charles with brothers Keith and Roy Kennedy on
Darkie, with their dog Brownie, bend of the river
Hillston 1938
Photograph W. Carlyle
Courtesy Roy Kennedy
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Introduction

*How soon they forget: the art of Roy Kennedy* aims to give historical background to Roy Kennedy’s two missions as well as to clarify details about Roy’s life, including the place and date of his birth and the mission he lived on as a child. It seeks also to show the significance of Roy’s art as personal and community history and the importance of seeing his works linked to their accompanying stories. This is essential if their full potential as envisaged by the artist is to be realised. It reveals them as multi-layered, composite and compelling statements, communicating the past to the present and to future generations. An examination of Roy’s work and its stories, moreover, shows that the portrayal of his missions, although individual and idiosyncratic, has parallels and connects with other Aboriginal artists reaching back in time and beyond his immediate country.

If the essence of Roy’s art lies in the way he draws on his memories of forgotten landscapes and re-creates them in tangible and accessible form, its power derives from the fact that by this process the places in his mind are emerging to enter the consciousness of those who follow him. In a further development his works, reinterpreted as mosaic and mural, are in the 21st century themselves becoming part of new physical landscapes.

Roy’s declaration ‘How soon they forget’ is the title of an etching as well as a consistent theme in his ongoing commentary. In 2009 Roy was the winner of the Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize, his winning entry *Mission Series 2*, a painting of his two missions. This award, in conjunction with all he has already achieved as an artist, is an indication of the success of his quest to ensure that the story of his early life and his mission community will not be forgotten.
Roy Kennedy at home
October 2009

After a childhood by the Murrumbidgee at Darlington Point and a life of change and travel, Roy now lives at Waterloo in inner Sydney.
This is my story. This is my life.
This is how it was. All from memory
All from being there ... and we survived.

Roy Kennedy Artist Talk, NAIDOC Week, National Gallery of Australia, July 2003.

Roy David Kennedy known since childhood as Dootcha, is a Wiradjuri man who was born in 1934 in Griffith, New South Wales.¹ The privations of the depression were the background to Roy’s childhood near the Murrumbidgee river, close to the site of the former Warangesda Aboriginal Mission at Darlington Point. Here Roy with his mother and stepfather, lived first in the old mud hut by Waddai creek and then behind the police station, on the Darlington Point police paddock. From this base they moved around in search of work, travelling with extended family in the Wiradjuri area, in a circuit encompassing Hay, Hillston, Griffith and Leeton. As Roy remembers it - ‘We lived together. We used to travel together, running along behind the old wagon.’²

The pattern of Roy’s life as an adult has been a chequered one, moving about New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and then to Western Australia, where he lived for eight years. During this time he made his living following seasonal and labouring work - brickies’ labourer, fruit picker, sleeper cutter and rabbiter as well as working as a ganger and in railway break down gangs. He has lived and worked in Sydney, Gosford, on the New South Wales south coast and in places like Wakool, Roto, Eugowra, Balranald, Moulamein, Shepparton, Marree, Oodnadatta, Perth, Norseman and Bencubbin in the Western Australian wheat belt. Much of this has been summed up by Roy as ‘wandering around doing seasonal work wherever and not finding any satisfaction with the rough life, not caring much about tomorrow.’³

¹ Born in Griffith hospital, Roy moved after his birth to Darlington Point, which he associates with his birth place.
² Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 24 February 2005.
The mud hut outside Warangesda 2004
Photograph Geoff Huston

The hut was home to a succession of ex-Warangesda people including Roy Kennedy’s family.
Remnant of the lift bridge relocated to the entrance to the Darlington Point caravan park 2004
Photograph
Geoff Huston
Finally after a lifetime on the move, Roy settled in Sydney, at Waterloo and in 1995 began to attend the Eora College, Sydney Institute of TAFE New South Wales ‘to get some education.’ After initially experimenting with ink on paper, in 1998 Roy was introduced to painting, ceramics and print making and his career as an artist took off in the following year. He graduated from TAFE NSW in 1999 as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student of the year and also received a commendation award for his Mission Series etchings in the inaugural TAFE NSW Invitational Arts and Design Prize, Australian Images and Perceptions. In 2000 he was an Arts and Design Prize finalist for the etching The forgotten Darlington Point and its two missions in years gone by (also called My forgotten Darlington Point mission) and again in 2003 for Movement on the Murrumbidgee river. From this promising beginning he has gone on to exhibit at a variety of venues in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, and at Boomalli Gallery (Leichhardt, New South Wales) as a member of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative.

During the last decade his works have toured Australia with the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, the Kate Challis RAKA Award and the National Indigenous Heritage Award 2000, in which he was highly commended for the etching Woddi will be forever. In 2007 he was a speaker at the 6th Australian Print Symposium in Canberra, when his etching How soon they forget was included in the accompanying exhibition The story of Australian printmaking 1801-2005. From its inception in 2005, he has been a consistent finalist in the Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize, and was the winner of this award in 2009 for his painting Mission Series 2.

His work is represented in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Australia and the Parliament of New South Wales, as well as in private galleries and collections in Australia and overseas. Since 2005 his etchings have begun to take new form and assume a new life as mural and mosaic. Mission boy dreams is displayed with its story on the Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care building, Redfern and Movement on the Murrumbidgee river, in 2009 is being replicated by Sophie Verrecchia as an external coloured mosaic commissioned for a Sydney residence by Gavin Jones. As an artist participant in the 2009 Djamu Indigenous Art Education program of the Art Gallery of New South Wales he is reaching out to new generations of Indigenous youth.

Although Roy’s adult life has been one of constant change, it is his early years at Darlington Point which are the well spring of his art and which provide its continuing and repeated themes.

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4 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 24 February 2005
Roy Kennedy’s two missions
Warangesda Mission

In 1880, the missionary John Brown Gribble founded Warangesda on the banks of the Murrumbidgee river near Darlington Point, New South Wales. In the following years, the struggling mission passed through the hands of the private, non-sectarian Aborigines Protection Association before becoming a totally state run institution in 1897, under the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board. In late 1924 the mission was closed down and the land sold to a farmer. The Kennedys were members of the Warangesda community from its earliest days and the Kennedy name is mentioned frequently in the diaries of John Gribble and later mission managers, as well as in the records of the Aborigines Protection Board.

While Roy Kennedy’s great grandfather David (senior), his brothers and their descendants played an active part in the life of the mission, their survival in the mission environment was not without costs. The Warangesda diaries record some of the privations of mission living including sickness, food shortages, expulsions and authoritarian treatment by managers. The Kennedy family, like others on the mission, was also affected by the removal of children, taken from the 1880s to the Warangesda dormitory and after 1912 to the Cootamundra Girls Home. Forty four years after it was founded, the closure of Warangesda (ironically called the Camp of Mercy by John Gribble) was completed with a thoroughness which must have had a profound impact on people like the Kennedys, who were still living there when the destruction of their homes forced people to seek refuge elsewhere.

The Warangesda Roy depicts was gone by the time he was born - ‘As kids we used to cross over the river. There was nothing there, only the church and a couple of old buildings.’ All that survived the demolition which followed Warangesda’s closure were a few wooden structures, including the mission church, the school and the girls dormitory. By the time Roy was born, these had been incorporated into the working life of the farm which replaced the mission or were falling into disrepair in the harsh Riverina climate. Over eighty years after Warangesda was closed, the church, later used as a barn, has disappeared completely - destroyed by a fire in the 1980s - and the pepper trees planted to form the approach to the mission (the subject of the etching and painting Pepper tree avenue 1999 and 2001) stand depleted within a paddock, leading nowhere. In the

5 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 24 February 2005.
Pepper tree avenue leading to Warangesda 2007
Photograph Roy Kennedy

Levees to contain flood waters can be seen in the foreground.
1990s the deterioration of one of the remaining buildings was temporarily arrested by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, but essentially the mission as Roy’s family knew it, and even as the ruin Roy himself knew, is no more. Roy sums this up simply in the titles of two 2004 paintings, in which he also refers to the mission which succeeded Warangesda – Where has it all gone my two missions and These two are history today.

In his representation of Warangesda, Roy draws not only on his own memory but also reaches back into the memory of his grandfather David Kennedy and his mother Jessie, to show the mission as it used to exist. The element of orally transported memory which Roy incorporates into his art enables him to tell his story using dual dimensions. This can be seen in the composite Woddi will be forever 1999 in which the Police Paddock and Warangesda are shown together, transcending the boundaries of time and described by Roy as

the place of my mother’s birth, Warangesda and also my birth [the Police Paddock]. This is the mission I was brought up on. This shows my memories of childhood days. Warangesda up top and the Police Paddock down the bottom.

The impact of the closure of Warangesda is shown starkly by Roy in his accompanying comments to Warangesda Mission in the days gone by 2002, which capture the desolation of his family’s community.

Warangesda before shut down. Many people who was brought up on this mission didn’t know what to do when this mission was closed down. Everyone was lost.

Although in Warangesda’s last years numbers had been steadily reduced by the removal of children and by expulsions, a core of people still remained in 1924, including some who had lived there for all or most of their lives. Following their forced dispersal from Warangesda, people moved to places like Narrandera, Hillston, Cowra and Yass, while others made their home on the

6 Woddi will be forever 1999
Partial view of the school house
Warangesda 2007
Photograph
Roy Kennedy

The building was later used as a shearing shed.
police paddock on the north side of the river which became known as the Police Paddock mission. Here, tin shacks and other improvised shelters were set up by individuals and families and later, on the higher ground above the river, a small group of red painted iron huts known as the red huts was erected by the Aborigines Protection Board. By the 1930s, numbers of people were living in the bend of the river below the Police Paddock and near the old wharf, a remnant of the early days when the river was a busy and vital trade route.

Bobbie Peters, an Aboriginal pastor from Cummeragunja Aboriginal Station, joined the Police Paddock community in 1932, encouraged by the Aborigines Inland Mission and Darlington Point became a focal point for Inland Mission conventions. These were held several times a year, when people would gather from surrounding districts and worship in temporary bough shelters. Roy’s recollections reflect the atmosphere generated by these meetings.

The mission was home to lots of Aboriginals from all over New South Wales. A great place for holding conventions, plenty of singalongs. Name it and it happened at the Point.  

The 1936 Easter convention was attended by Roy and his family and described by the AIM missionary W. Arnold Long.

A large bough shelter had been erected and provided with seats of bush timber, while other arrangements had been made for the convenience of visitors. Everything was beautifully fresh and green and many camp fires at night made a picturesque scene by the river bank.

Long’s observation is complemented by Roy’s own comment ‘I used to love the moments when the conventions were approaching. We had good times.”

7 Darlington Point in the late 1930s and early 1950s 1998
9 Roy Kennedy, pencil annotation to photograph ‘Group at Darlington Point’, Treasure in an Earthen Vessel, Mount Isa Printing Service, Qld., [1960]
The Warangesda church 1960

The church was used to store hay until it was destroyed by fire in the 1980s.
Photograph courtesy Noel Williams

The Police Paddock church 1937

Pastor Bobbie Peters stands in front of the church in an illustration in the AIM book which describes his life.

---

I conceived the idea of building a substantial and roomy church. After due consideration and prayer I began felling timber with my blackfellows. We prepared and erected the framework then waited until the way was further opened up. Then I got boards, iron doors, windows &c. from Sydney and then with the aid of a skilled carpenter the Mission Church became an accomplished fact. The opening celebration took place on 22nd of September 1882 and was indeed a red letter day in our history.


The framework was made of bush timber and in its construction a lot of work was involved. The walls were made of bags sewn together by the women and afterwards cemented, and the windows with their peaked tops were made from boxes. A platform and pulpit were erected and seats installed in two rows with an aisle through the centre. Altogether it was a labour of love and one that showed great skill and patience.

Pylons from the old wharf
Murrumbidgee river
Darlington Point 2004
Photograph
Geoff Huston
In 1937, led by a World War One ex-serviceman Charlie Runga, the Police Paddock community worked together to build their own church with improvised materials. Eucalyptus branches were used for the church’s frames and pews and the walls of the church were made from corn bags coated with cement. As a child Roy witnessed the construction of the church - ‘I can remember the men bringing buckets of sand from the river for the cement’ - and was present when it opened in September 1937.  

Roy’s mother, Jessie Kennedy, was born at Warangesda in 1910 and taken from there to the Cootamundra Girls Home in 1917. She returned as an adult to her family, which by then had been displaced to the Police Paddock. This was where Roy spent much of his childhood with his brother Keith, his mother and stepfather Thomas ‘Digger’ Davis. With other Kennedy relatives they lived in what had become a self regulating and cohesive community made up of extended ex-Warangesda families, joined by others who came for seasonal work. Here Roy explains ‘Life was what you made it but when you came on to a mission you had to learn the customs of the elders and abide by their rules.’  

In 2009 none of this remains. The community is dispersed and the overt physical evidence of its existence long gone. The bridge over the river which used to open to let paddle steamers pass was pulled down in 1979 and the wharf is in decay. Gone too are the trees, including the old mulberry tree, which once grew amongst the shelters. The building which housed Cardow’s shop, where residents of the Police Paddock came to exchange coupons for rations, was demolished by its owner Jack Cardow in 1987, and the red huts were removed in the 1950s to the Three Ways reserve at Griffith. Only the old police station, now a museum, is still standing.

It is the two Darlington Point missions - Warangesda and the Police Paddock - the latter home to the resilient community which sprang from the desolation of the Warangesda population - which form the primary focus of Roy Kennedy’s creativity. This is expressed in ink on paper, acrylic on canvas and board and in a limited number of ceramics, but it is etching which has been the predominant medium used by Roy to tell his story.

10 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 24 February 2005
11 Simple life on a mission 2001
Shearing sheds in days gone 1998
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 15 x 9.4 cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
*My mulberry tree at our mission* 1999
Mission Series 2
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 19.8 x 23.2 cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
The subjects

Roy’s subjects are not exclusively centred on Darlington Point and include other locations in Wiradjuri and adjacent country - Booligal, Hanwood, the Three Ways Griffith, Mossgiel and Roy’s seven rivers (the Darling, Wakool, Edward, Goulburn, Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan) - but the themes he returns to most frequently are the Darlington Point missions of his childhood. These are shown either in their entirety, or in part, in specific sections of the mission landscape. Within this landscape, the red huts provided by the Aborigines Protection Board, the mulberry tree, the church and the police station are all prominent keys to the various strands of Roy’s recall of Police Paddock life.

Central to this memory is the old mulberry tree: ‘I really thought there was no other place outside my mission and my mulberry tree.’\textsuperscript{12} The importance of the tree to Roy as a child, and practically to his community, is captured in his comment ‘Everyone on the mission loved this fruit. Our mothers would make mulberry pies. This was the Depression years.’\textsuperscript{13}

The four red huts and their accompanying outhouses form a distinctive grouping in most works. Roy’s reference to the huts, one of which was at one time home to him and his family, is descriptive rather than emotive and emphasises the positives of his community over the negatives of the substandard government housing.

\begin{displayquote}
We never owned homes on the mission, no one did. But it was the best that we had and we settled down the best way we could. The houses were sheets of old tin and very cold. But we knew no better.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{displayquote}

His later reflection on living in the huts ‘From way back as far as I could remember I’ve always wondered when we would have our own home’\textsuperscript{15} gives an insight into his feelings about living in Protection Board accommodation.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] My mission as I liked it 2001
\item[13] My mulberry tree at our mission 1999
\item[14] Settling down to mission life 2001
\item[15] Mission boy dreams 2005
\end{footnotes}
My original mission
c.1999
Mission Series 3
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark
11.0 x 24.4 cm
National Gallery
of Australia, Canberra
Gordon Darling
Australasian Print Fund
2003
My forgotten Darlington Point
mission 1999
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 25.6 x 34.0 cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
Roy also emphasises the positive achievement of his elders when describing the Police Paddock church, despite his later criticism of the Aborigines Inland Mission. Implicit in his description is the fact that the creation of the church was a practical expression of the Police Paddock community spirit.

The mission church on the police paddock was built by Aboriginals from corn bags which were cemented and timber from the bush around them. That’s why I call it original.16

In Police on alert 1999 and in Fading memories 2001 the foreground is dominated by the police station. This can be identified in these and other works by its iron barred windows and the police car which usually waits nearby. Roy’s comments accompanying Police on alert sum up his feelings about the role the police played in the Police Paddock community.

It didn’t take the police much to get to the mission. The least row or fighting among kids, anything at all. It put them on alert.

The bridge spanning the Murrumbidgee is usually present in works which encompass large areas of the Police Paddock and surrounds, and was a distinctive feature in the Darlington Point landscape. Its lift mechanism, no longer in use in Roy’s time, provided a constant reminder of the steamer trade of the river’s past.

The bridge of ours at Darlington Point was very important. The steamer which brought food to the township passed there and the bridge would draw its tracks up and let it through.17

The bridge is prominent in My mulberry tree at our mission 1999 and How soon they forget 2001 but although referred to in the titles of etchings and paintings, it is the principal subject in only one work, the painting Our bridge [by 2006].

16 My original mission 1999
17 Our bridge on the Murrumbidgee 1999
Woddi will be forever 1999
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 22.3 x 30.2 cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
Warangesda mission as it was before 1925 frequently appears above the later Police Paddock settlement. The co-location of places, existing at different points in time, emphasises the continuity between the people and the stories belonging to each mission. Warangesda also features on its own, in a step further into the past, as in Warangesda Mission where my mother was born 2002 and Warangesda in the days gone by 2002. The composite image of Warangesda with its dormitory, school, church and dwellings, comprises a single icon from the immediate past of Roy’s forbears - the mission presence he grew up with - but one outside his own immediate experience. This is represented graphically in Warangesda, a 2008 painting of both missions, in which the Warangesda structures appear against a grey background, contrasting with the warm brown of the Police Paddock below.

Like Warangesda, the river steamers of Movement on the Murrumbidgee river 2003 and the coach of Mossgiel weigh station 2001 predate Roy’s own memory. While Movement on the Murrumbidgee river displays both Roy’s missions, Mossgiel weigh station represents a departure from the mission theme as well as another excursion into the stories and memories of Roy’s elders. The role played by his grandfather David Kennedy in forming Roy’s memories is acknowledged by him in Stories of years gone 1998, when he states ‘My grandfather used to tell my brother and me some great stories and about all the things which happened on the mission’ and again in My memories remain with me 1998.

My grandfather would sit and tell me and my brother about things which he had to do to be a man among the elders and so on. But he moved us on until another day and [would] keep telling a little every time we would sneak down to the hollow log he was living in.

The hollow log, located behind the red huts in Mission boy dreams 2005 and Where has it all gone my missions 2004, draws David Kennedy into the narrative of these two works.

The Murrumbidgee river is significant to the structure of all Roy Kennedy’s art. Its flexible form divides spaces, delineates elements of the works and contributes to an appreciation of them seen purely as arrangements of objects, shapes and spaces which engage the eye. The function of the ribbon-like river is replicated by the similar form of roadways and fences in works like Shearing sheds in days gone 1998, Woddi will be forever 1999, Aboriginal reserve Threeways Griffith 2001 and I’m never alone 2005. These also segment and divide and like the river, assist in creating satisfying structures and patterns which transcend the purely representational.
In contrast to his icons, Roy rarely directly names the river in his artist statements or the titles of his work (exceptions being Both sides of the Murrumbidgee 1999 and Movement on the Murrumbidgee river 2003). More oblique references are in My seven rivers 1998 and Woddi will be forever 1999, the latter relating to Waddai creek which gives its name to the south side of the Murrumbidgee, opposite Darlington Point. The reason for the small number of references may be the fact that the river is still there and a continuing presence in Roy’s life - unlike the community life and the physical structures which he has sought to describe.

**Content and arrangement**

In all Roy’s work it is the man-made structures which dominate - the exceptions being the mulberry tree, and the river which separates and defines the two missions. Amongst these there can be multiple indications of life and activity which enliven and embellish the landscape - boats with oars, carts, bicycles and cars, outdoor cooking fires, clothes lines, the water tank, horses and small animals, a child on a swing, a family group or a solitary adult or child. In some works the football field is shown (marked out by Roy’s uncle Roy James Kennedy). In others the market garden, figures working in the old saw mill and Cardow’s shop complete with petrol pump are depicted below the Police Paddock. All these not only fill the background but give a sense of vigour and vitality to the works, by describing or implying the day to day activities of life on and around the Police Paddock. Etchings such as This lifestyle has gone 1999, How soon they forget 2001, Stages in my early childhood 2002, Mission boy dreams 2005 and the paintings My mission in Darlington Point 2006 and Mission Series 2 2009, all fall into this category.

In earlier works the myriad details of human activity which so often invigorate Roy’s art are largely absent. This allows main features to predominate - buildings, river, trees - all of which form strong patterns from which the life and sense of movement of the works derive. This strength is particularly evident in the etchings My forgotten Darlington Point mission 1999 and Pepper tree avenue 1999. In other etchings a darkened or filled in background, enveloping the mission buildings, serves to emphasise the main structures as carefully arranged and balanced elements, notable in the representation of the church and red huts in the 1998/1999 Mission Series.

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18 Val Weldon, personal comment, 25 February 2005
Pepper tree avenue 1999
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 23.2 x 28.6 cm
Courtesy Roy Kennedy
Roy usually paints in acrylic on canvas or board and in a few instances he has inventively used the canvas from the sides of a baby’s cot. An overall tendency towards a more detailed approach in his painting is assisted by the use of a fine brush to delineate features, apparent in *My mission in Darlington Point* 2006, and in *Mission Series 2* 2009 - in which the names of key structures appear in the work itself. While most of Roy’s paintings date from 2004, two early experimental paintings, *Water under the Bridge* 1 and 2 1998, in their emphasis on strong patterns, show parallels with the 1999 etchings *My forgotten Darlington Point mission* and *Pepper tree avenue*. However it is in paintings dating from 2004 that the use of paint, with its range of colours and brush application, conspicuously adds a new element to the way form and detail are handled. In these, rather than the strong pattern like effect characteristic of etchings with sparse detail, it is colour which is used to break up the surface. The consistent selection of specific colours - blue for the churches and river, red for the iron huts and light to emerald green for trees and vegetation - generates its own vitality and lends an almost jewelled effect to paintings like *Mission series of both missions at Darlington Point* 2004. In other paintings a startling orange red - evident in *Police Paddock mission way back in the 40s* [by 2006] - or a more subdued earth brown, evoke the dry, sunburnt country. The artist’s choice of colours conveys the effect of the seasonal extremes, including the floods, drought and the unrelenting summer heat, which were part of the experience of mission life. This, together with Roy’s increasing use of fine brush work to record details, makes later paintings a rich source of information about his subjects.

Ink on paper drawings dated 2004 or earlier, when coloured, replicate the colour code of the paintings, although the pigments are generally more subdued. Their subject matter, in addition to the Darlington Point missions, includes the rural scenes of *Working mans work shed* and *Stolen moments 1-4*, whose rough buildings, set at an angle, display parallels with the structures in the etchings *My original mission* 1999 and *Mossiel weigh station* 2001. While these drawings of buildings, in association with human figures and lively domestic and native animals, comprise only a small part of Roy’s work, they demonstrate his ability to sketch convincingly and creatively from nature. Other drawings like *Darlington Point mission back in the 1940s* 2004 and *My mission at Darlington Point* 2004, although lacking the minutiæ of mission life, show basic features placed with the artist’s usual confidence within their landscape.

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19 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 23 September 2009
Settling down to mission life
2001
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 16.2 h x 19.0 w cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
When painting on ceramics, Roy uses the shape of bowls and platters to give his subjects a new orientation. The river and fence lines follow their curves and edges and in doing so create a sense of life and movement which contrasts with the flattened river country of the Darlington Point area. The influence of the three dimensional surface of these ceramics is shown clearly in the way Roy has utilised the recessed centres of square and round platters. These frame and give prominence to the church, which is literally fenced on all sides, while the mission buildings line the periphery. In one, _Untitled [round platter]_ 2001, the buildings of Warangesda and the Police Paddock, including their churches, occupy the outer edges, while a third church fills the platter’s centre. This illustrates both the artist’s adaptation of the shape of the platter for the purposes of composition and the importance of his subjects seen purely as icons rather than as realistically placed elements.


**Presentation**

A major difference between the presentation of subjects in ceramics, painting, drawing and etching is obvious from the position they occupy in these works and it is important to take this into account when reconciling the images in each medium. The images Roy creates as etchings, when printed are seen in reverse, whereas the painting and drawing process, on whatever surface, translates the artist’s view unchanged. This technical difference means that the ceramics, drawings and paintings of Roy’s missions complement the etchings as mirror images.
[Police Paddock] 2004 and Police Paddock mission way back in the 40s [by 2006]
Photograph Matt Poll

Comparison of these paintings, displayed at Boomalli Art Gallery, shows the artist recording the effect of climate on the landscape, and in one, an unusual angled view of the Police Paddock.
Roy has often said that when he works he feels he is back in the Darlington Point of his childhood and that his art brings this to life for his own personal pleasure.\(^{20}\) In doing so he is also intentionally making his experience available to others. Like the 19th century south eastern Australian Aboriginal artists Barak (c1824-1903) and Tommy McRae (1842-1901), Roy looks back to recreate a time now past for a modern and largely uninformed audience. All three men began to create works in the latter part of their lives, and unlike traditional artists, Barak and McRae directed their art to an audience of outsiders. It is possible, because of the diminishing presence of ceremonial activity, the primary subject matter of both these artists, that they also hoped their paintings and sketches would have the capacity to inform later generations of Aboriginal people - people like those Roy Kennedy more than a century later lambasts in the emotive and revealing title of one of his major works, *How soon they forget*. This innately censorious title for a work, emphasises the fact that Roy, as well as directing his art to a broader audience, is specifically seeking to reach the urbanised descendants of the people he grew up with, including his own family.\(^{21}\) *How soon they forget* 2001 and works like *Fading memories* 2001, *This lifestyle has gone* 1999 and *My forgotten Darlington Point mission* 1999, in word and image, together illustrate the didactic nature of the artist’s efforts to revisit and record the scenes and circumstance of his early life.

The titles of works by Roy Kennedy’s 19th century counterparts Barak and McRae, are not those composed or written down by the artists themselves. Instead, the descriptions associated with their art have been imposed by white commentators, although in McRae’s case, Andrew Sayers has suggested there is evidence of some input by the creator of the works. He points in particular to the repetition of the words ‘in olden times’ and ‘in old time’ which he sees as having been specifically communicated by McRae.\(^{22}\) Use of these phrases reinforces parallels with Roy Kennedy, whose naming themes repeat phrases like ‘in years gone by’, ‘yester year’ and ‘days gone by’ and contain frequent allusions to memory.

\(^{20}\) For instance in his Artist Talk, NAIDOC Week, National Gallery of Australia, July 2003.

\(^{21}\) Roy’s descendants, like those of other living former members of the Police Paddock mission, are now into their third generation.

\(^{22}\) *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994 p.32.
Police Paddock mission
way back in the 40s
[by 2006]
acrylic on canvas
61 x 61 cm
Courtesy Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi
Unlike the art of Barak and McRae, Roy Kennedy’s art is unquestionably enriched by his own chosen titles and statements which form an integral part of each work. Roy names and describes his works with care and stresses that ‘There is a story with each one.’ The associated artist statement completes each piece and is the key to understanding what the artist seeks to convey. It is in this union of text and image that the art becomes history and story.

Barak and McRae’s art was not confined to depictions of ceremonial activity, just as Roy Kennedy’s is not confined to his two missions. However the fact that ceremony and traditional life constitute a major part of their subject matter, combined with the relatively uniform way this is presented, further reinforces links between the three artists. Common to Barak and McRae is the presentation of lines of figures which recur again and again and are described by titles like *Ceremony, Figures carrying spears, Figures in possum skin cloaks* (Barak) and *Ceremony, Scenes of aboriginal life, Dancers with weapons and Lachlan war dance* (McRae). While the two artists responded at times to the requests of Europeans, these patrons and purchasers were seeking Aboriginal subjects and it is reasonable to assume that the ones chosen by Barak and McRae had meaning and were of importance to them. Their repetition of subjects is directly comparable with the representations of his Darlington Point missions which form the basis of Roy Kennedy’s art. It is the repeated depiction of places and events from ‘olden times’ and ‘years gone by’ as a means of transmitting and reinforcing information which is the common factor which unites the three artists.

Roy Kennedy’s works have yet another dimension which relates to their status as both immediate self expression and recorded memory. As detailed renditions of place as it was decades ago, they stand also as annotated map. Many of Roy’s works are presented as a semi-aerial view in which conventional perspective and spatial relationships are distorted but which in their composition create a cartographic effect, in turn a way of displaying the many elements of their story. This map analogy is indicative rather than specific. The arrangement of the dominant and repeated features in each work, like the church, mulberry tree and red huts, is not always consistent - sometimes altered for reasons of composition or because consistency is not as important as the actual presence of these features in their landscape. What is important is their role as both icons and touchstones to the past as Roy knew it. This is acknowledged by Roy and the status of his art and statements as narrative, when he says ‘The way I set this story out it brings everything into focus, the church, the mulberry tree, the police station and the mission houses.’

23 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 23 November 2001
24 *Stages in my early childhood* 2003
The past Roy Kennedy portrays is more complex than a romantic recall of early life which titles like *My happy little mission* 1999, *A simple life on a mission* 2001 and *My mission as I liked it* 2001 suggest. Despite the apparent implication of these titles Roy’s art is not an exercise in nostalgic reflection. His affection for the world of his childhood is qualified by a latter day realisation of the extent of the negative role of the Aborigines Protection Board in his and his people’s lives and by what Roy refers to as the ‘brain washing’ of the Aborigines Inland Mission. Roy pinpoints this in his statement accompanying *My happy little mission* 1999 - ‘We loved our way of life because we didn’t know any better with the Aboriginal Protection Board ruling our lives’ - and again in his comments on *My forgotten Darlington Point mission*, also 1999.

My mother’s mission … was called Warangesda, she was born [there] in 1910 and lived under the thumb of the Aboriginal Protection Board who ruled over them.

Roy’s words are reinforced by their unstated subtext - the fact that that his family was powerless to stop the removal of his mother, Jessie, by the Aboriginal Protection Board. His awareness of the arbitrary nature of the Board’s actions and their effect on his people was restated in 2002 in *Warangesda Mission in the days gone by*, when drawing on his family’s experience, he lamented that people ‘didn’t know what to do when this mission was closed down. Everyone was lost.’

In contrast to *My happy little mission*, both title and statement accompanying *Out of sight out of mind* 2007 come exclusively from an adult perspective, untempered by the emotion of childhood.

Out of sight out of mind. This is what the Aboriginal Protection Board wanted. They moved missions and reserves two and a half to three miles out of towns - this was to satisfy the white people.

The ever present theme of informed retrospection underpinning Roy’s work as art and history was summed up by him as early as 2001 in *Fading Memories*.

So many years have gone and trying to remember everything that happened is very hard. Specially the way we were treated by the Aboriginal Protection Board.

25 For instance artist statement *Plate with mission inside* 2001
Untitled 2004
[Warangesda]
ink on paper
25.3 x 20.2 cm
Collection of Julie Cracknell and Peter Lonergan
In the same year, in a deceptively simple statement made at the November 2001 Eora Student Exhibition, he took this one stage further when he placed his art in the broader context of life after the Police Paddock.

All my art works are mainly about my upbringing on missions. All mostly different stages of my life which I went through in my life when I was young. All the things that happened since have happened in the white man’s world. Drugs, grog you name it, the white man brought it. So [I am] going back to things which I knew in the simple world of the black people [which] have gone. So this leaves me in the white man’s concrete jungle.

His statement of the experiences of childhood recalled from the more complicated world of adulthood, and of country life versus city living, gets its bite from its context - that of black/white relations and Aboriginal experience. Roy’s appreciation of the world of his childhood is an endorsement, not of the mission life Aboriginal people were forced to live under the Aborigines Protection Board, but of the resilience in these circumstances of his family and community. Although he contrasts this with life after the abolition of the government regulations ‘ruling our lives’ he sees the following years as a time when Aboriginal lives and potential have remained circumscribed by the influence of white man’s drink and drugs and more - ‘you name it the white man brought it.’ Roy is under no illusions about the ‘simple world of the black people’ of his childhood, of which he says

I lived it. I’ve been through it. I done it. We starved - 7/6d in rations that was nothing. We used to hunt for our food. How soon they forget it all.

The Darlington Point missions Roy describes in etching, paint, ink and ceramics represent just one stage in the history of Aboriginal people. Dispossessed more often than not with violence, marginalised, regulated and kept out of mainstream Australian society by government act and community prejudice – all this forms the background to the susceptibility to the opiates of alcohol and later drugs Roy denounces in his Eora statement. For Roy, the paradox of looking back is that the mission, a product of dispossession and instrument of control, was at the same time the heart of the rich community life which he enjoyed in his childhood.

26 Artist statements My happy little mission 1999, Bowl with my two missions 2001 and This lifestyle has gone 2001
27 Roy Kennedy, personal comment, 2006
Working man's workshop 2004
ink on paper
12 x 29.5 cm
Collection of Philippa Scarlett
Mossiel weigh station
2001
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 12.0 x 20.0 cm
Collection of
Philippa Scarlett
Aboriginal art in south eastern Australia, although not linked to traditional life in the same way as that of artists from central and northern Australia, is connected to this art by a commonality of purpose and theme. Both art forms are the art of place and central to each is their capacity to tell a story. Central and northern Australian artists tell stories often thousands of years old, pertinent to their lives and culture and the world they inhabit. Roy Kennedy, like other south eastern Australian artists bearing the burden of a more protracted period of colonisation, also documents the place he knows - his home, the mission and the mission story - one which by definition is distinctive to post invasion Aboriginal life. By depicting Darlington Point and the surrounding country, Roy is mapping ‘the geography of [his] dreaming country’ in the same way as western desert artists like Kathleen Peytarre and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri have mapped theirs. Roy does this in etching, painting and drawing and, in common with Aranda women from Hermannsburg, who paint their country on pots, uses the surface of bowls and platters as an additional means of translating his Darlington Point missions.

The dichotomy in Roy Kennedy’s art lies in the fact that the mission places he describes, with their inherent negatives, are important to him and his contemporaries because of the sense of identity they created. The contradiction this embodies is one which has been fundamental to his creative process. It is this which in words and images Roy is impelled to record and communicate to the generations following him, people who in a relatively short space of time have been propelled into a world far removed from his mission childhood. In doing so he laments not the demise of the mission itself, but the dissolution of its community life. Roy often refers to the New South Wales 1940 Act which replaced the Aborigines Protection Board by the Aborigines Welfare Board. The irony of this act which did allow a degree more freedom to Aboriginal people - in the interests of the new policy of assimilation - is that it marked a stage in the destruction of his Police Paddock community.

Roy’s art relates both to a physical place and a place in his memory. Based as it is on strong, emotional recollection but subject to intentional distortion to give prominence to icons, his art exists in a world somewhere between landscape and mindscape. Above all it relates most strongly to the identity provided by place - specifically by the mission environment - an identity not provided in ‘the white man’s concrete jungle’ of the 20th and 21st centuries.

28 Elizabeth Grosz quoted in Rosemary Sorenson ‘Deleuzian or not it’s all sensation’, The Australian, January 27, 2000, p.12.
29 Examples of these pots and details of their creators can be found on their website <http://www.hermannsburgpotters.com.au/pots.htm>
Bowl with my two missions
2001
15.5 h x 19 d cm
Collection of
Philippa Scarlett

This view shows three of the red huts and the church. A fence rings the base and the river straddles the bowl’s surface.
**Contemporary comparisons**

Roy Kennedy is not alone in looking back to his life at his mission at Darlington Point Police Paddock. Other artists from New South Wales whose work draws on their life on missions are Elaine Russell (Murrin Bridge, Lachlan river), H. J. Wedge (Erambie, Cowra, Lachlan river), Jim Stanley (Moree), Milton Budge (Burnt Bridge, Kempsey) and Elizabeth Homer (Brungle). Of these, Elaine Russell’s depictions of the river, mission houses and the familiar Aborigines Inland Mission church, seem most comparable with those of Roy Kennedy. Born at Tingha in 1941, she paints life in the 1950s at Murrin Bridge near Lake Cargelligo. While her carefully ordered scenes imply the control exercised by government over Aboriginal lives, including child removal, in their very order they also summon up the simplicity and certainty of childhood. The artist’s achievement is to use the same quality to impart diverse messages and in this way embed powerful tensions into her work. Despite their marked differences in presentation, Elaine Russell and Roy Kennedy tell a similar story – of childhood and oppression and also identity.

As an inner city artist with country roots, Roy uses his art to record and comment on the effect of dispossession and control on him, his forbears and family and his wider community. Although Roy’s art appears non-confrontational in its subject matter, the nature of his commentary places his art squarely within the territory of more overtly political and outspoken urban Aboriginal artists like Adam Hill and Gordon Syron.

**Art transformed**

The emergence of Roy Kennedy’s art in new form as mural and mosaic has shown how readily translatable his images are to other mediums. While these works have a decorative function, the translation encompasses not only the physical image but the story implicit in each work. The process of re-forming the images from etchings has resulted in some change, most obvious the addition of colour and the fact that the view, reversed in the etching process, is restored to its actual perspective.
*Untitled* [round platter]
2001
40 d cm
Collection of
Julie Cracknell and
Peter Lonergan

In addition to the two mission churches, a third church is given prominence in the recessed centre of the platter.
Mission boy dreams 2005
Wyang Aboriginal Aged Care facility Redfern
Photograph Cracknell & Lonergan

The transferred etching is accompanied by its story (far right) in a second incarnation as mural and public art.
This etching has taken new form in 2009 as a mosaic on a court yard floor. Sections shown here are the Murrumbidgee, the police station, the church and football field, the red huts with washing and outdoor fires, the mulberry tree and bridge and the Aboriginal flag below the bridge, in the waters of the Murrumbidgee. The photographer's feet where visible give perspective and indicate scale.
An exterior wall of Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care facility in Redfern is the location of a recreation of *Mission boy dreams* 2005. This work was selected by workers from the facility from options which were suggested by Cracknell & Lonergan, the architects for the refurbishment of the building. The reproduction (painted by Danny Strachan) has been transferred as etched on the plate but while the background remains white, the black ink used in printing the etching has been replaced by red paint. The fact that this etching is on the wall of an aged care facility, whose members include people with memories of the Police Paddock, and is also on public display for all ages to see and question, seems particularly relevant to the intention of Roy Kennedy’s art. The artist statement - ‘From as far back as I can remember, I’ve always wondered when we would have our own home and 70 years on I’m still wondering’ - is placed at the right hand extremity of the mural. This links the past with an ongoing present, connecting with broader issues still unresolved for Aboriginal people.

A second etching, *Movement on the Murrumbidgee river* 2003, has been reinterpreted in 2009 as a mosaic commissioned by Gavin Jones and created by Sophie Verrecchia. The mosaic on the floor of the entrance courtyard of a private dwelling measures 1.2 by 7.5 m (compared with the etching’s plate-mark of 19.2 by 45.2 cm). The translation process has necessitated a degree of readjustment and repositioning of some of the features of the original etching, in consultation with the artist. Location on the ground means that the work is now viewed from above. While *Movement on the Murrumbidgee river* is primarily, indisputably Roy Kennedy’s, because the translation process has included the addition of new elements, the mosaic emerges as a creation in its own right. The interpolation (with the artist’s permission) of the Aboriginal flag, floating below the bridge, adds the pre-eminent icon of Aboriginal Australia to Roy Kennedy’s own icons and in doing so invokes the spirit of the stories which accompany his work.

**New directions - old themes?**

The 2005 etching, *The crucifixion*, which shows three crosses dominating a small group of agitated, gesticulating onlookers, seems to be a radical departure from the mission themes and icons which figure so consistently in Roy’s work. The departure is in subject matter and place only and not from Roy’s underlying narrative. The artist’s statement ‘They crucified him like they crucified us’ places this work firmly within the parameters of the statements which inform Roy Kennedy’s art - and is a continuation of the theme of dispossession and domination implicit in the existence of missions themselves. Perhaps not coincidentally, the artist has separated, possibly segregated, the group from the crosses by a brick wall. This wall itself links *The crucifixion* to Roy’s other work by replicating the dividing role played by the Murrumbidgee river.
The corollary of *The crucifixion*'s dark statement is the seemingly contradictory *I’m never alone*, also 2005 (an etching of the Police Paddock) about which Roy comments

> I’m never alone. Why do you say this you might ask? Well all my lovely memories of my mission are always there. Some are sad times and some are good memories. I love them all.

These words from the heart are not irreconcilable with *The crucifixion*, but stand in coexistence beside it. Both works relate directly to the complementary themes of Roy’s art. The first of these is his own critical examination of the past to see it for what it was, to confront the life his people were forced to lead and to show this against the background of the solidity and strength of the mission community which nurtured and embraced him as a child – a life he feels he has now lost in his transition to city living.

The second theme is the artist’s imperative to transmit this knowledge and to use his art to inform the wider community of the life he and others led. In doing so he also specifically seeks to reach later generations of his own people whose collective memory no longer holds details of the life he so clearly recalls. As Roy says, ‘How soon they forget.’ It is these two elements which together encapsulate the art of Roy Kennedy.
I'm never alone 2005
etching
printed in black ink
from one plate
plate-mark 25.0 x33.0 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gordon Darling
Australasian Print Fund 2003
Works by Roy Kennedy

Etchings

Darlington Point in the late 30s and 40s / Darlington Point in the 1930s and 1950s / Darlington Point in the late 1930s and early 1950s 1998

Mission Series Number 5 plate-mark 17.8 h x 28.2 w cm [The Mission Series are not numbered in order of creation]

My mission church Darlington Point c1998*
My mission in depression years 1998 plate-mark 18 h x 28 w cm
My memories remain with me 1998 plate-mark 18.5 h x 14 w cm
My seven rivers 1998 plate-mark 10.25 h x 23 w cm
Shearing shed in days gone 1998 plate-mark 15 h x 9.4 w cm
Stories of years gone by 1998 plate-mark 9.0 h x 14.8 w cm
Both sides of the Murrumbidgee 1999 plate-mark 17 h x 20 w cm
My forgotten Darlington Point mission / The forgotten missions at Darlington point and its two missions in years gone by / The forgotten
Darlington Point and its 2 missions in years gone by 1999 plate-mark 25.6 h x 34.0 w cm
Days of harmony on my mission in days gone 1999 plate-mark 22.4 h x 40.2 w cm
My original mission c1999 Mission Series Number 3 plate-mark 11.0 h x 24.4 w cm
My happy little mission 1999 plate-mark 11.4 h x 24.0 w cm
My mulberry tree at our mission / Our mulberry tree on our mission grounds 1999 Mission Series Number 2 plate-mark 19.8 h x 23.2 w cm
Our bridge on the Murrumbidgee 1999 Mission Series Number 1 plate-mark 14.0 h x 17.5 w cm
Pepper tree avenue 1999 plate-mark 23.2 h x 28.6 w cm
Police on alert 1999 plate-mark 18 h x 9.5 w cm
This lifestyle has gone / Life style gone 1999 plate-mark 12.8 h x 33.6 w cm
Untitled 1999 Mission Series Number 4 *
Woddi will be forever / Woddi creek will never be forgotten 1999 plate-mark 22.3 h x 30.2 w cm
Fading dreams [by2001] plate-mark 9 h x 7w cm
My church on the mission / My church on my mission [by 2001] plate-mark 14 h x 10 w
My two missions Darlington Point [by 2001] plate-mark? 25.5 h x 12 w cm
A simple life on a mission 2001 plate-mark 11.2 h x 13.0 w cm
Fading memories 2001 plate-mark 10.3 h x 17.4 w cm
How soon they forget 2001 plate-mark 49.2 h x 59.6 w cm
Memories of the good days of my childhood 2001 *
Mossgiel weigh station / Mossgiel weigh station 1910 to the late 1920s 2001 plate-mark 12.0 h x 20.0 w cm
My mission as I liked it 2001 plate-mark 5.8 h x 37.2 w cm
Settling down to mission life 2001 plate-mark 16.2 h x 19.0 w cm
Aboriginal reserve Three ways Griffith / Changing of the Three ways in days gone by 2001 plate-mark 12.4 h x 22.8 w cm
Young and old culture on our mission 2001 plate-mark 28.0 h x 41.0 w cm
Warangesda Mission in the days gone by 2001 plate-mark 10.0 h x 32.0 w cm
Stages in my early childhood / Stages of growing up on our mission 2002 plate-mark 13.4 h x 17.8 w cm
Warangesda Mission where my mother was born 2002 plate-mark 49.2 h x 59.6 w cm
Movement on the Murrumbidgee river / Movements on the Murrumbidgee river 2003 plate-mark 19.2 h x 45.2 w cm
My mission back in 1947-48 [by 2005] *
Stories of yester years [by 2005] 13 h x 16 w cm
Booligal weigh station on the Lachlan 2005 plate-mark 8.2 h x 27.8 w cm
Days of glory on our mission 2005 plate-mark 19.2 h x 29.2 w cm
I’m never alone 2005 plate-mark 25.0 h x 33.0 w cm
Mission boy dreams 2005 plate-mark 21.8 h x 49.4 w cm
The crucifixion 2005 plate-mark 10.4 h x 17.2 w cm

Ink on paper

Darlington Point Mission back in the 1940s 2004 29 h x 21 w cm
My mission at Darlington Point 2004 30 h x 21 w cm
Our two missions at Darlington Point 2004 30 h x 21 w cm
Stages of my growing up on my mission 2004 21 h x 15 h cm
Stolen Moments [1] 2004 29 h x 21 w cm
Stolen Moments [2] 2004 29 h x 21 w cm
Stolen Moments [3] 2004 21 h x 15 w cm
Stolen Moments [4] 2004 29 h x 20.5 w cm
This is my mission called Police Paddock 2004 30 h x 21 w cm
Warangesda mission back before closing down 2004 29 h x 21 w cm
Working mans work shed 2004 12 h x 29.5 w cm
Untitled 2004 [Warangesda] 25. 3 h x 20. 2 w cm
Untitled 2004 [Warangesda and Police Paddock] 41 h x 28 w cm
Stages of growing up [by 2008] 22 h x 27 w cm
Paintings - acrylic on board and canvas

Boarding house 1997
Menageree 1998 *
My mission with me reminiscing c1998 *
Water under the bridge 1 1998 66 h x 102 w cm (on canvas cot stretcher)
Water under the bridge 2 1998 59 h x 91 w cm (on canvas cot stretcher)
Fruit orchard [by 2001] *
Pepper tree avenue 2001 *
[Police Paddock] 2004 *
Capturing moments of bliss on our mission 2004 40 h x 28 w cm
Good days on my mission 2004 30 h x 30 w cm
Mission series of both missions at Darlington Point 2004 41 h x 24 w cm
My moments of thinking on my mission 2004 38 w x 25 h cm
My mission in better days 2004 40 h x 35 w cm
Our two missions at Darlington Point 2004 *
Where has it all gone my missions 2004 60 h x 44 w cm
These two are history today 2004 38 h x 23 w cm
Where has it all gone my missions 2004 60 h x 44 w cm
Untitled [by 2006] 50.5 h x 100.5 w cm [Police Paddock, river and bridge, predominant colour green. Artist's name and Ultimo Eora Campus appear on reverse.]
Our bridge [by 2006] 12 h x 18 w cm
Police Paddock [by 2006] 12 h x 18 w cm
Police Paddock mission way back in the 40s [by 2006] 61 h x 61 w cm
Police Paddock mission [by 2006] 61 h x 61 w cm
My mission in Darlington Point 2006 25 x 45 cm
Out of sight out of mind 2007 53 h x 69 w cm
In days gone by [by 2008] 65 h x 51 w cm
Warangesda mission (camp of mercy) 2008 146 h x 110 w cm
Mission Series 2 2009 118.8 h x 145.7 w cm
Where has this lifestyle gone 2009 40 h x 52 w cm
Ceramics

Bowl of Darlington Point 2001 *
Bowl with my two missions / Bowl with both missions 2001 15.5 h x 19 d cm
Plate with mission inside [square platter] 2001 [Warangesda (left) Police Paddock with animals and car (right) church (blue) centre] 24 x 24 cm
Untitled [square platter] 2001 [rounded corners Warangesda (left) Police Paddock (right) church (white and brown) centre] 24 x 24 cm
Untitled [square platter] 2001 [rounded corners Police Paddock (left) Warangesda (right) mission church (blue) centre] 24 x 24 cm
Australia map [platter] 2001*
Untitled [round platter] 2001 [Police Paddock and Warangesda both with church and a third church (blue) centre] 40 diameter cm

*Details not available.

NOTE
This list was compiled in 2009 from available sources but may not be complete. There can be slight variation in the titles and this is recorded where identified. The artist has been consulted to resolve some issues about dates.
Artist statements

The stories which Roy Kennedy adds to his work are essential to an understanding of what he is seeking to communicate. Stories for works reproduced here are in most cases quoted in the text. However it has not been possible to locate artist statements for all these works, particularly the stories which accompany paintings and drawings. Stories for works used as illustrations but not quoted are listed below as well as artist statements referred to in footnotes. Alternative artist statements to those referred to in the text are also listed. Sources for artist statements are named in the Bibliography.

Mission series 1-5 1998/1999
This series represents my upbringing on the Darlington Point mission, near Griffith, in the late 1930s and 1940s, and the hardships that I suffered under the Aboriginal Protection Board.

Pepper Tree Avenue 1999
From the gateway at Warangesda mission house there was these lines of pepper trees which was pretty in days gone by.
(alternative statement)
Pepper Tree Avenue was on Warangesda Mission where my mother was born in 1910. This mission was closed in 1925 so all my people were scattered everywhere. Eventually they moved onto the Police Paddock Mission and all the elders were classed as fringe dwellers.

Police on alert 1999
(alternative statement)
The police were always alert on the mission. They watched everything, what the Aboriginals did or where they went wrong.

Woddi will be forever 1999
(alternative statement)
I’ll never forget Woddi. The mud hut was built around the creek. There were about five or six families living in and around there in the early thirties. From there we were moved onto the Police Paddock mission where I lived until the late forties.

Aboriginal reserve Threeways Griffith 2001
Before the Threeways was formed Aboriginals lived everywhere around Griffith, Front area, The Pines, Wilbriggie, Wickem Hill, the rice mills, the sale yards, Hanwood, Helems corner, the Willows, Scenic
Hill. Then in 1958 they were granted Threeways as a reserve to build houses on in the early 60s. From then onwards they have been living the same.

*Mossgiel Weigh Station* 2001
Mossgiel Weigh Station was between Hillston and Ivanhoe, Hay and Balranald where they say a coach ran. Upward of 2000 Aboriginals lived in this area because there was heaps of wild food to be hunted around there.

*Bowl with my two missions* 2001
Every bit of work of mine are mainly about my upbringing on the mission where we spent most of our young life until the Aboriginal Protection Board was abolished in 1941 and we had freedom.

*Plate with mission inside* [square platter] 2001
This plate tells a story of a little boy on his mission with his mulberry tree and the church and its preachers that brain washed us all.

*This life style has gone* 2001
In the late 40s after the Aboriginal Protection Board was abolished in 1941 Aboriginals just went in different directions when freedom of movement came to them.
(Alternative statement)
Aboriginal people along the way have moved along with the time. Today they wouldn’t know how to hunt along with cooking wild food.

*Settling down to mission life* 2001
(Alternative statement)
When settling down to mission life you had to be certified by the Aboriginals on the mission but everyone did get on well on a mission.

*Movement on the Murrumbidgee river* 2003
All these things went on before my time specially when the steamers were the transport in those days and my story goes with the movements of all those good old days
(Alternative statement)
This is about the steamers carrying cargo up and down the Murrumbidgee river in the days of river transport. My mission includes the township of Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee river.
Where to see works by Roy Kennedy

In addition to the limited number of works reproduced here, original and published works can be located for viewing in galleries, publications and websites.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Australia are major galleries whose collections include etchings by Roy Kennedy.

Details of publications and websites which contain works by Roy Kennedy are listed in the Bibliography. These include the website of the National Gallery of Australia which displays digital copies of twenty eight etchings in the Gallery’s collection, covering the period 1998 to 2005.

Other images may be seen (in 2009) on the Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi and Alcaston Gallery websites and Boomali Flickr which show a selection of paintings, etchings and ink on paper drawings.

The TAFE NSW Arts and Design Prize website displays the five etchings which make up the Mission Series 1998/1999, as well as Darlington Point and its two missions in years gone by / My forgotten Darlington Point mission 1999 and Movement on the Murrumbidgee river 2003.

Eighteen paintings and ink on paper drawings exhibited by Neil Murphy at the Shapiro Galleries, Woollahra in 2004 can be seen (in 2009) on the Neil Murphy Indigenous Art website.

Mission Series 2 2009
acrylic on board
118.8 x 145.7 cm
Photograph
Peter Lonergan

The winning entry in the Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize.

Named in this richly detailed painting include Cardow’s shop (blue building lower right) and the mud hut (below the Warangesda church far right)
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* Includes artist statements
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