

# Richard Crichton

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## Chronology

### Richard Crichton: Born 1935

Early childhood and school years spent at Sassafra, Victoria. Father abandoned family. Family moved to East Brighton around 1944. Mother died in 1946 when Richard was 11. She was a musician (classical pianist) and painted as a hobby. Richard loved painting and drawing and so inherited her paint box through his maternal grandfather, who acknowledged Richard's early art ability. Richard went to school at Hughesdale and then Oakleigh Technical school. He painted at home (living with his grandfather) using leather dyes, wax and house paint. At around 14 years of age he met Arthur Boyd, who was very kind, encouraging his determination to paint and to learn about art materials, giving him a paint grinder and teaching him how to use it.

### 1951-52

Attended Caulfield Technical school to obtain his Certificate of Art.

### 1953-54

Attended Melbourne Technical College. (later RMIT) where he obtained his Diploma of Fine Art. In 1954 his name was drawn from the ballot for National Service Training (Korean War). This he completed in 1955. Fortunately the war ended and he was not called upon to serve overseas. During this training period his grandfather died and the family home was disposed of. Richard moved about, living in various boarding houses.

### 1955-56

Worked as a lithographic artist for the Argus, a Melbourne daily newspaper, painting and drawing in his spare time. He exhibited paintings in the Herald Outdoor Art Show and at the Victorian Artists Society. In 1956 Richard exhibited some paintings at the Peter Bray Gallery in Melbourne where his first sale (to poet, Chris Wallace-Crabbe) took place. He began teaching painting and drawing part-time then eventually full time at RMIT.

### 1957-1961

Married Florence, and lived in a rented house in Carnegie. Arthur Boyd and John Perceval were frequent visitors as they lived nearby in Murrumbena. The Crichtons bought land at Eltham, and built a small house and studio. A daughter was born in 1958. Richard began working on a larger scale and was invited by Clem Meadmore and Max Hutchinson to exhibit with them at their premises - Gallery A, in Flinders Lane, Melbourne. In 1960, Richard's first solo exhibition was held there, receiving good critical attention. A son was born in 1961.

### 1962

Richard met Albert Tucker, who had recently returned from overseas and was living in Eltham. A long and firm friendship was formed, which lasted until Tucker's death in 1999. Tucker introduced him to Sydney Nolan, who became an occasional visitor, both in Eltham and later, New York.

### 1963-1965

Four large solo shows were held, two at Australian Galleries, Melbourne and two at Bonython Galleries in Adelaide. Richard received a commendation award for his work in the 1965 Georges Art Prize, Melbourne.

### 1967-1969

Richard was granted a Harkness Fellowship, which took him to New York for the next two years. He and his family (3 children by then) lived for the first year (67-68) in the Chelsea Hotel, with Brett Whiteley and his family as their immediate neighbours. He shared studio space for some months with painter Kevin Connor, from Sydney. A large body of New York paintings were produced during this 2 year period, some of which was shown in the exhibition 'Young Painters from Around the World', New York in 1969. Richard travelled to England and Europe in late 1969, visiting galleries and museums, before returning to Australia.

### 1970-1976

The early 1970's saw the emergence of the 'Cows' series of paintings and drawings and the beginnings of his 'Summer Diary' work, where beach and coastal imagery once again took hold. By this time Richard had created his 3-D 'Parade' and 'Farewell Ballet' series: sculptural forms with an armature of terracotta pipes built up with plaster and marked with colour in the manner of his earlier paintings ('painting in the round'). Travels in Tasmania, discovery of Tasmania's early colonial 'Black War' history, later expressed in paintings/drawings as tragic fantasy ballet series. (see here in Tasmania Conflict. Exhibitions were held at Macquarie Galleries, Sydney in 1974 and 1976.

### 1977-1979

A large survey show at Melbourne University Gallery in 1978. Extensive travels (in 1977 and again in 1978) in Arnhem Land learning about Australian indigenous art and culture. Contacts made then were renewed years later when he again visited, camping and staying at remote outstations, and working on-site at Ramingining, Goulburn Island (Warrawi) and Yirrkala.

### 1980

Invited to join Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA as their first International Visiting artist, a position which he held for the 1981-82 academic year.

### 1982

Artist-in-residence at the University of South Carolina. A large solo exhibition was held in Atlanta in 1982, followed by another in 1986, when Richard also acted as visiting artist at Maryland Art Institute in Baltimore. During the late 1970's and the early part of 1980, Albert Tucker was a frequent visitor to the Crichton's, particularly following the death of his son, Sweeney Reed. Tucker's visits at that time were a means of 'talking through' his grief, and he and Richard would often draw and sketch as they talked. Richard's sketches became the start of his painted portrait of Tucker, which was completed and exhibited in the 1982 Archibald Prize Exhibition and later acquired by the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Museum.

### 1986

Travelled to Ireland and Greece to participate in 'Moments of Vision' Exhibition, Corfu

### 1989-1992

Three solo exhibitions held in Sydney

### 1992-2002

Crichton continued to paint, but did not exhibit again till 2002 when an exhibition was held at Lauraine Diggins Gallery, Melbourne which included paintings of Ireland and the Irish exodus. Crichton's ancestors came from Ireland to Melbourne in the 1840's and he has travelled within Ireland on three occasions.

### 2009-2011

Eastgate & Holst Fine Art Gallery in Melbourne mounted a survey exhibition of works from 1955 to 1975. This was followed by Works from the Studio Exhibition in 2011.

### 2012

'Richard Crichton-PROFILE'. A large selected exhibition held at Castlemaine Art Gallery and Museum.

### 2014

Solo Exhibition Eastgate and Holst Fine Art, Melbourne

### 2016

Solo Exhibition Eastgate Gallery, Melbourne 'Campfires, Journeys

