

## Artist's Statement

**Tony Windberg**

**Viewpoints exhibition**

**Gallery East**

**September 24 - October 17 2010**

*Salvation (diptych)*

engraved vinyl, Marri & Balga resin, painted mdf  
107 x 95 x 17 each



The artificial lines in the stark landscape of the diptych *Salvation* lead the viewer upwards to a summit. Both the ascending track and the rows of newly planted bluegums in each panel lead to the same hill and stand of charred pines seen from different viewpoints.

A reference to Friedrich's controversial altarpiece *The Cross in the Mountains* (1808), my work *Salvation* has at its roots issues of land-use which appear insensitive and sacrilegious. Friedrich's work dared to allow Nature into the church, yet for him such links were clear.

The recent fires near Bridgetown in South West WA devastated large areas of mature pine plantations. In their place have been planted Tasmanian blue-gums, a more fire resilient species. The shift from an exotic tree to slightly less exotic one makes for a powerful metaphor for patterns of cultural imposition and human adaptation.

Bluegum plantations were touted as the savior of South West native forests in the logging debates of the 1990s. Many plantations have since sprung up and while changes have occurred to logging regimes, considerable pressure still exists on remnant vegetation.

The dual scenes in *Salvation* are seen through archways of local marri trees with the tell-tale foliage sprouting from their trunks as a response to fire. Their detached position in the foreground not only forms a framing device but recalls colonial paintings of native Australian people who were placed in the foreground of vistas of a changing world beyond.

The arch shape has connotations of the sacred. This shape, used in Friedrich's altarpiece, also appears in *Salvation*. As the viewer approaches, the apparently flat picture planes of each panel change form. The structure's pronounced convex planes, truncated at the top, give an increasing illusion of arched outlines. The elevation of the works with their bases at eye level also causes the effect, and creates an added physical presence.

*Salvation* is a culmination of many ideas developed for the body of works in *Viewpoints* exhibition. The dual viewpoints of same subject is based on stereoscopic images that give the illusion of depth. Once a popular photographic format, and used today to allow for three dimensional perspectives of topography, scientific specimens, etc, the system relies on our use of binocular vision: each eye sees a slightly shifted vision, the brain then interprets and combines the images to create a perception of depth.

A similar process is used for the pair of images in *Salvation*, however the distance between the viewpoints is notably further apart than the eyes! However, the combined information in each image creates a greater picture in the viewer's mind. It can also be argued that this is how we visually perceive the world - through a series of snippets pieced together in the mind.

The vertical alignment of the track in the first scene seems to hold profound significance, an ascension to the summit. Yet this placement is entirely determined by the artist. In the second scene, this illusion crumbles, replaced by another alignment of apparent consequence, the parallel formation of tree rows now obvious, leading upwards to an empty arch-like space.

Tony Windberg

September 2010