

Kevin

ROBERTSON



Kevin Robertson is a figurative artist and is best known for his portraits which usually feature his immediate friends and circle of acquaintances.

To describe Robertson exclusively as a studio artist (fundamentally committed to the contemplative and reflective traditions focused around portraiture, still life, figure studies, etc.) is to underestimate his intellectual curiosity.

The narrow focus that he has set on his repertoire seems to have been done as some form of personal challenge and intellectual discipline related to the intensive investigation of a particular phenomenon.

The parameters appear to be to stay humble, avoid artificiality and dissect one's own environment with a cool degree of neutrality.

The artist's knowledge and intimacy with his subjects and surroundings bring a certain psychological intensity to his work. Though he provides a fairly distanced and objective scrutiny of his sitters - using broad and generalised rather

than detailed technique and integrating them in humble urban interiors which are identifiably local - he does not seem concerned or determined to entirely divorce himself from interpretative involvement.

Especially with colour, he invariably finds a way to heighten the emotional impact of the painting. Particularly in his use of red - which is not only a demonstrably favourite hue but also universally renowned for its association with passion and violent sensations - the chromatic choice seems poignant and difficult to associate with strict cerebral impartiality.

It is in any case a rewarding exercise to approach Robertson's work on a purely formalist premise because of his competence in the traditions of representation, skill in the manipulation of tone and colour, and his expertise in pictorial structure.

Left: *Red Room, Bondi Junction 1992*, oil on canvas, 127.5 x 127.5 cm, The University of Western Australia Art Collection.

Right: Kevin Robertson in his space at Gotham Studios, Northbridge.