



Press Release 1995

Is God a Duck Shooter

By Helen Norton

Arthouse Gallery
Rushcutters Bay
Sydney

At a time when the world is dismayed and frustrated with the crude and senseless exercise of power by our so-called world leaders, an exhibition by acclaimed narrative and landscape painter Helen Norton, entitled 'Is God a Duck Shooter', is opening at the Art House Gallery in October 1995 is particularly timely.

Norton's imaginative narratives, such as the New World Order Series 1995, encapsulate our foolishness in endowing power and granting stature to leaders with a little more

on their agenda other than the well being of us all.

Working in the relative isolation of Broome, Western Australia, for the past ten years has afforded Norton a unique vantage point from which to witness the human condition.

Commenting on her latest series of artworks, Norton said, "I have invented a story visually to expel frustration onto the canvas and hopefully exorcise, understand and explore the contradictions of our system of human management. The condition of delegation of our responsibility to each other to a higher source, then the confusion, disrespect and disappointment of the result".

Norton grants freedom to her poetic imagination while at the same time drawing on the Australian landscape as a source of inspiration. The bright harsh sunlight of North Western Australia drenches her scenes and heightens the intensity of the brilliant colours.

In paintings such as 'Teddy Bears Inquisition', nature assumes an anthropomorphic quality, echoing the confusing and ominous tone of the proceedings taking place on the picnic blanket.

The teddy bears are symbols for the 'disempowerment we experience as pawns for the ambassadors of the world'. The relatively benign expressions on the faces of the motley crew of assembled 'world leaders', belie the burden of responsibility they should feel as 'Gods Ambassadors'.

Norton challenges the viewer to question our assumptions about how we contract our responsibilities to each other and the world in a disintegrating society. How are we to keep faith? Is God a duck shooter after all?

The New World Order series (God is a Duck Shooter) is a portrait of power and the human inability to get along with and understand his neighbour. The work explores the feeling of disempowerment we experience as pawns to the ambassadors of the world. The players are us, we put them there.

The table is set. The representatives of the human race face one another to solve our problems. They carry the burden of Gods Ambassadors. They physical boundaries are down, they sit closely together, yet they are far apart. They gaze from their multi coloured cloaks and want us to take them seriously. They are doing serious things after all! They tell us they are, and that is how we know. They are doing big things; they are our bosses. They are the bosses of the mortal world and they think they are the bosses of the ethereal world. We will do what they decide is best for us. They will carve our future. They are the designers and gate keepers of our children's inheritance. They are very powerful and they like it. We gave them that.

They kill people, including women and children. They press buttons, they decide war and peach, they play games (cruel ones), they don't like each other, and yet they are all the same.

Who are they?

What's this big talk they are always having? Can they stop evolution? They can do lots of things, but what are they going ?

Who are they?

They are our choice.

Helen Norton Sept 1995
