

# An overview of art paper supply in Melbourne from 1940-1990

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## ABSTRACT

The history of art paper supply in Melbourne encompasses the collective stories of artists, suppliers and paper mills based in Australia and overseas. In the late 1930's, when the range of papers available to Melbourne artists was just beginning to expand, World War II abruptly interrupted supplies. The end of the war saw the rebirth of the industry at the hands of returned serviceman, Norman Kaye when he opened Camden Art Centre in 1948. The 1960's saw a number of new suppliers emerge including N.S. Eckersley's Pty Ltd, Art Stretchers and Graeme Brown Papers Pty Ltd. These enterprises brought with them new papers including the Arches range from France but as was the case throughout the 19th and early 20th Century, most of the paper available was designed specifically for watercolourists. Melbourne Etching Supplies was founded in the 1970's with a vision to service the diverse needs of Melbourne's printmakers, including providing them with a range of interesting and high quality papers. The choice of printmaking papers available to local artists expanded once again in the 1980's when printmaker Robert Jones became the Australian agent for Magnani Papers. By the 1990's a vast array of art paper was available to Melbourne artists in a kaleidoscope of colours and paper choice became more about personal preference than availability.

## KEYWORDS

paper importation, art paper, Australian paper history

## INTRODUCTION

This study documents the availability of art papers in Melbourne from 1940-1990, from the period of Modernism through to the contemporary art of the 1980's, focussing particularly on the suppliers operating and the type of paper they were stocking. Knowledge of paper availability can assist conservators and art historians with dating and authenticating works on paper, offer an insight into the role of artists' choice in their selection of materials and provide information about the quality of paper being used at specific times.

## PAPER SUPPLY PRE-WORLD WAR II (WWII)

Prior to WWII, which commenced in 1939 and ended in 1945, European and American mills had a set minimum quantity of paper that suppliers in Australia could purchase. There was no wholesale distribution structure in place so artists were limited by the range and quantity of paper available (B Senior [Senior Art Supplies] 2008, pers.comm., 4 December; and M Burnet [Melbourne Etching Supplies] 2009, pers. comm., 5 February). W & G Dean Pty Ltd (Deans), directly imported materials from English companies such as Winsor and Newton, Barcham and Green, Whatman's and Dutch company Royal Talens.<sup>1</sup> In the first few decades of the 20th Century, the paper range available through Deans, Norman Brothers, B.J. Ball, W.C. Penfold and Sands and Macdougall Ltd. was predominately designed for watercolourists. The selection included Royal Watercolour Society, Canson and Montgolfier Ingres and Whatman's (S Davidson 1997, pers. comm., 22 April). Whatman paper had been the most broadly advertised and therefore widely used art paper in Australia since the 1840's, so most artists would have been very familiar with it and the working properties it offered. One of the few alternatives to watercolour paper was Kent cartridge, which Deans imported from Wiggins Teape in England and was used by artists for drawing and printmaking (S Edgar [Information Services, Arjo Wiggins, England] 1997, pers. comm., 15 July).<sup>2</sup> Few drawing pads were available, but companies such as Dean's produced a limited number of sketchpads from bank and bond papers (S Davidson 1997, op.cit.). From 1901 Fabriano paper was imported exclusively into Australia by Melbourne-based company G. Ferrando & Co (M Biori [Export Sales Department, Catiere Miliani Fabriano S.p.A.] 2009, pers. comm., 1 April) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Fabriano chiaroscuro watermarks created for the Australian market, courtesy M. Biori, Catiere Miliani Fabriano S.p.A.

By the 1930's the company was known as Australian Commercial Co. Ltd. Following this incarnation, the agent for Fabriano was a Mr Smith of Brighton. When Mr Smith died in the 1970's, Bob Senior took over distribution.<sup>3</sup>

## WWII IMPACTS ON PAPER SUPPLY

The advent of WWII had a profound and immediate effect on Australian paper production and importation. This naturally had an effect on the type and quality of paper available to Melbourne artists. A letter received by the directors of Australian Pulp and Paper Manufacturers (APPM) on 7th June 1940 from the Minister for Supply and Development provides an insight into the pressure placed on Australian paper mills at this time.

Gentlemen,  
The difficulty of maintaining adequate supplies of paper in Australia is becoming increasingly great, as Australia is being thrown more on its own resources. I need not dwell upon the affects of the war on European supplies, but I feel that I should urge upon your employees the fact that, however much the government departments economise in the use of printing and writing papers, they must have large supplies for vital uses directly connected with defence. Indeed I may say that the product of your Burnie Mill is now an essential war commodity. I hope therefore that every person concerned with production at that Mill will regard himself as engaged in War Work, and will endeavour to continue in that work to the best of his ability (Lawrence 1986).

Calls for the general public to economise on their use of paper were printed in *The Argus*, together with helpful suggestions for reducing paper use:

### Paper shortage

Sir, We have received from one of our English correspondents recommendations for the saving of paper, which may prove of interest to readers: 1. Use the smallest sheet of paper for any purpose that will do the job. 2. Use the thinnest sheet of paper for any purpose that will do the job. 3. Type on both sides of the sheet. 4. In case of simple answers, reply on the back of the incoming letter. 5. Do not make copies except where absolutely necessary. 6. Where a copy is necessary in a reply keep it on the back of the incoming letter. 7. Consider whether all the numbers of copies taken in system forms are necessary. 8. Always type single spacing. 9. In all cases (letters, commercial printing jobs and pamphlets) curtail margins. 10. Consider using the smallest type face consistent with legibility. 11. Try not to pack items individually-pack in bulk. 12. Avoid unnecessary packing paper-use just what is necessary and no more. Yours, &c. N.T.F. Collins, Melbourne. (Collins 1940)

A letter to the editor of *The Argus* two years later, indicates some thought that more could be done by local paper mills to alleviate the chronic shortage of paper:

Sir: Could anything be more ironical? On the one hand a Commonwealth order suspends the obligation of companies to distribute balance-sheets and reports; on the other hand a well-known paper-making organisation in Australia sends out a 12-page annual report and a double foolscap statement of its accounts on stout paper. Surely these paper mills should be the first to set an example in paper economy. In England companies are now saving labour and paper by not printing and distributing their annual reports and statements of accounts and eliminating long speeches at the annual meetings. -R. ADAMSON (Caulfield). (Adamson 1942).

During WWII, the Department of Defence had great buying power and the first right of refusal on all paper coming into Australia. Meetings were held between the Federation of Manufacturing Stationers and the Department of War Organisation and Industry to discuss the supplies the Department needed for the war effort. The Federation would then place bulk orders with overseas mills on behalf of the Department and stationary companies such as Norman Brothers and Deans (R Neville [President of the Association of Stationers and Manufacturers during WWII] 1997, pers. comm., 14 June). Paper imported into Australia at this time included Strathmore drawing and charcoal paper from America and Kent drawing and cartridge paper, Canson and Montgolfier Ingres paper, Cotman Rough watercolour paper and Col Art paper from Europe (N Heysen [WWII Official War Artist] 1997, pers. comm., 30 September).<sup>4</sup> English art papers imported into Australia at this time were probably old stock because during the war, paper production in Britain came under direct government control and was directed by the Ministry of Supply, who dictated which mills could produce what paper and in what quantities (P Bower 1997, pers. comm., 8 July).

As the war continued, art papers became increasingly scarce, even for Official War Artists, as a letter addressed to Captain Ivor Hele indicates:

Supplies have arrived from England but up to the present we have received only half our order and are finding it difficult to obtain advice as to when the balance will arrive...In the meantime it is a headache to keep artists supplied and to make provision for some additional artists whom it is desired to appoint ('Letter addressed to Capt. Ivor Hele' 1944).

In Melbourne, civilian artists were forced to become increasingly resourceful and this 'make-do' ethic continued for many years after the war ended. Bankers and Imperial cartridge papers and envelope paper that were produced by APPM's Burnie Mill became popular painting and drawing supports. According to Ruth

Faerber, an art student during WWII, the smooth, calendared side of MG Litho was used by artists for painting and drawing and the felt side was used by printmakers (R Faerber 1997, pers.comm., 21 April).<sup>5</sup> Artist Ian Armstrong recalled:

Kent papers were used...frequently by printmakers during 1940-1945 and only ceased to be used when Graeme Brown of Nunawading (paper importer) introduced us to Arches, Rives (I Armstrong 1997, pers. comm., n.d.)

The end of the war in 1945 saw the return of two servicemen who had previously been Dean's employees. Indeed, Norman Kaye and Sydney Davidson were to become pivotal figures in the supply of art materials in Melbourne.

### CAMDEN ART CENTRE PTY LTD (CAMDEN)

When Kaye and Davidson returned from the war, they resumed work at Deans. Kaye resigned in 1948 to establish Cambridge Art Supplies in Brunswick St Fitzroy (P Fitz-Gibbon 2009, pers. comm., 13 March). Not long after establishing the business it was found the name 'Cambridge' could not be used for legal reasons so the business name was changed to Camden Art Centre (ibid.). Davidson joined the business in 1949 as Sales Manager and according to Kaye's daughter Pamela Fitz-Gibbon he was well suited to the role, being a natural extrovert. In Camden's early years, art materials were rationed because they were imported and this was the case into the early 1950s (Zimmer 1996). Of the paper range stocked, Whatman and Fabriano were by far the most popular with Melbourne artists until the introduction of Arches paper to Australia in the 1960s (P Fitz-Gibbon 2009 op.cit).<sup>7</sup> This is probably due to the fact that Whatman paper had been available in Australia for more than a century at this stage and Fabriano had been supplied intermittently for approximately 50 years, so these were the paper supports that artists were most familiar with. From the late 1950s Kaye travelled to England by ship to visit suppliers and on these occasions he stayed with the Roberson's (of the London-based artists' colourman Charles Roberson & Co.). The Camden range of products naturally expanded as a result of these overseas business trips.

Kaye purchased the building housing the Johnston's Furniture factory at 188-192 Gertrude St Fitzroy and the business moved to this new address in 1964 (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: The old Camden building at 188-192 Gertrude St Fitzroy, photographed in 2008

From the 1960's Camden stocked a range of good quality drawing and watercolour papers in various weights and surface finishes including Saunders 90 gsm hot pressed watercolour paper, Saunders medium Imperial, Fabriano Ingres, Fabriano Murillo, Whatman 300 gsm, Aurora cartridge, Strathmore hot pressed, Arches Ingres, Arches 300 gsm FIN, Kent ordinary cartridge and Kent hot pressed.<sup>8</sup> Kent paper was also available pre-mounted onto pulp board and this was sold as 'illustration board' (B Senior 2008, op.cit.). As Melbourne-based artist Gareth Sansom recalled:

You could get quality paper from Camden Art Centre in Gertrude St or Dean's. I had an account at Camden (G Sansom 2008, pers.comm., 5 December).

Kaye was also the agent for Holbein Artist Materials, a Japanese

company established at the beginning of the 20th century. One of his first overseas business trips was to Japan to visit Holbein and Japanese paper mills. The relationship between Kaye and Holbein was so genial that Holbein named a brush -'Series K'-after him (P Fitz-Gibbon 2009 op.cit.).<sup>8</sup> Camden stocked a range of paper imported from Holbein including Shin Hoshō, Kozo and Chiri papers for woodblock printing and rolls of Kongo paper.

When interviewed on 4 December 2008, former employee B Senior explained the degree to which the concept of archival quality was stressed to Camden employees.

At Deans and Camden's permanence of materials was always paramount and it still is today... In '63 when I first joined Camden the first lessons were permanence, permanence permanence, it was a very strong inbuilt thing...As a young man at Camden, and I started there when I was 23, I would get so angry when I was serving in the shop and a famous artist would come in and buy student pigments. It's like false pretences, you know, so it was always very strong through those traditional suppliers...when you handle paper you should wear gloves. In the old days all the paper was all locked but it's not today, it's all out and everybody handles it and it's no longer acid-free... I always used to get very angry with RMIT, Caulfield and all these big institutions, never taught it [permanence], if you wanted to learn it you had to go to the old National Gallery School or private teachers through the Victorian Artists Society...

Kaye was the first international member of the American-based National Art Materials Trade Association (NAMTA) and in 1960 was awarded a Degree of Master of Artist's Materials from NAMTA in recognition for his contribution to the industry (P Fitzgibbon 2009, op.cit.). Davidson and Kaye continued to work together at Camden until 1966 when Davidson left the business to join N.S. Eckersley's Pty Ltd. In 1968, Norman Kaye's son Colin and daughter Pamela joined the business. In 1979 Kaye sold Camden and the business amalgamated with Deans Art Supplies and Sydney-based company Vitrex to become one of the largest retailers of art materials in the Southern Hemisphere (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> Camden employed a number of individuals who went on to become key figures in the supply of art materials in Melbourne. Among these were Rod Beer who now owns the Art Shop in Maples Lane Prahran, Sydney Davidson who became Sales Manager of Eckersley's, Pamela Fitz-Gibbon, Managing Director of National Art Materials and Bob Senior, founder of Senior Art Supplies.

## N.S. ECKERSLEY'S PTY LTD (ECKERSLEY'S)

The Eckersley twin brothers established their business at 17 Toorak Rd, South Yarra in 1965. They were society printers and initially stocked only a small selection of art materials (B Senior 2008, op.cit.). When Sydney Davison left Camden to join Eckersley's, two of the Camden art representatives joined him and the Eckersley's business flourished. The papers stocked from the late 1960's into the 1970's included Strathmore, the Arches range, Saunders watercolour paper and Kent drawing pads. Although the Eckersley brothers owned the Toorak Rd building, in 1968 they decided to move the business to Commercial Rd and rent out the Toorak Road property. They were fortunate that the Toorak Road address commanded such high rent that they were in the enviable position of no longer needing to work. When the brothers retired, Bob Senior resigned from Camden Art Centre to join Sydney Davidson, Colin Vaughan and David Green as the fourth partner in Eckersley's (B Senior 2008, op.cit.).<sup>10</sup> After Norman Kaye sold Camden in 1979, Pamela Fitz-Gibbon joined Eckersley's where she worked for the following 8 years.

## ART SCHOOLS

Several Melbourne art schools operated their own small art supply outlets. There was an art materials store on the 3rd floor of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) building that opened for a couple of hours a day and was staffed by a member

of the administration staff (G Sansom 2008, op.cit.). They stocked Kent drawing paper, Arches Ingres in a range of different colours including white, beige, cream and light grey and cartridge paper. The papers were used by students enrolled in life drawing and costume drawing classes. According to Gareth Sansom

Generally butcher's paper would be used for classes, we were just doing 20-minute sketches, but for exams, we would do a 3-hour rendered drawing and good quality paper would be used for that. Butchers paper couldn't withstand the rendering. (ibid.).

The art materials store at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) opened in approximately 1971. It stocked a range of drawing materials, paper and paint and was eventually taken over by Eckersley's but closed in 1988 because it wasn't economically viable.

## SUPPLY VERSUS DEMAND

By the late 1960's the range of papers available to Melbourne artists had expanded and suppliers such as Deans, Camden and Eckersley's were well established. However, even by this time, most of the paper available was designed for watercolour or drawing and obtaining enough of the same paper for a print run was difficult. In 1969 artist John R. Neeson entered the Australian Print Prize and was advised by fellow artist George Baldessin he should print an edition for the Prize. Neeson went to several paper suppliers in Melbourne to get enough of the same paper to print an edition.

I knew the Norman Brothers down the bottom of Elizabeth St ...and the Dean's one I'd come up to occasionally, I'm pretty sure it was the one in Lonsdale St. Then I can remember that I had to get a tram up to Fitzroy to this other shop [Camden]. I remember over about 3 or 4 days, I made the trip probably about 3 times trying to work out what paper was I going to buy. Getting 10 sheets and thinking 'I can get more of this'. Then printing the 10 and having trouble printing them and saying 'no the edition is 10 end of story, forget it', then regretting it. It stuck in my mind that whole episode...What a lot of people don't realise, the actual resources to resource something about art were not there (J Neeson 2008, pers. comm., 15 February).

Neeson's print *Explosion 1* received an honourable mention and he sold the complete edition. Soon afterwards various state institutions contacted him to purchase prints but they were all sold. He bitterly regretted having only been able to print an edition of 10 due to the difficulty of obtaining paper and decided his print runs needed to be 25 provided he could get the paper. Two weeks after printing *Explosion 1* Graeme Brown walked into the print room at RMIT School of Art where Neeson was printing. He said 'nice paper you're working on. I believe its Arches Arjomaria'. Neeson explained how hard it was to get paper and Brown told him he was the distributor and that he would come back next week. 'He brought 200-300 sheets of paper in, all different types. I thought this must be the father I never knew!' (ibid.).

## GRAEME BROWN PAPERS PTY. LTD.

Melbourne-based paper importer Graeme Brown became interested in paper whilst working for James Cook, a stationary business owned by the French paper company Arjomari and as a salesman for the fine paper merchant, B.J. Ball (B Allen 2007, pers. comm., 2 August). Through connections made at this time, he was invited to be the Australian importer of Arches paper and this was the impetus for establishing Graeme Brown and Company in Mitcham, Victoria in the 1960's. Initially the main client base was high schools and colleges, whom he supplied with news and cartridge paper (F Brown 2007 pers. comm., 27 September). The business gradually shifted focus towards the Arches and Rives range of papers and Graeme developed a genuine interest in the papermaking process, travelling regularly to France to oversee the making of the paper he supplied. In addition

to distributing European paper, a selection of approximately nine Japanese papers were distributed by Brown including a thick, white paper similar to Torinoko (B Allen 2007, op.cit. and Y Boag 2007, pers. comm., 2 August). When interviewed 25 September 2008, former employee R Beer recalled:

He was in a good position because he could talk extensively to people who manufactured the paper and view the manufacturing and then talk in depth to the end user.

As recalled by artist John R. Neeson, Brown's sales strategy was simple and direct. He would visit artists and art schools and take a selection of papers with him. Two of his common phrases when introducing an artist or lecturer to his new but expensive products were 'there is no alternative to a Rolls Royce' and 'once you've tried this, you'll never use anything else' (J Neeson 2008 op.cit.). Graeme didn't see himself simply as a supplier; he was equally driven about educating students and artists to enable them to choose the right paper type for their specific application and ensuring they chose quality paper so their work would last. This was a defining moment in paper supply in Melbourne because rather than the focus being placed primarily on watercolour and drawing paper, Brown introduced papers made for various end uses including printmaking.

Fred Williams would never do anything unless Graeme came along and he would give him something to try out and say right that's it, I'll use that. As far as I know he never used very much more once Arches paper came on. Arches was the main one he used. He [Graeme] was the one who started the big rolls of paper which allowed them to do bigger work instead of canvas which was more expensive. He really did know his paper and he really did take an interest in the artist and what they were doing and try to get them to use the best quality so they could bring out the best in their work (F Brown 2007, op.cit.).

Brown opened a retail outlet and distributed paper nationally. At the pinnacle of his working life he sold his business to Canson Australia and became Managing Director in 1986 (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Graeme Brown (seated at right) signing his business over to Canson Australia in 1986 Courtesy Faye Brown**

When Graeme was bringing the paper in, he sold five times more of the art paper in Australia, per head of population, than anywhere else in the world. So he did make an inroad. He was quite pioneering really (ibid.).

## ART STRETCHERS/ART SPECTRUM

Art Stretchers was established in 1966 when founder David Keys Snr was a lecturer of painting at RMIT. He had just returned to Melbourne after spending 12 months in England on a British Council grant and he and fellow artist George Baldessin were having difficulty sourcing linen and stretchers (D Keys Snr 2008, pers. comm., 27 November). They decided to have some linen woven by David Coop to their specifications and gradually Keys began to orchestrate the manufacture of stretchers through

a friend who owned a timber mill (Zimmer 1996). He set up a workshop manufacturing stretchers in Lower Plenty and this was the beginning of Art Stretchers as it is known today. As the company expanded, so did the range of products stocked and in addition to selling stretchers, linen, paints, pastels and Enjoy etching presses, they began to import European watercolour papers such as Arches, Barcham and Green, Saunders and Waterford (D Keys Snr 2008, op.cit.). Keys was unusual in the Melbourne art materials industry because he fostered relationships with three Australian boutique papermills: Bemboka, Jabberwock and Blue Lake and encouraged them to produce high quality papers for artists which he marketed and distributed on their behalf.

## MELBOURNE ETCHING SUPPLIES (MES)

The establishment of MES in 1974 by Margie Burnet and Neil Wallace was pivotal in the history of printmaking in Melbourne. The business first operated from 227 Brunswick St, Fitzroy and was commonly known as the Print Guild (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Shop interior of Melbourne Etchings supplies circa 1974. Courtesy Margie Burnet**

Burnet had studied Art and Design at Prahran Institute of Technology and Wallace, who studied Metallurgy at RMIT, had become interested in printmaking whilst living in Toronto. Their enterprise was run in conjunction with the Print Guild print shop and their aim was to supply printmakers with fine quality materials and to promote Australian printmakers by providing a space for them to exhibit their work (M Burnet 2009, op.cit.). As a natural extension of this vision, the works of the artists required framing and accordingly conservation framing became another aspect of their business.

Their first catalogue lists a range of French papers for etching and lithography including Arches Velin, Aquarelle Arches Fin, Aquarelle Arches Satine, Aquarelle Arches Torchon, Arches Technique, Velin Cuve and BFK, Italian rag paper for etching and lithography including Fabriano Classico and Fabriano Murillo (available in a range of colours), English rag paper for etching, lithography and silk screen including Kent cartridge and finally Japanese cartridge and Haruki rice paper (Burnet and Wallace 1976). The paper range stocked by MES grew exponentially as a result of visiting trade shows and engaging with artists. They were very interested in adding handmade Australian paper to their range, but with the minimum order for Jabberwock paper in particular being approximately 2000 sheets, it was too financially risky for their burgeoning business (M Burnet 2009, op.cit.).

Graeme Brown supplied MES with Japanese papers and the Arches range and they sourced Aquarelle Arches on a roll from Art Papers Australia, which was operated by Jack Tanner. Burnet and Wallace were business partners until 1998 and over that time they opened conservation framing stores, galleries and material supply outlets in Fitzroy, Prahran, East Brunswick, Carlton and even London.

## MAGNANI PAPERS AUSTRALIA

Robert Jones, Director of Magnani Papers Australia first became familiar with Magnani whilst studying printmaking in Urbino, Italy in the mid 1970s. In 1979 he returned to Adelaide and bought The Beehive Shirt and Pyjama Company building in Woden and established The Beehive Press (R Jones 2008, pers. comm., 12 December). The initial vision for the business was to print lithographs for Australian artists and he hoped to source Magnani paper to print on.

So I wrote to the Mill and by an extraordinary coincidence they had heard about me and that I had moved back to Adelaide and set up a print workshop. So I got a letter from them as well asking if I would like them to supply me with paper. I was amazed! That was in 1979. So I ordered some paper for several editions and my friends saw it and said 'where can I get some'. So I said 'well I'll get some'. So I ordered a whole pallet of it and then I got a letter from Magnani Mills saying 'We've never supplied to Australia before but we're interested in opening up our market there, can you recommend anyone to be our agent?' So I modestly recommended myself and I've been their agent since January 1980 (ibid.).

Once Jones became Magnani's Australian agent he toured Melbourne and Sydney to visit art schools and artists' studios and supply them with samples of paper to try. Interestingly Magnani paper was embraced by Sydney artists but the Melbourne market was dedicated to Arches papers thanks to the dogged determination of Graeme Brown. Jones initially operated his business from Adelaide purely as a mail-order enterprise, selling most of his product to artists in Sydney. Although it would have seemed logical to simply move his business to Sydney, he moved to Melbourne for personal reasons and established his retail outlet in Smith St, Fitzroy where it remained until June 2009.<sup>11</sup> (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5: The original shopfront of Magnani Papers Australia in Smith Street Fitzroy, photographed in 2008**

While the Magnani paper mill in Pescia has undergone several changes of ownership, the paper quality has been largely unaffected and at the beginning of the 21st century, Jones was one of their largest customers, being responsible for 70% of their export market (R Jones 2008, pers. comm., 20 February).

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the War Years, paper shortages in Australia had a direct impact on the papers available to artists and a certain amount of improvisation was necessary. In the following decades, Melbourne artists began to experience the luxury of choice as the art paper supplied to them expanded from a small selection of European watercolour and drawing papers to a veritable smorgasbord of papers designed for various artistic end-uses. The period of time covered by this overview, mirrors a shift from the relatively small-scale works of Modernism to the larger scale contemporary works of the 1980s; a change intrinsically linked to paper supply.

The founders of the Melbourne art materials industry contributed immeasurably to the creative output of Melbourne artists by giving them access to some of the highest quality local and imported

paper. The concept of archival quality paper was very much part of the collective consciousness of the suppliers discussed in this overview. This sense of responsibility was played out in the shop front where they would educate artists about the importance of using paper that would stand the test of time. In the words of Faye Brown (2007)

If you are selling paper you owe it to them [artists] that 40 years down the track they're not going to find their work had fallen to pieces.

Needless to say, it is fortunate from a conservation perspective that the vast majority of art papers introduced over the period of study had a high rag and low lignin content, two of the most important elements in the manufacture of durable, permanent paper. Indeed, the legacy of the paper makers and suppliers discussed lives on in the diverse works of art produced by their customer-base which included some of Melbourne's most celebrated artists.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> W & G Dean Pty Ltd was established in 1854 and they were known as 'Deans the Paint People'. Located in Elizabeth St in the city, they stocked paint, glass and art materials. As the Deans business grew, branches opened in Little Collins St., Fitzroy and Spencer St.
- <sup>2</sup> The company's Export Agreements dating from the beginning of the 20th Century give reference to three Australian importers that Wiggins Teape had arrangements with. These were W. Detmold Ltd. Adelaide, D.L. Brown and Co. Brisbane (not related to Graeme Brown) and R.R. Woolcott and Co. Melbourne.
- <sup>3</sup> Today the agency for Fabriano is shared by four distributors including Margie Burnet of Melbourne Etching Supplies.
- <sup>4</sup> B.J. Ball was the agent for Strathmore papers in Sydney and Melbourne. Suppliers were not stocking a great deal of Strathmore paper because the general feeling at the time was not pro-American.
- <sup>5</sup> MG Litho is a cheap, general-purpose paper. During WWII it was used for making bottle labels and wrapping ammunition.
- <sup>6</sup> This product list has been compiled from information received from former employee Bob Senior and invoices dating from the 1960's that were retained by Melbourne artist Fred Williams. Copies of his invoices are retained by Paper Conservation at the National Gallery of Victoria. His prints provide a great insight into the paper range available to Melbourne artists.
- <sup>7</sup> The production of Whatman art paper ceased during WWII but recommenced after the war for approximately 2 decades. Production ceased in the early to mid 1960's and after a hiatus of approximately a decade, it became available in Melbourne again.
- <sup>8</sup> The Series-K brush is still produced.
- <sup>9</sup> The Dean's Art Fitzroy office still operates from the old Camden building in Gertrude Street.
- <sup>10</sup> All four partners were previously employees of Camden Art Centre.
- <sup>11</sup> Robert Jones has since retired and the business is now owned by James MacDoughall, Great-Great-Grandson of James MacDoughall who built the Broadford paper mill in the 1870's. James is the son of Peter MacDoughall, who was an owner of the Bemboka Paper Mill in Bega.

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## BIOGRAPHY

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