

The works in the *Three Ponds* series are playful, optimistic and, while multi-layered, strangely uncomplicated. The landscape is a recurrent but contested theme within the history of Australian painting. Writing at the time Collocott was beginning her career as an artist, art historian Terry Smith argued that landscape was exhausted as a subject for art.<sup>9</sup> Good art, he maintained, needed to be original; landscape painting was “dangerous” for the young artist because an artist could “not avoid the great mass of paintings done on this theme”.

Fortunately, Collocott did not take Smith’s advice and avoid the danger. She remained committed to her “sensitised expressions of emotion towards nature”. Art historians subsequently have valued those artists like Collocott who have made the local, the contingent and the temporary their subject, challenging avant-garde notions of originality. In series of works like *Three Ponds* Collocott has created lyrical images that make a distinctive and important contribution to the Australian landscape tradition.

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1. “Leading artists in the making”. *North Shore Times*. 13 March 1968
2. *Martin Collocott*. Gallery A. Melbourne. 15 – 27 October 1967
3. Margaret Plant. “Moulding wit from imagination”. *The Australian*. 11 October 1967
4. Michelle Collocott interview with Steven Miller. 30 September 2009. All quotes from the artist are taken from this interview.
5. Letter from Michelle Collocott to Max Hutchinson. 6 June 1967. MS2007.6 Gallery A Archive. National Art Archive. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.
6. Terry Smith. “Is the landscape exhausted as art?”. *Sunday Australian*. 14 March 1971
7. Michelle Collocott interview with Steven Miller. 30 September 2009. All quotes from the artist are taken from this interview.
8. Michelle Collocott interview with Steven Miller. 30 September 2009. All quotes from the artist are taken from this interview.
9. Terry Smith. “Is the landscape exhausted as art?”. *Sunday Australian*. 14 March 1971