

THE WORLD BANK GROUP ARCHIVES

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AUTHORIZED

Folder Title: President Wolfensohn - Briefing Materials for President's Speeches - Social Event - World Bank Art Society - Exhibit Opening - Virginia Cuppaigne - Australian Artist - James D Wolfensohn [JDW] to Make Opening Remarks - JDW and ERW - May 1, 1996

Folder ID: 30484966

Dates: 12/01/1989 - 05/31/1996

Subfonds: Records of President James D. Wolfensohn

Fonds: Records of the Office of the President

ISAD Reference Code: WB IBRD/IDA EXC-13

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THE WORLD BANK

Washington, D.C.

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The World Bank

1818 H Street NW

Washington DC 20433

Telephone: 202-473-1000

Internet: www.worldbank.org

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AUTHORIZED

World Bank Art Society--Exhibit Opening:
Virginia Cuppaidge, Australian Artist

Wednesday, May 1, 1996
6:00-7:00 pm
E 12th Floor Gallery

this belongs
in #543, but
that file is
missing

DECLASSIFIED
WITH RESTRICTIONS
WBG Archives

Archives

R2002-036

Other #:

17

Box #: 186467B

President Wolfensohn - Briefings Books for Presidents Meetings - Speeches - Socie
Event - World Bank Art Society - Exhibit Opening - Virginia Cuppaidge - Australia

Archive Management for the President's Office

Document Log

Reference # : Archive-00543

1105

Edit

Print

A. CLASSIFICATION

☐ Meeting Material
☐ Trips
☒ Speeches

☐ Annual Meetings
☐ Corporate Management
☐ Communications with Staff

☐ Phone Logs
☐ Calendar
☐ Press Clippings/Photos

☐ JDW Transcripts
☒ Social Events
☐ Other

B. SUBJECT: WORLD BANK ART SOCIETY -- EXHIBIT OPENING: VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE, AUSTRALIAN ARTIST
JDW TO MAKE OPENING REMARKS // (JDW & ERW)
VENUE: E 12TH FLOOR GALLERY
PROGRAM: 6:35 PM. (AFTER AMBASSADOR'S MCARTHY'S ARRIVAL) -- JDW WILL MAKE REMARKS
TO ACCOMPANY: REGINE BOUCARD & SERAGELDIN -- PICK-UP AT 6:10 P.M.
CONTACT: REGINE BOUCARD @ 34711

DATE: 05/01/96

C. VPU

Corporate

☐ CTR
☐ EXT
☐ LEG
☐ MPS
☐ OED
☐ SEC/Board
☐ TRE

Regional

☐ AFR
☐ EAP
☐ ECA
☐ LAC
☐ MNA
☐ SAS

Central

☐ CFS
☐ DEC
☐ ESD
☐ FPD
☐ FPR
☐ HRO

Affiliates

☐ GEF
☐ ICSID
☐ IFC
☐ Inspection Panel
☐ Kennedy Center
☐ MIGA

D. EXTERNAL PARTNER

☐ IMF
☐ UN
☐ MDB/Other IO
☐ NGO
☐ Private Sector

☐ Part I
☐ Part II
☐ Other

E. COMMENTS:

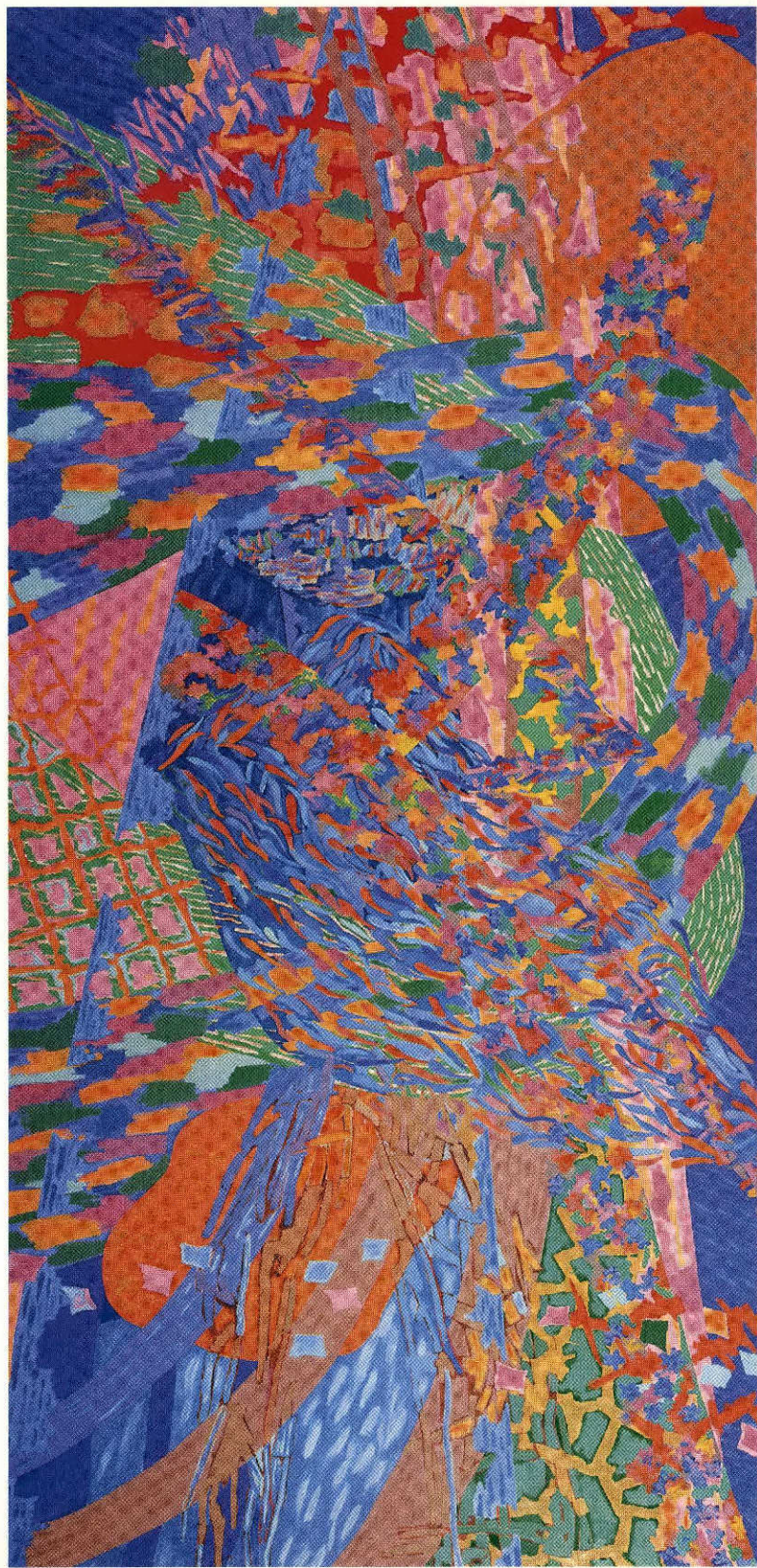
File Location

☐ EXC ☐ ISC ☐ Archives

Cleared By

Date:

05/17/96



THE WORLD BANK STAFF ART SOCIETY

REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY

AT THE OPENING RECEPTION

OF PAINTINGS BY

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

ON

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1ST, 1996

FROM 5:30 PM TO 8:00 PM AT

701 19TH STREET NW

E-12 GALLERY

WASHINGTON DC

PLEASE PRESENT THIS INVITATION AT THE DOOR
WITH THE PROPER PICTURE IDENTIFICATION

EXHIBITION THROUGH JUNE 30TH, 1996
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 202/473.4711

*World Bank Staff Art Society
1818 H Street, NW.
Suite J 4-008
Washington, D.C. 20433*

Mr. & Mrs. James D. Wolfensohn

CENTER OF THE BEGINNING VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE OIL ON CANVAS 7' x 15' © 1988

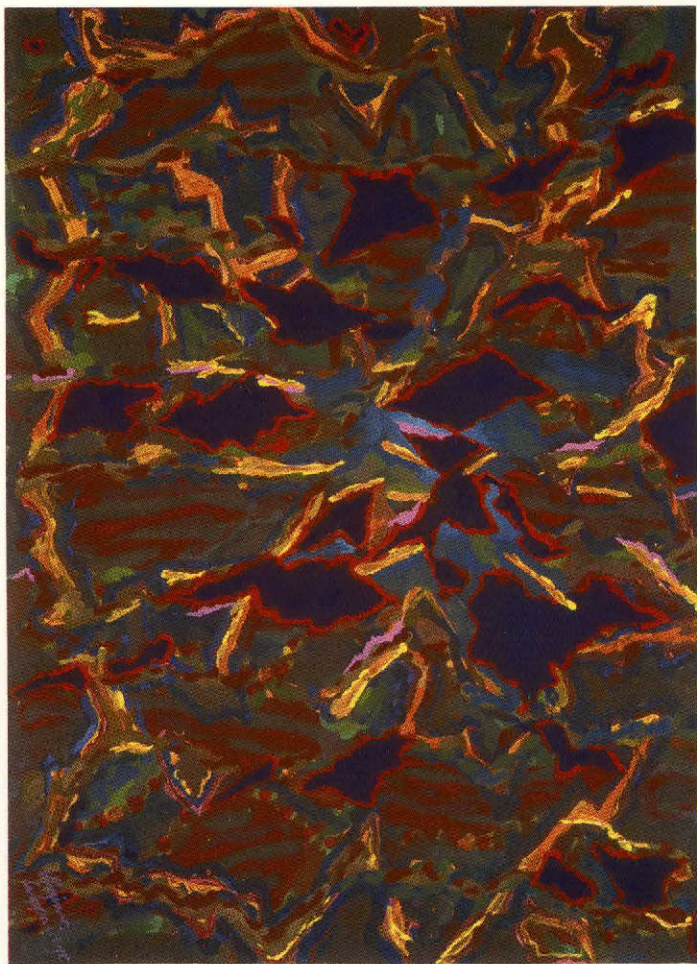


Forest Traffic II Oil/Canvas, 45" x 72," 1995

ROSENBERG+KAUFMAN FINE ART

115 WOOSTER STREET, NYC 10012

TEL 212.431.4838 FAX 212.431.1067

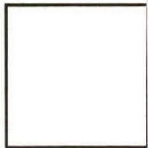


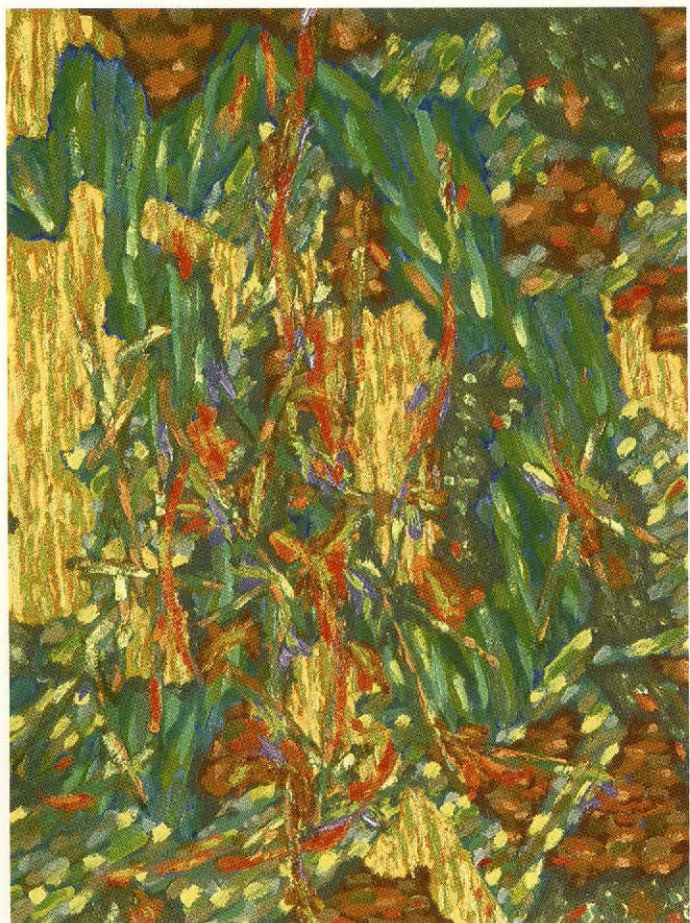
"Stars Map"

Virginia Cuppaide

Jo Sonja Gouache on paper

22" x 30" ©1994





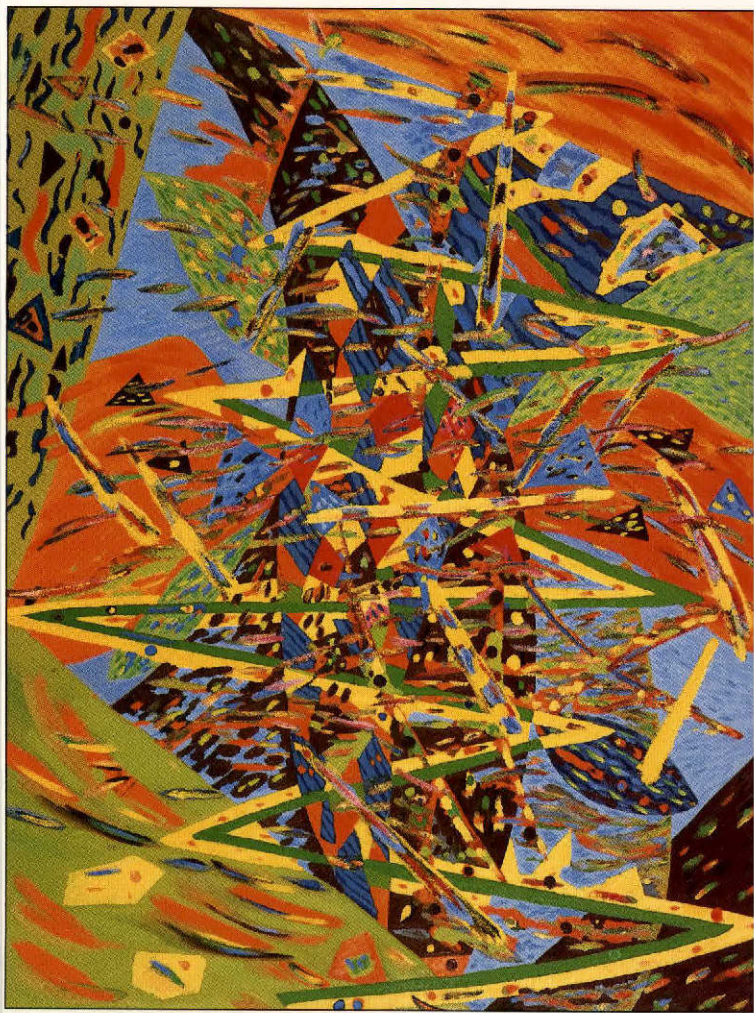
"City Harvest"

Virginia Cuppaidge

Archival Oil on Canvas

36" x 38" ©1993



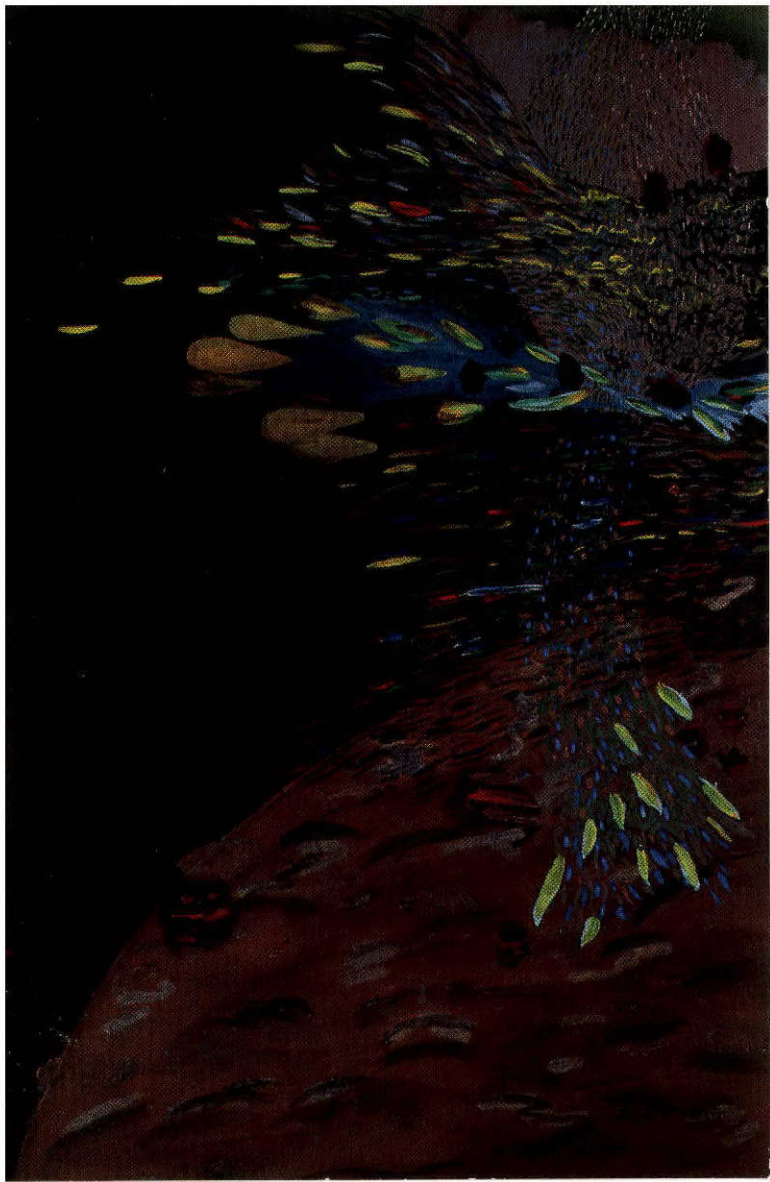


VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

NEW WORK

OCTOBER 17 – NOVEMBER 18, 1995

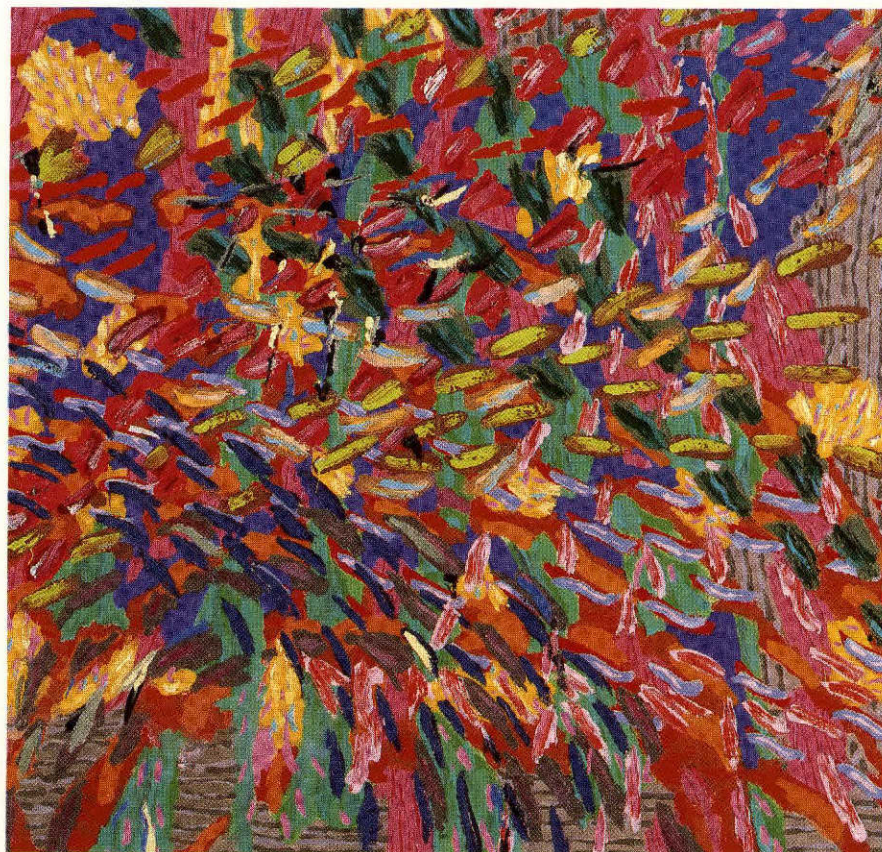
ROSENBERG+KAUFMAN FINE ART



Trailing The Perimeter

Virginia Cuppaidge

Acrylic on Canvas, 45" x 72", ©1986



VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

FROM COLOR FIELDS TO FIELDS OF COLOR

New Works by Virginia Cuppidge

"Light is there and colors surround us. Nevertheless
if we did not have light and color in our eyes, we
would not perceive them outside."

Goethe

In 1969, Virginia Cuppidge left her native Australia to come to New York to be in the center of artistic production which the city certainly was at the time. Many of her fellow Australians had gone to London but Cuppidge felt that she had to be in the place where truly contemporary abstract art was being made. Moreover, New York she recalls was purported to be "the most sophisticated city in the world." She found what she was looking for. Of great importance early on, was seeing a Hans Hoffman painting at the Metropolitan Museum which seemed bold, bright, and aggressively American, making European abstract painting appear polite in comparison. Then, of decisive importance, was the Mondrian retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in 1972. The work she had seen of the De Stijl painting in Australia was only in reproduction. But now she could respond to the paint quality when seeing actual canvases by Mondrian in the flesh. She realized that carefully structured painting could indeed also be sensuous at the same time. Like a Joycean epiphany, this moment of revelation has stayed with her as she continues her career as a painter.

In the seventies, Cuppidge worked in the style which has generally been described as color field painting. As time went by, however, Cuppidge, like many of her contemporaries, managed to discard the Greenbergian vise and the severe geometry in her paintings was eliminated while she was able to maintain her very special sense of light. She began playing with similar shapes against each other and before long, organic forms entered her paintings which were bathed in a subtle and subdued light.

Once Kandinsky and the Delaunays had liberated color from the delineation of form, it became possible to think in terms of color as the prime aspect of painting. In the work of Virginia

Cuppidge it is color that organizes the canvas and structure becomes a function of color. In a recent painting such as **The Eye of the Calm**, a blue pyramidal shape manifests itself, but it is the blue that is the most assertive in its relationship to the turquoise, the greens, and the reds of the richly vibrating surface. A similar experience is provided by a sensuously voluptuous painting which she has named **Clouds Within the Mountain**. The title is a reference to the I-Ching which has been an important source of illumination for this artist. The painting with its many layers of acrylic and oil has assumed a great strength of composition in emphatic colors. Evocative of a lush landscape, it simultaneously elicits visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile sensations, producing an effect of synesthesia which involves all the senses of the viewer.

The **Center of the Beginning** is a field of color 15 feet across in which a diffusion of hues flows across the canvas in a direction which moves upward and toward the right. The bright palette of red, blue, orange, green and purple is held at the same values, yielding a sense of harmony and calm within the luminosity of the painting. In certain places the straight lines delineate the color areas, but it is color which dominates the composition. The surface is organized in an all-over manner so that the forms at the outer edges hold the same visual weight as the central area. Although non-objective, the painting evokes a sense of nature, of water and sky and tropical flora.

Virginia Cuppidge continues to explore the range of possibilities of an ideal and consummate correspondence between nature and painting.

Peter Selz
New York City, 1989



Four Corners of the Earth. Oil on Canvas. 45" x 72", 1989 ©



Center of the Beginning. Oil on Canvas. 84" x 180", 1988 ©



Constellation Shift. Oil on Canvas. 45" x 72", 1989 ©

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1988 Michael Milburn Galleries, Brisbane, Australia
- 1987 Bloomfield Galleries, Sydney, Australia
- 1986 Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1985 Bloomfield Galleries, Sydney, Australia
- 1985 Milburn Galleries, Brisbane, Australia
- 1984 Ruth Schaffner Gallery, Santa Barbara, California
- 1983 Lewers Bequest and Penrith Regional Gallery (Museum), New South Wales, Australia
- 1982 Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1980 Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1979 Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1976 Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1975 Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York City
- 1974 Gallery A, Sydney, Australia
- 1973 A.M. Sachs Gallery, New York City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 Manhattan Community College, New York City
- 1988 Arts Fair, Melbourne, Australia
- 1988 EveSpan, Albury Regional Arts Center, Australia
- 1986 Genest Gallery, Lambertville, New Jersey
- 1985 A.I.R. Gallery, New York City
- 1983 A.I.R. Gallery, New York City
- 1982 Phillip Morris Collection, Melville Hall, Canberra, Australia
- 1982 A.I.R. Gallery, New York City
- 1978 Organization of Independent Artists, Brooklyn Courthouse, New York
- 1978 Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York City
- 1978 Australian Women Artists, Contemporary Arts Society, Sydney, Australia
- 1977 Lehman College of Art, Bronx, New York
- 1976 Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York City
- 1975 University Art Gallery, Berkeley, California
- 1973 "Women Choose Women," New York Cultural Center, New York City
- 1973 Aladdin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

AWARDS

- 1976 Guggenheim Fellowship in Painting
- 1975 C.A.P.S. New York State Award for Painting
- 1975 MacDowell Colony Fellowship

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York
- Kingsborough Community College, Brooklyn, New York
- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
- Commonwealth Loan Collection (Australian Embassy)
- Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
- Newcastle Art Gallery
- Power Institute, Sydney, Australia
- Sydney University Library, Sydney, Australia
- Queensland University, Brisbane, Australia

CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

- Chase Manhattan Bank, New York City
- Citicorp, New York City
- Integrated Resources, New York City
- Elders IXL Finance, New York City
- Hyatt Regency Hotel, New York City
- Olympia & York, Inc., New York City
- Phillip Morris Collection, Canberra, Australia
- Prudential Life Insurance, New York City
- S. Vogue, Inc., Dallas, Texas
- Westpac Banking, New York City
- Whitney Communications, New York City

TEACHING AND INVITATIONAL LECTURES

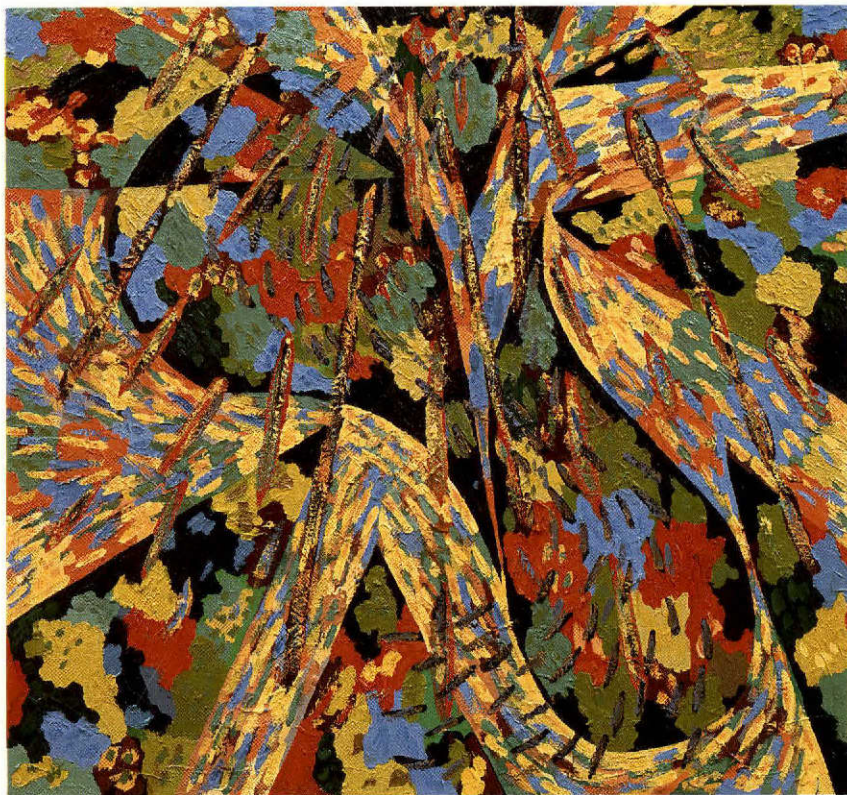
- 1988 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York
- 1986 Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York
- 1984 Visiting Artist, University of California at Santa Barbara
- 1983 Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia
- 1983 Power Institute, University of Sydney, Australia
- 1983 Queensland Art Gallery, Australia
- 1982 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York
- 1982 Wooster College, Ohio
- 1980 Visiting Artist, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn New York
- 1979 University lecture tour, Australia
- 1977 Lehman College, Bronx, New York
- 1975 Visiting Professor of Art, University of California at Berkeley

REPRESENTED BY
STEPHEN ROSENBERG GALLERY
115 WOOSTER STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10012
212-431-4838



Eye of the Calm. Acrylic/Oil on Canvas. 72" x 96", 1988 ©

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

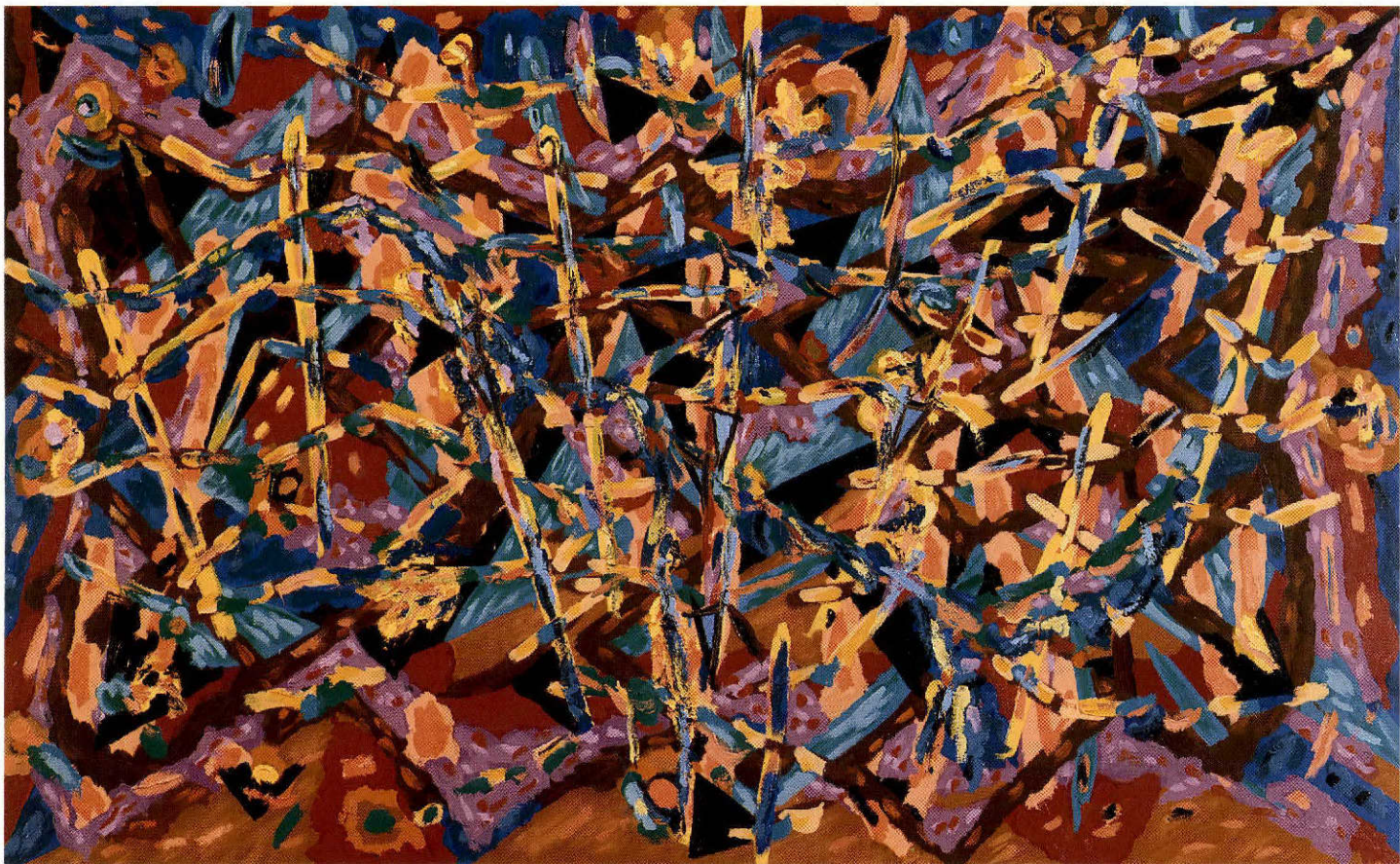


VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

ROSENBERG+KAUFMAN FINE ART

115 WOOSTER STREET, NYC 10012

TEL 212.431.4838 FAX 212.431.1067



Forest Traffic II Oil/Canvas, 45" x 72," 1995

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE:
The Nature of Painting

Virginia Cuppaidge's art has always been a celebration of abstraction. She understands how the sights and sounds of nature find expression through color and form on a two-dimensional surface. In her oil paintings Cuppaidge addresses one of the principal tenets of abstraction: the experience of nature is something more than the eye can see—the cosmic realms and the microscopic world also can be realized through abstracted images.

Cuppaidge's vivid hues and thick, sensuous surfaces reaffirm her initial pleasure in seeing works of art in the original after years when only reproductions were available to her. In 1969, when she came to the United States from her native Australia, Cuppaidge quickly

absorbed the sophisticated art scene of New York, which included some of the best museums anywhere. Trips to the Guggenheim Museum introduced her to the extraordinary abstractions of Wassily Kandinsky, and the wonders of American modernists Georgia O'Keeffe and Arthur Dove. A painting of explosive color by Hans Hofmann in the Metropolitan Museum of Art was a startling visual experience after the sepia reproductions of his work she had known in Australia. In 1972 a major retrospective of Mondrian came to the Guggenheim, and Cuppaidge was astonished at the incredible visual effect of his neo-plastic canvases. She realized that even the rigorous, geometric compositions of Mondrian could also be a sensual expression. In

1983 she saw Lee Krasner's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, and was overwhelmed by the canvases of this artist whose work had seldom been shown previously. Since her earliest paintings, Cuppaidge has continued to employ an underlying structure for her large, painterly canvases: a large biomorph or a series of triangles anchor her compositions, and serve as a counterpoint for the linear elements and spots of pigment that adhere to the larger forms like microscopic organisms. Like Kandinsky and Hofmann, Cuppaidge continues to explore the structural properties and the expressive character of color.

This is especially true in her recent canvases that are redolent of an important change in Cuppaidge's

life: for the past four years she has summered in Amagansett, Long Island, and taught at the Victor D'Amico Institute of Art/Art Barge in Napeague Harbor. She told a story recently of a remark that she had made to one of her adult students there. When the young man expressed an interest in painting the bay adjacent to the anchored studio/barge, Cuppaidge advised him to "paint the *feeling* of the bay" rather than a view. This is exactly the approach of the artist herself. The effect of the gentle waves, the cobalt of the skies, and the buzzing grasses have transformed her vision, making for smaller, shimmering, lively forms on the canvas. The vision is no longer of a landscape recalled from her native Australia, but the direct experience of the beauties



First Days of Spring Oil/Canvas, 40" x 60," 1995



When Ships Come In Oil/Canvas, 72" x 96," 1995

around her. The artist makes vivid works on paper, and brings back to her New York studio these impressions of Long Island's special light. Cuppaidge recalls her memories of the seas off the coasts of Australia as harsher and stronger than the tranquil lapping of waves and the gentle greens of the Atlantic.

Titles of her recent works suggest how much her yearning for nature has been satisfied by her sojourns at the beach, and how her creative energies are easily channeled there into paintings of enormous visual appeal. *Sunlight and Rain*, for example, combines underlying triangles and biomorphs with an active surface of vivid color areas in green, red, blue, and yellow; all the hues that are

redolent of the sea. In this work, and another, *When Ships Come In* she shows the extent of her abstractions' continuity and departure from previous paintings. These images have the dynamic interaction of color and form that has always been her signature approach. The new paintings, though they retain her expansive scale, feature elements that no longer sweep powerfully over the entire canvas, but pulsate and resonate as though driven by inner forces. *First Days of Spring* and *Forest Traffic II* in their shimmering effects of oscillating dabs of color are reminiscent to me of the resplendent nature studies of Joseph Stella, an American Futurist honored last year by a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art—a show that

Cuppaidge viewed, and deeply admired. While her color choices and the overall appearance of her nature canvases depart from the dynamism of the Futurists, the internal rhythms and the use of small strokes of color to enliven the surface reflect their example.

The cosmos has always been a theme that has captured Cuppaidge's imagination. In *Star Map*, the binaries of dark and glowing, massive and minuscule, unified and fragmented evoke the experience of a starry evening in a sky that never ends.

Cuppaidge needs to be applauded for the rich and vibrant canvases and works on paper that never get stale. Her art brims with new ideas, and her energy abounds. This show is the twentieth solo

exhibition for Cuppaidge. Such an exhibition history both in the United States and Australia is a remarkable achievement for any artist. For Virginia Cuppaidge, the buoyancy of her new canvases is a triumph.

JOAN MARTER

Professor of Art History
Rutgers University



Star Map Gouache on paper, 22" x 32," 1994

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1996

Douglass College, Rutgers University,
New Brunswick, NJ

1996, 1994

Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney, Australia

1995

Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, NYC
Wagner Art Gallery, Hong Kong, China

1993, 1989, 1986

Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, NYC

1988, 1985

Michael Milburn Galleries, Brisbane,
Australia

1987, 1985

Bloomfield Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1986

Manhattanville College Gallery,
Purchase, NY

1984

Ruth Schaffner Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA

1983

Penrith Regional Gallery, New South
Wales, Australia

1982, 1980, 1979, 1976, 1974

Gallery A, Sydney, Australia

1975

Susan Caldwell Gallery, NYC

1973

AM Sachs Gallery, NYC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1996

Joan & Peter Clemenger Triennial
Exhibition of Contemporary Australian
Art, National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne, Australia

1993, 1991

Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, NYC

1992

Wagner Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia

1991

Australian Galleries, Sydney, Australia

1987

Monash University Gallery,
Melbourne, Australia

1985, 1983

A.I.R. Gallery, NYC

1982

Philip Morris Collection, Melville Hall,
Canberra, Australia

1978, 1976

Susan Caldwell Gallery, NYC

1978

Australian Women Artists,
Contemporary Arts Society, Sydney

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1994

Elwyn Lynn, *The Australian*, June

1993

Wendy Beckett, *The Mystical Now: Art
and The Sacred*, Illus., Universe.

Grace Glueck, *The New York Observer*,
March

Corinne Robins, Exhibition Essay,
Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, NYC

1992

Helen Ashton Fisher, "NY Notebook,"
Oz Arts Magazine

Susan Wyndham, "Drawn to the USA,"
The Australian Magazine

1990

International Guest Artist, Australian
Artist, May

Amy Fine Collins, *Art in America*, Jan.

1989

Ruth Bass, *ARTnews*, December

1989

Peter Selz, Catalogue Essay,
Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, NYC

1986

Corinne Robins, Catalogue Essay,
Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, NYC

1985

Nancy D. Underhill, University of
Queensland Art Museum Catalogue

1985

Linda van Nuen, *The Australian*, April

1984

Corinne Robins, *The Pluralist Era: American
Art 1968-1981*, Harper & Row, NY

1983

Queensland University Art Museum
Acquisitions Catalogue 1973-1983

1978

Corinne Robins, *ARTS Magazine*, June

1973

April Kingsley, *Art International*, April

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney, Australia

Brisbane Girls Grammar School,
Australia (Commission)

Chase Manhattan Bank, NYC
Citicorp, NYC

Commonwealth Loan Collection,
Australian Embassy

Hyatt Regency Hotels, NYC

Kingsborough Community College,
Brooklyn, NY

Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY
Newcastle Art Gallery, Australia

Philip Morris Collection, Canberra,
Australia

Power Institute, Sydney, Australia
Prudential Life Insurance, NJ

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane,
Australia

Queensland University, Brisbane,
Australia

Sydney University Library Australia

Westpac Banking Corporation, NYC

Whitney Communications, NYC

Special thanks to:

Australian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

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Ann Lewis, A.M., Australia

Jeanne Thayer, California

Design: Laurel Marx

Photography: D. James Dee

ROSENBERG+KAUFMAN FINE ART

WORLD BANK STAFF ART SOCIETY

April 27, 1996

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn
President
World Bank

Dear Mr. Wolfensohn:

Here is the information package on Ms. Virginia Cuppidge, the artist whose exhibition you will open on May 1st. Although Australian Ambassador McCarthy will attend the function (he will arrive at 6:10 p.m.) he will be able to stay for only 20 minutes as he will be between engagements. Guests will arrive at 5:30.

Suggested schedule:

- 6:10 Mr. Serageldin and I will come to your office and walk with you to the exhibition
- 6:10 Arrival of Ambassador McCarthy
- 6:15 Mr. Serageldin introduces you
- 6:18 Your opening speech
- 6:23 Ambassador McCarthy introduces Ms. Cuppidge
- 6:25 Ms. Cuppidge responds briefly

Guests list includes Ambassadors, Cultural Attachés and other embassy staff from the British Commonwealth countries, directors and curators of area museums and galleries and private collectors. Bank and IMF Executive Directors, Vice Presidents have also been formally invited. All other Bank and IMF staff are automatically invited through Weekly Bulletin announcements.

I am extremely grateful to you for making the time to preside over this event.

Kind regards,



Regine S. Boucard

PS: You will notice that the wine and beer are from Australia.

Mr. J. D. Wolfenson

- 2 -

April 27, 1996

cc: Mr. I. Serageldin, Mesdames J. Bassinette, J. Holden, A. Tsatsakis, Art Society Board

**WORLD BANK STAFF ART SOCIETY
Washington, DC 20433
USA**

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

March-June 1996

Price List

When Ships Come In, 1995	72" x 96" oil/cnvas	\$ 22,000.00
Morning Light, 1995	36" x 38" oil/cnvas	7,200.00
Sunlight & Rain, 1995	36" x 38" oil/cnvas	7,200.00
Starry Starry Night, 1994	36" x 38" oil/cnvas	7,200.00
Trailing the Perimeter, 1986	45" x 72" oil/cnvas	14,000.00
Solar Cascade, 1992	30" x 60" oil/cnvas	12,000.00
St. Valentine's Gift, 1992	30" x 60" oil/cnvas	12,000.00
Center of the Beginning", 1988	84" x 180" oil/cnvas	36,000.00

Further visits to the exhibition by appointment only. Please contact the Art Society at (202) 473-4711 - Fax (202) 473-5480



Record Removal Notice

File Title President Wolfensohn - Briefing Materials for President's Speeches - Social Event - World Bank Art Society - Exhibit Opening - Virginia Cuppaigne - Australian Artist - James D Wolfensohn [JDW] to Make Opening Remarks - JDW and ERW - May 1, 1996		Barcode No. 30484966		
Document Date [undated]	Document Type CV / Resumé			
Correspondents / Participants				
Subject / Title Virginia Cuppaigne				
Exception(s) Personal Information				
Additional Comments		The item(s) identified above has/have been removed in accordance with The World Bank Policy on Access to Information or other disclosure policies of the World Bank Group. <table border="1"><tr><td>Withdrawn by S. Thompson</td><td>Date February 11, 2025</td></tr></table>	Withdrawn by S. Thompson	Date February 11, 2025
Withdrawn by S. Thompson	Date February 11, 2025			

Articles

A U S T R A L I A N

Artist

MAY 1990 Australia's national practical monthly magazine for active artists

INTERNATIONAL GUEST ARTIST: VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

Learn to take risks in your art – don't be afraid to open up

I decided I wanted to be an artist when I was very young, about six or seven years old. Later, when I was a teenager growing up in Brisbane, I remember looking at paintings and finding myself re-painting them in my mind to make them come closer to my own taste. That helped me to understand that this burning desire I felt to be a painter was real. And even though there were a few years when I first left school when I was worried about the notion of actually being a woman artist, I always had this burning desire, and I guess I just had to fulfil it. Now there's no question that this is what I will always do.

It's important to add that at that time in Australia, in the early sixties, the lack of role models made it very hard for me to truly envisage being a female artist. What I gather from younger women artists I meet now is that although their self image has improved a lot, there's still quite a way to go for women.

I came directly from Sydney to New York City in 1969. I was 25 years old with one suitcase in hand and not much money. How I knew so determinedly that this was the city for me to be in I do not know, but it is, and I have never stopped appreciating my time here. What motivated me was some of the contemporary art I had seen (in reproduction) from America. I thought it was the most advanced art I had ever seen. It was not as though, like a lot of Australians, I wanted to travel the world. I didn't. I just wanted to get to New York City. Now, after 20 years here, I still don't like to be away from it for too long.

One of the things I really love here is the access to the art museums. It is a real security to know that anytime you need to, you can hop a subway and be looking at some of the greatest art in the world in minutes.

I think that, like all artists, I am trying to reveal a deeper meaning to life and to explain it in visual terms. I will always struggle with this.

I think the feminist movement in America in the mid seventies definitely contributed to my opening up and revealing on canvas the maximum that I could without inhibition. When I look back at my early works, I realise that there was a definite timidity based on being a woman in what was a male world, and the feminist movement in the seventies – plus getting a few years older! – really helped me to open up more on the canvas and not be afraid to reveal my inner self.

Probably the most important thing that I have learned, though, is to take risks. I find that whenever I make a move based on 'should' – for example, 'I should do this because that's what I learned in art history' – it didn't work. But when I let the painting tell me what moves to make – even though it often doesn't make any sense intellectually – it always works. When I see a painting is not working and I look to see why, I usually realise I've done something that was dictated by my mind, and that I didn't let the painting tell me what to do.

So what I've learned is to just do whatever the painting suggests, because it ends up making sense to the painting, even if it makes no sense to my reason or logic or anything else.

My personal style

I suppose I would describe my personal style as intuitive. Over the years my work has evolved from being more minimal and a little aloof, to being much more upfront. I've really worked on trying to just let it rip, and I'm still working on that. It's not as easy as it might sound though. Well not for me, at least, because I see that I have a strong tendency to hold back. I think many women do. I suspect that I've been so deeply socialised to respond to myself this way that sometimes I don't even realise I'm doing it. But as I've become more and more aware of it my work has changed and so have I. I'm hoping my paintings now will

become an even clearer expression of who I am.

Some friends who are close to me who have watched the evolution of my work over the past 15 years or so, have commented on how much bolder and more robust it's become, and they say that the work really seems to directly reflect the way I have been changing in myself, as a person. And I think that's true. It's as though whatever's going on for me now is OK, and it's OK to put it out there, I don't have to hold anything back anymore.

I do want to say I have never tried to paint to adhere to a trend and I'm not about to start. What I'm pursuing as an artist is something truly contemporary, so I just paint what I have to paint for that particular time. Sometimes it even proves to be ahead of the trend. But being fashionable is definitely not a factor in my work. I'm just aiming for good paintings.

People often ask if I paint from sketches, and the answer is no. I maybe do a little pencil outline of a few of the forms, but I basically work on the painting as I go along. Years ago, when I was work-

ing in a very simple style, I tried to do a small version of the painting and then blow it up to a much larger size, but I discovered that there was no way I could do this because the proportion just changed the whole feeling of the painting.

Because I am an abstract artist, my choice of subject matter is dominated by what colours I want to use on the canvas. It's colour that organises the canvas, and structure becomes a function of colour. I get ideas for the colours, and then the colours will directly tell me what size and what sorts of shapes the

forms will be.

Most of my paintings take several months, but I can never predict it. I have a very big one that took six months, but sometimes they take only a few weeks.

I believe that being an artist is the most wonderful thing in the world, particularly when you know you will do it for the rest of your life. And I do believe that the risks we take in painting that ultimately work are the same risks we need to take in life. And I think the thing is to take the risk, in painting and in life, because it's worth it. It really is.

About the artist

Virginia Cuppaidge was born in Brisbane in 1943 and spent her childhood there. A painter and designer, she studied at the Urban Art School, Sydney and under John Olsen, Stanislaus Rapotec and Robert Klipfel. She taught painting and worked as a fashion designer in Australia before going to the U.S.A. in 1969.

Virginia was assistant at Max Hutchinson's Gallery, New York and later became

acting director of the Richard Feigen Gallery in Chicago. She has taken part in many important group exhibitions in Australia and U.S.A. as well as holding solo exhibitions in both countries.

She was awarded the Macdowell Colony Fellowship in 1975 and the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976. Her work hangs in numerous collections in U.S.A. and Australia.



Art in America

January 1990

Virginia Cuppaigne at Stephen Rosenberg

Nature, in Virginia Cuppaigne's vision of the universe, is ruled by frenetic forces. Acid complementary colors, swirling organic shapes, kaleidoscopic patterning and propulsive brushwork all conspire to produce delirious abstractions. Whether penetrating to the essence of a landscape or zooming through an imaginary galaxy, Cuppaigne discovers the same madly happy rhythms. Only her cool blue zones and intruding pyramidal wedges provide occasional relief from the pulsing neon palette and swooping high-velocity biomorphism.

In *Four Corners of the Earth*, a fantastic global diagram, two earth-toned blotches are opposed to a pair of ocean-blue sections, marked with checkerboard graticules. Within these "four corners," variegated rivulets flow by, vivid as party streamers. The curving striations also recall topographical notations on contour maps, while the string of dots—bouncing and popping as brightly as Christmas lights—suggests routes on an air-travel chart, or the plan of a constellation.

Less grounded in the material world, *Constellation Shift* is a meditation on galactic move-

ment. A giant rainbow-hued smear whooshes by like the tail of a confectionary comet. A molten, confetti-speckled sunburst oozes in from the right, while a ribbony streak of navy—turning in on itself like a Möbius strip—zips around in the opposite direction. Like space debris in orbit, everything in this cosmos floats past without colliding.

In *Center of the Beginning*, the most manic work of all, Cuppaigne discharges a wild barrage of hyperactive, directional brushstrokes. They radiate like sunbeams, flicker like flames, wriggle like high-speed sperm and shower down like the aftermath of fireworks. This painting is huge (84 by 180 inches), and it sucks

the viewer right into the heart of its maelstrom—a sensation that proves more exhausting than exhilarating.

Cuppaigne's visionary cosmologies, with their explosive, vibrating facture and colors and their homely shapes, recall van Gogh's anthropomorphized, anxious landscapes. But in Cuppaigne's canvases, there is no tension between chaos and order: this is van Gogh on mushrooms. Lacking the discipline of a rigorous underlying structure, her compositions get wobbly and her tropical, subaqueous colors—too similar in intensity—come dangerously close to a decorator palette.

—Amy Fine Collins



Virginia Cuppaigne: *Four Corners of the Earth*, 1989, oil on canvas, 45 by 72 inches; at Stephen Rosenberg.

Lifestyle

LOFTY ASPIRATIONS

In her loft in Soho, New York, celebrated artist Virginia Cuppaidge has developed a wonderful symbiotic relationship between her art and her living spaces.



Virginia at work in her light filled, open space loft — her painting and living space



Virginia Cuppaidge was born in Brisbane and trained as an artist in Sydney; she now practises her craft in a light-flooded loft on the top floor of an old factory building in New York's Soho district. "Light" is the operative word for Virginia — it is all pervasive. It invades her living space and suffuses her work. A reviewer described her paintings as "fields of light".

When Virginia bought the 232 sq m of raw space eight years ago and began to renovate, she found herself faced with a fundamental design problem.

"When I began to draw up plans, I discovered that in placing the walls on a strictly vertical/horizontal basis, with the walls at right angles to one another, I lost a good deal of the loft's most valuable asset, light."

She solved the problem finally by setting the walls at an angle to the horizontal, creating a wedge-shaped

gallery in the centre.

Kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms are located in the central area of the loft behind the angled wall that defines the gallery. A large living room occupies the south end of the space, and an even larger studio the northern end. "In a way, you could say the loft was designed around my paintings," she says.

Virginia Cuppaidge's work is well known both in Australia and New York. Her paintings now hang in the Australian Embassy in Washington, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Queensland Art Gallery, the Philip Morris Collection, the Chase Manhattan Bank, Neuberger Museum in Purchase, New York, the Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, and most recently she has sold a painting to a collector from Dallas, Texas.

There have been numerous articles concerning

her work in such prestigious publications as Arts Magazine, Art International and Art in Australia.

Virginia says that her early Australian environment and conditioning have left her with a marked feeling for the large scale, the wide expanse and the sweeping vista. This in part explains why she prefers to work on paintings of such monumental proportions.

"Really," she says, "the only factor that limits the size of my work, is the size of my working space."

In order to maintain her Australian connections, both familial and inspirational, she returns to Sydney and Brisbane once every 15 months.

The process by which Virginia produces her paintings is slow and painstaking "which is why I will usually need over a year to get together enough work for a show. It can take me four or five weeks to complete one

painting." Building up, by the application of up to 50 layers of paint, she achieves a smooth, almost flawless surface that quite literally glows, as though illuminated from within.

"I needed a simple uncluttered space in which to display the paintings to their best advantage, one in which dealers and buyers could understand how they might look in a domestic environment. Clients often find it hard to visualise how a painting will look in a room surrounded by furniture."

A beautiful Oriental rug in delicate pink and beige tones, light brown upholstery, the natural tones of wood and all white walls effectively complement Virginia's subtle paintings.

Lightly stained natural wood was also the choice for kitchen cabinets with plain white Formica for counter tops. "I intentionally designed the counters several inches higher than is standard," says the tall Virginia. "I was fed up with working in kitchens designed for midgets. Though I don't do it very often I do love to cook and occasionally I'll spend several days turning out gourmet masterpieces."

Just to survive in New York as an artist, let alone make a fairly decent living, is a tremendous feat of endurance and willpower, Virginia feels.

The loft is a perfect reflection of her needs and priorities. The space is divided roughly into one third living and two thirds working space. "That's if you count the gallery as working space." But it's impossible to separate the working and the living areas of either the loft or Virginia's life. They are inseparable. Her paintings enhance the living space and the living space enhances her paintings: they're symbiotic. □

ARTnews

VIRGINIA CUPPAIDGE

Stephen Rosenberg

Color is the animating force of Virginia Cuppaidge's dynamic abstractions. This Australian-born artist, who settled in New York in 1969, seems to have been particularly inspired by Hans Hofmann's glowing color as well as by his paint quality and his juxtapositions of hard-edge and irregular forms.

Once considered a color-field painter, Cuppaidge gravitated to a more organic abstraction, and her paintings often refer to landscape, the world of nature, and even the cosmos. In the large acrylic *Eye of the Calm*, a monolithic royal-blue triangle thrusts mountainlike into a field of brown, blue, purple, violet, green, and orange streaks and blotches. Toward the apex is an amoebalike shape of rich turquoise and aqua, overlaid with dabs and dashes of other colors and set against a halo of red and orange paint. The configuration alludes to landscape—somewhat in the manner of early Kandinsky—as well as to wind and weather, and sunrise and sunset.

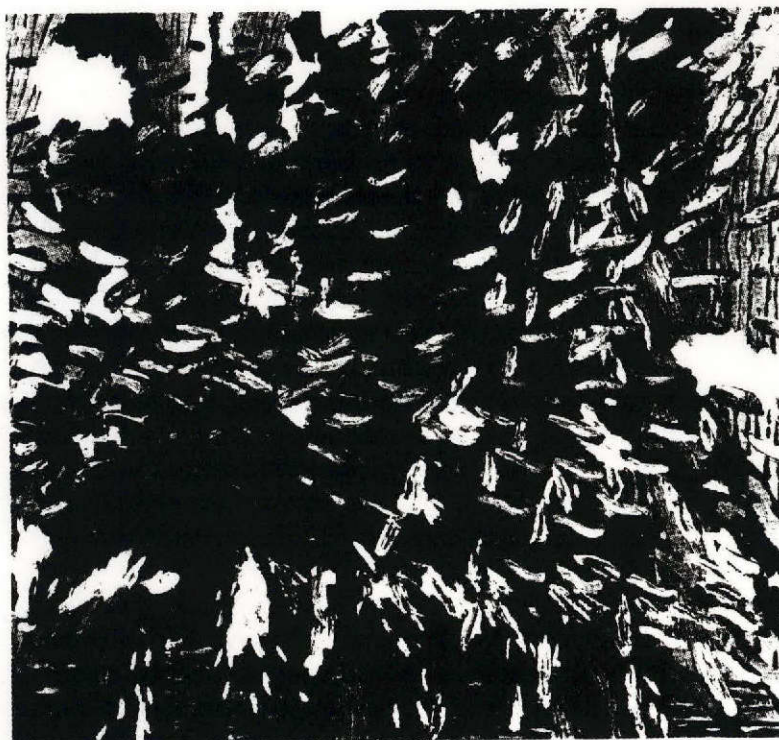
In the oil *Center of the Beginning*, curving bands of color, enlivened by recognizable patterns or globs of varying hues, interweave over the surface of a 7-by-15-foot canvas. Although there is no one-to-one correspondence, all kinds of images emerge—foliage rising, rainbows, mountains, rivers flowing downward, and fish swimming toward some predetermined des-

tination. Shocking pinks, avocado greens, multiple hues of blue, and dusky oranges predominate.

Cuppaidge's penchant for active, sweeping forms and brilliant color can lead to weakness. In some works the sense of motion seems to be there for its own sake. The most engaging paintings are those that are rather modest in size and dependent on color

and paint quality rather than on shape or form. *Sunshines, Somehow* is simply a buildup of thick, gooey strokes on an almost square canvas—golds and lemons, fuchsias and pinks, ceruleans and purples—in bursts and streaks of gorgeous color that create a world of foliage, flowers, and dazzling sunlight.

—Ruth Bass



Virginia Cuppaidge, *Sunshines, Somehow*, 1989, oil on canvas, 38 by 36 inches. Stephen Rosenberg.