

CRAIG BARRETT

THE BERRY CONSOLS

EUREKA CENTRE BALLARAT

3 February – 4 September 2021

Artist's talk and exhibition celebration:

Saturday 8 May 2021 at 5pm

Artist's acknowledgements

Special thanks to: The Dja Dja Warrung for allowing me to feel Spirit when I walk on Country where I now live. Hepburn Shire Council for the work that needs to be done to preserve these historic sites.

Anthony Camm and all the staff at the Eureka Centre for their ongoing commitment to Truth Telling.

Craig Barrett is represented by Stephen McLaughlan Gallery

EUREKA CENTRE BALLARAT

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Eureka Centre is a cultural facility of the City of Ballarat



We respectfully acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Eureka Centre stands. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge their continuing connections to Country and Culture.

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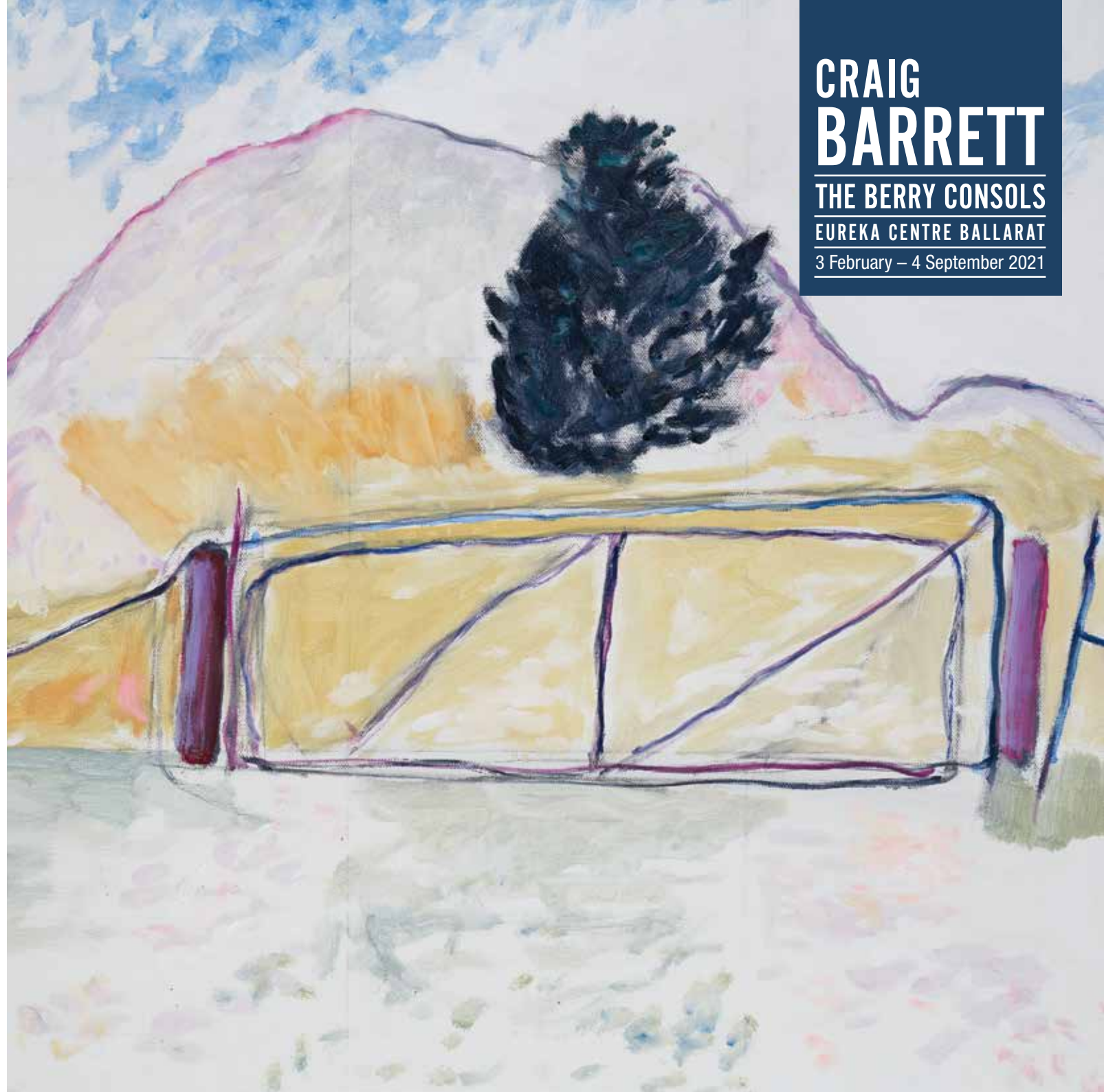
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THE BERRY CONSOLS – CRAIG BARRETT

Since childhood I have been fascinated with natural history, and human history. It seems like forever that I have picked up rocks, or seashells, or seed pods, or gazed at the moon and the stars. Rocks especially held a very mysterious fascination for me. I somehow seemed to 'feel' their age; their stories.

As a young backpacker in my early twenties, I worked for mineral exploration companies in North Queensland. I still search for fossils – what a story they tell. And I fossick over old mining heaps, not for gold, rather for other geological stories. Shards of slate or quartz embedded with other minerals give clues to our world way beyond the human experience. The ground we walk upon has so many layers of stories.

When I moved to Creswick nearly five years ago, I sought to become familiar with its geological and human history. Once again, I found a multitude of layers. I sought the pre-European contact of the Indigenous Dja Dja Wurrung people - the traditional owners of the land. I sought the goldrush history, and, of course, I sought the geological history.

The Berry Consols, deep lead mines just to the north of Creswick, brought a lot of these interests together – with yet another, the aesthetics of the mining industry. The Consols are a line of deep lead mines that traced the ancient gold-bearing riverbeds that were long ago covered by the lava flows of the newer volcanoes of central and western Victoria. Of course, these 19th century mines have left huge environmental problems that will be present for many years, with remnant sludge and tailings having transformed and polluted the land.

For me personally, the remains of these diggings have also become something else. I have become enchanted with the shapes and colours of the mullock heaps. They never look the same each hour or day, depending on the light or the season. It is not just the pictorial aspect that I respond to. When you look at these heaps of mining detritus, once again, you can see layer upon layer. So the story begins all over again.

Craig Barrett
January 2021



Mullock Heap, Madam Berry #3 2019
Oil on linen
55 x 73cm



Gate – Madam Berry 2019 (cover image)
Oil on linen
55 x 73cm



Madam Berry West 2019
Oil on linen
44 x 124cm



Berry #1 Mine 2019
Oil on linen
44 x 124cm