

## **JAMES GLEESON INTERVIEWS: ROGER AND MERLE KEMP**

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**JAMES GLEESON:** Roger and Merle, there's a lot of material here. I think we'd better break it up into groups. Three groups perhaps. Deal with the first small group of work of yours that we've bought over the years—that is, paintings—second group, the ones that we've acquired just recently and, thirdly, at some time in the future, the works on paper of yours that we hold. That will give you a chance to think about it and work out some information.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes, that quite a—

**MERLE KEMP:** It's a kind of cross-pollination process, you know. You get one—

**ROGER KEMP:** Take time to do all that.

**MERLE KEMP:** And it helps the other. I think it's very interesting. I'm looking forward to checking some of it.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, it is something that should be done, probably should have been done much, much before this, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Earlier?

**ROGER KEMP:** It's got away a great deal and it will take a little time to recover it, but there it is.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes. Well, you're one of those artists who's never dated your work as you went along. I can see that.

**ROGER KEMP:** No, it does present quite a problem. I've had about three or four historians on my work now recent times trying, you know, to put it some sort of order in it.

**MERLE KEMP:** Don't you feel ashamed?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, no, I don't really. I think the answer I'd give to that I think is because I've been so preoccupied with doing what I'm doing that, you know, I've just had no time to go back. Why it has developed that way, I think—and I think for a very good reason—is because I have taken myself with it, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** All the time I've been with it. You know, in the immediacy of my consciousness all the time, and that allows very little scope for going back. Automatically, I set my psychology that it does go back as it goes forward, you know.

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**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I work on the three levels; yesterday, today and tomorrow. That can be translated into, you know, history, today and then contemporary thought of tomorrow, you know. I mean, that's the way it goes. So while I'm working, even now, even while this exhibition was being gotten together, I was still so preoccupied that it almost blotted it out, you know, with the concentration and the immediacy of what I was doing. So, I mean you can see quite easily—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Well, I understand that because the creative process is the most important after all, and the historical part of the process comes afterwards.

**MERLE KEMP:** It can also be very confusing because in trying to date one will come up quite out of context, which is the sort of forerunner of a cycle that happens several years later.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**MERLE KEMP:** It seems to be completely perfect and quite out of place. Now, this is confusing, you know, regarding dates.

**JAMES GLEESON:** That's right.

**MERLE KEMP:** Then later on it's like a little spark, if you like.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Well, it simply means that you can't accept the style as a real basis for dating.

**ROGER KEMP:** No, no. I think again the explanation for this is I make bold to relate it to the freedom of the city, you know, with the freedom of the mind, sort of thing, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** This kind of parallel attitude, you know, if I can put it. What happens is that the mind goes through a whole spectrum of conscious levels, if you like, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Just the same way as philosophy does with the Zen philosophy of whatever, you know, they go through different cycles and whatever. Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's a parallel to that.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** But I've broadened it up and related it to everyday life, if you like, you know. Again, from the physical body to the thought structure, from the thought to the mind and the mind to the spirit idea, you know, along those lines.

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Of course that always is merged into subject matter, you know. I mean, it goes into an experience in short.

**JAMES GLEESON:** And this has been constant in your work right from the earliest days?

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes, yes, that's what is making it possible to go on in that level, because it is constantly being structured into what exists, you know. I mean, the reality, if you what reality that's reality. You know, it's so real that it gets a little terrifying, you know. And it works up and down. Now, what I do, I think there are three levels, main levels, or the structure with which I work. That's the past, present and future, if you like, and that can be translated into innumerable parallels. So I'm working centre, and the centre is balance, and the more that I push myself—in which I have no option now, I have to go, you know—so the more that I am or the more that go into the future, which is inevitable because of the way that I have structured myself in relation to this, it automatically works the whole framework or evolutionary development. So I push forward—I have—I'm pushing back at the same time, so it automatically looks after itself. Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** I do, I do, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So going back, then I go back, you know, to base, if you like, that subconscious source of material. You know, that automatically goes. Then as I go out, the feedback I mean comes from the reality about, you know, as I see things, you know, walking down the streets, you know, moving about, meeting people. All that is activated by, you know, the sense of reality at the level that I function. So, I mean, all that I'm taking it in.

**JAMES GLEESON:** I understand that.

**ROGER KEMP:** Do you?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. So it's coming in en mass, you know, and it's being computerised, if you like, and back it goes. Hey?

**MERLE KEMP:** Computerised? Never mind, go on.

**ROGER KEMP:** I get too (inaudible) and Merle doesn't like that.

**MERLE KEMP:** No, no, no. I'm just querying that word computerised.

**ROGER KEMP:** No. Well, I mean, it's a good, it's a good word to use because the computerisation—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Well, it's the feeding in of data from outside.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's data, that's what it is. I mean, the computer is a structure of the mind, more or less.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

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**ROGER KEMP:** I mean, all the structure that comes from what has made the computer possible is a corresponding sort of structure that we have within our mind which connects up with the universal prints, cosmic, whatever, you know. I mean, that's inevitable. If it doesn't, well, I ask the question: where does it come from, you know? I mean, it connects up with outside structures to provide cosmic structures and things of universal structure and things like that. It's all inter-structured now. What's the new science today has—

**MERLE KEMP:** Sorry, I put you off your thought then by interrupting.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. Once I'm on rhythm, you see, I lose it.

**MERLE KEMP:** Sorry. Be quiet.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Am I right in understanding this, Roger, that you work on several levels? One is a constant structure of three levels, which is the permanent thing that unites all your work from the beginning right through.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** But every now and again some stimulus, some visual or psychological or philosophical stimulus comes in which sets a motif operating within that overall structure. Such as those flying bird motifs that come in, which in a way gives a kind of phase to a particular time of working and yet it all fits in to this overall pattern of your structured thinking.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes, yes. Yes, that is so and, I mean, it's on record that I have gone back. You know, St Francis and the bird, I've painted a few of those paintings, which are not in that sense but in the sense—well, it is in that sense. But as I move through the various planes, if you like, you know, sometimes I come right back and I'm looking at nature, for instance, which excludes—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I mean, it is essentially nature and I think it is within that particular area that I identify myself. Now, I don't mean a compromise. I mean I come back and definitely sort of be that, you know. Another time I could turn away from nature, or it could be one or two per cent that's always there, and be aware of the other, you know. Like in the streets, for instance, where nature doesn't exist in that sense, you know, and then I would be conscious of that. All my concentration and awareness would be within that particular area, and this is like a specialised sort of way in which you do it. I think it's all ordered, the whole process of my thinking is ordered.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It has the capabilities of separating the various levels or planes. Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** My spirit there. Nature, you know, the science from the hits opposite, like the human quality which is, you know, in constant conflict all the time. And then having separated them like that, then it makes it possible for the

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evolution to reform itself. You build up, like the magnetic pull, if you like, when you hit an idea. I could be like I usually—which is one of the terrifying things that I have to go through from time to time. I'll be, you know, just casually sketching a little sketch no bigger than that. Because of the structure behind it and its connections, I'm not aware of it, you know. Then I just draw and I say, 'Okay, that looks good. I think I'll paint that'. So I go to my studio and look at it and say, 'Well, yes, twice, three, four times the size of that which would make it up to about three feet, that would be good'. But before I have it down, it's already multiplied about three or four times, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It will probably finish up about 20 feet long, you know, by sheer development of the concentrated idea itself, which I'm not aware of in the first—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, it generates its own force.

**ROGER KEMP:** It generates its own force. Now from one, you know, just a little section like that—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I understand.

**ROGER KEMP:** It sort of picks up, you know, and it goes so fast you can understand why I don't go back. Then I'm going like hell to try and catch up to it, you know, and it's quite a problem. Then the amount of energy and concentration demanded of, you know, just get the concept down like that, drawing paint or draw it with a paintbrush or whatever. Then immediately that's done, or before it's done because it's always ahead of me, I'm faced up with seeing that picture painted without having painted it. Then what it demands of me is that whole physical sort of effort to turn it around and supply at an emotional level equal to the mathematics that are behind it. So, you see, that's quite a demanding practice and that's normal.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Roger, it seemed to me that in a way all your work is one work. They're all parts of a body of work that's so closely integrated that one can look at it as a single work. Do you know what I mean about that?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, yes, I do. I think that you will notice even in this present exhibition here, I think you'll notice that one gallery alone doesn't make any attempt to give individual names to or to identify them in our isolation. But it had all become one form and I think that it is, of course, and that was probably contribute to the evidence of the last description I gave about the work, how it develops, you know, like that.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's continually expanding and not only expanding but developing. You know, the expansion is not enough. You can expand yourself out of yourself.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's the development of the idea which relates itself back to the central core which dictates, I mean, exactly what I can do and what I can't do,

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you know. The discipline is there. So seeing it down once it's out there, then what immediately is put out there in the objective world, then immediately it dictates, you know, and tells me exactly how much I can put in and, you know, what I should—do you follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** All the way along. So the discipline is precise. It's like a mathematical problem, I suppose, unsolved in the first place. But, I mean, these things solve themselves, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** It's a lifetime struggle.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, it is, and all I have to work on is one line, one line, which is this little symbol here which represents me in my entirety, if you like. At the same time—how am I going to put this one?—I've identified myself with the centre of the creative idea, if you like, you know. That's central too to a relativity of idea, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** So in a way a painting becomes a universe in which yourself is—

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, I think that's what it amounts to. I think what has been made possible to do that is because of the abstraction of the representational things that I see before me. You see, I run parallel and actually gone through the principle as far as abstracting the representational object back to a symbol. So the symbol represents that out there and it runs parallel to it. So the centre of what's out there is also the centre on which I work, and they're synonymous or interchangeable. Why I don't pull up on that, why doesn't it pull me up, is because I work on a three base principle. You know? I mean, the result of one line or one dot there is the sum total of what I see to the right of me, to the left, and as the right moves over like that—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Where they meet in the centre is what it's all about. Can I explain it to you in colour?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** You have a red there and you have a blue there. You see?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So that could be anything at all there, it could be something quite representational. But these two colours represent a symbolic way, or a way in which it can be explained a little bit more clearly.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** You can see if you have the blue here and the red there—and I'm thinking to try and solve that particular problem, which these two things have—as they cross over like that, you know, in the centre, at the moment of crossing is the moment in which I realise things. So when those two colours meet in the

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centre they become purple and the metamorphosis is absolutely complete. Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I do. Yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** So the result of that sort of thing is neither that which you see to the right, nor to the left, but the—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Fusion or crossing back.

**ROGER KEMP:** The creative act which occurred by my concentrating centre. I mean, it's like two and two are four, you can't argue against it. I mean, the metamorphosis, you know, becomes purple. The purple is the net result of your red and blue. See?

**JAMES GLEESON:** I understand that.

**ROGER KEMP:** So I identify myself with that metamorphosis of change, or that change which then releases me from being anchored to any conventional way in which I might otherwise think. So that particular result there is continually buoyant. It is creative in its own right, and yet it is stable. It is constant. So in a rough sort of way, do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** I do. Yes, I do follow that.

**ROGER KEMP:** But actually, I mean, that kind of thinking is the kind of thinking I do all the time, so I'm not just at this moment thinking something up like that.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No, I understand. It's the basis of your whole process.

**ROGER KEMP:** I mean, it is, it's the whole basis on which it works. To try and get it all together, it multiplies so quickly that the lateral thing that one might start off with finishes up, you know, quite in the round. It develops in such an extent that all that you see is finally contained in the unit. So the unit becomes one hundred per cent and then the scale of values, of course, in the next move where they all merge, it goes back to one per cent in relation to—do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, that is a hundred per cent. So this kind of rise and fall, of course all that could be reduced back to another mark if you like. But, I mean, at the same time it would be more progressive in so far that it had been through all that, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Through that, yes, yes. So in a way it's really not very pertinent to talk about individual paintings in your career because it's the process itself that's important.

**ROGER KEMP:** That's right. That's right. Yes. Where the personal thing comes in then I feel most uneasy about it because it's one step away from being perfectly creative in that sense. You know, you've got to be objective and have to release the self, the personality. Paradoxically, I mean, one has to put—in my case—my identity on that person, or on that creative act, you know. So, you know, how that's done is just on this principle here of working on three keeps you away

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from sort of putting a hand on it and say, 'That's me'. You see, I can't do it. So immediately I say, 'Well, that's me', it's either to the right or left of me. Like Zen, you know?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's the same, isn't it? So they don't ever catch up, although they do paradoxically. But, I mean, if you try to rest on it and say, 'Well, that's it', of course it's not. You know, immediately it's gone some other way. But, at the same time, you can flood into that centre and be it but, I mean, if you are then your consciousness has developed or expanded or becomes that you're not aware of it until you get out of it, or something of this nature.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I understand that. It's a very profound mystical approach, I suppose.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, whatever it is, that's the kind of framework, that's the kind of philosophy, religion or, you know. I think it goes into all kinds of different—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Well, it's scientific too. It has that scientific—

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, it is, I think. I'm working on this one now, the science. What's the other mathematical science?

**MERLE KEMP:** Physics.

**ROGER KEMP:** Physics. Yes. I think they've jumped ahead on physics now and Newton's laws or whatever have been challenged, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Now, I'm listening to this one and I'm somehow running very parallel to that and I'm full of fear at the moment because, I mean, even when I hit it a few days ago I can still feel the reaction from it. You know when you go out in the country and whatever, you know, you get the afterglow for days after. Do you follow that one?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Still feel it, which is a good indication that I'm very close to it. Now I'm trying to sort of line up, like science, art, religion, even those three, there's mathematics too which come into it and all those lines, they all go different lines. Somehow or another science has a way of diverting from the human sort of quality as such. At the present time it is completely detached. They can stand by, you know, and watch it in its progress outside of man, outside of God, as they make bold to state, you know. Now, if that's going to happen—and it is happening—then I think we're in for a whole lot of—I don't know where it's going because we have no guidelines. You see, as human beings we have no guidelines. It could sort of sidestep us in such a way that distance itself could put us out of perspective, if you like, you know, in a sense. But I don't know. I would observe that and then I would try to sort of go back somewhere and try and find that the connecting line or the connecting unity, the area in which science has been done before, science and the humanities, sort of come together and they go on together, you know, at a sense of give and take, you know. Balancing out



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just how far we can go. You can still have a scientific pilot, you know, together with the creative pilot which should be somewhat synonymous or in line with the human creative direction also. I don't know. But this one I've gotten into there somewhere and I'm not quite aware of it at the moment, just how to cope with it. But I have fallen into it somewhere, you know, and I'm in.

**JAMES GLEESON:** You are looking for an art form that is related in its truth to a spiritual experience.

**ROGER KEMP:** Oh, yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** A scientific experience, the nature of the universe as its possible for us to understand it, all worked into a synthesis that is art.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. What it means now, I think, that the whole—you're getting me expanding, I'm expanding. But this is the interesting point here. I think that where it's going now is a revolution, an evolution revolution. Evolution revolution.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes. I understand that, in physics especially.

**ROGER KEMP:** In physics too. Now, our capabilities as human, you know, our limitations of our capabilities, well, I just said they are their being challenged all along the line now and we're being extended that far by natural means that we could be extended right back to nothing, you know, without being that conscious of it until it is done, you know. It's like drinking alcohol or whatever. You never know just when to stop but you've already gone over the line. Do you know what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm, mm.

**ROGER KEMP:** You say, 'Oh, that's all right. I feel good, dear', you know, and you say, 'I'll have another one, another one'. Then of course an hour later or 10 minutes later, it doesn't really matter. You get, you know, the reaction from it, you discover it late, too late sometimes, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** You think that's the danger that we're in?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, I think a lot of these things have to happen, they're inevitable. I think its how we face up to them and how we challenge them. I myself observe, coming back on it, I observe what is happening. I come back to a base where I can handle it, you know. That means, in this particular case, I have gotten back to a base which is diametrically opposed to the materialistic magnet. Do you know?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

**ROGER KEMP:** So you come back. That's happening now generally. It means cutting off from the powerful rhythms that exist today, a sort of turning back on it, so to speak, and looking inside. There one finds a constant which is already detached from that big rhythm because we can't keep up with it any longer. I mean, technology is sort of taking—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

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**ROGER KEMP:** And what we're living with is a sort of an overflow now, if you like, and it will take probably centuries to run down. But, nevertheless, I mean we detach them. But what comes out of it is the human quality, the constant human quality, you know, which can now stand almost detached from this big expanding editor. What is more, it is equal to, it is equal to in reverse.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Yes, yes. Yes, I follow you there.

**ROGER KEMP:** Because, I mean, if you go on expanding it then your expansion means that you expand yourself out of yourself.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Development is another thing. So what it means is a takeover, if you like, and that's what's happening. We, as human beings, are going through a takeover in the same way as, you know, big business does. You know, takeover. So it's getting larger and larger and larger with a leak of some sort.

**JAMES GLEESON:** You're inundated with experience, with knowledge, if you like, knowledge that's not yet transformed by yourself into—

**MERLE KEMP:** Experience.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Real experience.

**MERLE KEMP:** True.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Am I interpreting that correctly?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, the experience is there but I'm not quite sure. We have to go back. I just do it this way first then you go back. The experience, I'm going through the experience all right, as I said a little while ago, you know. The experience is there, but probably the knowledge of how I gain that experience, I don't know because I'm a medium. You know, like I believe Einstein, you know, discovered his particular theory in an intuitive sort of way. You know, you can do these things upside down. Art works that way too.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, of course.

**ROGER KEMP:** I have to describe my point to some. I was asked a question, you know, whether I can start off sketching and, you know, prepare my work in that sense or alternately how do you do it? Sometimes I can't see a damn thing, you know. But I have this tremendous pressure, you know, I have an intuitive sort of sense, sixth sense or something that I've got to do something, you know. I even sort of run out of canvas approximately, you know, even if it's 20 or 30 feet or whatever, whatever it might be, knowing only too well that when I get through I'm going to cover that canvas in a very, very short time indeed, you know. You follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

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**ROGER KEMP:** It's that sort of upside down. While those pressures are on, I mean it's working, you know, this one little intuitive flash if you like which gets through, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** That's the detonator that starts it.

**ROGER KEMP:** Immediately I touch a canvas—and I can't see it sometimes, you know—immediately I touch it, then it's off, you know. You just hold my finger like that and it will shoot right across the whole canvas, bang, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** That's the detonator. That's the thing that starts it all off.

**ROGER KEMP:** Then if I come back and start looking at it, it's not there at all for a hell of a long time, you know. I've got to go up and touch my canvas and get on with it, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** You can't go back on these things. You can't go back immediately because it's full orchestration, full and precisely sort of measured out, and if I try to think objectively to a subjective release, well, there is a paradox all the time. I work objectively till the subject is released but if I try to, you know, run down or get tired like that and come away from it and think that okay, you know, that colour there should be a bit brighter than that or that, I'm absolutely wrong, you know, and I'll go over and touch it, it would not work.

**JAMES GLEESON:** I see.

**ROGER KEMP:** So I have to wait then until they sit down, if you like, which I don't. I'm too impatient, so I mess up lot but recover them again. Wait for the move and see what my next move is, you know, actually see it which is equivalent probably then of going up because there's nothing between me and what I'm seeing so I go over and touch my canvas again, and of course that one thing is integrated into the whole thing and it becomes one unit again and subjectively worked, you know. But they can rise and fall very, very quickly indeed and the moment of, you know, when to stop and when to go on, particularly when to stop, because I think I find it difficult from time to time. Because if I start off on a very sensitive area, you know, trying to be lyrical sort of painting, and the thing starts to develop of course and it can finish up in drama, absolute drama, by just putting too much pressure on my brush. You follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** The mood changes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes, the mood changes and the colour changes and the whole thing changes and before long the depth, where you start off with a very sensitive tone like that, you know, then immediately I put too much pressure. You can't come back, you have to go with it, and I try then to regulate, you know, a plastic sort of touch all the time. Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** If I put too much then they'll have to go.

**JAMES GLEESON:** It takes over. Yes.

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**ROGER KEMP:** It takes over. You have to go to that depth to—

**JAMES GLEESON:** That's what you meant, I think, a little while ago when you said the thing generates itself from its own energy.

**ROGER KEMP:** That's right, yes. There's no recovery, you know. Well, you just try to think of juggling a thing like that in space, you know, and the sensitivity is just one touch too much, you know. I'm being very precise at the moment, that's what happens.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So you start off with—well, I've already said that.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Roger, *Thrust* of 1972, is that the correct date for that one?

**ROGER KEMP:** It would be about that, would it, Merle?

**MERLE KEMP:** That was exhibited, let me see, (inaudible) Exhibition. Seventy-one, '72, I'd think.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, we've got some kind of record on the paper insofar that we know more or less when. Actually, the paperwork—

**MERLE KEMP:** Seventy-two, I would think, because you started working on paper in about '70, and it looks as though you are well into there because the first ones you did tended to be closely related to the figure, you know, those little floating figures (inaudible).

**JAMES GLEESON:** Ah yes, yes.

**MERLE KEMP:** But I'd say about '72. Yes, I think that's right.

**JAMES GLEESON:** So fairly accurate dating.

**MERLE KEMP:** Well, I would think so.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, at this moment. As for the end of it, you see, I painted a lot of this, you know, and you measure it out.

**MERLE KEMP:** It's hard to be precise.

**ROGER KEMP:** Sometimes it goes so fast that I have about half a dozen more bang on the wall stuck, you know, and they get so heavy they all fall down. Then to try and remember the back of them is not done at all.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No, it's very difficult. I can understand.

**ROGER KEMP:** But the individual ones.

**MERLE KEMP:** The fact that the cycles or the world, if you like, repeat themselves in periods of time, it does make it confusing. But that is on canvas which is an indication.

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**JAMES GLEESON:** I think there's one way of looking at it. In your work dating is not terribly important.

**MERLE KEMP:** No.

**JAMES GLEESON:** When you consider the work is the whole part of an organic thing, dating is not—

**MERLE KEMP:** Once they're all dated it's even more confounding, I think, in a way, because instead of seeing a lovely clear line of development right through, they're repeating, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes, the same things are—

**MERLE KEMP:** So in a different stage of development or, you know, a different time.

**ROGER KEMP:** Recreate or create a picture sometimes will bring up the idea because they have different lines, if you like. One's a repertoire of a sort. You know what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes. The repertoire are motifs perhaps that come from experience of nature?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, yes, to go to nature, you know, to music, to flowers, if you like and landscape if you like, metaphysics and, you know, science. All these things I refer to them as a repertoire.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Motifs.

**ROGER KEMP:** Repertoires from which they are motivated by motif, if you like, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** They're identified by a particular motif which takes them into that particular area. So I move after one. You see, I could be on the landscape for two or three months, depending on how far I've gone into other subject matter. That rebounds, you know. Go into that and stay with it for a couple of months and then go completely off it again. Then wait for the cycle to come back. In the meantime I'd be running around taking notice and unconsciously probably half the time and conscious also. But that's the way it goes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** How important is music in its effect on your painting? Do you listen to music a lot? Do you respond consciously to it, do you think in terms of rhythms and movements when you listen to music?

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. I think that I've gotten into music, I think. Well, first of all, I had an appreciation of it. Then to understand it, I think I've got more out of it by going into the structure of how it is structured, you know. Particularly the fugue sort of thing, which breaks itself up into these various units, you know, and I can put them together and build up, you know. Perfect. That takes me further into it, you know, to the understanding, you know, and I can be in the area of, well, the area that a composer I suppose would move into. The only difference is I'm

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interpreting through a different medium. But I'm sure it must, because I don't see any difference. Do you follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** Both structurally and from point of identification with what is music. While I'm painting I'm thinking nothing else but music. I'm not using little symbols to, you know, this or that.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No, no. Not on a superficial level.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's—

**JAMES GLEESON:** The structure.

**ROGER KEMP:** A note becomes a structure, and a structure becomes a substance or whatever, you know, that kind of thing. Ah yes, I like to do much more but it takes so much energy. Energy, you know. It's a matter of energy. The ideas are there. They've got hundreds of them, but I can't, you know, write. One day probably I could produce a dozen really good major ideas ready for major works. Come face up to them, you know, and already see them more or less there and it requires so much energy to keep up with it, that I just turn them over and go over to my board and think from zero almost and I go over and scratch on a thing. I've got all these ideas and they're just so difficult that I somehow choose to, you know, take an alternative course which takes me back to having nothing, if you like. Out of that, before long, it gives me a chance to catch up with it, I suppose. I don't know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Roger, you mentioned when you thought of music, you thought predominantly perhaps in terms of structure, the structure of music. It seems to me that your interest in everything revolves around the idea of structure. Even the titles you give your works like *Configuration*, *Thrust*, they have a sort of structural significance about them.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Would you say that this feeling of—how can I say it?—that the structure is at the central quality of your art? No, that's not putting it right.

**ROGER KEMP:** No, I got it. No, I tell you what. Yes, thanks for getting around to that question because it's centred to—oh, I don't know where I was. Try and put this one, try and get this one together because I think it goes back far enough and this is what we're trying to do, I think, find some starting point back there, you know, back to base all the time. But one is a very broad one. How am I going to put it? When I came out after I'd finished my study and that, and I came out of a point of no return in many directions. We couldn't go on with the Australian scene as such because the international sort of scene had flooded it, you know. It had sort of taken over. So even if one wanted to you'd be, you know, labelled whatever, you know. So I found myself not able. Well, at the same time I still the appreciation. I had a forward going attitude towards things so I took up the challenge of going international, so to speak, you know, in that sense. We didn't have very much material at that time, needless to say. But looking around when there was material, you know, in the modern sense of the word, I could only see fragmentation, a sense of breaking up. Now, that probably wasn't all in what was

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illustrated before me, but I'd gotten in my mind somehow and I could see that, and it's still going on, we're still in it, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Fragmentation.

**ROGER KEMP:** Fragmentation, you know. So I looked around for someone that I could identify myself, another artist or whatever, you know. But all I could see was this fragmentation. Then I found myself not being able to go on with the formats that had been created by other artists in that sense, you know, be it mainstream or what it was. So I set myself to create my own format, own format. This is where the structure came in. What one starts with then is a blank whatever. All I had was this little figure or this little symbol to put on it. Now, I realise that the little figure itself wouldn't create a format.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No, no.

**ROGER KEMP:** See. This is the very essence, I think, of creativity as far as the individual is concerned, you know, in going back to base. We can ride on other formats and that's quite valid. It wasn't for me though, you see.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No.

**ROGER KEMP:** So for over a long time the single one wouldn't work so I went back to this three base, you know. This three base made it possible to extend the single idea. Do you follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Of course, the more that I extended that, the more that I could—I mean, a lot of structures and things came into language also, language about, you know, you turn (inaudible) and all that had to be part and parcel. But more particularly it was structure, and then if you go from there I went to geometry and immediately geometry is applied to a representational thing, then immediately one is subjective to the geometry, the principle of geometry itself. Yes?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** What happens in most cases, when we apply a straight line we think that's geometry, but it isn't. That's only one per cent of the hundred per cent behind it.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So I took it at a hundred per cent significance behind it.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So in taking the human form, if I applied or converted to human form through abstract thinking back to a shape, you know. So you get a square, if you like, you put another square, then another one up there, whatever. Then you're immediately measuring out space for creating, if you like, the start of a format. Yes? But it was much more difficult than that because then I went into physics and various things like that, the mathematical, you know, these squares and things which probably are illustrated. I better not. If I divert now I'll get lost

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completely. But more particularly I'll go to the—where's the last one? Oh well, things of this kind here, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** What? That's number 78 in the catalogue.

**ROGER KEMP:** Where these big structures come into it, you know. On that basis now we exist today I could develop the idea unlimitedly, you know, unlimited scope. You would have scale. I mean, it would carry scale which an architectural structure which comes out of structuring the unit and an understanding of how the unit works in relation to geometry. You know what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** So when you extend it then the whole framework, the whole system of geometry, if you like, goes with it, becomes mathematical and so forth. You follow me? So I got into in all those complications, but then I applied logic to it. Well, it was logic but, I mean, the sense that I did logically assess and I come to decisions about how to control it made it possible for me finally to get around to creating a new format, which became a new order and which is a new order.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Oh, we were just talking about, you know, the rigour of the structure and each case always developed and worked out very thoroughly. Now, what started me off on asking you such a question was the way you obviously reacted to, say, the structure of a fugue and the extraordinary complexity that goes on in the structure of the fugue seems to me to occur in your own paintings. It is finely wrought and is delicately balanced and structured as a fugue.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. I am conscious of that and I'm also conscious of the lateral measurement of going into space, which is another thing which keeps the objective structure going which is something to do with the continuity of the rhythmical structure which is a very difficult one. But the rhythmical structure which takes it from the lateral and takes it from one area, one plane to that of another, you know—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** The physical and mental, the mind and so forth, from the thought process to the mind, from the mind to the spirit, whatever. I mean, certain areas along all of those. I mean, we connect up with a rhythmical structure which is a flowing sort of thing that is in tune with nature, if you like, and which makes it possible to go from the lateral to the round in the final count, you know. Those structures, once I get off these I have to stop like I did a little while ago, I have difficulty in getting back on them sometimes because they are very—

**JAMES GLEESON:** I know. Illusive.

**ROGER KEMP:** Very sharp, you know. I only cope with that you know. What I'm thinking now is in the round I'm actually sort of going through the experience of this, or not verbalising it, you know. It builds up and as it builds up, of course, they become the sharpness of my consciousness, you know. It gets a little blurred, if you like, because of the development around it, you know. It goes from one to a group two and becomes satellite sort of thinking in a sense, you know. It's difficult to keep a straight line. That again is another example of the amount of



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substance, content, or whatever you like, the energy that I have to cope with and the concentration.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Oh, I can see.

**ROGER KEMP:** If you haven't the concentration and the singleness of concentration which leads up to consciousness which is the most progressive sort of element that we have, element within our make up, you know. Consciousness, of course, becomes so vital, you know, the awareness that it creates within that consciousness cuts off the other thing. But when you're in it, then it doesn't matter so much about the other thing while you're there, you know. Because, I mean, we're taking the whole of our being on in that new experience all the time. So this is the point. Of course, I get accused of, you know—many times someone will ask me a question or whatever, and I have to juggle about three or four different answers to it, you know. In a normal sense the answer to that particular question would be obvious. There would only be one answer to it, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Because I sort of sometimes choose the wrong one, well, you know, I'm—

**JAMES GLEESON:** I understand. It's difficult. Roger, I suppose it's natural when one looks at the body of your work to think of it in terms of not so much as periods, but as themes that are play for a greater or lesser time, a fairly important role in your work. For instance, I think of those cruciform forms that came into a lot of your work; those bird shapes that were very dominant for a time in your work. But I take it that you don't really think of those as periods or phases, that you're not expressly trying to use those for a limited purpose to express, say, release. Or are they all part of your overall concern with energy?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, yes, they are all that. It's difficult. You see, I've turned the nature—you know, which trees and things—out. All that we see are the birds and things. I don't know why I don't come into animals. It was always one of those things that I just look at and I never have any answer to it. I don't know. The trees to the earth probably and the birds that fly and, you know, then I go up into metaphysics somewhere or beyond science, you know. I have these three categories, I suppose. But the landscape I find part of me and I sort of enjoy painting landscape. I have quite a lot of work back there on landscapes which I've not really gotten into it and given over completely. But nevertheless, I mean, I've carried the idea over from year to year and finally I'll probably give it more and more time. I hope so because I enjoy identifying myself with the reality of the environment, the indigenous and where we live and all that, you know. I've got a great, great feeling for getting out there, you know, in the centre, if you like, or somewhere. There again, what I'm doing is trying to convert, you know. Like a tree has to become a symbol. The bird has to become a symbol, you know. Or whatever I use. So in the final count, I suppose, the bird I had at one time I forced my barriers probably to the extent where the bird—and this is the time when the jet aeroplanes are overhead. I try to think because my thinking had gotten away so much that it had taken the earth, the aeroplane and metaphysics all into one, you know. I'd used the human form like I do, or rather the birds, the human form, the aeroplane which was another science sort of idea, and try to wrap all those up into one symbol.

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**JAMES GLEESON:** I see.

**ROGER KEMP:** When I was looking at it I see the aeroplane, the bird and myself, all simultaneously, you know. That which relates to one of these pictures in here, which I better not go—of course, the creative rhythm of that time which I was very, very conscious of and I painted a lot of pictures, you know, as things are happening more or less, you know. To make that possible and to travel up and down and not be caught anywhere along the line—do you follow what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** You have to have a key symbol which releases you through it. What, of course, is bounced off of that is the same as, you know, the musical symbol. You just press on it and your feelings, your emotions, your thoughts and even your imagery all comes bouncing off it, you know what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, I used the symbol; I used all those motifs in that sense, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. So it doesn't symbolise one thing; it symbolises many things compounded into a single image?

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes, yes. I think that, you see, I would be identified with the bird. I would be identified with the cross. I would be identified with these symbols and the general structure of things I see very little difference, you know. But the symbol now which is, you know, me representing man, if you like, is always the centre of my thinking, you know. This is a key to making it possible to do all these other things, to convert. Now I'm trying to convert the landscape, you know, via the symbols to get back to a set—like the aboriginals, I suppose. A little differently but to get back to a translation of what I see out there, you know, to bring it back to a symbol or like an octave, if you like, in a set of symbols so as I can play on it. You know?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** So you've got one little shape here that represents that, and another one which represents the birds, or the leaves. Or even you could break up, you know like I do with the gum tree, gum nuts, the metamorphosis of the evolution, the tree itself, you know? The leaves, even the veins in the leaves, you could convert them into, you know, to music, if you like, or whatever. Do you follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

**ROGER KEMP:** So that's the way that I look at these things, you know. At the same time I like to feel and identify myself with the reality of what I see and to feel what I see, to experience what I see, and then interpret what I see and what I feel through a symbol, which makes it possible to do that kind of thing. You follow? So they're going through the bush or something like that. I'd have these little symbols, if you like, which would be little notes and I'd be playing them.

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**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** The ups and downs of colours, the rises and falls of the shades and the moods and all that kind of thing could be attracted, if you like, to the symbol. You know, it's all around the symbol and as I press the symbol—as I also, you know, imagination—press the musical note, so all that would be reflected or bounced off it. Does that make sense?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. It's very clear to me. In so many of your paintings you use a single symbol but throughout the whole picture that symbol recurs in different structural relationships.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** So that you get an almost universal feeling of the symbol moving through everything.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yes. I think the problem with what I'm doing—I think it is a problem—I've attempted a lot, you know, and I'm still working on this mathematical formula as it pleases me to sort of identify it or to name it. It's still a lot now on this new physics release and, you know, it's going to pull me up quite a lot now and I'm going to, you know, bring about some kind of challenge with myself and that to modify myself in relation and at the same time keep with the understanding of what it is doing. I have structure that back into my work, you know, at the same time. That's very, very difficult because it upsets the whole equilibrium of it, but not the order. I mean, it adds to it by just one direction or line and it changes the whole understanding and the whole direction of it, and paradoxically it remains the same. It is the same block. Or it isn't. I don't know. I'm not confused about it but I find it difficult to verbalise on it, to describe it. Please, following I divert a little. To answer your question—that was to preface what I was just about to say—if I had all this and the world wasn't going through such a dramatic sort of change—what?—technological change, you know. (inaudible) trying to counter all the time and it's still exploding, you know, exploding so much about us that it's almost impossible to keep catch up with. But, I mean, had it been going slower, you know, and I'd been able to catch up with it in the sense of bringing all this together, then my painting probably, I should imagine, would incorporate all these things simultaneously. Yes? But you follow? The birds, the trees—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes, yes. Exactly.

**ROGER KEMP:** The subject matter, if you like, like the old masters. But at the same time it would be in the symbol form and it would be related closer to music, probably in that sense that it's an experience and not a visual thing and yet it is a visual. You follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I mean, you've got to put priority on the symbol and the thought behind the symbol, as in music. When you listen to music you don't see it but, I mean, you can follow patterns out, imagery and, you know, structures and whatever. You interpret it a different way. Yes?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

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**ROGER KEMP:** Well, in that sense I think that my work would go along those lines.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Roger, I don't know a great deal about, you know, physics. I'm not a scientist. But it seems to me that at the moment the whole sort of concept of physics has changed, that the old mechanistic concept of physics that Newton propounded is no longer accepted. The idea of an absolute in any form can't now be accepted, that physics deals with approximations rather than absolutes.

**ROGER KEMP:** That's right.

**JAMES GLEESON:** It seems to me that you're approach is really in line with this new physics, that you are searching for something that is an approximation of the total experience.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, I think it's something like that, the principal, you know. These are audacious sort of comments that I make. But still, this is the way I think, you know. I suppose if you ask anybody else what they thought they would come out with ideas of extravagant ideas and all the rest of it. That doesn't really matter; it doesn't worry me too much. I think that I have also a principle or way of looking at these things that no matter what I say, I mean, I'm subject to, you know, an intelligence and a discipline beyond myself which naturally sort of puts these things right. But I have also an urge and, you know, a direction into this which I feel, you know, that I should exercise, no matter what. I've got a friend now, a scientist, biological scientist, and I've not been in that. But, I mean, when we get together I again find realism different, you know, in parallel thinking and it came from her first. She's written several papers on very, very important things and she'll probably get a doctorate from just doing it without sort of, you know. Oh, I hope I haven't lost that one now. Oh, yes. One of the ideas that, you know—back on the absolute, wasn't it, that we were talking about there?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I still argue on this point or debate it. I still hold it as being a very significant point insofar that what's happening I think that we're going through a—like my book indicates here, directions and cycles, and that's a very carefully thought out subject. No one is ever here. They even sort of name my exhibition retrospect but I choose to name it that. What the whole system is worked on is a series of cycles.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Cycles, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I use the straight line, you see, to get through that cycle. But, you see, that originally was a complete cycle in somebody's mind. Now, if they hadn't stopped, you know, when thinking about making a cup or making paper or something like that, wireless, television, or whatever, if they had not, if they had sort of had not stopped, if the process of stopping that circle wasn't contained within that, you know, go around, you say, 'Okay, I feel I've got something here'. You couldn't let it go. But, I mean, we go on and then we bring in analysis of it, we assess it and what not and we find out exactly what stopped us within that cycle. It's inevitable that if we were stopped that way that we will discover that there is a complete idea contained in that that finishes up a wireless set or

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finishes up this, or an aeroplane or whatever. Yes? In the first place, if that were allowed to go on, it could be the absolute. Yes?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, I see that. Yes, I see the point.

**ROGER KEMP:** You see the point? Now, I mean, because this probably slowed down here a little bit, you know, because we brought it back and we're able to pick up or come in on a tempo or some of things down here. We've got a good perspective or good knowledge about scientific investigation or inventive sort of mind and whatever, we can more or less assess them and take note. But when you get into other fields, when it's going so fast, the same thing, the same thing occurs, I think, within the direct lines that go on. What I'm suggesting here is that these various cycles are so sharp in some places that we go right over the top of them and sort of get pulled on into infinity. Yes?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** What my point is that instead of going on, we should go back and develop the idea in relation to not itself, but in relation to other sort of elements or disciplines or substances to the right and left of it.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's just a point, you know. It's worth thinking about because today technology, or any other way, we've gone on to such an extent we can't keep up with it.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No.

**ROGER KEMP:** We've got no answers. We've got no answers to the chemicals or the things that present—mainly raining. Religion is scratching its head and say, 'Where do we go from here? Do we go over the east and come back again?' you know, and so forth. The church is even having to query itself now and ask the questions: where do we go from here and so forth? Do you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Mm.

**ROGER KEMP:** Economics, ecology, you name it, all of them have been extended to the utmost extremity. Now, somewhere along the line if someone — you take ecology—someone had—and it's quite obvious, tipping out this waste and poison into rivers and whatever. You can see it was being done, they knew it was being done, but no-one acted upon it.

**JAMES GLEESON:** No.

**ROGER KEMP:** You see the disciplines to the right and left of it are referred to. If they had been brought in at an early stage, you follow?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes, I do.

**ROGER KEMP:** It's just, you know, an idea. But I can see that one, that particular principle working. Instead of going on within my work, which I do, paradoxically I do all of those things but I maintain the 51 per cent proprietorship in my sense of balance.

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**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I maintain if you have your 51, which is just minimum, and you foolishly extend yourself 10 per cent over that, then you can be sure that, you know, over there someone has got such a percentage that they can take you over in no time, particularly when you're going into areas which have not been as yet explored well. You see that?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Yes. I can see the danger there.

**ROGER KEMP:** Then if you do, like myself now, I will get into these very cute areas now and only extend myself one per cent because I've got 80 per cent sort of dominance over my own field now or even more you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Yet, because of that, this new area, like the physics one we're talking about like that, I mean, that one's really sizzling. Now, if I were to get in that I would, you know, goodbye sort of thing. Do you follow me?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. I see what you mean.

**ROGER KEMP:** I just take it one per cent.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** I'm emphasising here, but behind it all is this very, very subtle sort of giving away, and you can either give it away in a very gentle sort of way, even on social levels. Do you follow what I mean?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** Once they got the point—

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. It seems to me a very wise attitude.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, it is really, I think. But that's the way I see it and it comes back to balance. Even talking about balance you say, 'Well, what's that?'. But that is behind balance, the way that I think it, you see.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Well, it is, because if you went wholly into it, if you put all yourself into one little area, however important that area might be intrinsically, you are losing so much of yourself.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, this is so. I think unless you have an understanding about what you are about, and that you should have knowledge about the area in which you operate, complete understanding about it, you know, and that's not—

**JAMES GLEESON:** No. So that you take from various areas what you need but without throwing too much out of balance?

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, that's it, I think you give and take. I must acknowledge that other people, you know, it is people that makes it possible to move from point A to point B, you know, whether we're aware of it or not. Fortunately, from time to

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time we come in on the physical manifestation of that particular point, you know. All the other times, I mean, we're being—I mean it must be that kind of, you know, mental telepathy is an idea which gets us the idea over, if you like, we're communicating. If we're not doing well, you know, work or something that we've done out there is also doing it and people are talking. You know what I mean? So it's being built up all the time. So it is people that make things work. I think it's unfortunate the artist doesn't exercise a little bit more in that direction, communication, and give and take, you know, build up the consciousness more, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Well, Roger, look thanks very much for all this. It's invaluable and it gives me a real background against which to work. Now, what I'll do is leave all this material with you and Merle, so that you at your leisure can go through and Merle might be able to fix dates to any ones that we're uncertain about. Then I'll come back to you, say in six or eight weeks time, and we can finalise just the catalogue details, factual things like dates and media and so on, where they've been exhibited, what shows they've been in, where they've been reproduced.

**ROGER KEMP:** Any data. Yes, I understand that. I think that it's time that it should be all of it recorded.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes, yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** You know, it's trailing a bit and I think Merle has a good understanding about this. She has a system now of working these things out and relating them back to various times, what we we're doing there, materials that I might have been using then, and where we lived and what we did there. It's the only basis on which we can work it out now. There it is.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Would you look at the group of drawings that we've got of yours?

**ROGER KEMP:** You've got drawings?

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes. Oh, a whole lot of them we've got from you.

**ROGER KEMP:** Oh yes, yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** But clearly we can't go through them individually at the moment. But if you would look through them and, you know, next time I come down we can perhaps have a talk about the drawings. Although in a way it's not necessary because they relate exactly to your paintings, don't they? They're part of the same process.

**ROGER KEMP:** Well, to make it comprehensive, you know, comprehensive, you know, well, to understand it clearly I think that it will be necessary to get all the data that we have including drawings. Sometimes I've worked so fast that some of the major moves that I have made have been recorded probably in my drawings and whatnot, you know, and things of this kind.

**JAMES GLEESON:** I see.

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**ROGER KEMP:** For the simple reason I haven't the energy, the time or whatever to carry them out and I've promptly forgotten them like I forget everything else because I can't remember them. So going on with a progressive consciousness I don't seem to want the need to go back, but I should. This is one good reason why I should do it now, to try and get it together. So from my drawings and my funny little symbolic language that I've created to make it possible to get these things down, if I had a hunt around and looked for the right word under these fast moving thoughts. By the time I found the word, it wouldn't be the right one and my thoughts would have been gone and I couldn't recover the thinking, you know. That's how fast it goes. So I invented these things. Etchings again would clarify some of the structural approaches and whatever, you know.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Yes.

**ROGER KEMP:** All this I've reduced down to one symbol now, a whole network of it. I started with a tremendous network of lines and whatever, you know, that's building up the format in the first place, you know. To try and reach myself out as far as I could in geometric terms, if you like, my feelings incorporate in relation to other existing orders and so forth, you know, until I eventually make contact, you know. Just one line, or whatever, you know, and from that of course it just sweeps right across the board. From that multiple of shapes and directions, structures and all the rest of it, was reduced back to one symbol. From the one symbol that would incorporate the whole principle and from the one symbol then that would open up and develop again and that's what it's doing now. It's going on unlimited in its capacity to develop a track and do all the other things. It's a tremendous challenge to even conceive it, you know. I get it all together sometimes. I am not physically fit. I mean, it would probably take another week to recover that at its maximum and then the whole spectrum sort of comes up before me. I thought, 'God, you know, it's too much'. You know what I mean? Luckily, I might finish up by just getting one major picture out of it which would incorporate something of that effort, you know. But the capacity of what it presents to me at that particular moment is unbelievable, you know, and I couldn't possibly sort of carry it out. So I have to push it over again, you know. But it's swelled up like a big tidal wave coming up and, you know, I finish up by just getting on the board and running out on to the sand or something.

**JAMES GLEESON:** All right, Roger.

**ROGER KEMP:** I'll just go on and on, I'm sorry. So what is needed then is all the data relevant to the notes here would give some indication as to what you want. If we can add more—yes, Merle, would you, Merle?

**MERLE KEMP:** (inaudible)

**ROGER KEMP:** Would you just make a detail of what James—

**JAMES GLEESON:** What I might like to do, Merle, is to leave all this material. These are our cards, a photocopy of the cards.

**MERLE KEMP:** Yes.

**JAMES GLEESON:** And all the works on paper that we've got, and the photographs of those and the ones that we had, you know, the ones we selected at the last meeting.



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**MERLE KEMP:** Yes. That would be helpful because once we get a few firm dates the others will fall into place.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Oh well, that would be an enormous help if you could—

**MERLE KEMP:** It would be fascinating too.

**JAMES GLEESON:** Go back and look over the old catalogues and reduce to (inaudible).

**MERLE KEMP:** Let's hope I won't be a white haired old lady by the time it's—

**JAMES GLEESON:** All right. Well, thank you both very much indeed.

**ROGER KEMP:** Thank you.