

From the Director | Joseph Eisenberg

There is one thing we have to have; ...
a soul made cheerful by work, love, art
and knowledge. Friedrich Nietzsche

The Geoff and Vicki Ainsworth *Collecting Lines* exhibition presents Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) with a unique opportunity to demonstrate and validate what an exhibition that features many works on paper can provide for the art gallery visitor.

As part of its grand opening it is a fortunate time for MRAG to host such an exhibition with its high quality works on paper because MRAG now collects this medium as part of its new direction and acquisition policy. *Collecting Lines* in addition provides the opportunity to view fascinating variations of this age old format presented by internationally and Australian renowned artists whose collected art works have been brought together and shown in a group exhibition for the first time. It is also advantageous that *Collecting Lines* has been augmented by a number of crucial paintings, sculptures and two videos. But, this exhibition is much more. It plays with

the concept of lines. There are the different ways in which artists use and incorporate lines in their work: lines creating shapes, bodies, spaces; thick lines; thin lines; lines in colour; lines disappearing into nothingness; lines almost never ending; lines encasing lines; surreal lines; confronting lines; decorative lines. The exhibition also demonstrates the line of collecting chosen by Geoff and Vicki Ainsworth with its emphasis on the story of art that they have chosen and what a fortunate choice it is for the viewer.

The selection of art evident in the exhibition is quite rare in the world of private art endowment, acquisition and collection. It is eclectic, universal and very judicious and is part of the collection of two unique people, who, oh so very quietly, beaver away and enjoy the finding and gathering rather than glowing in the benefaction limelight.

MRAG is indeed fortunate as this is the first—and perhaps only—time that such a number of works of art from the Geoff and Vicki Ainsworth Collection are exhibited in the one venue. It is also auspicious that *Collecting Lines* can be pulled together from the one collection



opposite page: Martin Eder (b. 1968), *My Sick Eyes Search for You*, 2002.
Watercolour, series of 16 works, 28.5 x 22.5 cm each.
Courtesy Galerie EIGEN + ART Leipzig/Berlin.
Copyright Martin Eder/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney 2009.