

**THE TOFFEE
GALLERY**

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EXHIBITION

**ROBERT HODGINS &
MICHAEL TAYLOR**

CATALOGUE

**22 APRIL -
4 JUNE 2017**

In memory of Robert Hodgins (1920-2010).

Curating the first exhibition at The Toffee Gallery: Robert Hodgins and Michael Taylor

At the end of 2015 we relocated the Darling Sweet production kitchen to our current premises; the stately Edwardian building on Long street, which originally housed Darling's General Dealer store, known as 'Retief se winkel'. While moving into the building we got the idea of one day turning the space adjoining the shop into a gallery. We thought that this airy room with its perfect proportions, high ceiling and exquisite hand-carved door leading onto the stoep is ideal for exhibiting art. This, however, remained only an idea, a desire, 'till earlier this year when, after resigning from my lecturing position at Stellenbosch University, I found myself with enough extra time and energy to get down to the task of converting the space into a gallery; a process that afforded me much pleasure. We decided to name the space The Toffee Gallery, to acknowledge the industry that will provide the financial support to keep the gallery doors open and ensure that there is a new exhibition every six weeks. It is toffee that will afford us the freedom to put on exhibitions wherein the emphasis is on the quality and relevance of the exhibitions and work on display, rather than on sales to keep the gallery doors open. Therefore, The Toffee Gallery, as a way of acknowledging art's reciprocal relationship to industry.

When the time came to decide what the first exhibition at our new gallery would be it didn't take long to settle on the work of Robert Hodgins. It was my close friendship with this extraordinary man over many years that shaped my admiration for his work as well as helped form my own understanding of art and what it means to be an artist myself.

Upon starting to assemble the exhibition I started thinking about the work of Michael Taylor, another contemporary South African artist, a few generations removed, who's work resonates in such profound ways with that of Hodgins'. In the work of both there is the total enjoyment of art-making processes; in their case it is painting, drawing and printmaking. Hodgins and Taylor's work evidences a joyful indulgence in mark-making, surface, colour, line and gesture. It is through their total immersion in these processes that both artists arrive at the images that populate their work and for these to take on meaning and to start speaking about the world around us. This emphasis on process is also what causes their work to be first and foremost a celebration of art and being an artist and, furthermore, a celebration of the power of art to communicate in such complex ways that involves both the mind and emotions.

The intellectual preoccupations evident in both artists work are also strikingly similar; the love for popular as well as 'high' culture, wit, drama, irony, camp, and storytelling. In the work of Hodgins and Taylor there is also the ongoing interest in the male form and an exploration of the male psyche through depictions of men in various uniform and dress, as well as depictions of the male body in states of nudity and vulnerability.

Hentie van der Merwe
16 April 2017, Darling

ROBERT HODGINS was born in London in 1920 and immigrated to South Africa in 1938. He enlisted with the Union Defence Force in 1940 and served in both Kenya and Egypt during WWII. In 1944 he returned to England and studied art and education at Goldsmiths College, University of London, where he received an arts and crafts certificate in 1951 and a National Diploma of Design in painting in 1953. In 1954 Hodgins returned to South Africa and started teaching at the Pretoria Technical College School of Art. From 1962 he was a journalist and critic for Newscheck magazine. Between 1966 and 1983 he lectured in painting at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In 1983 he retired to paint full-time.

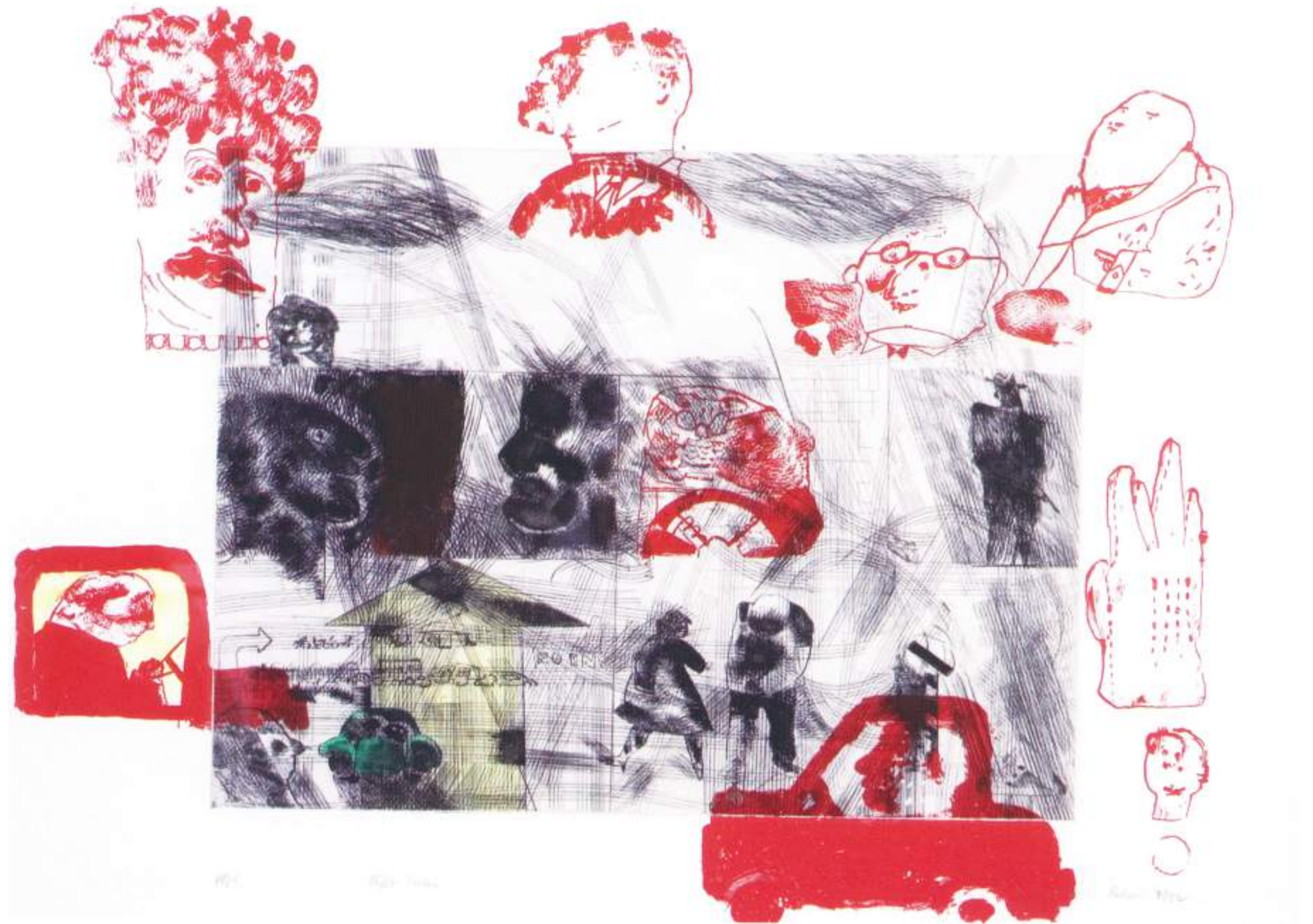
Hodgins used a variety of paint media, including oils, acrylic and tempera. He was also a brilliant printmaker who worked in a variety of techniques including etching, silkscreen and lithography. He had been exhibiting since the 1950s but did not come to wider attention until the early 1980s. He partook in many solo and group exhibitions in South Africa and abroad. His work can be seen in many galleries, corporate and public collections, including Anglo American, the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Sandton Art Gallery, the Pretoria Art Museum, the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, University of South Africa (UNISA), the University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries, and the William Humphreys Art Gallery in Kimberley.

Robert Hodgins died on 15 March 2010 in Johannesburg, after a bout with lung cancer, at the age of 89.

MICHAEL TAYLOR lives and works in Cape Town. He studied at Stellenbosch University, where he completed his Master's Degree in Visual Art. Primarily working in the mediums of painting and drawing, his work explores notions around narrative art, absorbing ideas from illustration and abstract representation. In 2013 Michael was shortlisted as 100 Young Painters of Tomorrow by Thames & Hudson. His work is also included in the Woodner Collection.

Robert Hodgins
Mad Boy Lost (1993)
Oil on canvas

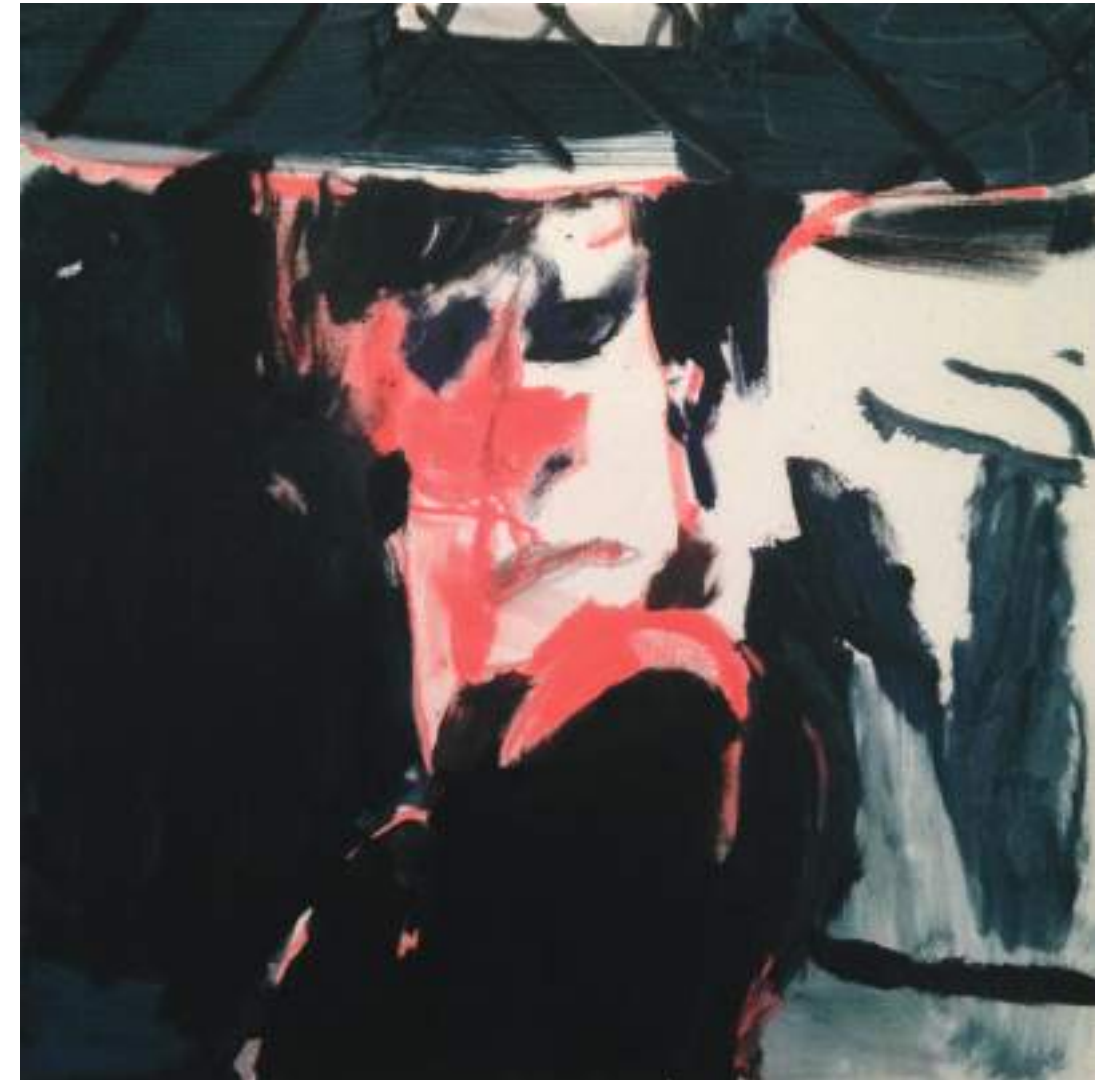




Robert Hodgins

Night Traffic (1991/2)

Etching and silkscreen on paper



Michael Taylor
He Knows (2016)
Oil and pastel on canvas



Michael Taylor

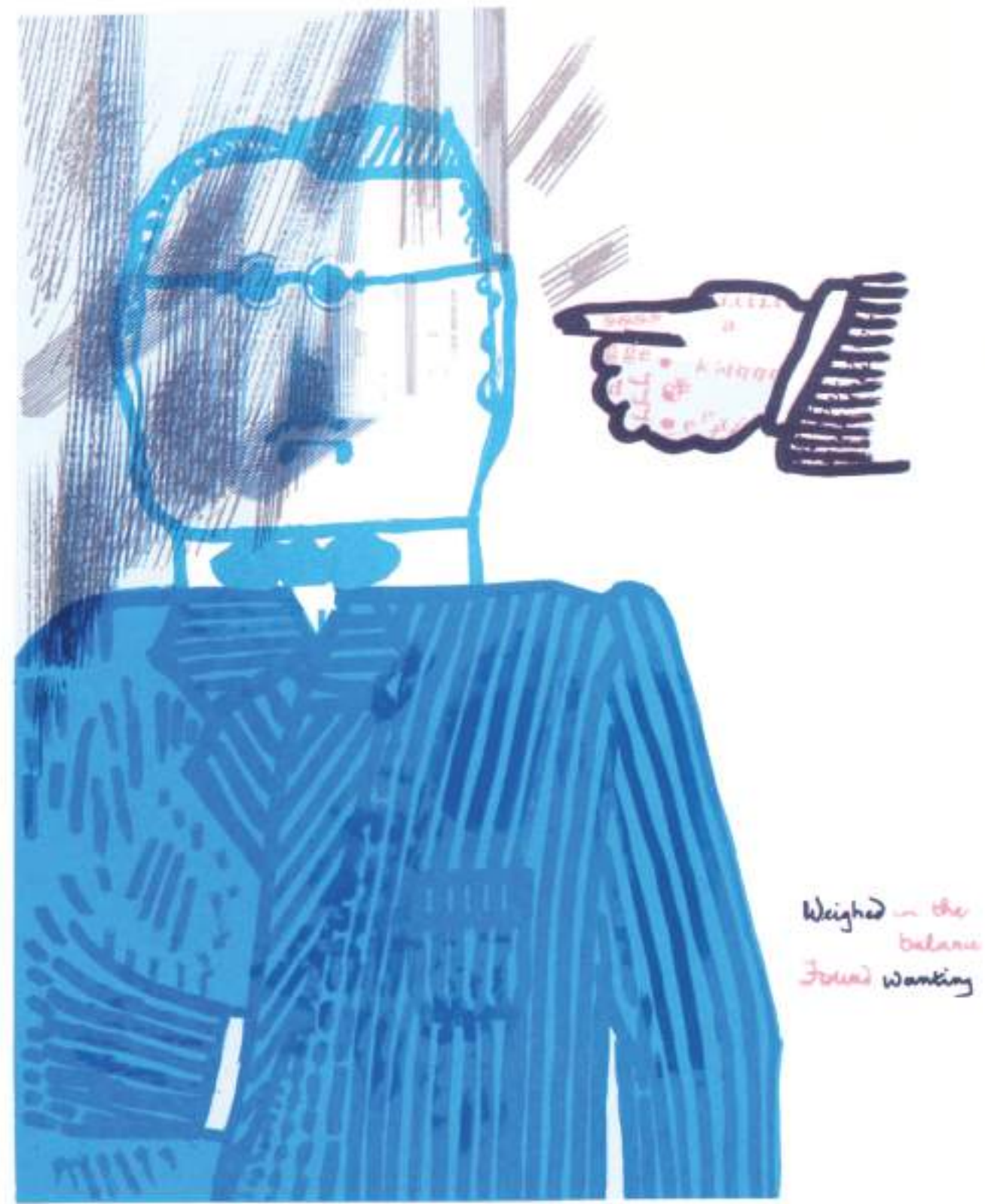
Professor Zit (2015)

Ink on paper

Robert Hodgins

Weighed in the Balance Found Wanting (1996)

Screenprint on paper



Robert Hodgins

Apropos HW van der Merwe Esq. (1998)

Oil on canvas





Michael Taylor

Walk the Picasso (2012)

Ink on paper



Michael Taylor

A Rake's Progress - The Ride (2015)

Flashe, acrylic, and pencil on paper



Michael Taylor
Creep Street (2015)
Pencil on paper



Michael Taylor
Mr. Scratch Patch (2015)
Pencil on paper



Michael Taylor
Futurist Speedwalker (2013)
Gouache on board



Michael Taylor
Aristodactyl (2013)
Ink on paper