

THE INTUITIVE LANDSCAPE

Richard Lane

"...Richard Lane..... shows organic, drifting works that flow like a submarine Frankenthaler or a Morris Louis but more like a Richard Lane. Lyrical and unstrained they are for those who need no angst..."

Elwyn Lynn, the Weekend Australian, March, 1987

The above remarks relate to several large colour field paintings that were included in my Holdsworth Gallery Sydney Exhibition in 1987. In the early 1980s I was particularly influenced by artists Paul Jenkins, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko and Morris Louis and their colour field work. Colour field paintings are usually very large which encourages the viewer to experience the colour as an enormous, engulfing expanse: a field of colour. I experienced that very engulfing expanse when standing in front of an extremely large Mark Rothko canvas at the National Art Gallery in Canberra.

In this exhibition, *The Intuitive Landscape*, I have taken the flatness of the canvas and introduced value changes that give the feeling of depth through topographical perspective and thus the perception of landscape imagery.

Intuition: Immediate insight or understanding without conscious reasoning.. (Aust. Pocket Oxford Dictionary p. 557)

The genesis of this exhibition occurred thirty-eight years ago in May 1977 when I travelled from Sydney to Townsville for the first time. Upon arrival at the airport I was met by friends, Tom and Tina Pietzsch. Tom, realising it was my first trip to Townsville naturally drove straight to the top of Castle Hill. It was approximately 10am. First thing I noticed (apart from the change in temperature from Sydney's 3 deg C to Townsville's 25 deg C) was the change in light from Sydney! Second I was immediately captivated by the turquoise water of Cleveland Bay and the shapes and shadows of the hills on Magnetic Island with their light and shadows and shapes of the distant Islands of the Palm Group and misty Hinchinbrook in the far distance. I was hooked!

This exhibition, *the Intuitive Landscape*, is the manifestation of my emotional experiences over more than 3 decades observing the colours, shapes, and most of all, *light*, of the city of Townsville and its environs.

The exhibition has been grouped into six experiential themes. None of the works depict a moment in time when I consciously set out to paint a particular scene, but rather each painting is an amalgam of over 30 years of experiencing the atmosphere

and changes in the landscape due to the influences of the elements previously mentioned.

The themes are:

1. My backyard

For over 33 years my family and I have been privileged to live on the banks of the Ross River at Kelso where our backyard finishes at the high water mark of the river. On the opposite side of the river are many thousands of hectares of Commonwealth land sparsely used by the Military. Our backyard has many ghost gums, and the river bank many melaleucas. The resultant groundcover, aided by colourful petals from various flowering shrubs, provides a smorgasbord of colourful textures.

2. Lake Ross

Formerly known as Ross River Dam and Ross Dam, Lake Ross is one of the most picturesque areas in tropical North Queensland. As we live about 2kms from the spillway an hour spent walking along the wall of the Lake is a frequent occurrence and the multitudinous landscape scenes provide lasting memories.

Some of the many attractions include the quarry which was carved out of the side of a hill to provide rocks for the dam wall construction. The interesting shapes include the surrounding hills, Round Mountain, the very large mango farm, the Pinnacles, and the quarry at the bottom of the Pinnacles.

Every year there are bushfires in the distant mountains and, from a different direction, smoke from the cane firing in the Burdekin. The resultant smoke haze from both of these events creates dramatic changes in the whole view of the landscape. The changes of light, and thus values, depending on time of day and weather conditions, were a constant delightful variable for affecting personal emotional reactions. The sunsets viewed from Lake Ross wall are magnificent.

3. Magnetic Island

The landscape on Magnetic Island is different to the mainland because of the many bays and the rocky headlands thick with Norfolk Island pines.

The view from the Strand to the island creates unique opportunities for experiencing the change of shadows on the National Park hills and mountains on the western side of the Island.

4. Hervey Range and Piper's Lookout

The breathtaking panorama viewed from Piper's Lookout provides scenery which can hold one spellbound for hours. The high green mountain Range to the left then the distant Coral Sea at 10 o'clock, Mount Stuart and Ross Valley at 2 o'clock to the Pinnacles and Hervey Range complete the 180 degree panoramic sweep. The sunsets over Hervey Range are magic.

5. Paluma and Coastal Ranges

From vantage points on the Town Common, we can see the distant ranges through to Bluewater and beyond. When driving on the Bruce highway north the Paluma Range is seen with the summit distinguished by a "bump" on the skyline. There are layers of hills that can be seen from the highway and therefore clear aerial perspective is evident. The road to the summit has beautiful spots such as Little Crystal Creek and Crystal Creek on the Valley floor.

6. Pallarenda and Cleveland Bay

The changing light throughout the day from the fabulous sunrise to the afternoon glow of the setting sun on the Magnetic Island hills is a feature of Cleveland Bay viewed from Pallarenda Beach foreshore. The view from the beach through to Castle Hill gives a long distance outline of the city skyline.