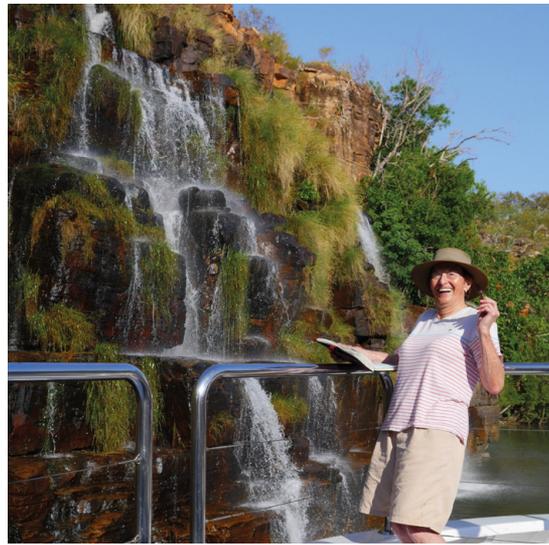


Mercia Bush

Mercia Bush lives and works in Sydney, Australia. Following a long and successful career in marketing and fund raising (clients included Red Cross Australia, The State Library and St Lukes Hospital Foundation), Mercia took up painting seriously in 2005. Enrolling in numerous private painting and drawing classes and art workshops over the course of a decade, the subject matter she is most constantly drawn to is the Australian landscape – from her own inner city garden to the far reaches of the Outback.

Following landscape painting workshops in Tasmania in 2013 & 2014, Australian watercolour artist and tutor Tony Smibert wrote, “you have a lightness of touch that translates to joy in life,” and advised Mercia to, “continue to paint in your natural way which seems to be effortlessly lyrical.” Whether painted *alla prima* in watercolours on location or the landscape re-imagined on returning to her studio, Mercia’s recent works demonstrate a new level of competence and confidence.

Mercia has participated in a number of group exhibitions and her works are held in private collections in New Zealand, Spain, Germany, the United States and Australia. This is her first exhibition at Gauge Gallery.



2017.

Artist statement

Painting the Australian landscape is a loaded artistic domain, treading in the footsteps of so many notable artists who have sought to capture the insouciant colours and qualities of this vast land. Since first travelling to the Kimberley in 2001, I have been inspired by the challenge to explore and capture in oil paint and watercolours some essence of the magnificence of the landscape: the timelessness, the vastness of the grand vista, the possibility that no footsteps have walked on it. The pure majesty of the towering cliffs of the Kimberley coastline, the reds, pinks and distant mauves of the landscape. Australia is an ancient land shaped by time and erosion: the rocky outcrops near Derby are actually the remains of an old coral reef.

When you look closely you can observe how the land was formed through epic processes, at how the wind and the sand has eroded and softened the outcrops. Sketching, you observe the geology, the structure underpinning the land, in an attempt to capture the distance and vastness. Subsequent trips to Kakadu, Arnhem Land and the Kimberley in 2016 & 2017 provided much of the raw material for this exhibition. Kakadu is water, birdlife and the freedom and lushness of foliage. Arnhem Land is home to many sacred indigenous works of art, which brings you back to the first people to be there. The unusual shapes of rocky outcrops are a reminder of the great age of the land.

The exhibition of works in *Landscapes Real and Imagined* represents the culmination of many journeys, personal and actual, real and imagined.

“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

TS ELLIOT, FOUR QUARTERS

Landscapes Real and Imagined

17-29 October 2017. The Gauge Gallery,
68 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.
Exhibition hours: 10am–6pm (closed Monday).

Opening: Tuesday 17th October, 6–8pm.
Drinks with the Artist: Saturday 21st October, 4pm.
Contact: mercia.bush@iinet.net.au