



art with
marina saint martin

Discovering the lay of the land

■ An exhibition of small enchanting landscapes proves in a world where the big, the bold and the shiny tend to dominate, small yet exquisitely painted artworks can still maintain their historic importance and capture the interest of modern artists and art enthusiasts

Fashions in fine art tend to come and go in the same manner as in any other creative industry, but whatever the current art focus or fad, landscapes always seem to maintain their interest with viewers, their popularity and their following.

This is because the landscape is the setting for our own lives, where we live, where we play and why we have such a passionate and ongoing interest in it.

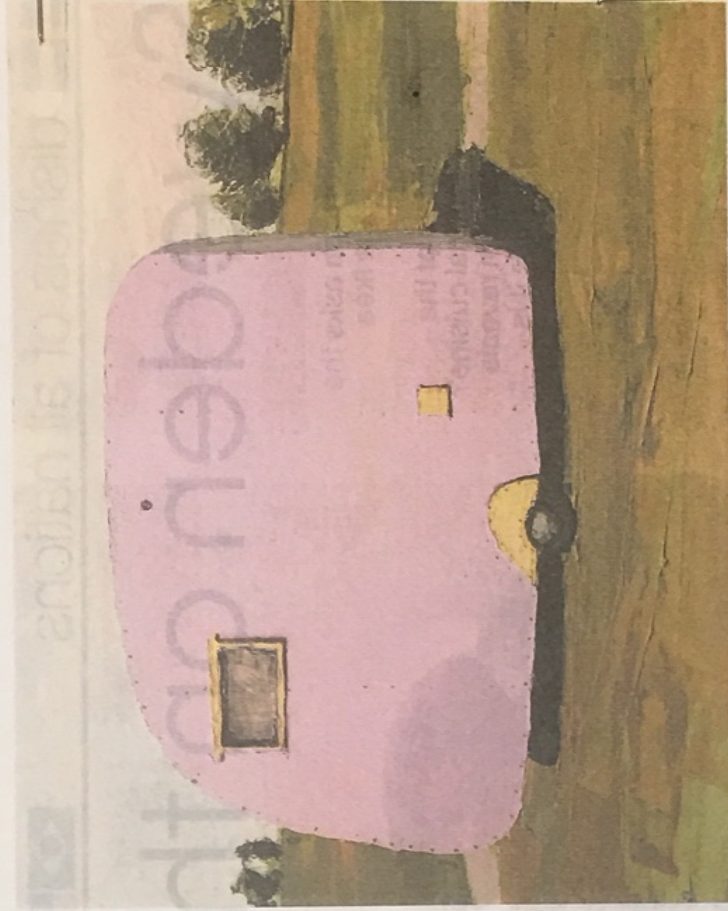
This year's winner of the Josephine Ulrick & Win Shubert Photography Prize,

Polinexi Papapetrou, calls it our 'metaphorical shelter'.

Some landscapes are huge works reflecting the scope of the land masses which they portray, but the majority are smaller, as landscapes were often done outside – in the plein air style so popular with the Impressionists of the late 19th century.

These were mostly painted on site and perhaps just finished in the studio.

In the days before modern transport, landscape size was vitally important, as the artist often had to carry the canvas on foot or on horseback.



Amanda Penrose Hart's *Mudgeeraba Holiday*, 2009

Australia, with its vast spaces, has a rich tradition of early 'portable' landscape canvasses from the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the culture of small canvasses is still used today, especially with compact housing demand for smaller scale artworks.

An exhibition of small, but enchanting, landscapes is on show at the Gold Coast City Art Centre called *Exquisite: Three Exhibitions of Small Landscapes*.

"I wanted to curate an exhibition around the late 19th and early 20th century landscapes from our collection," says curator Sandra Warner.

**To capture
the essence of the
landscape is to live
in it**



**Edwin Bode's Valley
Of Nerang**



**Isaac Walter Jenner's On
Cabbage Tree Creek, Moreton
Bay, c1890**

To supplement the show, she included other painters who work on a small scale, such as Amanda Penrose-Hart and Hobie Porter.

Penrose-Hart is a Queensland-born artist who for the past six years has been painting caravans in the landscape, travelling from the Maroochy River Caravan Park to Cowles Caravan Park on Phillip Island, Victoria.

Her 1950s cherished green caravan gave her show its name and is also a symbol for alternative green living.

Penrose-Hart, who divides her time between Brisbane, Sydney and country



**Herbert Clarke Simpson's
Piggabean Creek, 1918**

New South Wales, holds a Diploma of Fine Art (Queensland College of Art) and a Bachelor of Visual Art from Griffith University.

She has been selected for the Mosman Art Prize, the Portia Geach Memorial Award and the Salon des Refuses.

Living' Green is the culmination of her six-year caravan project spanning thousands of kilometres.

Local contemporary landscapes by Dave Groom, who paints the hinterland around Beechmont where he lives, are also included.

For Groom, this subject is virtually innate, as his family has lived in the area for four generations.

He works in a studio on the edge of Lamington National Park, where his grandfather established Binna Burra Lodge.

Art has also been a family trait. His grandmother, potter Marjorie Groom, has a number of works in the Queensland Gallery.

Groom firmly believes the best way to 'capture the essence of the landscape is to live in it'.

By doing so he is able to observe and record the constantly changing forms, colours and light at different times.

Groom has only been painting seriously for about six years and for him the great joy is the sense of discovery he gets from his work.

Also on display are landscape works by Vida Lahey, Isaac Walter Jenner, Edwin Bode, Rubery Bennett, H. C. Simpson, Ethel Carrick Fox, Frank Sherrin and Patricia Prentice.

■ *Exquisite: Three Exhibitions of Small Landscapes* at the Gold Coast City Art Gallery until July 5

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