



Amanda Penrose Hart



Amanda Penrose Hart paintings are composed by whatever she finds in front of her. Penrose Hart is a seasoned traveler when it comes to artist tours. Travelling is a key aspect to her practice so she is fueled by a new source of inspiration. Landscapes are often rendered in a panoramic view, crafted on long boards that force the viewer to inspect the finer aspects of her pictures. Her compositions are sometimes interrupted by the inclusion of the manmade – holiday caravans, garden gnomes and washing lines – which Penrose Harts explains as being key to giving life to desolate and empty landscapes.

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What is it that lures you to landscape painting?
The constant struggle to nail a good one. It's a bit like my golf game – I have 400 swings but only 10 shots are any good.

Your past compositions have included incidental objects such as garden gnomes and caravans. You've incorporated fences and telegraph poles in this body of work. What role does the manmade object play in your compositions?

The inclusion of the 'human factor' gives life to a desolate landscape. I don't do flower beds and pretty things because I've been chasing landscapes as far from the coast line as possible for the last eight years. My paintings look pretty dry.

If I include the telltale signs that there is some human inhabitation then I can do this with a caravan, clothesline, gnome etc, without putting the figure in the painting, which I always used to do when I first started showing my work.

Would it be right to say that intuition plays an important part in your painting process?

No, I paint what is in front of me. That is why I have to travel so far to get variety in a body of work. If I painted intuitively I could lock myself in a white box studio and dream up the paintings. I seriously

lack imagination so I have to go out looking for the composition. If there is a flat Fanta can tossed in the grass, I'll put that in. If I was in my 'white cube' I wouldn't think to include litter.

Is there anything about the landscape of Fowlers Gap you've investigated that continues to influence your work?

I like very much that area of Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Silverton, Fowlers Gap, White Cliffs etc. It is further away from my usual resting spots so you can do nothing but immerse yourself in painting and see what comes out of it.

Strangely, Fowlers Gap was way too green for me this time. I had been there on one other occasion at the height of a drought and I really enjoyed the hot wind, red dirt and flatness of the saltbush. These dramatic contrasts with where I normally paint forces you to re-evaluate the landscape and re-evaluate your whole approach to starting a painting. Like getting into a cold pool, I have to ease in very slowly!

Do you enjoy painting en plein air? Is this a regular mode of painting for you?

Yes and yes. It started because I had no studio. I didn't start painting landscape because I was overwhelmed by its beauty and that crap you read about other people's inspiration. I lost my studio



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in Redfern, simply because I could not afford the rent on it and my small home, so the studio had to go. I converted a small attic in the roof of my terrace to a studio but it was only about two by three metres. I started painting in my car, driving and working along the way. I was painting *en plein air* without even knowing!

The life of an artist is often one of solitude. How did you find the experience of working amongst a group of artists?

Fantastic – I was forced to be civilised to others! Really good to see how others start their day, out and gone at the crack of dawn, others not quitting until it was pitch black and stumbling in well after first drinks. We all did about the same amount of work – not necessarily in finished pictures but in regards to thinking, reading and looking, as part of the process of the workday.

What challenges did this trip throw at you and your painting?

Everything is a challenge for me. This trip was just more of the same pressure you are under if you are painting around Manly or Wilcannia.

And what was the most enjoyable part of the tour?

Ross Laurie. ■



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Amanda Penrose Hart is represented by King Street Gallery on William, Sydney, and Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane.

www.kingstreetgallery.com.au
www.philipbacongalleries.com.au

- 01 Above the River Bed, 2011, concertina book, gouache and graphite on paper, 18 x 180cm
 - 02 The Lookout, 2011, oil on board, 10 x 49cm
 - 03 Looking out from the Xbox, 2011, oil on board, 9 x 18cm
 - 04 Above the River Bed, 2011, oil on board, 14 x 180cm
- Images courtesy the artist and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney.



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