



LUKE SCIBERRAS

Living and working in the NSW central tablelands provides this well-known landscape painter with a space to be immersed in his practice.

You moved from Sydney to country NSW. Why?

From the very first encounters I had with the region, I was hooked! I began coming here in the 1990s on romantic weekends with my then-girlfriend (and fellow artist) Gria Shead, and then moved here to bring up our daughter Stella. In those visits I remember wonderful weekends with friends, drinking wine in fragrant gardens or drinking whiskey in smoke-filled pubs. You learn so much about a place by talking to the people who live there. It gives meaning to everything you see.

Has living here changed your perspective?

There is a lot of work involved in being a landscape artist — travel, research, long walks and cool reflection. These are the essential ingredients of my practice, and living in the country is the beautiful base from which to carry that out.

What do you love about life in the country?

I have a very busy calendar of exhibiting and travelling. When I'm at home working, I'm happiest spending days on end reflecting and expressing in paint where I've been and how I feel. Living in a small country town keeps me in touch with all the things I hold dear — nature, community, family, gardening, cooking. I love that my life is entirely integrated in a very organic way and a lot of that informs the way I work. It's incredible how many different bodies of work can be gestating in the one studio. For example, this last year I've had works from Gallipoli, Wilcannia, Hong Kong and Bruny Island all at once. This takes focus and time, which is what life in the country gives you.

Are you drawn to certain landscapes or places?

The Australian landscape will enduringly be my main focus, because it is such a new subject. You can count on one hand the number of European artists who have made truly significant and unique inroads into the Australian visual language, which means that what we really have is a vast frontier of new discoveries to be made. For the most part, my work is based on my journeys into outback and central Australian deserts, and this year I am focusing my attentions on one exhibition in spring at Scott Livesey Galleries. My studio is now filling with a new body of works which populate my life like wonderful new friends. *CS*

Luke's next exhibition will be from August 27–September 17 at Scott Livesey Galleries in Melbourne, where he is represented, (03) 9824 7770; scottliveseygalleries.com

Luke's art is inspired by his travels and love of the desert. One of his newest paintings is *Darling River, Wilcannia*.