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TOM CARMENT
The Long Way Round



These paintings were done on Narungga, Ngarrindjeri, Adnyamathanha, Gundungarra, Gadigal, Woi-wurrung, Wiradjiri, Wadandiboodja, Darkingjung, Yuin and Whadjuk Noongar Country

Tom would like to thank these people for their hospitality and kindness on his recent trips to Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne: Pru Black and Stephen Muecke, Tanya and Eloise Court, Helen Idle and Joan Leese, Jane Porter, Julia Lehmann.



TOP Tom painting at Shell Beach, Yorke Peninsula 2021

BOTTOM Tom's painting kit, Wilson Cemetery 2022



Yacht out to Sea, off Clovelly 2023 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm

TOM CARMENT

The Long Way Round

24 October -
18 November 2023



Jacaranda by the Oval, Ashfield 2022
watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm

The Long Way Round

IN EARLY NOVEMBER 2022, my friend Cecelia, from Ashfield, told me that there was a big jacaranda next to the cricket oval at Pratten Park. The next day I packed my watercolours and took the train to Ashfield, reading a magazine article on the way about the poet John Donne, who wrote the famous lines '... for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee'. I left the station and walked into a strong wind beside a wall of liver-coloured bricks. I passed a woman standing, face to the wall, weeping. Her weight was resting on her forehead and her body shook with sobs. I turned back after fifteen metres to see if she was OK, but she had resumed walking, talking on her phone. At the oval, I found the tree, blooming early, already full of purple flowers, which contrasted nicely with the green, shuttered cricket scoreboard. Some elderly ladies were slowly circuiting the white fence and stopped just in front of me to perform a complex set of gentle exercises. A wind gust blew my watercolour sheet away and I sprinted to retrieve it. I weighed everything down until I had finished. Such are the random events and small dramas that surround each picture I paint. Perhaps they influence the way I see the world on that particular day.

When I'm painting from life, things are rarely static. Clouds pass by, dragging shadows below them, switching the sunlight on and off. Winds

change and increase, exposing the lighter undersides of leaves, bending trees, twisting the head of a windmill sideways. I might be setting up my paints on the beach at dawn and see a couple passing by, walking a dog, crossing a sand dune. As they disappear, I try to fix their shapes and colours in my memory. After that, the scene would feel like an empty stage set without them.

My time is often divided between preparation and painting. I spend many hours accurately cutting up panels with my fine-toothed Japanese saw, then priming them five or six times, sanding between coats. Sometimes I sand the enamel paint off old wood extracted from doors and furniture. Painting pictures on these later is a far more concentrated and intense activity, but perhaps I need these repetitive preparations to balance things out, like the bread around a sandwich.

Before I leave the house to paint I like to prepare my palette, scraping off any dried bits of colour and reapplying fresh blobs of oil paint, or I wash down my watercolour plate and clean up the tints. Arriving at my chosen subject I can then start painting within a few minutes and not lose sight of what made me want to stop.

I've called this group of paintings *The Long Way Round* in a belief that if you avoid the direct route, and even get lost, you notice more things. In a pejorative sense it can also mean sliding down the chimney to enter a house when you could have just walked in through the front door. I've done that sometimes. While I usually like to get to know a handful of places well, over years of repeated visits and circuitous explorations, this group of works includes some new territory, in particular the southern Flinders Ranges - the result of six camping trips to Hawker, South Australia. Other subjects, old and new - mangroves at Mooney Mooney, Sydney jacarandas, the bush at Mount Victoria, houses in Carlton, a jetty on the Swan River in Perth - are all held together by my preoccupation with light and my personal associations with each place.

The date of this showing also marks fifty years since I left art school, in late 1973. My approach during those decades has remained fairly constant - painting the things that interest me, from life, on a modest scale. I don't work towards one big masterpiece but instead hope to build a wall, or maybe a house, where each brick represents a fresh observation.

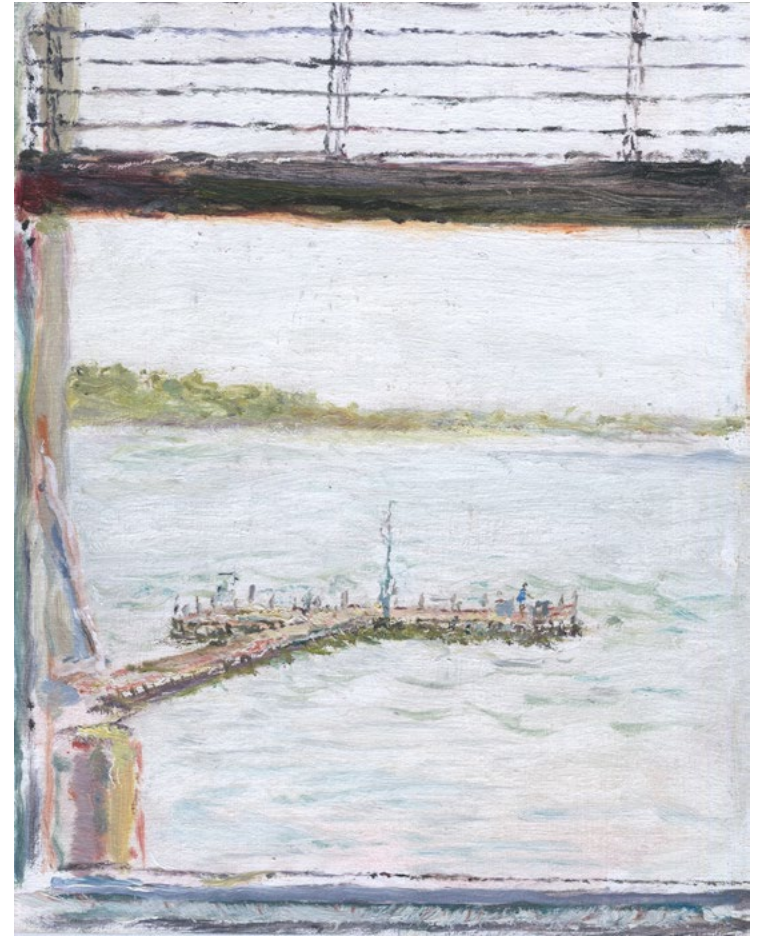
Put simply, this exhibition is a selection of my pictures, mainly landscapes, painted since October 2021.



TOP *Yacht and Jetty,*
Freshwater Bay, Claremont
2023 watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

MIDDLE *Claremont Jetty III*
2023 watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

BOTTOM *Claremont Jetty VI*
2023 watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

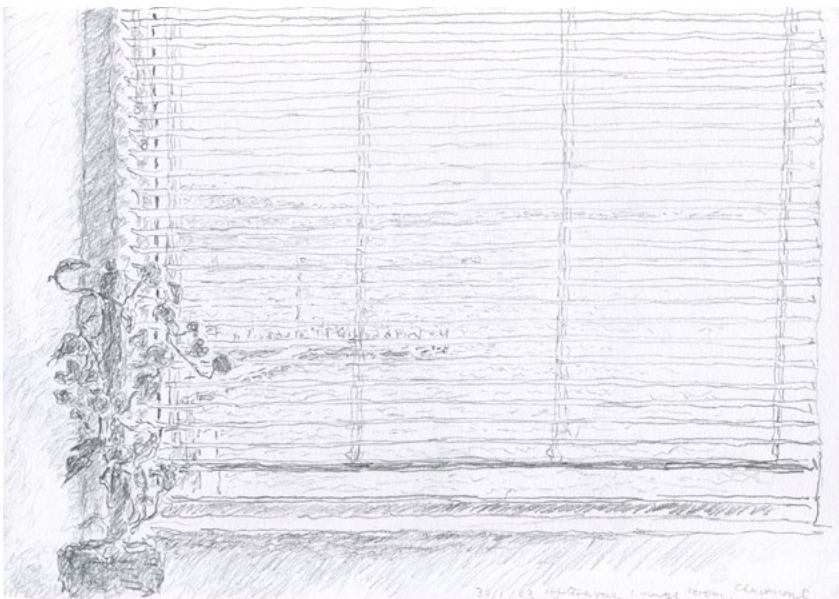


Claremont Jetty, through the Open Window 2023 oil on linen 24.5 x 19cm

WHEN THE CRABS ARE RUNNING, Claremont Jetty gets busy, with thin ropes going off into the water from every outer post into the shallow bay. There are differing ideas as to the best bait to put into the crab pots: old chicken wings, sardines, fatty red meat, offal. I've heard that the optimum time to leave your trap in the water is eight minutes. There's a lot going on out there, in an atmosphere of both camaraderie and competition, as three-generational families work the lines. At night you see figures, up to their shoulders in the shallows, swinging their head torches from side to side, making yellow-green arcs in the water.



Through the Venetians, Claremont 2023 oil on linen 23 x 30cm



Afternoon Lounge Room, Claremont 2023 pencil on paper 21 x 30cm



Claremont Jetty, from the Water's Edge I 2023 oil on marine ply 13 x 30.5cm



Claremont Jetty, from the Water's Edge II 2023 oil on marine ply 13 x 30cm



Dog Walker, Dawn, Tuross Head 2023 oil on marine ply 14.5 x 19cm



Stormy Morning, Tuross Head 2023 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Calm Day at Clovelly 2023 watercolour on paper 16 x 20.5cm



Hot Afternoon, Gordons Bay 2023 watercolour on paper 14.5 x 22.5cm



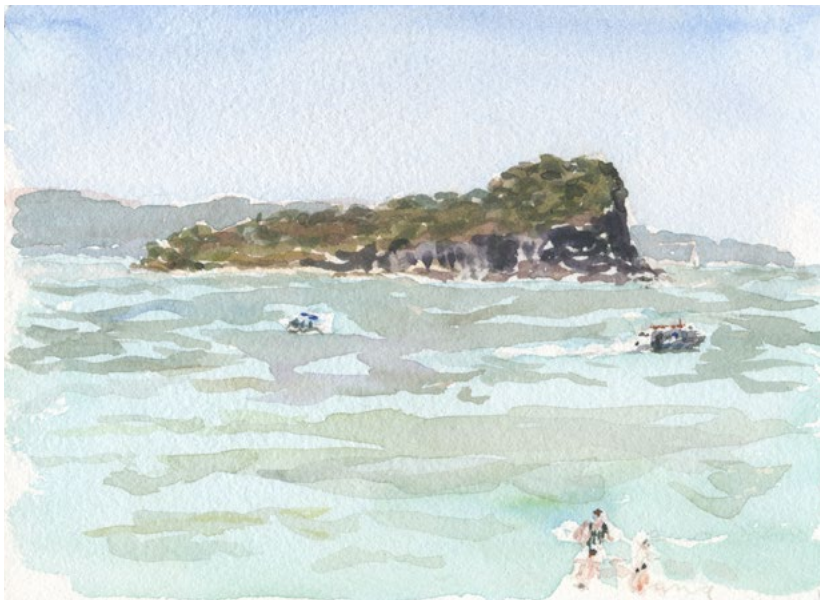
Clovelly in April 2023 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Yacht Tacking, Dunsborough 2023 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Goolwa Beach, looking West 2022 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Lion Island, from Flint and Steel Beach 2023 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



The Jetty at Bindijine, New Year's Day 2023 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Dawn Surfers, Middleton II 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



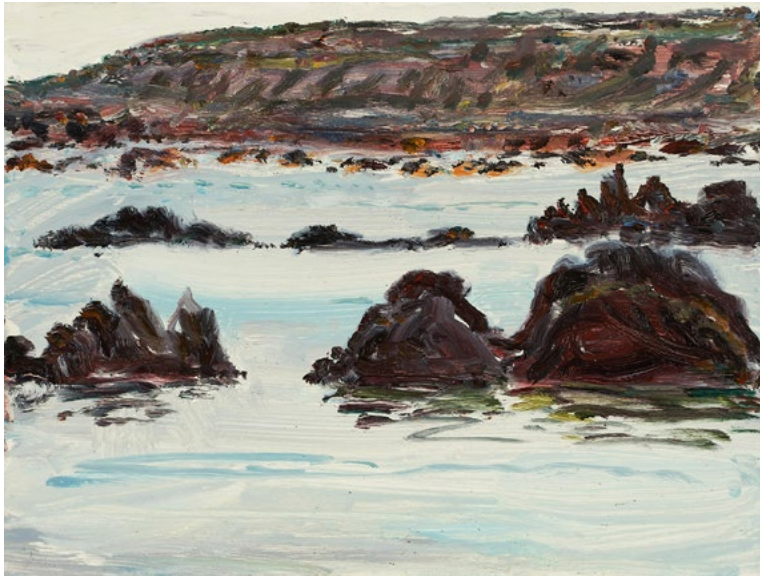
Dawn Surfers, Middleton I 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Late Morning, Point Annie 2022 oil on marine ply 19 x 39cm



Rock Outcrops, Lighthouse Beach 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 39cm



Early Morning, Lighthouse Beach 2023 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



From the Rocks, Daly Head 2022 oil on marine ply 23 x 30cm



Sailing Boat off Bottle and Glass Point 2023 oil on marine ply 18.5 x 31.5cm



Rocks, Shelly Headland 2023 oil on marine ply 23 x 30cm



TOP
*Palm Tree, Waverley
Cemetery II* 2023
oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm

MIDDLE
*Palm Tree, Waverley
Cemetery III* 2023
oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm

BOTTOM
*Palm Tree, Waverley
Cemetery IV* 2023
oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm



TOP Late Afternoon Bathers,
Leighton Beach 2023
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm
MIDDLE Leighton Dog
Beach II 2023
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm
BOTTOM Windy Afternoon,
Leighton Beach 2023
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm



Leaning Tree, Dunsborough II 2023 watercolour on paper 15 x 21cm



Late Afternoon Mangroves, Mooney Mooney 2023 oil on linen 23 x 30cm



High Tide Mangroves, Mooney Mooney 2023 oil on linen 23 x 30cm



Screen of Trees, Mount Victoria 2023 oil on marine ply 18.5 x 31.5cm

THE LYREBIRDS WERE CALLING from the mulchy understorey of the tall trees further down Megalong Valley. I walked out to the edge of a rocky outcrop, looking for a place to paint, and saw an unzipped backpack slumped against a nearby tree. There was no one about. Then I noticed a stainless steel loop at the far end of the sandstone ledge with a taut rope attached to it. The view was immense but I decided to go elsewhere, worried that the tired climber might come up over the lip of rock and reel back in surprise at seeing me there.



TOP Cliffs, Mount Victoria I
2023 oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm

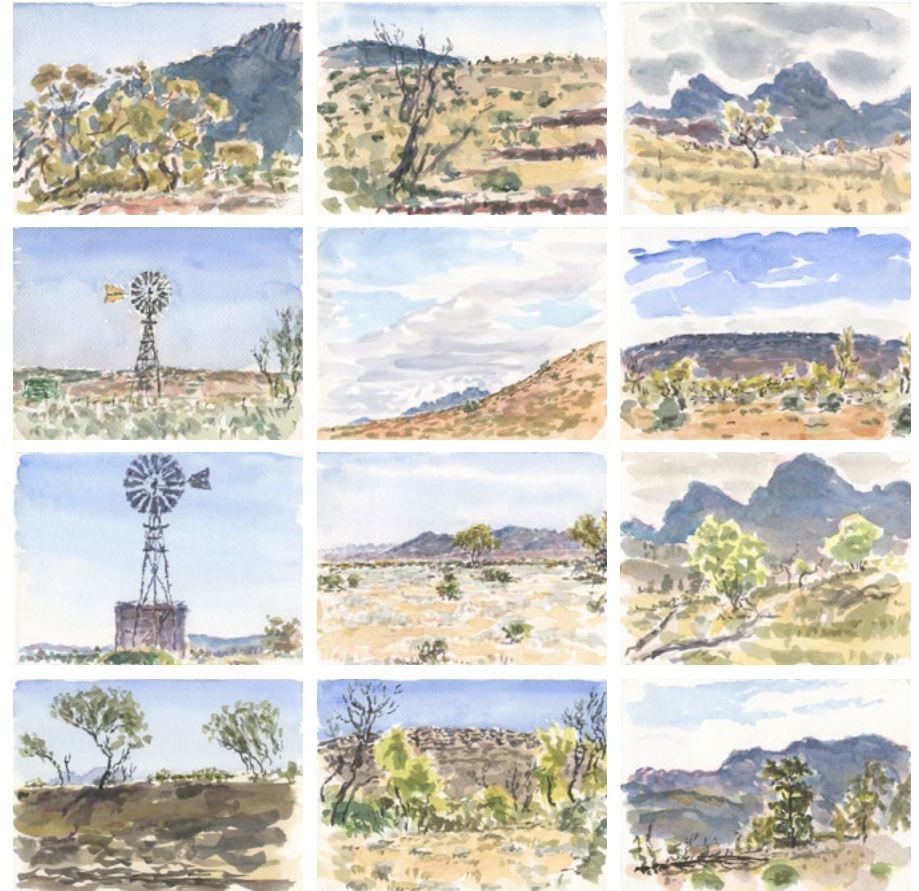
MIDDLE Cliffs, Mount Victoria II
2023 oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm

BOTTOM Cliffs, Mount Victoria III
2023 oil on marine ply
16 x 21cm



Fenceline, North of Hawker 2023 oil on linen 22 x 40cm

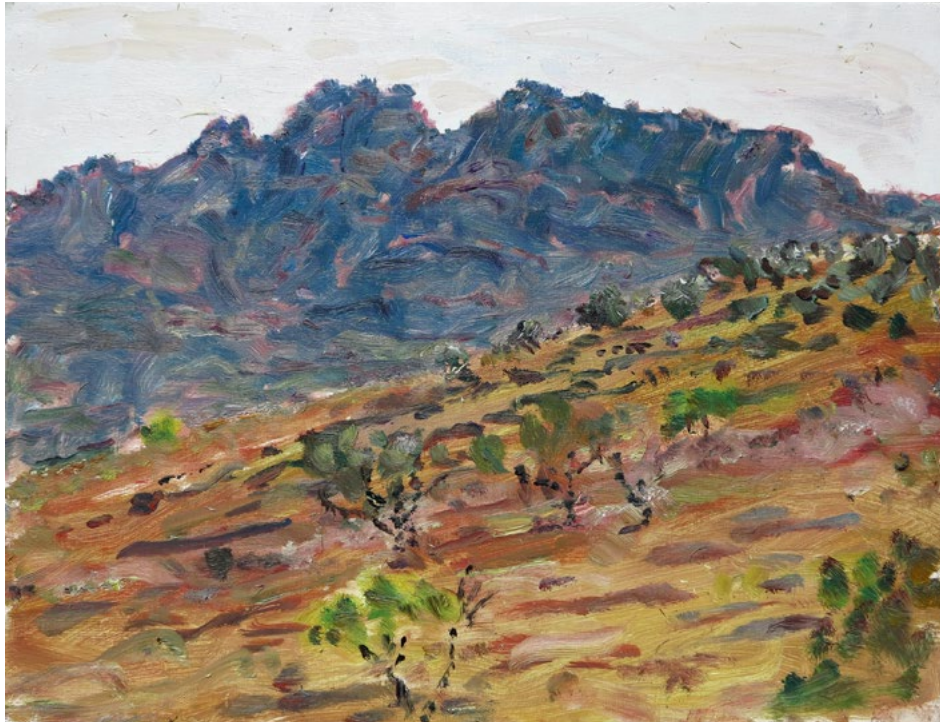
I PITCHED MY SMALL TENT in the far corner of the unpowered section of Hawker Caravan Park, my favourite spot, where two wire fences meet and you can look out over a paddock to distant blue ranges. I went out painting all afternoon, until dark, beside the dry bed of Wonoka Creek, then cooked some Tommy Ruff filets in the camp kitchen and read until 9 pm. I was really tired by the time I crawled into my tent and switched off my head torch, but I found it hard to get comfortable under my blankets. There was a lump under my sleeping mat. I felt around with my hand and figured, from the shape I felt down there, that maybe my umbrella had rolled underneath or that my groundsheet had got scrunched up. I unzipped the fly and peered under the bottom of the tent with my torch. A big Shingleback Lizard stared back at me. It didn't open its mouth and hiss at me, so I hoped I hadn't hurt it. When I reached under and tried to get it to move away, it stubbornly held firm. I had to use a lot of strength before it dislodged its claws from the ground and shuffled off into the night. After that I was no longer sleepy.



Walking through Adnyamathanha Country, Mount Elm to Arkaba 2022
watercolour on paper group of 12, frame size 84 x 80cm



The View from Jarvis Hill, Hawker 2023
watercolour on paper 15 x 20cm



Afternoon Ranges, Arkaba 2021 oil on marine ply 23 x 30cm



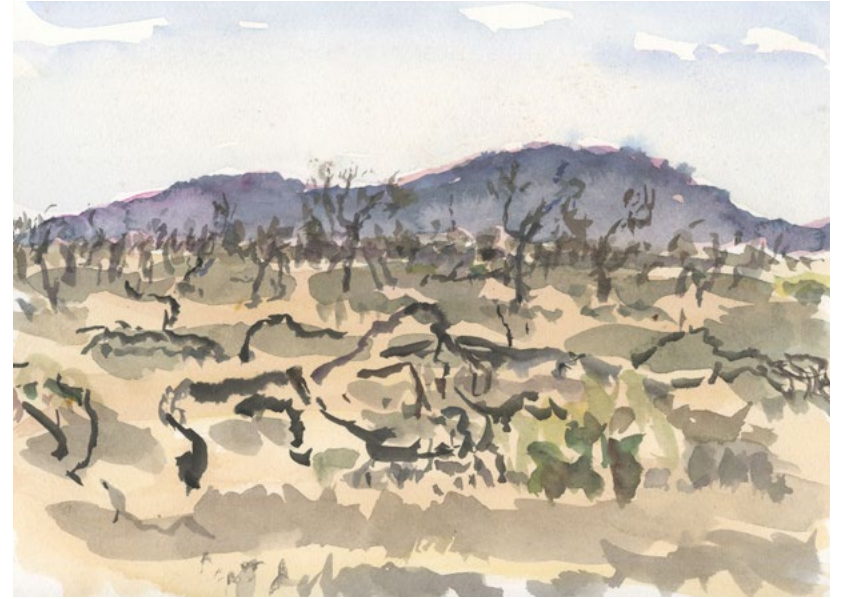
Late Afternoon Rooftops, Hawker 2023 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



TOP
South of Wilpena Pound I
 oil on marine ply 2021
 12 x 21cm

MIDDLE
South of Wilpena Pound II
 oil on marine ply 2022
 11 x 21cm

BOTTOM
South of Wilpena Pound III
 oil on marine ply 2023
 11 x 21cm



Afternoon Paddock, Yappala 2021 watercolour on paper 20 x 27cm



Wonoka after Rain 2022 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Shearing Sheds, North of Hawker 2022 oil on linen 41 x 51cm



Shearing Sheds, North of Hawker, after Rain 2021 oil on linen 25 x 30cm



Cirrus and Shearing Sheds, North of Hawker 2021 oil on linen 23 x 30cm



Storm Lifting, Shearing Sheds, North of Hawker 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Gate, Jarvis Hill Road, Hawker II 2022 oil on marine ply 13 x 30cm



Mernmerna Hill, from the Outback Highway 2022 oil on marine ply 13 x 30cm



Windmill and Tank, Hookina II 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Windmill outside Hawker IV 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



TOP LEFT *Windmill outside Hawker II* 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm
TOP RIGHT *Windmill near Hawker Airport* 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm

MIDDLE LEFT *Windmill and Tank, Hookina I* 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm
MIDDLE RIGHT *Windmill outside Hawker III* 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm

BOTTOM LEFT *Windmill, Morala Gorge Road I* 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm
BOTTOM RIGHT *Windmill outside Hawker I* 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



TOP *Fishing Shack,
Corny Point I* 2021
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

MIDDLE *Fishing Shack,
Corny Point II* 2021
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

BOTTOM *Fishing Shack,
Corny Point III* 2021
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm



Wind-bent Tree, Corny Point 2022 oil on marine ply 19 x 39cm



Paddock by the Sea, Point Turton 2021 oil on marine ply 13 x 30cm



Tree in Ruined House, Wonoka 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Wilson Cemetery 2022 oil on marine ply 23 x 30cm



*TOP Barndioota Ranges,
from the Edge of
the Outback Highway*
2023
watercolour on paper
19.5 x 26.5cm

*BOTTOM The View from
Dutchmans Stern Track*
2022
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

EVEN AFTER I'D WASHED MY SOCKS, months later, I kept finding burrs adhered to the wool, delicate whorls of spikes, the colour of red earth. They probably came from the dry bank of Wonoka Creek or from beside a collapsed fenceline at Arkaba, where I spent so much time painting these past two years. Sharp burrs, flies, ants and dusty wind are the less pleasant things about painting in the Flinders during the hotter months. A fly veil alters the look of things, so I do without, but the flies eschew the strong repellent I apply to my face and hat rim and crawl beneath my glasses to suck at my juicy tear ducts. Both hands being occupied with painting - the left one holding a panel and the right one a brush - I rattle my head from side to side to dislodge them. This, in its turn, alters 'the look of things'.



Corny Point Lighthouse - Nine Views and other paintings on the kitchen wall, Womerah Lane, 2023



Distant Ranges, Wonoka II 2023 oil on marine ply 13 x 30.5cm



Afternoon Clouds, Hookina 2022 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Distant Ranges, Wonoka I 2021 oil on marine ply 16 x 21cm



Band of Flowers, Wonoka 2022 oil on marine ply 19 x 39cm



TOP Jacaranda and Cumulus,
Marrickville 2022
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

MIDDLE Jacaranda, Croydon
2022
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm

BOTTOM Jacaranda,
Summer Hill 2022
watercolour on paper
11.5 x 16cm



House Wall, McIwraith Street, Carlton 2022 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



Stadium Lights and Houses, Princeton Hill 2022 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm



View from the Attic, Womerah Lane 2022 watercolour on paper 29.5 x 21cm



Nasturtiums through Julia's Back Fence, Brunswick 2022 watercolour on paper 20 x 27cm



Back Lane Shadow, Brunswick 2022 watercolour on paper 15 x 21cm



Back Lane, Sydenham 2023 watercolour on paper 11.5 x 16cm

I CARRY A SMALL FOLDING STOOL (\$2.80 from Daiso) in my paint bag which raises my viewpoint up a bit and protects me from wet or thorny ground. As I lower myself onto this stool I think sometimes of Ronald Ryan, the last man hanged in Australia, at Pentridge Prison in 1967. In a book I once read about him it remarked that he was fastidious about his clothes and, when resting on a bushwalk, would smooth out a white handkerchief on a log before sitting down.



Rushcutters Bay Park in Autumn 2023 oil on marine ply 19 x 31.5cm



Plane Trees, Rushcutters Bay Park
watercolour on paper 16 x 11.5cm



*Corner House, Curtain Street,
North Carlton* 2022
watercolour on paper 16 x 11.5cm



On the Road to Quorn 2023 oil on linen 23 x 30cm

TOM CARMENT was born in Sydney in 1954 and has been painting landscapes, portraits and still lifes since the early 1970s. His work has been shown in numerous exhibitions and at King Street Gallery since 1992. He has been selected twelve times for the Archibald Prize, eight times for the Wynne Prize and four times for the Sulman Prize. He is also a writer and his latest book, *Womerah Lane: Lives and Landscapes*, was short-listed for the non-fiction section of the 2021 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

For Tom's full CV go to kingstreetgallery.com.au/artists/tom-carment

This catalogue is a selection of the paintings in *The Long Way Round* at King Street Gallery, 2023. All the works can be viewed on the King Street Gallery website.



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