



Genevieve Carroll

The Wattle Room

Chapter 13

Inventory of a Landscape

1 – 26 September, 2026



King Street Gallery
on William

Right: Genevieve Carroll in her Hill End studio,
2024, photograph Bill Moseley

Through the Looking Glass: And What Genevieve Found There

Written by Richard Perram OAM

*"Who in the world am I?
Ah, that's the great puzzle."*

*- Alice in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,
Chapter 2, Lewis Carroll*

Working in the isolated 19th-century gold mining village of Hill End, Genevieve Carroll paints her magical creations.

This exhibition *Inventory of a landscape* is a collection of her most recent works which recall 17th century Dutch/Flemish *Vanitas* paintings in which our mortality (*memento mori*) is alluded to through fabulous visual associations which provide an insight into her life.

This exhibition is part of a much larger work and is Chapter 13 of *The Wattle Room*, the overarching title of Carroll's art practice and exhibitions.¹

Jugs, rats eerily reminiscent of the early Disney cartoon characters, snow domes, iPhones, a cat from Picasso, dissolving red brick walls and black starry nights occupy her expressionistic landscapes and still lives, and which are all part of the psychological self portraits she inhabits, (*Self Portrait: Just let it out*, 2026).

Carroll has lived for 20 years in Hill End, the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people. Hill End in 1872, at its peak, had a population of 8,000 people, by 1900 it had declined to 500, today it sits at 110, of which 21 are practicing artists. On daily rambles through the heritage town, Carroll observed the detritus of

19th-century living, crockery shards, broken bottles and twisted spoons which have inspired how she sees this fragmented landscape, (*Self Portrait walking Hill End searching for green*, 2025).

Her paintings are similarly fragmented in which disparate elements are combined to create psychological states, reminiscent of the works of writers Franz Kafka in which a man becomes a cockroach (*Metamorphosis*, 915) or Nikolai Gogol in which a nose detaches itself from a face to have a life of its own (*The Nose*, 1836). So, in Carroll's case she becomes a ceramic jug, (*Self Portrait*, 2026), one of her most important self-images and reminiscent of the pottery shards she encountered on her Hill End rambles.

The juxtaposition of the disparate elements in her paintings creates rich associations that have meaning but not necessarily in a literal way. Her influences are wide ranging and include Samuel Beckett, one of the founders of the Theatre of the Absurd, silent film star Buster Keaton, the expressionistic distorted landscapes of Chaim Soutine, Philip Guston's later cartoonish and satiric work dealing with the banality of evil, and Austrian artist Erwin Wurm's manipulation of everyday objects and houses to create surreal relationships.

1. *The Wattle Room* concept arose from the nostalgia she experienced for Australia's floral emblem when she was in Paris in 2007 as the recipient of the Tim Storrier and Annette Onslow Residency at the Cité des Arts.



Self portrait - just let it all out, 2026, oil on canvas, 170x130cm

Through these disparate influences Carroll creates her own absurd universe with its own logic or lack of logic. In *Meetings of nonsense and love machines*, 2026, a bulbous human figure sits at a table with a jug, a bug, and a mobile phone while looming over them is a craggy face, nothing connects them, except the feeling something is about to happen. Her work is reminiscent of the world of Lewis Carroll where Alice's adventures in wonderland are presented as if they are reality, and logic is not a prerequisite for meaning. Carroll's *Cross Contours of Hill End Anxious Objects*, 2026, in which a rat perched on a milk jug coexists with a larger ceramic jug, recalls the Mad Hatter's Tea Party in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The central image in Carroll's work is a ceramic jug, which represents herself and her place in the landscape, (*Still life thinking about its own stillness*, 2026). Another image is the snow dome recalling the safety of home, of nostalgia for another age, a miniature world sitting safely beneath a protective glass dome (*Everything is absolutely fine, in the snow dome #1 & #2*, 2025). Additionally if it was able to be shaken its white snow storm would delight the viewer. Rats which are everywhere in Hill End, appear as spindly cartoon characters (*A character*, 2026).

Carroll's work verges on the surreal, in her world inanimate everyday objects come to life, red brick walls collapse (*Remember to comb the stuffed sandwich door shadow*, 2025), amorphic rabbit figures sit on a table covered in toadstools (*Betsie & Bernie*, 2025), and a house dissolves before our eyes (*And the home waved goodbye*, 2025).

There are two other aspects of Carroll's work that are striking, her use of colour

and how the titles of her paintings contribute to their intellectual richness.

Growing up in the 1960s with parents who were both artists, she lived through a time when there was a drive to create a new world, with new architecture, new design, new art and most importantly new colours. Her bold use of vibrant and abrasive colours in her current work is reminiscent of the excitement of the 1960s.

The titles of her work, all carefully worked at, often provide a deeper richness to the meaning of the work: *Once upon a time*, 2026, *A table holding memory*, 2025, *Landscape with a cat and bird*, 2019, *On the hill, upon the frost, under lemon clouds*, 2026 and *Tear/Tear*, 2024.

In her poem for two voices *Inventory of a landscape*, 2026, reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's 1958 monologue, *Krapp's Last Tape*, she enunciates many of her themes:

Who likes to count?
Counting what?
Counting time.
Why time?
Morsels of weight
I've counted
the shadows.
Before or
after?

Carroll in her work is trying to make sense as best she can of the world in which she lives. A world full of, inconsistencies, disappointments, feelings of isolation and uncertainty but one which she faces with her unbounded optimism and her never-ending good humour (*Another sunny start*, 2026).

- Richard Perram OAM



A table holding memory, 2026, acrylic and collage on archival paper, 174.5x138cm