

Wendy Sharpe
Paris 2008

King Street Gallery
on William

10am – 6pm Tuesday – Saturday
177 William St Darlinghurst NSW 2010 Australia
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Wendy Sharpe

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Wendy Sharpe Paris Street
Photo Martin Lane

Ah... Paris

Paris, France... "A tamed and familiar land, as comfortable as an old espadrille" or perhaps not, as Graham Robb suggests in his recently released history, *Discovering France*. At the heart of the locale exists a fundamental paradox where the place's perceived appearance - formed by generations of tourists savouring cafes, charcuteries and connoisseurship - belies its rawness and grunt, the latter being the France of discovery by earlier explorers and travelers.

At what point though does one shift from the stages of explorer, traveler and tourist to beyond, to become woven into a place's fabric? It is a question underpinning Wendy Sharpe's enquiry in her current body of paintings, *Paris*.

A regular traveler to the city of lights, she recently spent three months over the European Autumn/Winter as a recipient of the AGNSW Denise Hickey Studio. Exactly 20 years earlier, Sharpe as a precocious emerging painter, had been awarded the same studio. This time, as a mid career artist, she notes,

"I was much more able to shift easily from the enclosure of the Cite, its comfortability and security to beyond, to where I could absorb the ambience, capture the moment, the strange juxtapositions of tourists in places, the gestures of Paris's people, the ways all different types were all squashed in."

That said, the luxury of space and time, afforded in the provision of a studio, kick started arguably Sharpe's finest painting to date.

It takes seconds to fall in love with her cluster of tiny canvases living and breathing every nuance of the city via relaxed, sensuous mark making. Surface scuffs and frissons of paint pulse with the city's field of expressions while more extravagant conversations evolve with the four metre canvases. They stretch to an evocative survey of Parisian life where mood is delivered by swatches of moving colour. Distorting the real in a way not dissimilar to real estate ads, these panoramas survey then close in with a fish eye lens retaining their integrity as Sharpe's signature expressive style whisks them into shape.

It is as if the whole of Paris, Sharpe's Paris, were caught in a moment of suspended animation, as if she the onlooker were committed to being more than a tourist, more than a someone passing through who does this looking, this painting for pleasure. The viewer too shares in this process. He or she becomes a person looking at an artist looking at someone. Sharpe, as the one looking and creating, captures then an aesthetic distance and herein lies the key to her work. It is grounded in a fundamental paradox, as if to mirror the paradox of Paris itself, the sacred end of culture and the profane end of an old espadrille.

Wendy Sharpe, whether painting about artist's studios, art schools, militia on missions, lovers in studios, cafés or tourists, is curious about the romance of art, the romantic perceptions about its practice, its making, but never does she doubt it is work, seriously hard work. This is what affords this independent traveler an integrity over time and a well deserved success in the annals of Australian art.

Courtney Kidd

*Graham Robb, (I) The Discovery of France(I), Norton & Co, 2007

*Courtney Kidd is a Sydney based art consultant and writer.



Musee D'Orsay 2007 Gouache on paper 28 x 36cm



Paris Imagined 2007 Oil on canvas 145 x 180cm



Rooftop Paris 2007 Photo by Janna Ferris



View from the Roof 2007 Gouache on paper 50 x 65cm





Paris Studio 2007 Oil on linen 80 x 378cm

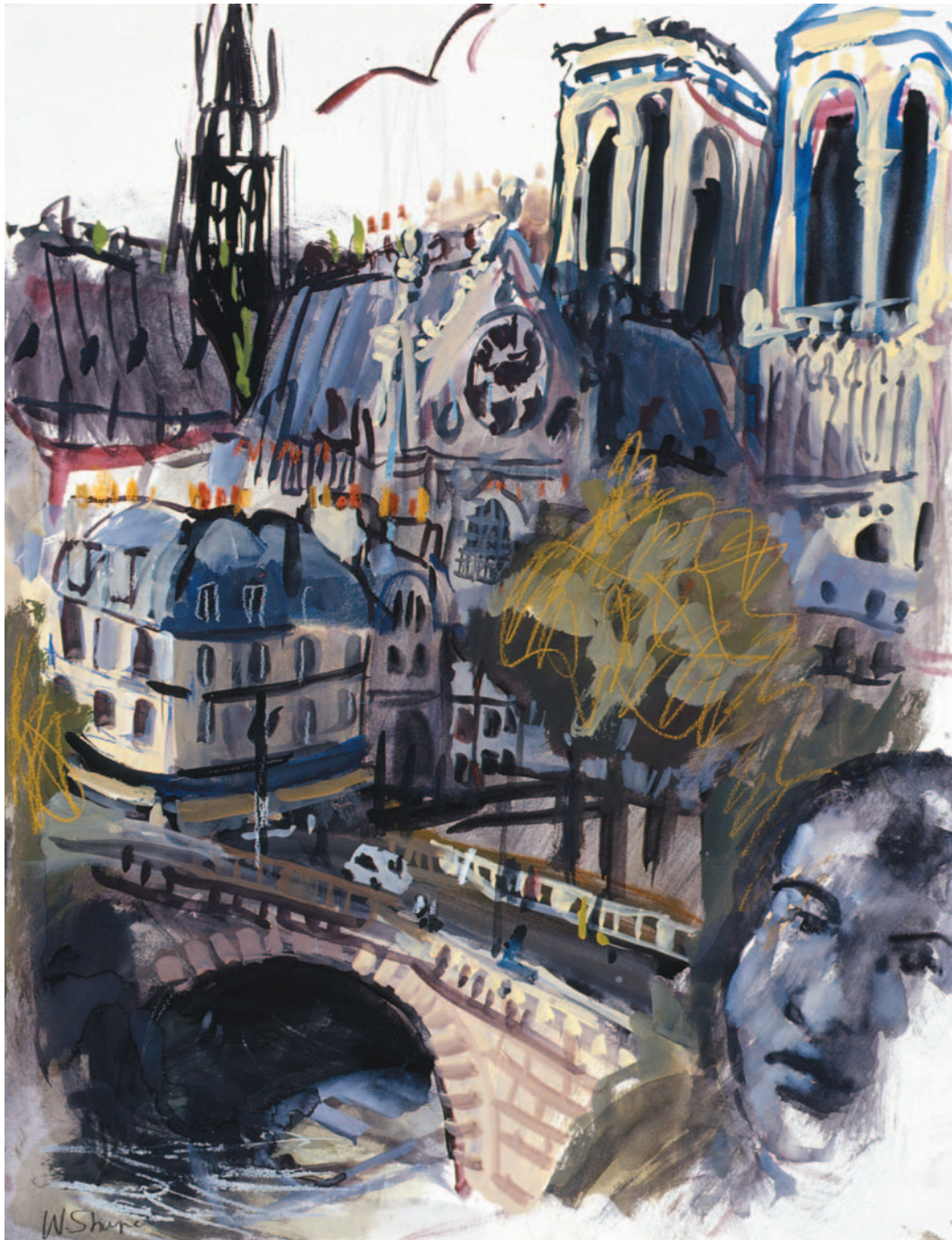




Tourist on Ile St Louis 2007 Oil on linen 80 x 378cm



View from the Roof Backview 2007 Gouache on paper 50 x 65cm



View from the Roof Pont Louis Phillippe 2007 Gouache on paper 50 x 65cm



Mona and Stephane 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Men with Beer 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Breakfast in the Studio 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Pink Coat 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



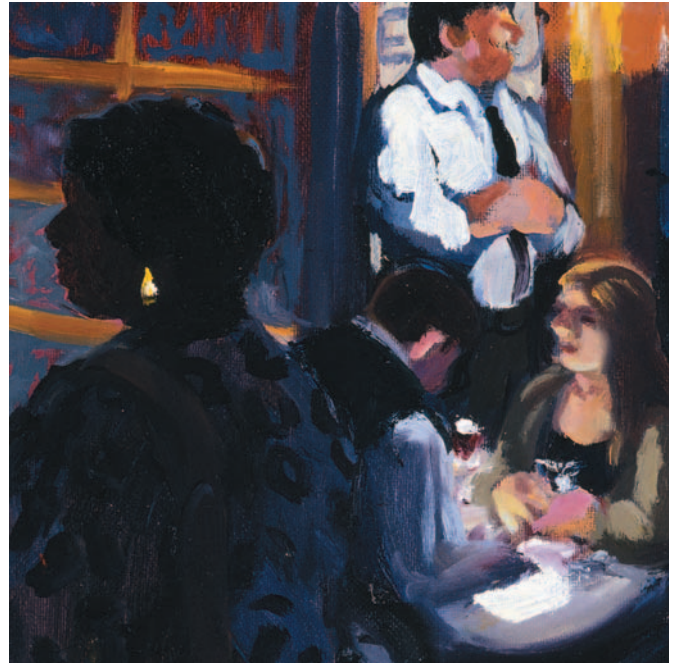
Carousel at St Paul Metro 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Woman Getting Dressed 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Dog 2007 Gouache on paper 28 x 36cm



The Waiter In the Doorway 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



The Hairdresser The Metro 2007 Gouache on paper 28 x 36cm



Carousel at St Paul Metro 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



Woman with Blue Folder The Metro 2007 Oil on linen 20 x 20cm



View from the Roof Shadow 2007 Gouache and mixed media on paper 50 x 65cm



View from the Petit Hotel 2007 Gouache and mixed media on paper 28 x 37cm

View Woman on Balcony 2007 Gouache and mixed media on paper 50 x 65cm



Wendy Sharpe

Born 1960 Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Solo Exhibitions (selected)

- 2007 *Stories from the Studio* Philip Bacon Galleries, Sydney
- 2006 *Couples* MARS Gallery, Melbourne
the opera series king street gallery on burton, sydney
Million Dollar Mermaid Australian National Maritime Museum
- 2005 *Artist and City Paintings and Spanish Series* Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- 2004 *paintings (city series)* king street gallery on burton
Travel Paintings Phillip Bacon Gallery
- 2003 Recent Paintings, Chapman Gallery
Paintings Phillip Bacon Gallery
- 2002 *Wendy Sharpe: a selection of works 1999-2002* king street gallery on burton at Span Galleries, Melbourne
new paintings king street gallery on burton
- 2000 *New Beginnings-East Timor*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra
East Timor king street gallery on burton
- 1999 *Drawings, Paintings and Mixed Media Works for The Annette Kellermann Mural* (at Cook & Phillip Aquatic Centre, Sydney) king street gallery, sydney
- 1997 *Night Paintings* king street gallery on burton
- 1993 Recent Paintings, Michael Nagy Gallery, Sydney
- 1990 *Magic Paintings* DC Art Gallery, Sydney
- 1987 Selected Work, Nidus Gallery, Sydney
- 1986 *Fire Inside* First Impressions Gallery, Sydney
- 1985 *Sex and Death* Nicholson Street Gallery, Sydney



Group Exhibitions (selected)

- 2007 Portia Geach Memorial Award, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney
Cuisine & Country, Orange Regional Gallery, NSW
 Salon Des Refuses, SH Ervin Gallery
Squared Greenhill Gallery, Perth
 The Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- 2006-07 *witness to WAR [official art and photography 1999-2003]* SH Ervine Gallery [travelling NSW]
- 2006 The Inaugural Adelaide Perry Prize For Drawing, Sydney
 The Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
- 2005-07 *Fireworks-tracing the incendiary in Australian Art* (curated by Gavin Wilson) [travelling to regional galleries throughout NSW; Qld; Vic]
- 2005 Dobell Drawing Prize, Art Gallery New South Wales
- 2004 Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
- 2003 The Dobell Prize for Drawing, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Winner - Portia Geach Memorial Portrait Prize, SH Ervin Gallery
 Winner - Allen Gamble Memorial Art Prize (in conjunction with Mosman Art Prize), Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
 Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls, NSW
- 2002 The Dobell Prize for Drawing, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Kedumba Drawing Prize, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls
- 2001 *Federation* (curated by John McDonald) National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Studio Tradition (curated by Therese Kenyon), Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Sydney
Art on Steel Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Wollongong City Gallery, NSW; Museum of Tropical Queensland, Qld (& travelling)
- 2000 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair, king street galleries, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
 The Dobell Prize for Drawing, Art Gallery of New South Wales
- 1999-2003 *Witness to War-Australian War Memorial* (curated by Claire Baddeley & Katherine McMahon),
 Mornington Regional Art Gallery & travelling throughout NSW; Qld; Vic



Awards, Prizes and Major Commissions (selected)

- 2008 Residency-Australian Embassy, Cairo, Egypt
 2007 Residency-Studio Cite Internationale des Arts [Art Gallery of New South Wales], Paris
 2003 Allen Gamble Memorial Art Prize, Sydney
 Portia Geach Memorial Prize Award, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney
 1999 Commissioned as Official Australian War Artist to East Timor, Australian War Memorial ACT
 1998-99 Commissioned by the City of Sydney for Olympic pool murals based on the life of Annette Kellerman
 (8 panels), Cook & Phillip Aquatic Centre
 1998 Bathurst Art Prize, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
 1996 Archibald Prize Winner, Art Gallery of New South Wales
 1995 Kedumba Drawing Prize, New South Wales
 Portia Geach Memorial Prize, SH Ervin Gallery
 1986 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Collections	Art Gallery of New South Wales	University of Sydney
	Australian War Memorial, Canberra	Kedumba Drawing Collection, NSW
	Australian Embassy, Paris, France	Orange Regional Gallery, NSW
	Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, NSW	Qantas, Australia
	BHP Australia	Waverley Council, NSW
	City of Sydney Council	Warringah Council, NSW
	University of Queensland, Qld	Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, NSW

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Artwork photographed by Peter Jones

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Director: Robert Linnegar
Director: Randi Linnegar



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