

David Bennett

Reverie

21 September — 15 November 2017



David Bennett, *Bushwalk III*, Acrylic and oil stick on canvas, 100 x 120 cm

The challenge of visually representing an experience of the Australian landscape has motivated David Bennett since moving from New Zealand to Australia in 1981. During the period of acclimatisation that followed, the direction of Bennett's artistic activity changed course: the techniques and modes of thinking specific to figurative art gradually giving way to an exploration of the possibilities inherent in more inclusive interpretations of form and dimension that empower the viewer and invite more open-ended experiences.

In Bennett's practice, explorations of the landscape beyond Melbourne have always gone hand in hand with explorations of medium and technique. Inspired

by the revolutionary landscape works of Melbourne painter and printmaker Fred Williams, some of Bennett's early field trips were to the You Yangs, which provided rich subject matter for artistic engagement and experimentation. Part of the enjoyment was to experience what Williams experienced and to enter into his artistic vision, to get inside the artist and to see how he achieved what he achieved. The craggy, upward tending drama of the Grampians also drew Bennett beyond the city limits at this time.

'The conundrum I find with landscape painting', Bennett writes, 'is how to portray the visual experience in a manner that is not completely realistic but somehow conveys the feeling of what one sees or experiences. Not to paint the whole picture so to speak, not to tell the whole story, but to allow the viewer to enter into the painting



David Bennett, *Breakwater*, Acrylic and oil stick on canvass, 100 x 120 cm

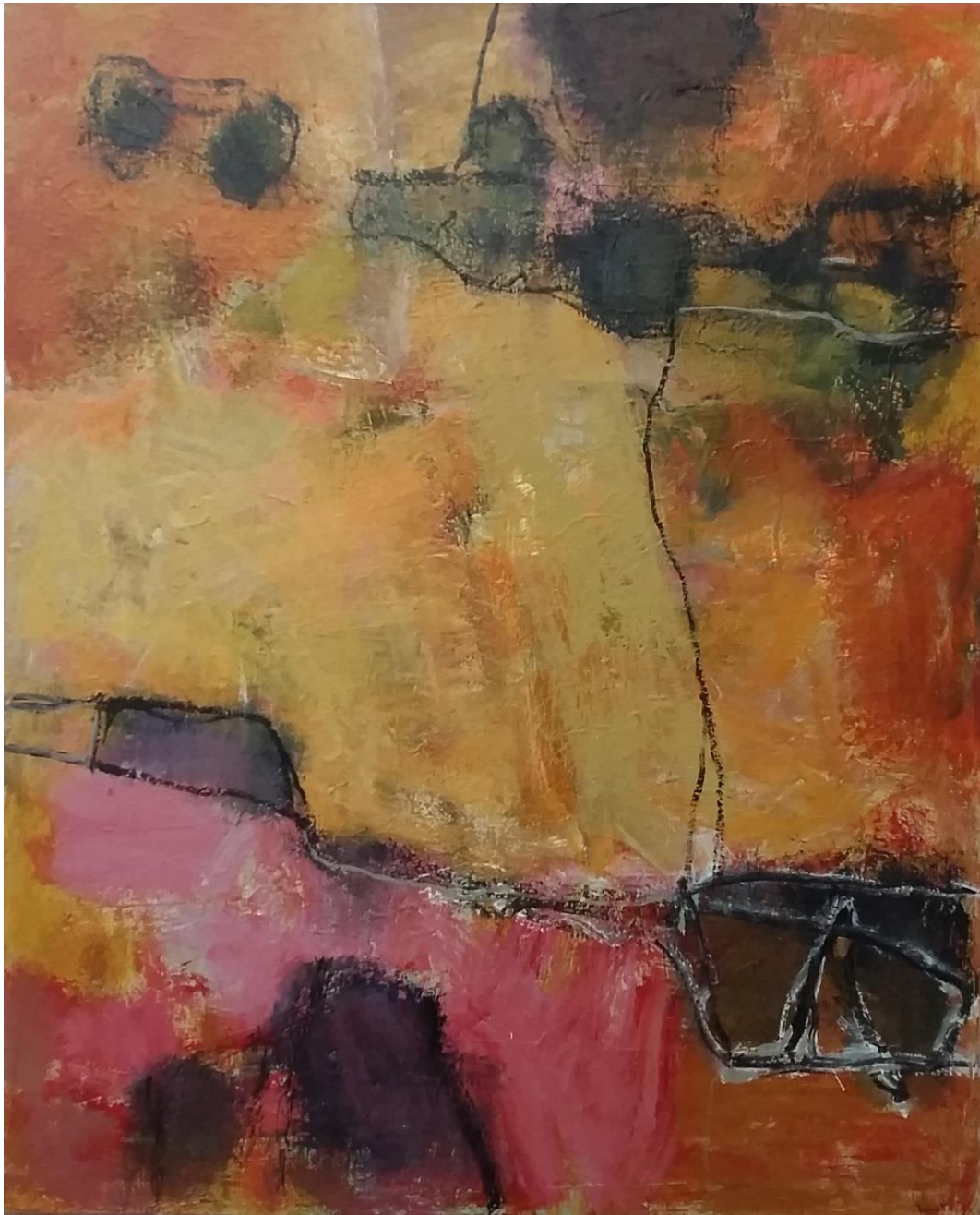


David Bennett, *Hills Meet Water*, Acrylic on board, 88 x 104 cm

and meander about in it. It is the same with figurative work, not simply rendering figures realistically but somehow creating a dimension in the work thereby breaking up our perceived reality.'

Bennett certainly divides and displaces conventional visual fields. In rupturing the picture plane with astonishingly suggestive movements of line and colour, the works that make up *Reverie*, Bennett's latest exhibition at Yering Station Art Gallery, all generate spacious, open-ended and uplifting experiences for the viewer, while simultaneously creating narrative possibilities that are free to wander, like reverie itself, over the surface, beneath the textured layers, into unseen regions and back again, in an exploratory fashion within which it is possible to experience a sense of expansion.

Bennett has exhibited regularly since his first solo exhibition at Compendium Gallery in Auckland in 1977. He now lives in Healesville, Victoria with his partner and fellow artist Kerryl Shirley.



David Bennett, *Rustic*, Acrylic on canvas, 119 x 97 cm

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