

Introductory notes and approach

Gerry Hartland is the hardest talent (*) for an interview I have ever faced in my career as a journalist ; I thought people like Malcolm Frazer and Amanda Vanstone were going to be difficult. No way, with them it was like having a friendly chat! With Gerry no way! He just refers you to some stuff he has said or done and you have to make your own decisions and approaches. No use of trying to talk to you in depth about styles, techniques and approaches.

Sometimes, he says nothing, some other times, he just warns you: "don't start me up now"! He is also a big man; a tough man! Someone you better avoid persuading for different ways things should be done. He has his own ways; and so has his art! Often he dismisses early stuff of his as amateurish and mind you in a rather cynical way! "Looking at them now, he claims in one of his notes about some early sketches, it is not surprising I abandoned the project"

On the other hand, I like his early works and is not only his early stuff that I like!

Talking about Gerry Hartland's gift of a very sharp eye of capturing his themes in a melancholic, yet powerfully original style by subtracting all unnecessary ornamental elements, and presenting a Dorian if not Laconic result, where mood and essence play the major role (**) his Australian themes come to mind as the finest example of creative austerity.

Another worthy traveller had once noted: "The colours of the Outback are impressive: red sands, golden grass, blue skies, white and black ashes, shrubs and trees in a hundred types of green. You may be less impressed viewing this picture, but two pictures cannot show what one sees during hours driving the countryside"

In Hartland's highly expressionistic [Vic Creek](#) or the pencil drawing [Seaside Shrubs](#) and the masterful [Caloundra Storm](#) (I think he likes that one too!) the abstract form of functioning with the elements is essayed: You don't have to use colour in [beach wreck](#) and the [Storm](#) to create an impression! Looking at these two works one can feel the powerful wind while drenched to the bone by the unforgiving rainstorm in Caloundra