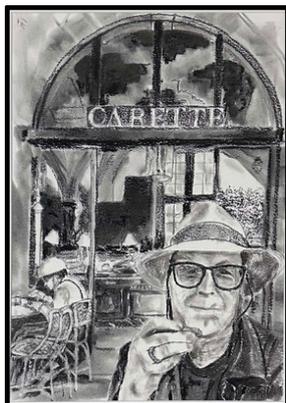


## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Introducing .....

## DOUGLAS ROBERTSON



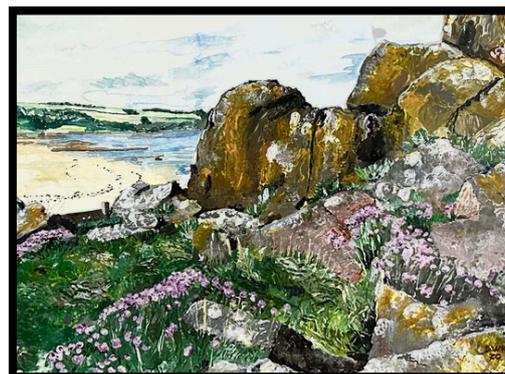
### ***\*Early Days***

I never excelled at Art in School but I did enjoy it. On writing this I re-visited some old School reports, always interesting. At the age of 9 I had what I now find the most pleasing comment "Approach to colour bold; keen to experiment". I then hit a fairly lazy patch and at 13 the commentary was "Not giving all he has, but can do well enough when he applies his mind to things" – pretty perceptive comment through much of my life. And the following year "Some of his work shows, I feel, a little promise. He might do well to consider art next year." Needless to say, like many, pressures to consider the sciences won through. Indeed science is then where I spent much of my life. I love counter factuals and wonder "what if I had chosen art?"

### ***\*University to Lockdown***

My most significant challenge is that I still have so much to learn. Having only been painting 'seriously' for three years since I retired, moved to Victor Harbor and joined the Society there is a long road to go. I have always loved Art of all complexions from sculpture to textiles, painting and drawing. Over the years I have tried embroidery, cross stitch, tapestry, crochet, decoupage, oils, watercolours, acrylics, charcoal and pastels and pen and ink. Always in danger of being a 'jack of all trades and master of none'.

My rate of production sat at a steady 2-5 paintings a year. Often dabbling and sometimes with purpose. Whilst at university, art occasionally provided a little pocket money with sales of my work through my sister's café. Work in these years varied from stuff I felt pretty happy with to other works that, I felt, were rather cumbersome. Mostly self taught at such times, it often showed. No YouTube or internet information to improve capability. How times have changed.



### ***\*From Lockdown to Retirement***



Like many people, COVID Lockdowns were a mixed blessing. I rediscovered walks on my own doorstep, particularly walking in Stirling Woods in Canberra. A beautiful eucalyptus woodland echoing to the sounds of Pardalotes, Gang Gangs, Butcher Birds and King parrots, accompanied by the amazing whirring of a Bower bird. I walked here for hours, often alone and often with my wife. It was here that I fell in love with gum trees. I then picked up a paint brush for the first time in a decade. I rediscovered art. At the same time I started writing poetry. I also discovered acrylics. It was a wonderful and worrying time.

### ***\*Inspiration***

I am inspired by so many artists. Who is my favourite artist? Usually the last one I looked at and liked. My taste is very broad from Vermeer to The Glasgow Boys from Egon-Schiele to Arthur Boyd, from Cressida Campbell to David Hockney (no surprise there). I find the way people talk and think about art fascinating. How they get their inspiration. How they make their marks. I think about art at numerous and random times during the day. I take and collect photographs (over 100,000 and rising).

My inspiration sneaks up on me. I rarely think things through before I make my first mark. Having no defined style means that each painting or drawing is a voyage of discovery. As a child I always wanted to know what was round the next bend. And so it is with my art. I turn a corner and I am somewhere new. My parents once called the police when we were on holiday simply because the coastal path had too many bends!

***Continued Page 4***

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## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: DOUGLAS ROBERTSON *Continued from Page 3*

My art is very much trial and error. This is both infuriating and enlightening. Some of this is simply because my technique is still developing and my understanding of colour is incomplete. Many people say they are self taught. I think I am everyone taught. Every conversation revealing. Every thought leads to a YouTube search. Every exhibition eye opening. All of this means that I am unlikely to develop a single style. So may never perfect a technique; but it is the journey that excites. Every mark a step towards the next bend in the road.

### **\*Emerging Techniques**



*Stage 1: Blocking in*



*Stage 2: Adding Colour and Context*

Since coming to Victor Harbor and joining the Society I have painted widely and broadly but there may be two techniques which are starting to emerge that I might call my own (if there is such a thing). The first was a happy accident where a failed watercolour was made to 'ping' by marking the colour and tonal changes with pen lines. I then applied this to acrylic at scale. But for once in my life it leads to thinking of colour and tonal change in more detail before I start a work. These are becoming almost planned.



*Stage 3: Adding line detail*



*Finished !!*

The second came from my training as a geographer and love of landscape and its formation. This led me to using black acrylic marker pens varying from 5.0 to 0.05mm; allowing a surprising amount of lines on the page and using thicker pens in the foreground receding with distance to aid perspective.

Results from both techniques are based on reality but are semi-abstract in outcome. In a job interview (for the Mars Group) I was once described as having my feet on the ground and my head on the clouds. That's something I am entirely comfortable with and means I am will never stop experimenting and dreaming.

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