

*Walking by water.*  
**Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, 2014**

**Ken Smith.**

This exhibition combines paintings produced over three decades, which in hindsight all seem to ask similar questions. That is, how can handmade and static images of landscapes evoke movement, transience and change and create at the same time enduring visual structures?

A double paradox that acknowledges "... the natural world as both ephemeral and unchanging..." and which requires the landscape artist to "... fuse vitality and stability in representing the experience of nature ..." ( Andrews p.181)

Another constant over this time has been the response to and use of the archetypal division of things above and below the line of the horizon. This region, particularly when observed over water, is another paradox for it is always there, but in appearance, always changing.

Also consistent over this time of production has been a search to find ways to authentically represent the experience of the perception of colour. This is part of the landscape painter's puzzle for colour is the most elusive and fugitive of pictorial concerns and the one about which one can be least certain.

While the first work in this exhibition " Walking by water (Beach Road, Port Melbourne) ", 1983, was created in a studio context, all the other works on show were made on location in the landscape that was their subject, here on the Mornington Peninsula and, more recently, Sydney Harbour.

Working in the uncontrolled space of outdoors affects both how images are formed and also their content. Serial painting, that is, repeatedly painting the same subject from the same location over many days has evolved as a consequence of the type of visual analysis that landscape painting engenders, for it is impossible not to be aware of change when working outdoors. These sets of serial images attempt to make apparent continual change that occurs in and because of natural phenomena, variations that may not be so clear without the opportunities for simultaneous comparison that serial imagery provides.

## References

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