



Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge

DAVID ROBERT HILL

## A COLOURFUL LIFE

‘Eternity is such a profound and beautiful word.’

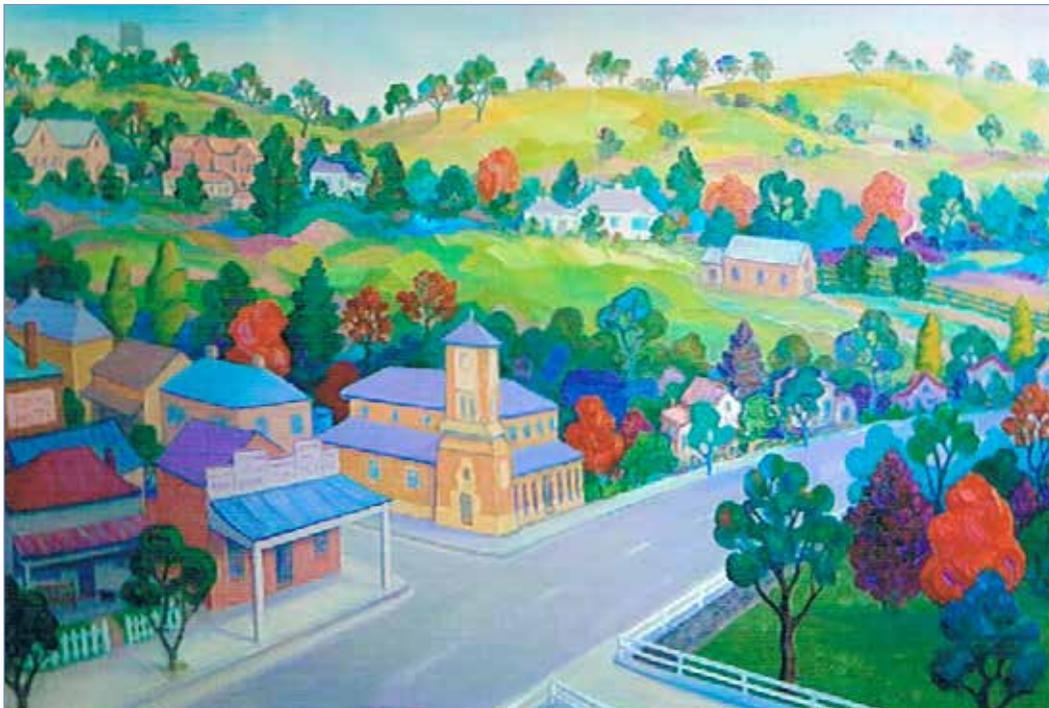
The musings of an elderly painter...

Classical music fills the studio, refreshing the mind and lifting the spirit. Through the window a weeping cherry is in full blossom, joyfully celebrating the arrival of Spring. Nature is as it is, in perfect accord with the creative pulsing of the cosmos.

The pleasurable art of oil painting is a serendipitous adventure. It unites both the painter and the viewer in a quest to discover the aesthetic in the ordinary and the elusive in the familiar.

In the studio the old painter's tremulous hands mix mounds of luscious oil paint onto a large palette, the colours an array of musical notes awaiting orchestration. A large canvas sits blank on an easel, taunting and yet inviting. Once begun a painting must proceed for mistress art suffers no infidelity.

Standing at an easel on 80 year-old legs, countering the quivers by pressing elbows hard against the body, he picks up a three inch flat

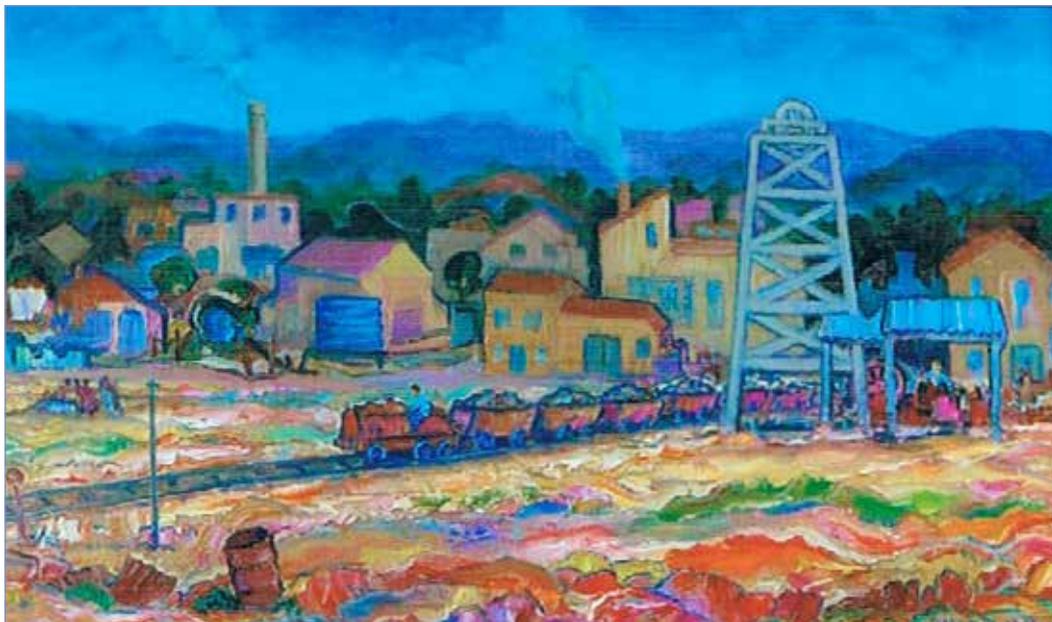


Autumn in Carcoar: Some years ago I spent a week painting in the hills above the picturesque village of Carcoar near Bathurst. Carcoar was the site of Australia's first bank hold-up by Ben Hall and his gang in 1863 and is a painter's delight. The Royal Hotel provided me with a comfortable room with roast dinners and Guinness each evening – what more could an old painter wish for!

A stylized signature or mark, possibly the artist's name, rendered in a dark, flowing script.



Katoomba Railway Station and the Historic Carrington Hotel, 100x150 cms  
Katoomba in the upper Blue Mountains is a good place to live. The air is clean,  
the winters invigorating and the arts are flourishing.



The Occidental Mine near Cobar:  
Many years ago on a painting trip with my friend and painting buddy the late  
Frederick Frizelle, we camped at an old abandoned gold mine near Cobar.  
Painting each morning and afternoon, boiling the billy and cooking sausages,  
eggs and beans over a camp fire each evening was a bonding experience.  
Recently I visualized what the site might have looked like when it was a  
working mine.



Country Bathroom

head brush and begins. Working and absorbed for hour after many hours, there is no self doubt or trepidation, simply the familiar pleasure of working at one's art.

Creativity does not simply happen, it requires intention and conscious focus. But the elderly painter may well daydream while working, recalling the vigour of more youthful times, painting in

the countryside, camping under stars and the community of kindred spirits. There were all those fruitful and stimulating experiences – at Lightning Ridge, Sofala, Broken Hill, Cobar, The Warrumbungles and Kangaroo Valley.

Conscious focus returns and behold! There is a small area of the canvas where a few broad brush strokes are relating rather well. The painting

progresses, it comes to life and gives back its energy. Triangulation, the Trinity Principle, kicks in and a healthy dialogue develops between painter, painted and the painting itself. A completed painting expands far beyond its physical space. It asserts its own personality as it begins a journey that may well span many centuries. This work is named Autumn in Carcoar and the old painter is happy.

'There is no happiness that compares to the joy of creative work', said Bertrand Russell, and this certainly rings true for the art of painting. A successful painting will evoke a sense of wellbeing for both creator and viewer.

Remuneration for artists is modest and at times non-existent but work satisfaction is immense. To bring into being something unique is a joyous act. Creative work generates its own energy and happiness. It is an evolutionary process and a passion which may span many lifetimes. This painter's view is that painting is unlike all other sequential art forms which demand a linear time slot to experience: for example concert, film, books. A painting's beginning, middle and end are one, perceived in the immediacy of the moment we call the present. The NOW is eternal, it is eternally NOW.

Eternity is such a profound and beautiful word.

DAVID ROBERT HILL was born in North London in 1938. His earliest memories are of air raid sirens, the drone of German bombers and the dreaded buzzing of doodlebugs, one of which destroyed the houses across the road, blasting in the doors and windows of the house where he lived with his mother and grandmother. The war years and the thick yellow smog of the time triggered chronic asthma attacks preventing him from attending school until he was eight.

In an era of gas mantles and candles there was not much an only child could do other than sit propped up and draw and paint a little and to engage in periods of blank eye staring.

David emigrated to Australia in 1962 and was sent to Mt. Isa in North West Queensland where he stayed for five years. The dry desert air worked wonders for the lungs and the bronchial problems all but disappeared.

During this time he received his first painting lessons from Queensland artist Frances Culpepper at her studio in town. Enchanted with the creative process, he decided to study and become a professional painter and enrolled as a fulltime student at The Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney. The then principal Richard Ashton was an inspiring presence; he was a fine painter, teacher and philosopher who imparted much more than technical knowledge to his students.

After receiving his diploma, David travelled to the UK and then returned to Australia, to shared studios in Sydney. In 1980 he moved to the Blue Mountains where he still lives and paints.

Below: Blue Mountains Train of 1981



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