



## Chapter 13

# Art and craft (Bellata St)

2 years before we sold Traveston, we had moved to a new house in The Gap at 25 Bellata St. Matt had moved in to a share home and Michelle was keen to downsize. My main reason for the move was to get some extra cash to pay back the loan we owed Dad and Mum for part of the Traveston purchase. Had we known we were going to sell Traveston I might have resisted the move from Waterworks rd.

When we decided to sell Waterworks Rd we were very fortunate that James Baird a friend and POD farm worker was keen to buy our house, so we were able to work out a private sale. It was good to know the new owners, and that they would look after the trees. Coincidentally we also heard about someone wanting to sell privately in Bellata St. This house was immediately of interest as it backed on to a BCC forest park and I really liked the 60's design of the house. There was a bit of dodgy building to create rooms under the house but the main part of the house was in good nick.<sup>1</sup>

The front yard was all garden with a very large blue gum, and the backyard was very steep with grass and a few garden beds behind large round logs. The logs looked very precarious, not dug in at all. It looked like they could all end up in the neighbours. While steep front to back it was also steep from side to side. Standing in our back yard we looked on top of the neighbour's roof below us. The first thing I did was to landscape the back yard with railway sleepers to hold the soil and prevent things rolling down the hill. We later found out one of the previous owner's logs did end up against the neighbour's kitchen window. So I was immediately in Jude and Brian's good book with my work here. We decided to get rid of all the grass in the backyard and cover the whole area with low native

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<sup>1</sup> The lady we bought the house of was a bit of a character who liked to garden topless in the back yard. We discovered later she had just painted around objects which was revealed when she took her stuff. We also discovered after that the tiles in the bathroom had also just been painted over with white paint which soon flaked off to reveal old brown tiles. We found all this very amusing rather than a drama.







Balaangala Community Group, Blue sky and The Gap Local organic Co-operative Ltd. These projects have been a major focus for Michelle and I over the last decade, but in this chapter I want to focus on my painting.

Selling Traveston gave me a mind to really have a go at establishing myself as a painter, hoping wishfully to earn enough income to support our other community projects. I also liked the idea of having my own gallery. So to make a physical commitment to this new life plan I hung a very small sign below our letterbox, “Bell(Art)a Studio”.

### Painting

No longer having 40hrs work over 3 days at Traveston, I suddenly had a lot of time for painting. I still needed to earn some money and I relied on casual gardening jobs for family and friends but I still had more time for painting. After selling Traveston and repaying Mum and dad the money loaned to us, we ended up with some savings. With this financial buffer in place it was now time to take my painting up a level. I felt like I had lots of good ideas for different painting topics and I had now also improved my techniques. I had been exhibiting and selling paintings: in local competitions; the Ekka; joint exhibitions with our BIA group; and in two joint exhibitions with Cathy at the Charles Ginn Gallery. At this point my paintings were of very mixed topics. While there was often a political or environmental theme to my paintings the works were all fairly different, with a different mix of landscapes, portraits and still life.

I would frequent a lot of the more upmarket galleries looking up close at paintings to learn new techniques. Looking at exhibitions in galleries there was clearly a much narrower range on offer in any of one artist’s work. There would be a strong thread holding them all together with a similar look, style or technique and with a very narrow range of topics. I could appreciate the work, and could see how the similar works created a coherence to an exhibition. But part of me also felt a bit disappointed creatively that there was a lot of repetition of a very similar idea. It was clear however that galleries liked this.

One exhibition at Philip Bacon Gallery had a big effect on me. Lisa Adams’ works were amazingly realistic but with very different topics. The coherence came from her very skilled realism, and moreover ‘a play on words’ in every work. It could take a little while to see what was going on, but this added an element of surprise and humour, often black humour to her fantastic paintings.





For example one work shows a couple kissing in a park and immediately around them the grass has all burnt. The other is called the Ghost train. This connection allowed her to paint very different things but they were held together at a more conceptual level.



I had been doing a bit of this conceptual connection in a different way in my own painting, hiding figures and faces in the images and putting little things in the work that would not be noticed at a regular distance but which would become apparent closer up. I liked the idea of telling a different story from different vantage points, to create an element of surprise and even humour. It also enabled an idea to be told at two different levels, which I think adds some depth and more potential for the viewer to develop their own ideas in between the dual perspectives. I liked shyly to hide my signature in the painting, as I felt signatures were a bit brazen and obscured the painting. I wanted my signature to gel in to







the background. This created a “where’s wally?” type game for kids (and adults) to play, looking to find the signature.

Over time listening to people’s commentary on my paintings I could begin to understand more about what they liked but it was also often very surprising what people purchased and liked. Nevertheless I started to get more of an idea about what I thought made a good, aesthetic and interesting painting. Over time I also started to enjoy painting some topics more than others. I like doing realistic portraits. I liked close up paintings of gums as I enjoyed painting the trunks and leaves. I like the challenge and the mood of still life paintings. I was also interested in the impact of changing scale. Still life are generally done life size, but I found if you made something bigger it seemed to give it more importance somehow and more life. I had painted some pears 20 times their normal size and this seemed to give them more personality, and I could then inject more personality in to them.

Looking back over the years there has been a definite trend towards realism in my paintings. This has been partly a consequence of a developing skill to manipulate paint to achieve realism. I have always liked trying to get good light and shade or contrast in to paintings which helps to show depth. While I enjoy looking at abstract paintings, I very rarely think of doing one. Generally I have an idea or story I want to tell and realism seems to allow for a clearer story. I can’t think of many other areas in my life where I like detail, but with painting I enjoy trying to capture all the details. Sometimes in these small areas I find what are like enjoyable, miniature, abstract paintings. In the main I like the detail because I think the complexity of the close up scale, is just as relevant as the broader perspective. I expect my work to be meaningful up close as well as from a distance often with different meanings at each vantage point.







(and I had sold a few), I decided to do a whole exhibition using pears. This provided a connection with all the work but also allowed me to explore various themes. I discovered that there was also the added benefit of one painting informing another, so that as people discovered something in one painting they could look for connections in others. I was now working on a collection where stories between paintings intertwined. The idea of a collection was creating new ideas and possibilities. It also allowed me to explore other angles of a similar idea and so it felt like more depth was being achieved to the stories suggested in the paintings.

All these pear paintings can be seen on my web page ([colinpeile.com](http://colinpeile.com).) The paintings varied in topics from a sexual embrace, a police line-up, some silly pear trees and a self-portrait of a scared shy artist that feels not part of the main stream.



The exhibition went very well in terms of feedback about the work and with sales. It strengthened my confidence as a painter and as an artist. As part of this exhibition I also added some non-pear works (maybe hedging my bets in case no one liked the pears) and a couple of timber sculptures I had been working on.

















This exhibition in 2012 was a particular success. The paintings were big and so needed to be sold for a bigger price and it was very gratifying that people liked them enough to part with this amount of money. I could see visitors, on opening night and the days that followed, admiring the tree and then moving in to see what they could find on the trunk. I sold close to three quarters of the big tree paintings. A gallery owner in Red Hill was also impressed by my sales and the paintings and offered to display a couple of the ones that did not sell. It was very nice driving down Latrobe Tec to see one of my paintings hanging in her front









Here is the invite, and a painting about Ghandi and his nonviolent battle for independence from the British



And one about class warfare and one about the Green Party.











This developing narrative about different objects, in turn made it possible for me to tell more stories in the still lifes, by the way each character was positioned, in relation to the others. These stories and scenes led to thinking about new stories with other characters. From another direction when I had a political idea I wanted to explore, I now had a range of different characters who could help explain the idea. I gave a clear indication of my thinking in the titles, but was very happy for people to develop their own stories. I foolishly lost a sale when I made it clear that the blue mug, was for me, a liberal party member. This was another successful exhibition in terms of good feedback and sales. I felt my skill was increasing and I was getting good feedback on the quality of the work.

### The next exhibition

I did not finish this still life exhibition with a clear plan for the next exhibition. I still had lots of ideas for more paintings within the already established themes, and these themes captured a lot of what I wanted to say as a painter. I had several ideas for possible new collections but after exploring these with a few paintings I would change my mind about the suitability of a big exhibition. I had in mind a giant panorama of Brisbane from Red Hill, broken up in to 30 or so separate paintings, but connected continuously as a 360 degree painting. While I thought I could explore capitalism this way it did not seem to generate much energy for me as each painting seemed to lack enough to be interesting in its own right. I still think there is a good idea there but it needs something else to bring it together. Maybe an historical look at colonization could be worked in to the scene. It also seemed like a massive undertaking, maybe I need to reduce the scale somehow, perhaps thinking about it in a small room instead of a big gallery space.

In a way, it was convenient not to have an idea for another big exhibition. It was not really fair to keep gathering friends and family for exhibitions. There was a bit of an 'Amway' feeling of relying on sales to friends and family. It always feels fantastic when friends and family liked my work and wanted to take one home, but it is especially exciting selling paintings to strangers. I felt I needed to find more ways to sell to strangers.

Art competitions are one way and while getting accepted in to regional art competitions was affirming they were more a place where lots of people came to look at art works but they did not have lots of sales generally (the Ekka was an





exception). A café called “the Nook” agreed to display my works which lead to a few sales. Group exhibitions with my BIA mob was another way to show my work to strangers but I starting to get a bit jaded with this group, feeling a few main stays were putting a lot in to organizing these exhibitions, but more importantly the others in the group did not seem to be able to or want to bring along their friends and family. So again I felt I was pressurizing my own contacts too much. The end result was I was still producing more than I was selling. This was a little discouraging for spending a lot of time at the easel, but I still loved painting and while I had somewhere to hang my work I still wanted to keep painting.

Some other things coincidentally forced a slower production. Firstly, my mum had Alzheimer’s and my four sisters and I needed to spend more time with her to give my dad a break from the very demanding care required. Secondly, for various reasons, I was getting drawn more into my fathers’ business Claypave which reduced my painting time by a day a week. Thirdly, some of my other community commitments were requiring more time. I also was needing to do more gardening work for income. So instead of painting 4 days a week, I was now sometimes only getting a day a week.

I have been asked to do a few commissions from time to time. Generally this has been a nice process where a friend asks for a particular type of painting or idea and I see if I can do something that suits. Alternately someone may ask for a painting to give someone else. This has worked well for the most part, but it has also been a problem on a couple of occasions where the work is not what was expected. In these cases, I have not expected any financial compensation. I set up a commission saying that I only wanted them to buy the painting if they liked it. When I paint something I like, it is not a problem as I can seek a sale from someone else. The problem is when the potential buyer has been more definite or explicit and I have done something I think they want, but which is not something I would have painted without their instructions. These requests are more of a problem, as I am left with a painting that does not feel like one of mine. Despite only wanting them to buy the painting if they like it, I would still devalued when the painting was rejected. Having learnt this lesson I will now only paint things for others if I also can fully commit to the painting topic. These commission incidents do raise a question about how art is valued and how the labour of an artist is valued.





After mum's death in sept 2018 and Claypave ending up in administration the following year, I now have more time again and I am working on 2 collections. An easy one and a more difficult one. The easy one is simply scenes from Stradbroke Island where I spend a bit of time. These are simple paintings, just wanting to celebrate the animal plant and human life on the island and my own connection to this place. There is no deep philosophical point which means I generally have a couple of painting to go on to if I am struggling for ideas with the other exhibition.

The second collection is the reason for this text. I am trying to put together paintings which tell my life story and via which I can say something about society. It is like a self/societal portrait. My ideas was to write down and learn from my life experience at trying to change the world and then to use this as a stimulus for new paintings, but also to incorporate old paintings and self-portraits. This also has involved looking back at old paintings and trying to rework them with new insight from the writing experience.

I hope by the time I finish the writing I will be well on the way to have all the ideas for a full exhibition. I am a much better and faster painter than a writer, and so I have set myself a difficult task of completing the writing alongside the painting process. It has become a mammoth task doing the writing and the painting, never enough time for either. Each gets in the way of the other, but the interaction between the painting and the writing has nevertheless proved very beneficial.

### Insights

When Traveston sold and I decided to take up painting as a main activity. I felt like I was withdrawing further from what is considered mainstream activities. I felt as if I was retiring to the edge of society to critique and question it through my art. I now want to make my art itself the subject for study and critique, to turn the critique back on 'itself'. Seeing myself, as outside society with an ability to look in involves a clear self-deception and protection from scrutiny about my own actions. I want to now take this further to see what understanding of society can be gleaned through thinking about my art practice. I will look at my beliefs about art as beauty, creativity and critique.







## Beautiful art

Art is about seeing the beautiful, sometimes in unexpected places. Most art is purchased because the person enjoys looking at it. Huge numbers of people visit galleries across the globe to view paintings and art every day. The enjoyment people experience looking at a painting could be for a whole host of reasons, including because it is beautiful, or interesting or because it takes them to a relaxing place or stimulates some other pleasing memory.

When people are surrounded by nice beautiful things they are more relaxed and happy. Art makes people feel good, it distracts them from other problems and worries. Throughout history and across cultures people have made and displayed beautiful things for their own enjoyment. These nice things often enfold a history or a story for that person. Art goes to the next step of trying to share that meaning with someone else. I have always felt a confidence that I have a good sense of what is beautiful and so what should be for others.

When the real world feels ugly, a painting offers a window to a better place. While most of my paintings have a critical intent I want them all to look good, and be pleasing to the eye. If you forget what is actually being represented and just focus on the shapes and colours as if it was an abstract painting, I want it to have good structure, shapes, patterns and colour. I also want any of my paintings to be nice from a distance and close up.

I think an artistic sentiment is part of being human. However when we create a specific group of people as artists, we are saying some people have more artistic sensibility than others. The very idea of an artist creates a hierarchy, where some will be held as being at the pinnacle. This then means some then get to say more than others, what art is good or bad, which painting is more beautiful than another. It allows for professional art critics, and for some artists paintings to be sold for huge sums. In this way, hierarchy is just as much a part of art practice, as academia or politics. I thought I was escaping the system as an artist and positioning myself to critique it from outside, but really all I





was doing was moving over to a new hierarchy where I was very much in the lower ranks.

I fairly quickly realized my goal was not to climb this new hierarchy. However I wanted to make some income from my art so that I could devote more time to art and less to making money some other way. So I have had to climb the hierarchy to a certain extent. I have done this by entering art competitions and having exhibitions and trying to sell my works. I have been in this way promoting myself as an artist.

Most art practice is actually done by non-professionals, by people who just enjoy making their own art works as a hobby. They often have no expectation of sales or a career, they do it because they just enjoy it. In a similar way most sport is played by the non-professionals even though professional sport dominates the news. I guess I am somewhere in between a hobbyist and a professional. I am selling paintings (over 200 now), so it is a bit more than just a hobby or pastime, but I have no desire to climb the hierarchy to the top. I am not sure how I would react if I was suddenly discovered without effort on my part. I know I would not enjoy the attention and having to speak about my work to gatherings of strangers, but I might enjoy being able to do some good things with the money.

Philosophically, I want to reject all hierarchy, so I should also be rejecting the art hierarchy. This means a different approach to beauty. It means no longer seeing the elite artists and art critics as possessing the main claim to knowing what good art is, and what is beautiful. I want to democratize art. I want everyone to feel more confident about making their own art, and I want everyone's work to be valued and appreciated. Understanding their sense of beauty then becomes a challenge to the viewer rather than the creator.

I have often felt uncomfortable about the distinction between art and craft. I have heard my fellow artists often disparage craft activities and the objects produced including paintings. My auntie's crocheted toilet roll holder may not be my cup of tea, but who gets to say it is less worthy than one of my paintings. Sure she was following a pattern but so do many landscapes. What if I did a painting of her crocheted work, would the object become art when a subject in a painting. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. As my daughter points out, the devaluation of craft in part is because it was seen traditionally as women's work.





I am asking for an end to the distinction between craft and art. I can see the great beauty in lots of craft objects. Sometimes a collection of different craft objects together can particularly highlight their artistic beauty. I love looking at the works of the elite artists, mainly from a technical interest, but I often find more enjoyment and visual pleasure in the creations of school kids.

At the same time I do not want to go all relativist and leave beauty just up to everyone as an individual. I don't want to make it easier for the Capitalist forces to uglify the world more. I think beauty needs to be a discussion, a dialogue. We need to discuss and share what we like as a community and to come up with things that lots of people like, particularly when they are things everyone will perhaps be seeing. Art exhibitions and galleries offer the chance for such discussion between friends and family and everyone's view needs to be equally valued. So when as an artist, I am exhibiting my work, I will be interested in everyone's view and I will be open to letting all these views impact on my perceptions of beauty. Beauty is something as a community we need to create together.

The community arts movement has played a key role here. Had I gone to art school instead of social work in my 20's, I suspect I would have ended up in the community arts movement instead of seeking to be in the elite art fold, just as I ended up in community work instead of climbing the welfare bureaucracy.

As an art practitioner you can also better understand the skill involved in a particular work and the time that would have been required. Regardless of the beauty of the final outcome, the level of work and commitment can be acknowledged and appreciated. I think most people can appreciate the craft and skill of the masters in this way, but people are often left scratching their heads when huge amounts of money are paid for contemporary works that the viewer thinks they could have done themselves in a few hours. These works are however admired in the art world not for the technique but for their originality.

## Creativity

I have seen myself in the past as a creative person. As an academic I was seen by others to have a special facility for theory development. I enjoyed constructing new theories and the struggle of thinking about various problems. I liked the creative excitement of a new idea that resolved problems or brought different







components together. Painting has been a similar creative experience. When I began my attempt to be a more professional artist I arrogantly felt I had something special to offer. People around me supported this confidence.

Again while people have different creative abilities I don't want for creativity to be seen in a hierarchy of ability. Just as with beauty, creativity needs to become a community enterprise with people joining together to develop something new. In this way the people learn the skills of creativity rather than it becoming a speciality.

Beyond a focus on creativity and beauty I want to create some story or puzzle for people to think about. I would like them to search for meaning, for them to think about what I might be on about, but in the process to come up with their own meanings. Hopefully this meaning will shift and change over time. I want people to look at my paintings and think about society and their connection to these issues. For me most of my sense of creativity comes from this focus rather than the focus on beauty. I think this also fits with how others see my work.

## Critical art

I have enjoyed my position as an artist, as an outsider looking in. I have seen my attempts at social change in the same way. I have been an outsider to the mainstream wanting to change the flow. In both areas I have settled into a position of distancing myself from the world, of not feeling a part of its direction and swimming against the flow. I suppose this is a very convenient position for a shy person to inhabit.

Seeing myself as an outsider, as separate, actually offers a sense of control and protection. Rather than being part of what looks like a scary bad world, I can sit at the edge, an observer, not a participant, and in this way, not as effected by the world. This position gave a sense of being good and different to the 'bad' world, but when I scratch further I can see it perhaps also reflected a smug sense of superiority. I felt like I could see things insiders were blinded to. It could feel like I had a better view or understanding of the whole. My father often accused me of being a reverse or introverted snob and while I was dismayed by this claim, in many ways he was very correct.







our system. We like to think here, we embrace difference, satire and critique (clearly some more than others). Politicians vary in how much they think art and critical art should be supported, perhaps because it cuts too close to the bone or perhaps because it is seen as frivolous waste and not as important as health care for example. Nevertheless, there is at least some support for critical art, as it is part of the resistance to totalitarianism, it's a manifestation to say we are free and open. These calls often come from the edge, but people at the centre can also realize the importance of art for a liberal society.

So within this context, my past criticism of the system through my art has been to some extent expected and seen as something just to think about within a gallery space. It does not lead to actual social change. This is hardly a surprising revelation as I could not give you any clear example of how my painting has helped to change society except to offer some vague suggestions of an effect through the collective impact of small influences on people who see the works. It is hard to think of any art work that has actually lead to social change in liberal societies. At best the influence would be very small. Art reflects society and so it records the historical changes taking place. An exception would be in more totalitarian societies where the artist does things that directly challenges the state. Even in this example however, it is not so much the art that is responsible, as it is a case of a person/artist in a sense speaking out against authority. To say that art has had no impact in a liberal society is a depressing thought and oversimplifies the way artists and others become participants in a movement for change and through that working together, the way artists and activists can support each other and become collectively influential.

What is clear is that the expectation that you could painting a picture that by itself would lead to change, is clearly false, and such an expectation again reflects a desire for power and influence, within a hierarchy. A belief that as one person you can change things.

If we want to actually pull down hierarchy we need to see change as a community venture, not the actions of one person. It is about finding others with similar ideals and working with them to create new ways of doing things that are more consistent and encouraging of the desired ideals. Art in this context is just another way to communicate with people to set up a discussion for the very same purpose. The objective is not powerful grand gestures by an individual but rather the emergence of a creative artistic dialogue where a new flatter system can be







envisaged. Painting can play a role in criticizing the system but also in imagining this new society. In this way I can see how my painting can contribute to such change, but only as one possible first step in a process of communication with others, but only alongside other activity. In just the same, as the way we need plumbers and builders for example to rethink their practices and to see how they can change theirs, to contribute to a better more equal society.

Thinking about all of this is leading me to envisage a new approach to art for me that involves some sort of collaborative sharing and teaching role with others to assist their own critical and creative insights in to society.

### Art as capitalism

I have emphasized above the hierarchical elitist features of the art world but I want now to just make clear the very clear capitalist underpinnings of the whole enterprise before trying to work out what art could look like in a flatter more egalitarian culture.

The art world is just one branch of the capitalist economy. Just like farmers we take our produce to the market to sell. We might try to sell directly ourselves by renting space, marketing the exhibition and being a salesperson for a few weeks. Alternately we might have an agent to sell for us and we will pay a commission to leave all that sordid sales work to the agent. In the process we are competing with other artists for a sale, for wall space. Artists are small business operators.

Having an agent can be a way to disguise this business underpinning and to adopt an artist persona. In other fields (like house building or medicine) being a bit crazy or a drug addict is generally not a good thing. However in art, like in music, it has often added to the sales potential for the agent. The artist is 'painted' as being totally obsessed with their art. Their self-destructive passion provides a romantic tragic quality which adds a supposed depth and emotional quality to the work. The art dealer provides the stability, the artist the drama. Given stories of the success of famous artists success after a tragic life (such as Van Gogh) it encourages the notion their work could be a good investment. All part of artistic marketing.

Once an artist's work has found its way in to the area of investment art, gallery owners, dealers and art critics begin to influence values and these people all feed





off the market particularly if values keep rising. The artist themselves may not even actually benefit as we have often seen in relation to Aboriginal art.

Another group of artists rely more on government grants for specific projects or commissions. The huge paintings on the grain silos and other street art are examples. Governments and businesses also offer big prize money for art competitions. Success here helps to build profile and attract investment purchasers.

Becoming a professional artist relies on success in one of the ways above, and a few will move on to the more elite circles. Most will never progress very far up the pecking order and some will rise and crash out just like in any realm of business. Some like Ben Quilty have been able to use their status to try to encourage action on certain social issues but the art enterprise itself is not often questioned. Even artists like Banksy who seem to want to undermine the whole elitist side of the art world, can have their art works sold and incorporated within this elitist enterprise, whether he likes it or not.

In summary the art world is just as hierarchical as other dominant institutions in society and it is just another form of capitalist enterprise. Much of my behaviour has implicitly just gone along with this without challenge. I have just followed the paths of other artists before me. While I might like to see the subjects of my paintings as creative and critical, my practice has been just more of the same. The question for me now is how to flatten the art hierarchy, how to make it more egalitarian. Art will not change the world, but changing the art world is part of changing the world.

More importantly I now realize the limit of just being an artist, of offering abstract idealistic messages and critiques to those that listen without actually changing practices. To achieve real material change will require changing practices and I have the ability to do so in relation to my own practices. This will involve being involved in other more grounded aspects of community life and working for change in these practices. The growth of hierarchy has allowed for specialization. To have people trained in specific fields like medicine or art. What I am wanting is a flatter more self-sufficient structure where being a full time artist will be less likely and artists will need to also learn how to grow their own food and so on. As art becomes less of a speciality it also makes it easier for everyone to claim to be a bit artistic. The role will get shared around more.





Da Vinci was an elite artist in his own time but he is still an inspiration. I would like to be like him, good at a range of different things. More accurately to want to keep learning new things and be less reliant on the hierarchical system. I guess it is becoming clearer that my anti hierarchical politics reflects an anarchist framework, maybe I am an an(art)ist.

## The next exhibition

I will return to more commentary on the current self-portrait exhibition in a later chapter. For now it will do to just say that this book is part of that exhibition and that my hope was to develop works through the engagement with the writing by thinking about and learning from my own life. Thinking about this chapter has led me to question my whole direction as an artist. No longer being able to maintain the deception of the artist being outside the system I am less clear what my art practice should look like. I hope the planned self-portrait exhibition will capture a new approach and lead me to a new anarchistic approach to art/craft.

## Conclusion

Selling Traveston allowed me to consider the possibility of painting full time. While the ideas and stories I wanted to explore in my paintings have not greatly changed over the last 15 years, how I have gone about this has developed. I have become a much more realistic painter and have started to use multiple paintings or collections to explore these ideas. Rather than presenting many different stories I have found it useful to explore one story in more depth offering different angles on the one topic via different paintings.

Painting for me has been one way to share a critique of society while at the same time highlighting the beauty of the natural world. From time to time paintings like 'the goat stand' have also offered insights in to my own self and have provided challenges to me personally.







