

Survey 2010

Artist's Statement

Tony Windberg

In 2006 I set up a studio in the forested region of Northcliffe in South Western WA. I had moved down from the remote North West, where I had been exploring the theme of the modified landscape. I find again that local subject matter has broader implications. Our uneasy relationship with the landscape seems to be one that is belatedly changing from one of conflict to a problematic adaptation.

The shifting nature of land-use in the Northcliffe area since the Group Settlement schemes of the 1920s has been marked by the grafting of European culture, land practices, ideas, and spiritual values. There is now a distinct duality evident in the landscape; one aspect is distinctive by its removal of vegetation, and the other in its implicit Nature worship.

In the aftermath of the battles over logging, the monoculture of plantations offered as the salvation of native forests continue to grow rapidly. Logging still occurs, and the ubiquitous Tasmanian bluegums are still planted.

The plantations depicted in *Vanishing Point - Middleton Road* are on farms "gone over to bluegums" after the deregulation of the dairy industry. I methodically photographed adjacent rows - seedlings on one side of the road, established trees on the other - aiming to link their structural formation to the intended artworks.

Nature is also compartmentalized in *Vanishing Point - South West Highway*, where the depicted bluegums will inevitably obscure the remnant karri trees from view.

As a painter in the traditional sense, I use techniques and create spatial illusions that have their roots in religious altarpieces. In these new artworks, I hope to challenge many formal conventions of pictorial representation. Linear perspective, the picture-plane, the fixed viewpoint, and the vanishing point are constructs, an illusion. Like an argument falling apart, they are loaded with internal contradictions.

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