



JILL KEMPSON'S OEUVRE:
LANDSCAPE IN PERSPECTIVE

BY PATRICK LE CHANU

TRANSLATION BY KAREN LE CHANU



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To my dear wife Karen, who did a lot more than translate this book.

INTRODUCTION

What place does landscape painting hold in the twenty-first century? The rise of abstraction and conceptualism has mostly eclipsed this long-established theme, but Jill Kempson is an artist who transcends the succession of styles and art genres.

A key reason for this is Jill's continuation of the artistic tradition of the *Grand Tour*. Thanks to her travels and her study of the old masters, she has been able to assimilate, then go beyond, the 'models', while developing her own vision and style. Jill's exploration of the art of the great masters has not been limited to an attentive examination of their works. She also familiarised herself with their techniques, which she studied at institutions internationally recognised in the examination, analysis and restoration of paintings.

A specialist in old masters art, I have accepted the challenge of writing a book about a painter of today. And to do so I will attempt to place Jill's work in the perspective of landscape painting tradition.

When looking at Jill's paintings, I am delighted to observe this rebirth and flourishing of an art genre that I have long contemplated. It is more than a simple similarity of technique or style to early European painting; Jill's work proves her to be a true heir to this noble legacy.

TECHNIQUE AND INVENTION

In Jill's work, as in the work of all painters, technical choices are fundamental. The type of support (for example, canvas, marine ply or paper), greatly affects the final aspect of the painting. The choice of pigments and the method of their application is also critical. The artist can conceal the brushstroke, resulting in a smooth surface, or, on the contrary, make the work of the brush apparent with a layered effect or impasto. These choices have deep roots in, and also express, cultural history. For example, early Netherlandish masters, such as Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, began to paint with deliberately visible brushstrokes during the Renaissance, as the liberation of individual expression developed.

The second essential element of painting is what was known as 'invention' in the seventeenth century. Today, in the language of cinematography or photography, we talk about the staging or framing of an image. This includes decisions concerning format as well as viewpoint – the height and angle from which we regard the scene. In landscapes, the choice of viewpoint determines the height of the horizon, and thus the relative proportions of earth and sky. The boundaries of the painting must also be considered; not just the four sides of the support, but also the film which is created by the coat of varnish to separate our world, that of the spectator, from the world depicted in the painting.

The first objects placed at the threshold of a painting fulfil the crucial roles of both springboard into the scene, and the reference point from which we view it. In one of Jill's recent works, *Whispering Reeds* (ill. 1), the foreground is comprised of a screen of vegetation on which our eye alights. From here, we can sense the depths of the successive visual components receding into the background.

ill. 1

THE WORK OF JILL KEMPSON

I have known Jill Kempson and followed her artistic evolution for more than twenty years. My interest in her work arose naturally from my interest in landscape painting.

Over time, Jill has shifted her viewpoint, varied her subject, and modified her palette and perspective. In 2006 and 2007, she painted a series of landscapes, 'Skyscapes', that particularly impressed me with their majestic vision and beauty.

More recently, Jill has brought her viewpoint closer to earth, tightening her field of vision and concentrating on the innumerable nuances that light and reflection produce on a serene world of still water and lush vegetation.

I have chosen to approach Jill's work by way of the essential elements present in her oeuvre: Earth, Sky (air), Water, and Light (fire). It is within this framework that I have attempted to distinguish a chronological development, at the same time realising that the work of an artist, in all its richness, can never be reduced to a linear progression.

The ambition of this book is, above all, to develop awareness and appreciation of Jill Kempson's art. Her work demonstrates that easel painting remains relevant and vibrant, with landscape painting at the heart of the great concerns of our time.

■ EARTH

Jill acknowledges that travelling in Europe made her realise how little she knew her own vast and diverse country. This prompted her, in 1991, to set out on a journey through the Northern Territory – Darwin, Kakadu and Arnhem Land – and the Kimberley region of north-west Western Australia. Travelling with her easel and paint box, meeting up with friends along the way, Jill discovered and painted the varying landscapes of these remote regions. She spent a month with the Yuendumu, an Aboriginal community, and continued her painting while taking part in their daily lives and learning about their traditions and art.

It is clear that this exploration of her country's roots, made even more profound as Jill was effectively adopted by the Yuendumu community, is important in the appreciation of all of her subsequent work.

The influence of this voyage is apparent in the series of small oblong panels painted in 1993, which is also the year her daughter, Mim, was born. This series of landscapes, entitled 'Journeys to the Interior', presents images of a world in formation, as if we are witnessing the birth of our planet.

It is a world of fire and primordial geological forms, fascinating and, at the same time, terrifying in the absence of all life but that of some primitive vegetation. The painting technique itself reinforces this image: in spite of their small size, the works are comprised of large blocks of a thick oily pigment. The lack of sharpness which characterises them also contributes to the idea of a universe, and a style, still being formed and developed.

ill. 2 The paintings reveal an Australia seemingly untouched by human intervention, a land strange and distant to people who are not familiar with the country. These visions are at times so fantastic, as in *The Edge* (ill. 2), that they appear to be images of an alien world. This is a theme that recurs, but in a different form, in Jill's later work.

ill. 3 The role that vegetation plays in several of these panels deserves attention. It is pictured as a carpet of greenery, or as long dry grass blown by the wind, and appears almost in flames in *Heat* (ill. 3). It is also presented as sombre, impenetrable shrubbery placed, like a screen, at the threshold of the painting. In this last case, its dense, granular aspect, superimposed on and so different from the rest of the landscape, again illustrates that we are facing a world still unfinished, or at least discordant. This contrast in technique is also what makes these works so modern. We are reminded of Max Ernst, for example, when we contemplate *Winbaraku I* (ill. 4).

ill. 5 *Waychinicup – Place of Emu Dreaming* (ill. 5) presents a more recognisable scene, but still alludes to the land's beginnings. The title refers to the mythological emu, which legend claims left its footprints on the boulders of Waychinicup. This landscape of rocky outcroppings rising above an inlet of water recalls Cornelis van Dalem's painting of Adam and Eve, relating the origin of mankind (ill. 6).

The Earth theme could include a group of landscapes painted during later voyages that took Jill to Spain, Italy, Portugal and the south of France, in 1998 and 2001. In these paintings, the sky occupies but a slight band at the top of the canvas, while the earth fills the rest, contrary to later works from the 'Skyscapes' series of 2007. The landscapes of southern Europe present an image of nature profoundly transformed by man, a sort of civilised disorder. It is a calm and harmonious world, bathed in soft sunlight, in which, as in the superb aquarelle *The Olive Picker* (ill. 7), one has only to reach out one's hand to obtain all the necessities of life. Even the houses in the painting *Sella – The Village* (ill. 8) with their compact mass and warm harmony of tiled roofs, seem to spring from and take root in the soil that supports and nourishes them.

■ WATER

Water is a fundamental element in Jill's work. In fact, it appears in almost all of her paintings. From the man-made ponds of a French park to the rocky coasts of the Indian Ocean, Jill uses water not only as a pictorial subject, but also as a reflecting surface, or to evoke a particular atmosphere.

ill. 9
ill. 10 For example, three works from the 1990s have a surrealist mood. *Train on the Water* and *Round and Round* (*ill. 9*) are dreamlike scenes set at the ocean's edge. *Rainy Day Red Coat* (*ill. 10*), though set in the more urban environment of the port of Fremantle, not far from Jill's home, is very close in spirit. In this painting, a woman and her dog stand, seemingly frozen in place, creating a strange stillness that recalls the work of the Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico.

ill. 11 In 2002, Jill painted a series of small scenes that she inserted in the cut-out pages of books. These paintings are mostly interpretations after the works of old masters, to whom Jill maintains a strong, evolving connection. For example, *The River* (*ill. 11*) is her vision of the background of *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, by the early Netherlandish painter Joachim Patinir.

ill. 12 & 13
ill. 14 In 2006, Jill painted two versions of the port of Amsterdam, entitled *Amsterdam Sunset I* and *II* (*ill. 12* and *13*). The scenes are taken from the same perspective, but at different times of the day to capture the variations in colour and light. The water acts as a mirror to the sky, reflecting and enhancing the luminous tints. The radiance of the setting sun in *Amsterdam Sunset I* evokes the work of Claude Gellée, known as Le Lorrain (*ill. 14*). *Amsterdam Sunset II* is treated in a manner that we cannot help comparing to Claude Monet's technique of using light to dissolve and diffuse surfaces. Here, the effects of light on water take precedence over the representation of the water itself.

ill. 15
ill. 16 The sea is also present in the panoramic scenes of wide, deserted beaches, painted in 2006 and 2007. In these silent visions, the scale of time seems to be eternity. The pale colours and lunar-like surface of the sand give the impression of a distant world, a recurring theme in Jill's work. *Wilson's Inlet – Mist* (*ill. 15*) and *Golden Haze II* (*ill. 16*) are two views of coastlines which each have two versions. In them, wide horizontal bands fit together, alternating light and dark, sky and earth, sand and water. The water's primary role here is reflective, especially in *Wilson's Inlet – Mist*, where the tide pools resemble icy mirrors.

- ill. 25* These paintings are perhaps the Australian transposition of Jill's 'Tonality of Time' series, in which she reinterpreted works of the early twentieth-century French photographer, Eugène Atget (*ill. 25*). Two major motifs reappear: a calm body of water which acts as a mirror, and the presence of a vaporous mist that envelops forms and diffuses light. In *Golden Haze II*, the hills in the background rise from this mysterious brume, and appear to float ethereally between earth and sky.
- ill. 17* The theme of reflections achieves its full maturity in the superb *As the River Flows*, from 2007 (*ill. 17*). In this essentially mineral universe, the roundness of the boulders and the curve of the river form a peaceful harmony, only slightly disturbed by the few wavelets pushed by the current. Vegetation has difficulty taking root in this world of perfectly sculpted forms.
- ill. 18* In 2007, Jill painted several seascapes on marine ply, in which water, rock and sky are the elements. *Sugar Loaf Rock* includes two versions. The first version (*ill. 18*) is less than half the size of the second. In it, the sun's light produces a dazzling reflection on the right half of the scene, and the surfaces of the central rock and the water dissolve in this glare. This first version clearly has a more impressionist feeling than the second. In *Sugar Loaf Rock II*, sunlight is also reflected on the right half of the painting, but with less dramatic results. The calmer sea confers a more solid character to the forms, and they maintain their integrity.
- ill. 19* We find a blend of the solid and the impressionist in *Sunset in Blue* (*ill. 19*). The rocks in the foreground resemble the remains of some great prehistoric creatures. Though the scene appears peaceful, the mist hanging over the water in the middle ground tells us that this is but a passing calm. Indeed, the background is the site of a drama in preparation: an immense wave will soon break over the shore and shatter this precarious calm. Overhanging, seemingly encouraging, this wall of water is a tormented sky from which great rays of sunlight escape.

■ SKY

As early as 1993, in the series ‘Journeys to the Interior’, the sky occupies a significant place in Jill’s paintings. Like the earth in this same series, the sky is in full turmoil; a crucible in which the world is still being formed. Clouds are rare, and are represented as simple whitish forms – almost halos, without much consistency. This tormented state also colours the sky with all the hues of a universe in creation, from the light pink shades of *Heat* (ill. 3), and deeper pinks of *Winbaraku I* (ill. 4), through the clear blue, becoming tinged with mauve of *Ancient Forms, Mesas III*, to the deep, rich blue of *The Edge* (ill. 2).

ill. 3
ill. 4
ill. 2

In the landscapes inspired by her voyages throughout southern Europe, particularly Spain, Jill allocates only a narrow band of canvas for the sky. Although the light is more intense, the sky itself appears more remote. Harmony seems to reign between nature and mankind, but it is the mark made by civilisation on the land that captured Jill’s attention.

It is in the Australian series ‘Skyscapes’ that the sky is the principal subject. Here we don’t have to lift our eyes to the heavens; the sky is all around us. The density, thickness and mass of the clouds are so great that they seem to crush the earth, which is reduced to a mere ribbon at the bottom of the painting. The earth’s only function seems to be to orient the viewer and to reflect our gaze, which might be tempted to slide out of the painting, back up into the scene. What is at play here is the heroic symphony of titanic forces, the sky formed and reformed by meteorological variations, from sunrise to sunset, as in *Waychinicup – Rain Clouds II* (ill. 20) and *Waychinicup – Sunset I* (ill. 21).

ill. 20
ill. 21

It is only in paintings by the Dutch masters of the Golden Age, such as Jacob van Ruisdael (ill. 22), that we find the sky, both by its density and sculptural presence, the subject of the landscape. Even earlier, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the landscapists of the sixteenth century (ill. 23), followed by Rubens (ill. 24), painted skies which convey a grand, tragic dimension. Jill combines these two traditions with a contemporary vision in her ‘Skyscapes’. But for us today, who have acted carelessly and are now preoccupied with the future of our planet, especially its climatic equilibrium, Jill’s skies hold a whole new, dramatic significance.

ill. 22
ill. 23 & 24

ill. 15 & 16 Jill assigned the sky a different place and role in her paintings of beaches from 2007. In the Wilson Inlet series, and *Golden Haze I* and *II* (ill. 15 and 16), all painted on wide supports, the sky is a uniform luminous band, mirrored by the expanse of water below. It serves as a backdrop on which the horizon, whether wooded hills or sand dunes, is carved.

ill. 25 These works are very close in spirit to the amazing series ‘Tonalties of Time’, painted between 2004 and 2006 after photographs by Eugène Atget. In all of these scenes the sky is depicted essentially as the source of a brilliant, sometimes blinding, light, which fills the air with its incandescence (ill. 25).

ill. 26 Several landscapes painted in 2008, also in an oblong format similar to the beach paintings, complete this rich exploration. The earth and the sky hold equal place; there is no longer any conflict as to which possesses greater mass or density. *Deep River* (ill. 26) depicts the vast plains and hills of south-western Australia, under an overcast but still luminous sky. *Then a Cloud Passed* (ill. 27) is a peaceful and promising image: a dream of harmony between mankind and a nature clearly inhabited, but respected and serene. This is also true in *Jackie’s Clouds* (ill. 28), a scene of an idyllic park where the clouds are so familiar that we can name them as they float by.

■ LIGHT

Once again, we see the considerable role that Jill's voyages have played in her painting. Her trip to the Iberian Peninsula in 1998 culminated in a series of works entitled *Foreign Yet Familiar*, exhibited at the Galerie Düsseldorf in Australia in 2001. In these paintings, the harsh Spanish sun carves out bold shapes, resulting in a stark contrast of light and dark.

ill. 29 & 30 *The Blue Doors*, three enigmatic interpretations of the same scene (two of these shown at *ill. 29* and *30*), illustrate Jill's exploration of this play of light and shadow.

Jill lived in Sella, Spain, for three months, and painted this quiet village bathed in a soft light reflected by the walls and roofs of the houses (*ill. 8*). By contrast, an intense, almost suffocating, light sculpts the houses and little square in *Siesta* (*ill. 31*). A small dog, the only living being in the scene, stands petrified in the unrelenting rays of the sun.

ill. 8
ill. 31

Jill was inspired by the photographs of Eugène Atget for her series 'Tonalties of Time', painted between 2004 and 2006. These works, most of which are similar in size, represent views of the grounds and ponds of the Saint-Cloud and Sceaux parks, situated just outside Paris. Although water is a fundamental component of these works, its role is more of a light-reflecting surface than an element in itself. Reflections are an essential motif of this series, and sometimes result in a doubling of images that can almost be turned over and viewed upside-down (*ill. 34* and *35*).

ill. 34 & 35

Taken in the early twentieth century, the photographs show the park in a hazy, filtered light, and Jill's interpretation of this nebulous atmosphere accentuates a feeling of mystery. This mood is further increased by the fact that no living being inhabits these scenes, which are frequently autumnal and somewhat desolate. Jill has described her paintings as 'figurative atmospheric landscapes'.

In the absence of human and animal life, these paintings are in the same vein as Jill's other landscapes. But unlike nature intact and untouched as presented in her Australian landscapes, here the sites have clearly been inhabited. They hold a souvenir of a world once proudly arranged by man, over which nature is slowly re-establishing its rights, as the vine steadily creeping up the pedestal of the great statue in the *Parc de Sceaux 1925* (*ill. 32*).

ill. 32

An intense light, filtered by the mist, seems slowly to invade these scenes and advance towards us. In the painting *Saint Cloud 1906*, which features a superb curved stairway (*ill. 33*), this cloud seems to portend an apparition, and we wait apprehensively to see what will emerge.

ill. 33

Two paintings, *Saint Cloud 1904* and *Saint Cloud 1926*, represent an expanse of water behind which we see two grand rows of trees, probably bordering a stairway (ill. 34 and 35). In the first, the scene is imbued with a soft but sustained light. The deep green of the trees infiltrates the water by reflection. In the second painting, the colours become subdued as the sunlight fades and evening approaches.

Jill explores another dimension of the landscape in 'Skyscapes'. In the shoreline scenes, we observe the effects of a ubiquitous luminosity on the atmosphere. The sunlight in *Golden Haze I* and *Golden Haze II* (ill. 16) is reflected off the water and creates a brilliant mist over the incoming waves. In *Wilson's Inlet – Mist* (ill. 15), even the sand glows with the light of the day.

Interestingly, in this series Jill also experiments with the physical aspect of the support as a means to enhance the effects of light. *Cottesloe Sunset* (ill. 36) and *Waychinicup Rain Clouds* (ill. 37), for example, are small works painted on canvas paper. The rough weave of this paper remains visible, and its relief catches the light and gives the surface of the paintings a more luminous, but also rustic, aspect. In old masters paintings, especially seventeenth-century Neapolitan works, this visual phenomenon is common, and is often the result of an alteration known as weave interference.

It is important here to mention Jill's interior scenes, fewer in number than her landscapes, but in which light plays an equally essential role.

Two works entitled *Remain in Light* show Jill's daughter in a setting very close to those represented by Dutch painters of the Golden Age. In *Remain in Light I* (ill. 38), she is opening a window through which a brilliant light penetrates the room. This intense light vaporises the forms that border the window. It is a favourite theme of Johannes Vermeer (ill. 39) that Jill intensifies to the point of the supernatural. The glare is depicted not only as an optical phenomenon, but also as an apparition with quasi-mystical connotations.

Remain in Light II (ill. 40) is painted from a more distant viewpoint, revealing the young girl in full length standing in a spare, high-ceilinged room. This scene is more poetic than philosophical, and is closer to a Vermeer contemporary, Jacob Vrel (ill. 41).

In *Interior with Child* (ill. 42), we find another grand theme from the Golden Age of Dutch art, the artist's studio. But it is rare to see the subject backlit, as we do here. We don't know if the child is drawing one of the objects on the table, or if she is inspired by the landscape framed by the large open window: a painting within a painting.

OUTLOOK

Is landscape painting meaningful today? Since its beginning, it has had to struggle for legitimacy in the hierarchy of painting genres.

In the sixteenth century, Italian artists imposed the representation of the human figure as the highest achievement for every painter. Consequently, history painting – that is, works depicting scenes from religion, mythology or historical events – was considered the most noble.

More recently, the domination of ‘contemporary art’ in official circles presents a new challenge for painting in general, and landscape painting in particular.

Jill Kempson’s oeuvre, in all its rich diversity, shows us that landscape painting has the capacity to express all the colours and dimensions of the human soul. Earth can be seen as representing stability, our roots; Water, serenity and peace; Sky, inspiration and hope; Light, the soul’s aspiration for infinity.

Among Jill’s most striking paintings are her scenes depicting a natural world seemingly untouched by human intervention. These images of nature are sometimes peaceable, sometimes tormented, but there is still a harmony in the contrasting forces. Nevertheless, Jill’s landscapes provoke sensations in the viewer that are inseparable from our feelings about our present situation, in which the relationship between mankind and the environment is no longer in balance. The admiration, respect and humility that must have been felt by the people of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in viewing the works of the great landscape artists of that time persist, but are now joined by a sentiment of precariousness.

In the different subjects she chooses, the numerous viewpoints adopted and formats used, Jill Kempson explores the landscape in all its perspectives. She succeeds in elevating this genre to its rightful place, and establishes the landscape’s role in expressing some of the essential issues of humanity today.

JILL KEMPSON'S TRAVELS

In addition to her academic studies, travelling has played an important role in Jill's training. All of her voyages, from the remote regions of Australia to China, have influenced her vision and expression, but it is her journeys to Europe which seem to have bestowed the most lasting inspiration.

Certainly we are no longer in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a trip to Rome was almost mandatory for artists and connoisseurs. In what is now considered Contemporary Art, Europe has lost its attraction as the unique and inevitable centre of artistic training and development. For some painters, however, the tradition endures, and Jill is living proof of this.

An example of Jill's interest in art history can be seen in an unusual experimentation from 2002. Jill hollowed out pages in selected books, creating cavities into which she inserted her paintings. Some of these paintings were copies of great works by European masters. Jill was inspired by Antonio Pisano (known as Pisanello), Joachim Patinir, Andrea del Sarto, Palma Vecchio, and Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin. Copying the old masters was fundamental in the classic training method as taught at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, founded in Paris in 1648.

We can see this series of 'art/books' as a double metaphor for the role of the old masters in Jill's artistic development. *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* by Giorgio Vasari was one of the first books of art history ever written. The fact that Jill chose this celebrated text in which to insert one of her paintings illustrates her faithfulness to artistic tradition, and her desire to perpetuate it.

Jill also chose books concerning philosophy, French civilisation during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and even several novels, such as *Le Rouge et le Noir* (The Red and the Black) by Stendhal. In this last, she inlaid her painting entitled *The River* (ill. 11). It is an interpretation of a painting by Patinir, who is widely considered as the father of easel landscape painting.

ill. 11



ill. 1 **Whispering Reeds**
2009

Oil on marine ply, 77 x 88 cm



ill. 2 **The Edge**
1992

Oil on board, 9.3 x 12.5 cm



ill. 3 **Heat**
1992

Oil on board, 9.3 x 12.5 cm



ill. 4 **Winbaraku 1**
1992

Oil on board, 9.3 x 12.5 cm



ill. 5 **Waychinicup – Place of Emu Dreaming**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 6 Cornelis van Dalem (1528–1573)
**Landscape with Adam and Eve lamenting
over the body of Abel**

Panel, 51.5 x 69.5 cm
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen



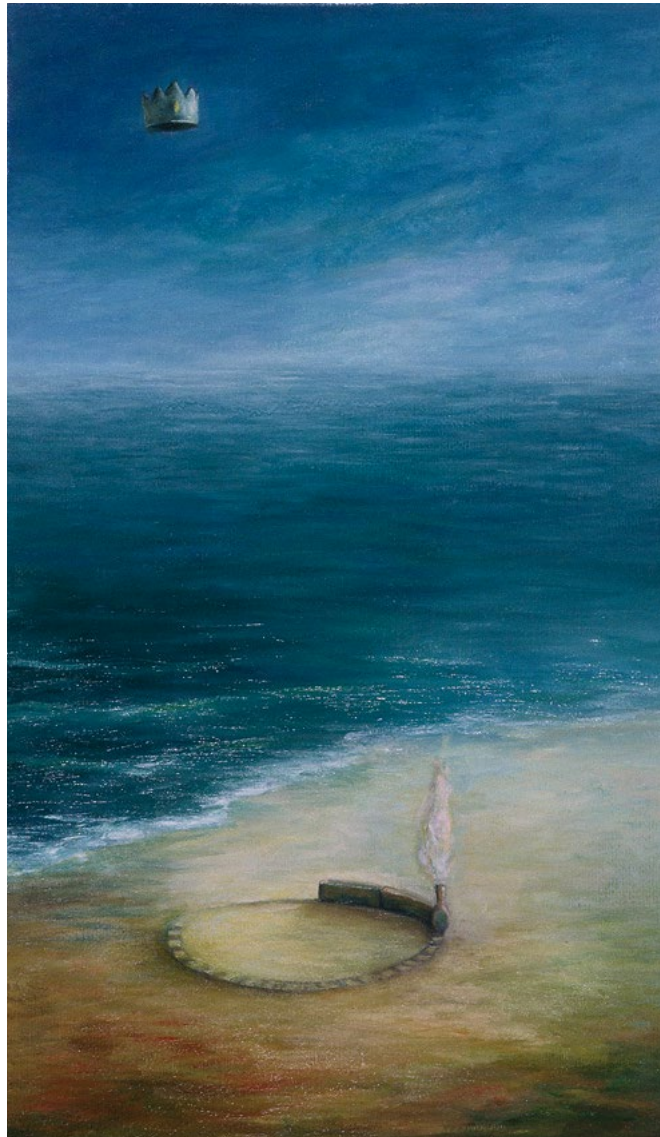
ill. 7 **The Olive Picker**
2001

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 8 **Sella – The Village**
2001

Oil on canvas, 117 x 82 cm



ill. 9 **Round and Round**
1996

Oil on paper, 60 x 32 cm



ill. 10 **Rainy Day Red Coat**
1995

Oil on board, 69.5 x 57.5 cm

LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR

coups de ces marteaux énormes les petits morceaux de fer qui sont rapidement transformés en clous. Ce travail, si rude en apparence, première fois dans les montagnes qui séparent la France de l'Helvétie. Si, en entrant à Verrières, le voyageur demande à qui appartient cette belle fabrique de clous qui assourdit les gens qui montent la grande rue, on lui répond avec un accent trainard : *Eh! elle est à M. le maire.*

Pour peu que le voyageur s'arrête quelques instants dans cette grande rue de Verrières, qui va en montant depuis la rive du Doubs jusqu'à la colline, il y a cent à parier contre un qu'il verra paraître un grand homme à l'air affairé et important.

A son aspect tous les chapeaux se lèvent rapidement. Ses cheveux sont grisonnants, et il est vêtu de gris. Il est chevalier de plusieurs ordres, il a un grand front, un nez aquilin, et au total sa figure ne manque pas d'une certaine régularité : on trouve même, au premier aspect, qu'elle réunit à la dignité du maire de village cette sorte d'agrément qui peut encore se rencontrer avec quarante-huit ou cinquante ans. Mais bientôt le voyageur parisien est choqué d'un certain air de contentement de soi et de suffisance mêlé à je ne sais quoi de borné et de peu inventif. On sent enfin que le talent de cet homme-là se borne à se faire payer bien exactement ce qu'on lui doit, et à payer lui-même le plus tard possible quand il doit.

Tel est le maire de Verrières, M. de Rénal. Après avoir traversé la rue d'un pas grave, il entre à la mairie et disparaît aux yeux du voyageur. Mais, cent pas plus haut, si celui-ci continue sa promenade, il aperçoit une maison d'assez belle apparence, et, à travers une grille de fer attenante à la maison, des jardins magnifiques. Au delà, c'est une ligne d'horizon formée par les collines de la Bourgogne, et qui semble faite à souhait pour le plaisir des yeux. Cette vue fait oublier au voyageur l'atmosphère empestée des petits intérêts d'argent dont il commence à être asphyxié.

On lui apprend que cette maison appartient à M. de Rénal. C'est aux bénéfices qu'il a faits sur sa grande fabrique de clous que le maire de Verrières doit cette belle habitation en pierre de taille qu'il achète en ce moment. Sa famille, dit-on, est espagnole, antique, et, à ce qu'on prétend, établie dans le pays bien avant la conquête de Louis XIV.

Depuis 1815 il rougit d'être industriel : 1815 l'a fait maire de Ver-

6

UNE PETITE VILLE

rières. Les murs en terrasse qui soutiennent les diverses parties de ce magnifique jardin qui, d'étage en étage, descend jusqu'au Doubs, sont aussi la récompense de la science de M. de Rénal dans le commerce du fer.

Ne vous attendez point à trouver en France ces jardins pittoresques qui ornent les villes manufacturières de l'Allemagne.

Il y a bien, dans le Jura, des murs, des auvents, des jar-

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ill. 11 The River
2002

Oil on board inset into book, 18 x 24 x 4.5 cm



ill. 12 **Amsterdam Sunset I**
2006

Oil over gesso on marine ply, 30 x 30 cm



ill. 13 **Amsterdam Sunset II**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 30 x 30 cm

The radiance of the setting sun in *Amsterdam Sunset I* evokes the work of Claude Gellée, known as Le Lorrain.



ill. 14 Le Lorrain (dit), Claude Gellée (1600–1682)
Seaport with the Landing of Cleopatra in Tarsus

Oil on canvas, 119 x 170 cm
Paris, Musée du Louvre – © RMN – Franck Raux



ill. 15 **Wilson's Inlet – Mist**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 25 x 84.5 cm



ill. 16 **Golden Haze II**
2007

Oil on canvas, 50 x 120 cm



ill. 17 **As the River Flows**
2007

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 18 **Sugar Loaf Rock**
2007

Oil on marine ply, 25 x 30 cm



ill. 19 **Sunset in Blue**
2007

Oil on marine ply, 30 x 30 cm



ill. 20 **Waychinicup – Rain Clouds II**
2007

Oil on marine ply, 30 x 30 cm



ill. 21 **Waychinicup – Sunset 1**
2007

Oil on marine ply, 30 x 23 cm



ill. 22 Jacob van Ruisdael Isaakszoon (1628/1629–1682)
The Bush

Oil on canvas, 68 x 82 cm
Paris, Musée du Louvre – © RMN – Jean-Gilles Berizzi



ill. 23 Matthys Cock (active 1509–1548)
The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine

Oil on plywood transferred from panel, 62.2 x 118.2 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington



ill. 24 Pieter Paul Rubens
Stormy Landscape with Jupiter, Mercury, Philemon and Baucis

Wood, 146 x 209 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



ill. 25 **Saint Cloud 1921**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 26 **Deep River**
2008

Oil on marine ply, 30 x 82 cm



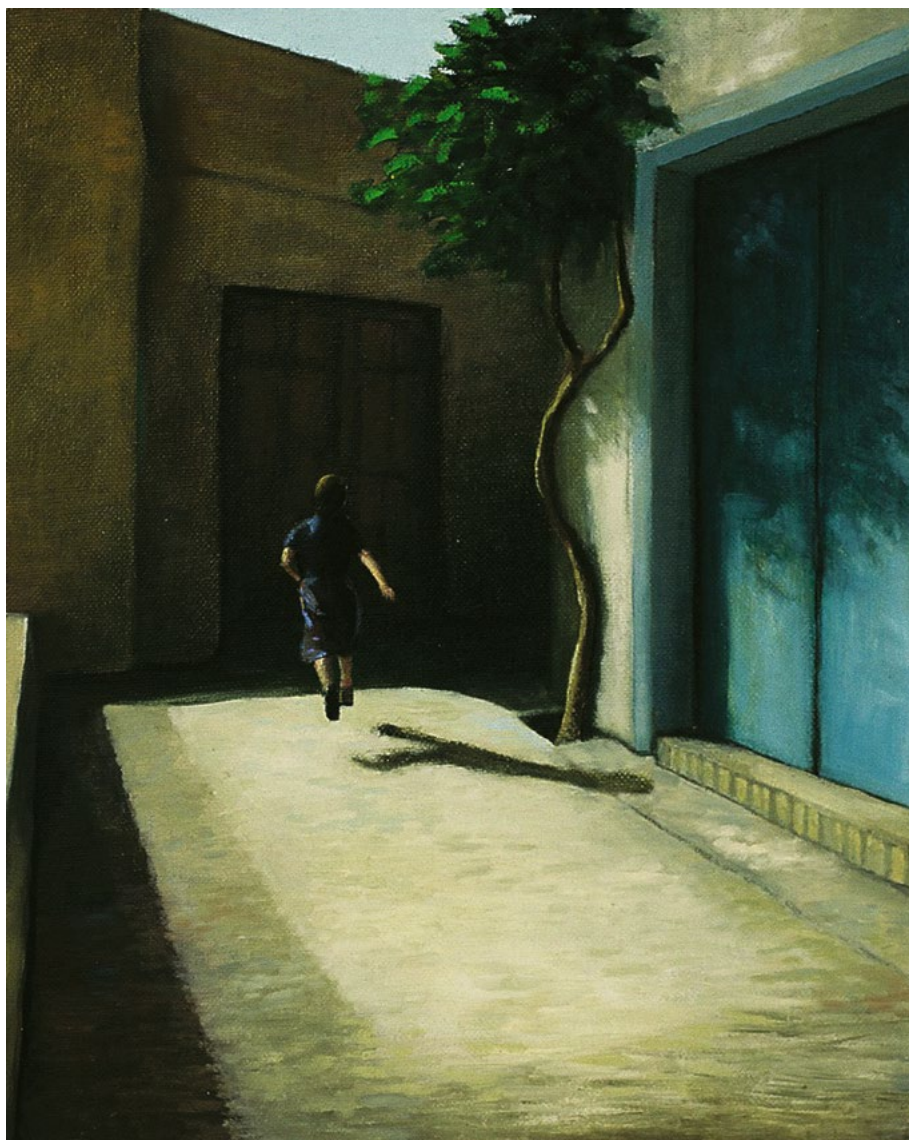
ill. 27 **Then a Cloud Passed**
2008

Oil on marine ply, 25 x 82 cm



ill. 28 **Jackie's Clouds**
2008

Oil on marine ply, 15 x 36 cm



ill. 29 **The Blue Doors I**
1998

Oil on board, 27 x 22 cm



ill. 30 **The Blue Doors III**
2001

Oil and canvas, 108 x 92.5 cm



ill. 31 **Siesta**
2000

Oil on canvas, 108 x 92.5 cm



ill. 32 **Parc de Sceaux 1925**
2008

Oil on marine ply, 22.5 x 30 cm



ill. 33 **Saint Cloud 1906**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 34 **Saint Cloud 1904**
2005

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 35 **Saint Cloud 1926**
2006

Oil on marine ply, 68.5 x 90 cm



ill. 36 **Cottesloe Sunset**
2006

Oil on canvas paper, 12 x 12 cm



ill. 37 **Waychinicup Rain Clouds**
2006

Oil on canvas paper, 10 x 9.5 cm



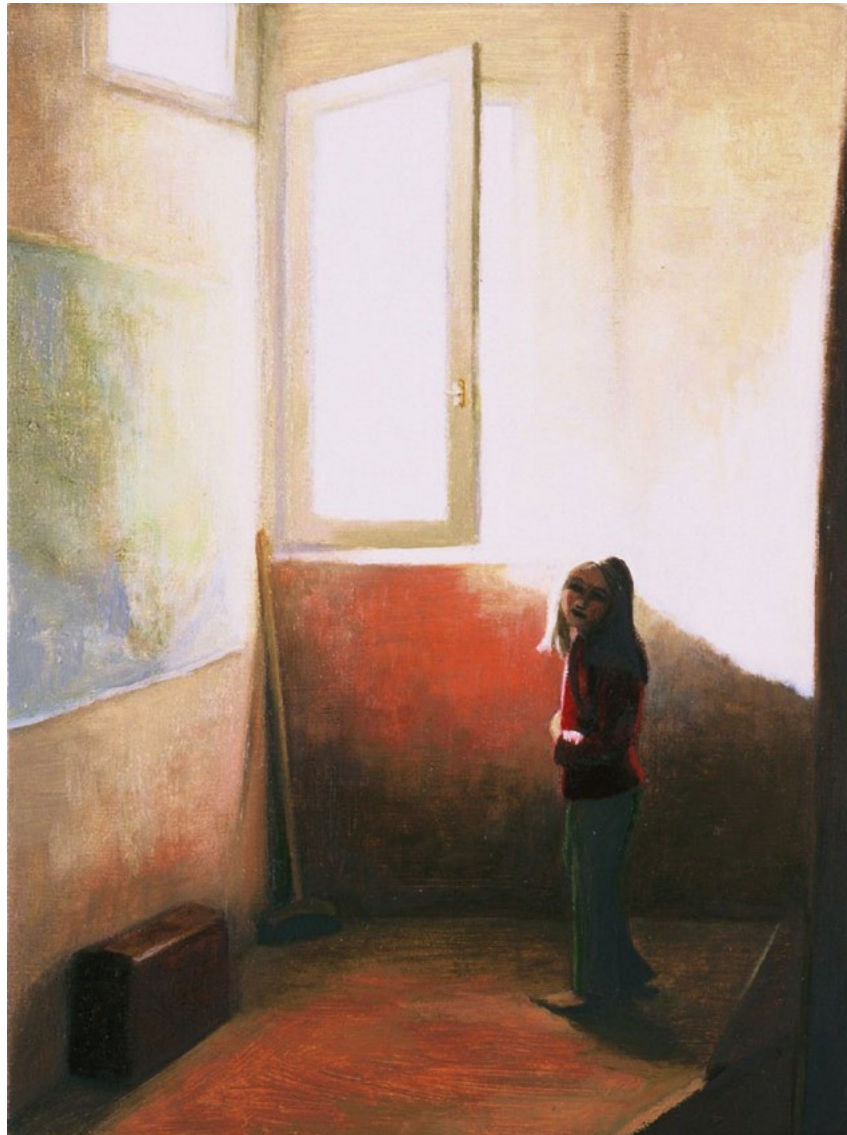
ill. 38 **Remain in Light 1**
2002

Oil on canvas, 56 x 41 cm



ill. 39 Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675)
The Astronomer

Oil on canvas, 51 x 41 cm
Paris, Musée du Louvre – © RMN – René-Gabriel Ojéda



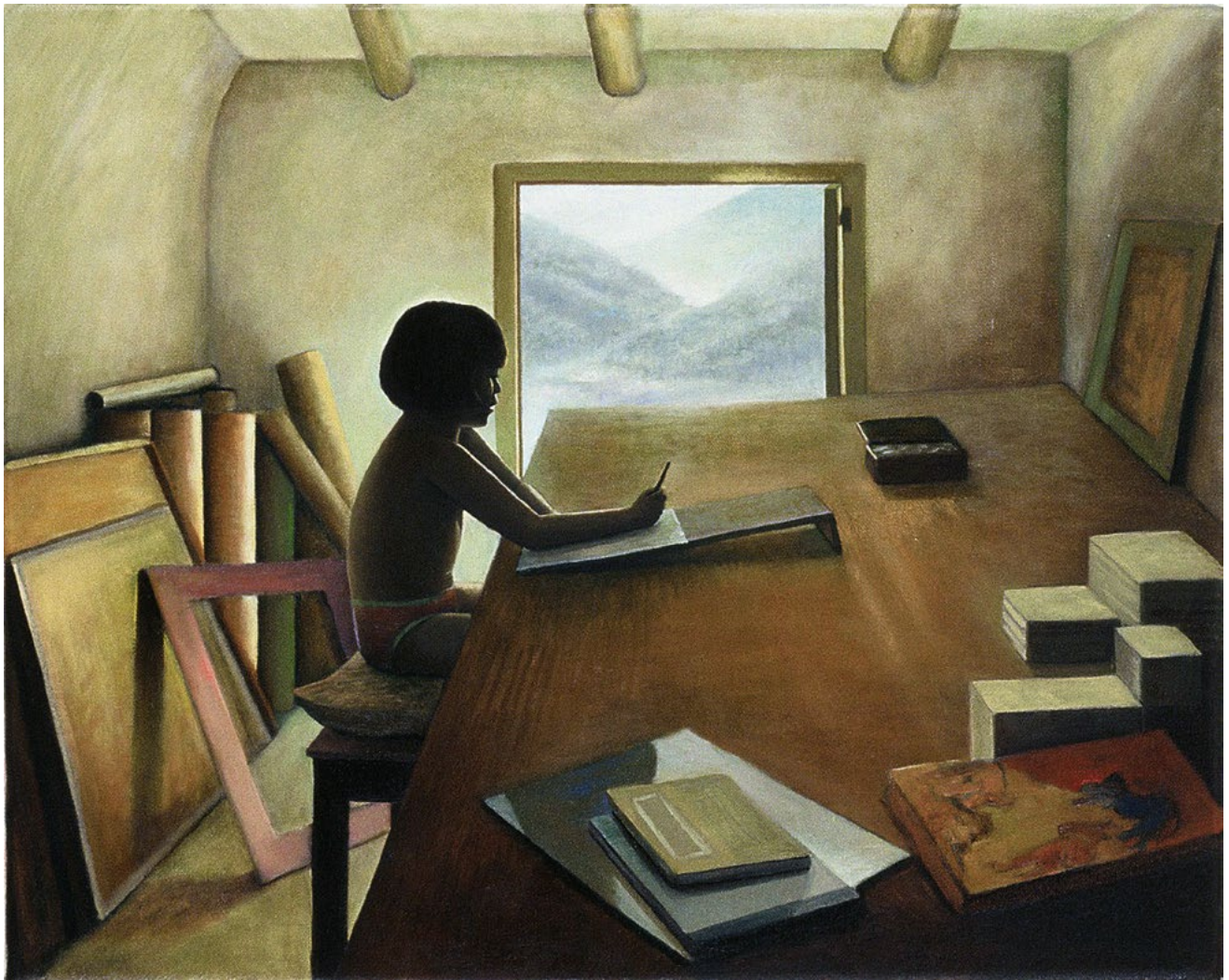
ill. 40 **Remain in Light II**
2002

Oil on board, 15 x 11 cm



ill. 41 Jacob Vrel (worked 1645–1662)
The Nurse

Oil on panel, 57 x 46 cm
Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp - Lukas - Art in Flanders



ill. 42 **Interior with Child**
2000

Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 50.5 cm

ARTISTS LIST

Atget, Eugène, French photographer (Libourne, 1856 – Paris, 1927)

Beyle, Henri (Stendhal), French writer (Grenoble, 1783 – Paris, 1842)

Bosch Hieronymus van Aken, early Netherlandish painter (s'Hertogenbosch, c.1450–1516)

Bruegel, Pieter (the Elder), early Netherlandish painter (Brueghel c.1525/30 – Brussels, 1569)

Chardin, Jean-Baptiste Siméon, French painter (Paris, 1699–1779)

de Chirico, Giorgio, Italian painter (Volos, Greece, 1888 – Rome, 1978)

Cock, Matthys, early Netherlandish painter (Antwerp c.1509 – c.1548)

van Dalem Cornelis, early Netherlandish painter (noted in Antwerp, 1545–1573/76)

Ernst, Max, French painter of German origin (Brühl, 1891 – Paris, 1976)

Gellée, Claude (**Le Lorrain**), French painter (Chamagne, 1600 – Rome, 1682)

Monet, Claude, French painter (Paris, 1840 – Giverny, 1926)

Patinir, Joachim, early Netherlandish painter (Dinant or Bouvignes, Belgium, c.1480 – Antwerp, 1524)

Pisano, Antonio (**Pisanello**), Italian painter (Pisa [?], c.1395–1450/55)

Rubens, Pieter Paul, Belgian painter (Siegen, Westphalia, 1577 – Antwerp, 1640)

van Ruisdael, Jacob, Dutch painter (Haarlem, 1628/9 – Haarlem, 1682)

del Sarto, Andrea, Italian painter (Florence, 1486–1530)

Turner, Joseph Mallord William, English painter (London, 1775–1851)

Vasari, Giorgio, Italian painter and historian (Arezzo, 1511 – Florence, 1574)

Vecchio, Palma, Italian painter (Serina, Bergame, c.1480 – Venice, 1528)

ART TRAVELS

by Jill Kempson

- 1984: China, Guangdong Province, staying at the Guangdong Art Academy for three weeks. I was strongly moved by the experience of such a foreign and ancient culture.
- 1989: First exhibition, 'Secret Garden of the Interior', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA.
- 1989, July: Paris American Academy, Paris. This was when I met Patrick Le Chanu.
- 1989, September–November: residency, 'Il Paretaiò' Australia Council Studio, Tuscany, Italy. This was my first trip to Europe and my first exposure to the fabulous museums in London, Paris and Italy. In Italy, Andrew Hayim and I stayed in an old farmhouse in the Tuscan hills, owned by the Australian artist Arthur Boyd, who has since passed away. The closest city was Florence, to which we made numerous trips; we also travelled to Venice, Rome, Sienna Assisi and Pisa. On this trip I also visited Amsterdam, Scotland, England, Ireland, Portugal and Greece. I was away for 12 months.
- 1991: Exhibition, 'Threading Light and Land in Tuscany', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA.
- 1991: Four-month research trip to the Northern Territory (Darwin, Kakadu, Arnhem Land) and the Kimberley region of north-west Western Australia. Having travelled in Europe I realised how little I had seen of Australia so I set off on my own, meeting up with friends along the way. With the specific idea of painting this country, I took a specially made up easel/paint box. I stayed in the Central Desert of Northern Territory for one month in an Aboriginal community called Yuendumu, with a friend Glen James who was working with indigenous artists. The Yuendumu artists are very famous in Australia and overseas. I set up a makeshift studio out in the open and went out hunting with the people. They gave me an Aboriginal name. I was incredibly fortunate to be taken under their wing and shown special places and told stories of their land.
- 1993: Exhibition, 'Journeys to the Interior', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA. (Most paintings were of the Central Desert and the north-west of Western Australia.)
- 1995: Exhibition, 'Looking Backward to Look Forward', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA.
- 1998: Exhibition, 'Unforeseen Journeys'. Experimenting with collage and different formats, e.g. ovals, circles; shapes instead of the traditional rectilinear format.

- 1998: Travel to Spain, Italy, Portugal, three months, with husband Martin and daughter Mim, aged five. Residency in a small mountain village called Sella in the Province of Valencia, Spain, for six weeks. Visited Granada, Madrid, Barcelona, Cordoba, Valencia, Seville.
- 2001: Exhibition of Spanish works, 'Foreign yet Familiar', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA.
- 2001: Development grant awarded by ArtsWA to travel to M. Pierre Bérès' collection and bookshop of rare and valuable books, Paris, and travel to the south of France.
- 2004: Exhibition, 'Remain in Light', Galerie Düsseldorf, focused on paintings using the book as an object.
- 2004: Development grant awarded by the WA Department of Culture and the Arts to undertake research at the Center for Research and Restoration for French Museums, Paris, assisted by Patrick Le Chanu. Attended classes on historical painting techniques by M. Andre Fische Atelier in Paris.
- 2005: Study historical painting techniques, Limbourg Restoration Centre, Maastricht, Netherlands.
- 2006: Exhibition, 'Tonalities of Time—The Forgotten Ways', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA. Exhibition of paintings using historical painting techniques. The paintings were referenced from Atget's photographs of Parc de Saint Cloud, France, and Waychinicup, in the south-west of WA, a place I have been travelling to for the past 25 years.
- 2007: Exhibition, 'Skyscapes', Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth, WA. Paintings of skies from the south-west of Western Australia.
- 2008: Development grant awarded by the WA Department of Culture and the Arts to research private English gardens in Norfolk, England, for an exhibition at the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, London, in 2010.
- 2010: Travel to London for Exhibition 'Garden Exploration—In and Out of Norfolk' and to launch book *Landscape in Perspective*; then to Paris to research potential galleries to exhibit my work.

First published in 2010 by Jill Kempson, PO Box 1630 Fremantle WA 6160

www.jillkempson.com

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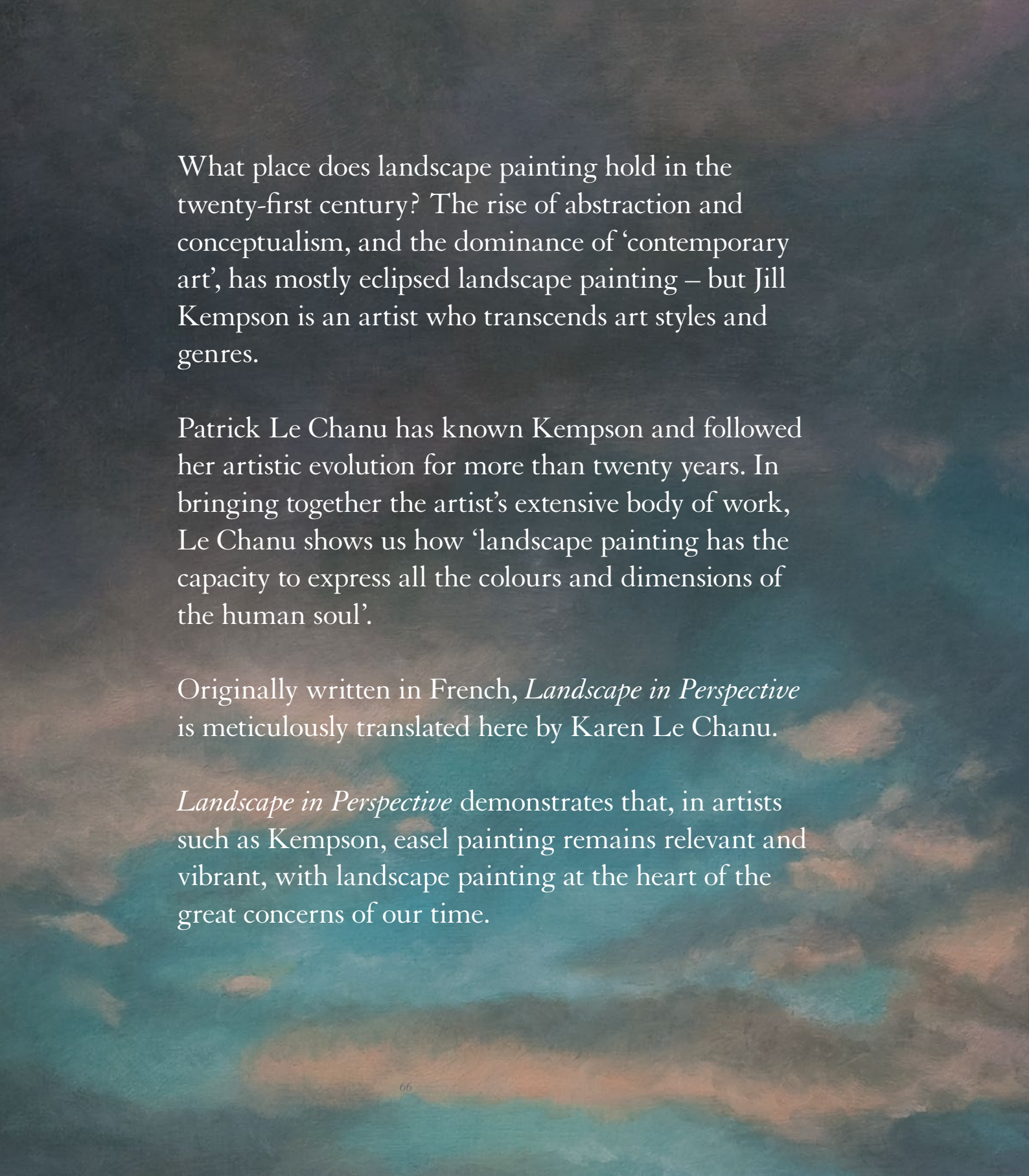
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Thanks to the kind assistance of various museums in allowing the use of the reproductions of the old masters' works in *Landscape in Perspective*: Barbara Wood at the National Gallery of Art, Washington; Ilse King at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna; Noelle Pourret and Catherine Bossis, Agence Photographique de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris; Griet Teetaert at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp; Lukas – Art in Flanders; and Dorian Hill at the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Many thanks to Patrick Le Chanu for his invaluable belief in me as an artist, and to both Patrick and Karen Le Chanu who worked tirelessly on *Landscape in Perspective*. Thanks to Alana Culverhouse at the DCA for her kind assistance. And to my generous and supportive mum and dad, Pete and Helen Kempson, thank you.



What place does landscape painting hold in the twenty-first century? The rise of abstraction and conceptualism, and the dominance of ‘contemporary art’, has mostly eclipsed landscape painting – but Jill Kempson is an artist who transcends art styles and genres.

Patrick Le Chanu has known Kempson and followed her artistic evolution for more than twenty years. In bringing together the artist’s extensive body of work, Le Chanu shows us how ‘landscape painting has the capacity to express all the colours and dimensions of the human soul’.

Originally written in French, *Landscape in Perspective* is meticulously translated here by Karen Le Chanu.

Landscape in Perspective demonstrates that, in artists such as Kempson, easel painting remains relevant and vibrant, with landscape painting at the heart of the great concerns of our time.