

fall into place

Two geographically distant artists, who solve the loneliness of the studio by regular communication, find it a natural progression to share an exhibition



Finding a shared artistic sensibility towards the landscape, Sydney-based Simon Collins and Hervey Bay artist Amanda van Gils, who met on an internet art forum, have developed a consistent, ongoing supportive and professional association over the past four years. So it has seemed natural to them to extend the discussions by exhibiting together.

With landscape as their common theme, their combined show, called *Going Places*, is on display at Main Beach. Landscape, they agree, can keep an artist busy for an entire career.

"It is landscape that continually returns to me, and I to it," says van Gils.

She works primarily in oil on canvas or linen, using landscape themes to create painterly representations of the flow of time and motion.

"The ideas behind my practice relate to our sense of place, our psychological connection to the land.

"My work is immersed in how we experience landscape in our fast-paced society."

Going Places continues the fleeting landscape views of her previous series, *Views from a Speeding Train*, based on a trip through Italy, Spain and France.

Simon Collins' *G.P. #14* will be on display as part of the *Going Places* exhibition

To find out what's on show this weekend at Gold Coast galleries, visit www.goldcoast.com.au



Above, Amanda van Gils' *The Greenest Green*. Top left, Simon Collins' *G.P. #15*. Below left, Amanda van Gils' *Yellow Trees*

In this selection, however, the new paintings are distinctly Australian, re-enacting a road trip rather than rail travel.

Collectively her works create a sense of movement, passing through changing scenes on a long stretch of road.

"I focused on the Bruce Highway. The colours became greener and crisper than the European work," says van Gils.

She photographed during the travel and then chose images to paint. The photo is a rough guide, but really the paintings are driven by the paint itself.

"The materiality of oil paint – its nuances, viscosity, opacity or transparency – entrances me and engages me completely I am inside and outside the painting while I am making the work."

Sydney artist Collins, a finalist in the recent controversial 2009 Stan & Maureen Duke Gold Coast Art Prize, has a similar approach, and is also building on previous work.

He likes to see the visual poetry in any ordinary

moment, which he also captures by camera, and later, in the quiet of the studio, turns it into something more beautiful.

Inspiration for his current body of work came not from travel but while watching his son's soccer training at a local park, absorbing the early evening mood.

This he sees as a natural progression from the car nocturnes of his most recent Sydney show.

"I'd been itching to do some figures again, and pushing on from previous nocturnes was naturally a good place to start, again drawing on life experiences," he says.

"One night at training I put some effort into grabbing the images used for *Going Places*."

He believes a painter sees potential paintings all day long. He does not feel his art has totally finished with his car themes, but the current works are essentially landscapes 'and in a way it links my old work, and Amanda's a little too. We share quite similar approaches to our work'.

Collins' primary motive for his painting is to reflect ordinary life experiences. Partly, he says, this is about investigating one's own life, as he feels there is honesty in drawing upon real-life experiences or intimate subject matter that affords a rich experience for viewers of paintings who might seek deeper interpretation.

But in the end, as with van Gils, it is the execution of the work and the language of paint which are the primary concern.

"I like to paint the whole canvas at once, as each area is a relevant part of the puzzle. I'm never sure how the painting is going to work when starting out, the painting itself dictates, it tells you as you go.

"My aim is to let the medium carry me in a way that imparts the experience I've drawn upon, to take the viewer to that place."

Going Places by Amanda van Gils and Simon Collins, on show at Anthea Polson Gallery, 19-20 Mariners Cove, Seaworld Drive, Main Beach, until February 28