

*Penny Hulbert: synaesthesia*



16 December '06 – 20 January '07



GOULBURN REGIONAL ART GALLERY



*Untitled 7*  
2006  
Oil on board. 61 x 30 cms

***synaesthesia***: a sensation produced in one physical sense when a stimulus is applied to another sense, as when the hearing of a certain sound induces the visualisation of a certain colour.

The Macquarie Dictionary, second revision (Macquarie University 1987)

When asked a year ago for a title for her solo exhibition, Penny Hulbert pondered a number of possibilities, ultimately selecting *synaesthesia*. She had just won the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery's 2005 Goulburn Art Award, the prize for which was a solo exhibition in 2006. At the time she had little idea of what her work would be a year later, but light and colour were the basis of her award winning works; she trusted that they would inform her subsequent work.

They very much do, but in her work synaesthesia extends and reverses the stimulæ. For her, as the artist, colours are an intuitive response to her process of artmaking; for us, as the viewers, her illuminated colours induce emotional responses - both extend deeper than the physical senses, into the psyche of the artist and viewer.

*Before beginning a picture, (Caspar David) Friedrich advised an artist to 'close his bodily eye' and then bring to light what he saw in the inner darkness.*

Melvyn Bragg (ed) Great Artists, (Golden Press 1987, P 266)

Penny Hulbert is inspired by the romantic artists, such as Friedrich, whose paintings were embedded in a spiritual or imaginative evocation of the infinite power of nature. Romantic art transcends physical reality as it aspires for the sublime. Like the romantics, Hulbert's paintings relate to landscape but they evolve from internal rather than external experiences. Like romantic paintings her paintings are literally awe inspiring as they place the viewer at the beginning of a journey into the beyond; at the precipice of the ether.

While romantic yearning may be the end result of Hulbert's painting, each painting essentially evolves from the reality of the painting process within the limited confines of her home studio. With no image in mind she begins with a wash of a chosen colour, then builds up layers of paint, and scrapes back into and rebuilds them. "My work is entirely process based and I like to see what different things do; I like the mistakes. It is about the paint on the canvas or board and what it does when you do different things."<sup>1</sup> It is an intuitive process that responds to the visual stimuli of colour upon colour and colour to colour.

Intuition is fed by experiences and learning; as such it is not devoid of rational processes. Hulbert only began painting about four years ago when she did a Diploma in Fine Art at Goulburn TAFE. Previously, her training and work was in fashion design which undoubtedly developed her drawing skills, but may seem distant from romantic paintings - except that she was always interested in colour and was able to experiment with it through screenprinting for her designs. Her artistic aesthetic derives from her learning experiences informing her intuitive understanding of the emotive energy of colour and light.

---

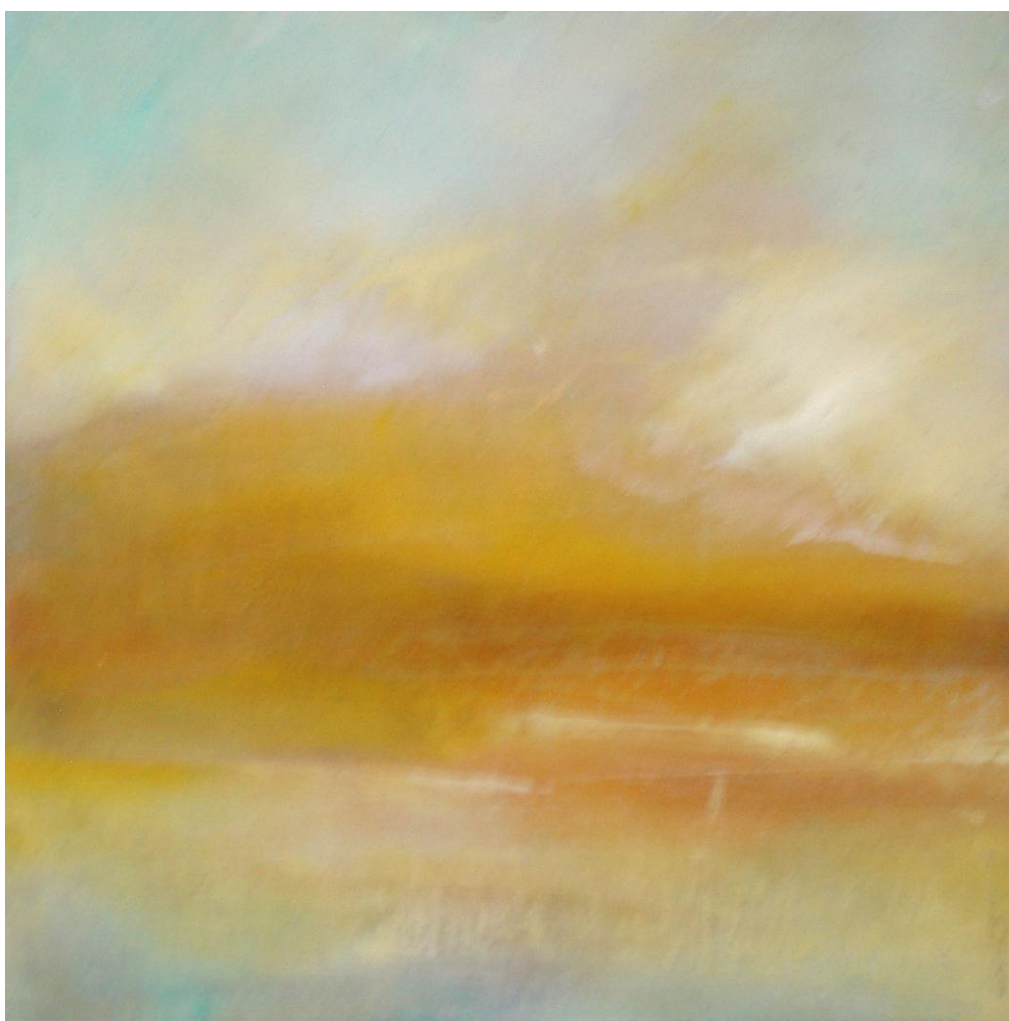
<sup>1</sup> Penny Hulbert, interview 9 October 2006

Because ultimately Penny Hulbert's *synaesthesia* speaks on an emotional level in the visual language of the artist to the eye of the beholder. Together they ponder the sublime.

-----

It is with great pleasure that Goulburn Regional Art Gallery presents this solo exhibition of Penny Hulbert, winner of the 2005 Goulburn Art Award. As an artist of the Goulburn region – indeed, of the city itself – she, like her exhibition, is a fine example of the artistic wealth of the region. I warmly thank her for her dedication to the making of *synaesthesia*, and congratulate her on the making of a brilliant art career.

Jennifer Lamb, Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, December 2006.



*Untitled 1*

2006

Oil on board. 30 x 30 cms



*Untitled 10*  
2006  
Oil on board. 61 x 30 cms



*Untitled 8*  
2006  
Oil on board. 61 x 30 cms



*Untitled 12*  
2006  
Oil on canvas. 51 x 51 cms



*Untitled 2*  
2006  
Oil on board. 30 x 30 cms





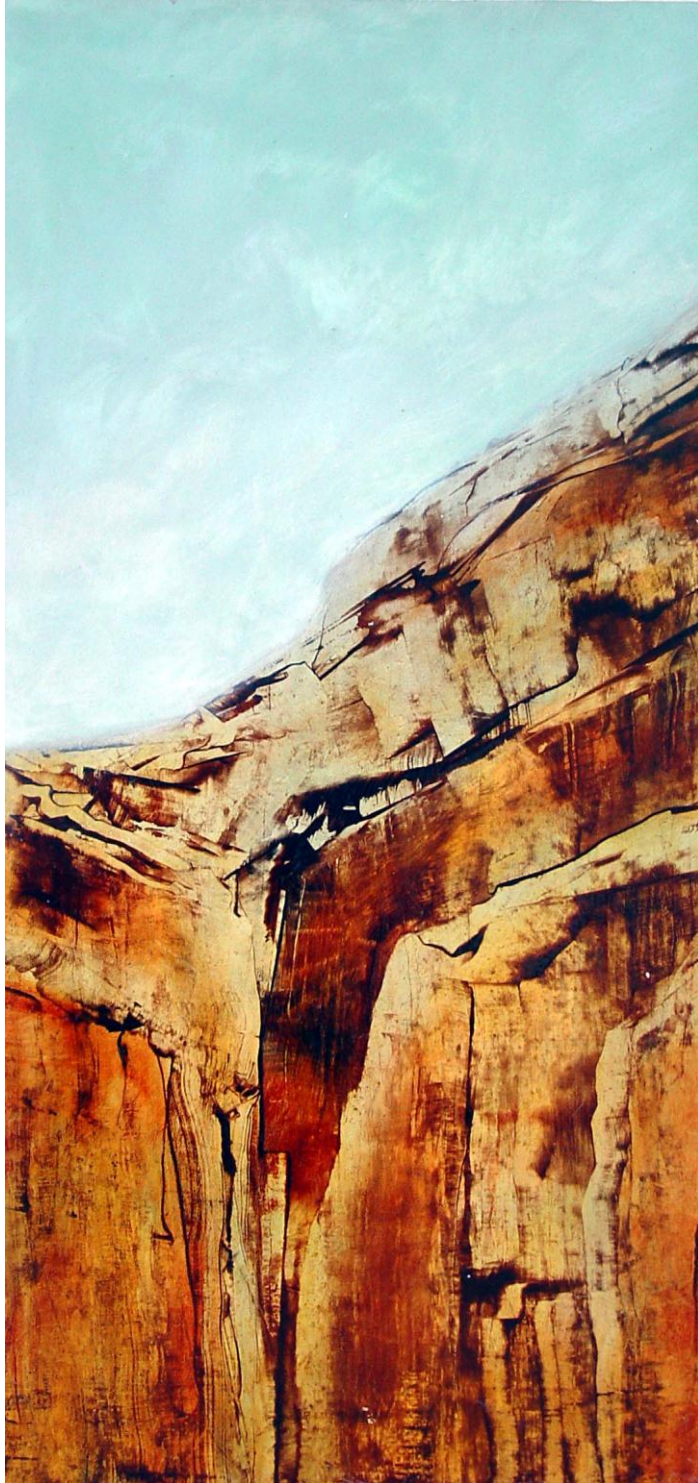
*Untitled 9*  
2006  
Oil on board. 61 x 30 cms



*Untitled 3*  
2006  
Oil on board. 30 x 30 cms



*Untitled 4*  
2006  
Oil on board. 30 x 30 cms



*Untitled 11*  
2006  
Oil on board. 61 x 30 cms



*Untitled 13*

2006

Oil on canvas. 76 x 60 cms



*Untitled 16*  
2006  
Oil on board. 30 x 30 cms



*Untitled 15*  
2006  
Oil on canvas. 102 x 102 cms