

Right and inside cover:
Geoffrey Elliott
Noosa National Park,
water colour on paper

Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland
Corner Middle and Bloomfield Streets,
Cleveland Q 4163
Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm
Sunday 9am – 2pm
Admission free
Enquiries 3829 8899
galler@redland.qld.gov.au
www.redland.qld.gov.au

*Redland Art Gallery is an initiative of
Redland Shire Council, dedicated to the
late Eddie Santagiuliana*



Northern Eyes, Southern Skies

Paintings by Geoffrey Elliott

**Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland
9 October – 20 November 2005
Gallery 2, 3, 4, 5**



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Northern Eyes, Southern Skies presents artist Geoffrey Elliott's perspective of some unique places around the south-eastern corner of Queensland. Elliott moved from the UK twenty-three years ago, and continues the tradition of re-discovery of the Australian landscape that began with the first European arrivals. This exhibition is selected from two decades of the artist's work, and provides an insight into the process experienced by Elliott as he settled into his adopted homeland. It focuses on places that, for him, have developed special meaning – from Noosa, Coolool, Stradbroke and Bribie Island to Brisbane, Mount Coot-tha, and Kooralbyn.

While this exhibition comprises of water colours, and several oil paintings, Elliott's oeuvre has embraced drawing, lithography, screen printing and painting with acrylics over a long career. Although

a formally trained artist, Elliott is a self-taught watercolourist who has always felt drawn to this subtle technique. Travelling extensively throughout Europe and America before coming to Australia, he has taken the opportunity to observe how other painters respond to specific environments, and capture characteristics like the quality of the light or a sense of space. At first, Elliott says, it was very difficult for him to 'see' Australian colours, and to translate them, via his palette, into an image. The light seemed too "intense". A time of revelation, when he first 'connected' with Australian colour and light, came at a friend's place. The painting entitled *Kath's Place* records the moment which led him to express colour and light in a different way.

Elliott's new environment has also led to changes in

his technique. The artist now eschews the fine tonal papers he used, and chooses instead a heavier white that suits the light. To begin a painting he usually works en plein-air, sketching directly from the scene.

Sometimes employing a scant pencil outline of the horizon and the main features, Elliott paints directly onto the paper using a very limited palette. In that way he records his immediate response to the scene, the light and the time of day. Occasionally a photographic record is made for later reference. While initially the execution of a painting is fast and gestural, back in the studio its resolution can be a slow process. Elliott painstakingly develops the work until he believes "the painting sings". Sometimes, as in *Noosa National Park*, the end product is one of close and meticulous observation, immediately recognisable to a viewer familiar with the scene. At other

times, Elliott's response to the landscape expresses itself much more freely, displaying washes of colour that seem to delight in the aesthetic potential of the medium. *Coloured Sands* is such a painting.

Elliott's approach to his subject matter is unhurried. Repeatedly revisiting sites has developed a familiarity that alerts him to each landscape's subtle moods, and the changes wrought by the vagaries of the seasons – trees in flower, the incredible blue of the sky, a cyclone's aftermath and summer's intensity as it fades into winter. Early European painters looked at the Australian landscape in European terms. Elliott challenges himself to capture what he feels to be the spirit of the place.

Susan Rothnie