

Undertow

An exhibition of new work by
Scott Christensen

Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland
9 October – 20 November 2005
Gallery 1

Right:
Scott Christensen
Visions #2,
oil on canvas
Inside cover:
Scott Christensen
Visions #1 (detail)
oil on canvas

Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland
Corner Middle and Bloomfield Streets,
Cleveland Q 4163
Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm
Sunday 9am – 2pm
Admission free
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*Redland Art Gallery is an initiative of
Redland Shire Council, dedicated to the
late Eddie Santagiuliana*



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Senses jaded by city living are reawakened by Scott Christensen's paintings. Imbued with the briny and bracing slap of sea and the invigoration of salt air, *Undertow* is a celebration of the landscape it portrays. It is an unmediated expression of the artist's love of the coastal areas he frequents, and his desire to share with others its powers of renewal.

In his past life, working as the leading hand of a directional drilling operation, Christensen would conjure seascapes as means of mental escape from his surroundings, when, he recalls, "All I would think about was getting to the beach." The artist's yearning for the beach, for the instant release of self into nature that happens there, has impelled him to produce paintings which exhibit a rare precision, both in terms of their physical detail and the

atmosphere that they invoke. His use of a photo-realistic style corresponds with the intention of his work. As he explains, "Everyone wants to live by the sea, but they can't; so the next best thing is to put it on the wall". Indeed Christensen's approach to a subject is to paint the scenes as if for himself. There are no hidden meanings complicating the work's purpose, which is simply to capture an essence of place. Through the paintings the artist hopes to share his unique environment with "like minded spirits". Whatever the impetus, it is obvious that his relationship with his chosen subject is instinctive. And it comes as no surprise to learn that he and his wife are keen surfers who escape with their family to camp at the beach as often as possible. Many of the scenes will be identifiable by those who have frequented the south-east Queensland and

northern NSW coastal regions and share with Christensen his affinity for these special places.

Christensen's inspiration has led him from painting in his back yard shed before work, to artist-in-residence based at the Redland Shire's Old School House Gallery. Over a short period, the demand for his work has become such that he now supports his family as a full-time painter. Working mainly in oils on canvas, he employs fairly thin layers of paint to build his pictures. In this work, gesture is almost completely subsumed by the painting's subject, although an expressionist sensibility manifests itself in occasional higher builds of colour. His paintings are created with close reference to the sketches he makes, and to the one to two hundred photographs he takes to document a scene in preparation for the intense

production process of these hyper-realistic works. The works are highly suited to reproduction, and, using very high resolution scans, Christensen has also had a selection of images reproduced as limited edition prints on canvas, making them accessible to a wider audience.

This exhibition consists of original works (which will not be reproduced as limited edition prints) that speak entirely for themselves, grasping the immediacy of the moment. They transport the viewer to the seashore by scenes produced with such veracity that they seem to at once crystallise and become expressions of our own memory.

Susan Rothnie