

ARTISTIC STATEMENT 2016

Penelope Hillam is an award and prize winning Marine Artist. She is a foundation member and Fellow of the Australian Society of Marine Artists (ASMA) and recently became a Fellow of the Royal South Australian Society of Arts. She is also a professional member of many arts organisations throughout Australia. Penelope has been painting and exhibiting since leaving Art School in 1980. Throughout her career, she has been involved in many innovative aspects of the art and design industry from kitchen design, teaching to community arts. In teaching she has taught Primary, Secondary, and TAFE including running a teaching business in the local community. She has been an Arts Director of regional galleries in Queensland and Victoria. She has served on many boards and committees including Nexus and the Public Galleries Association of Victoria and on the International Committee in regional Queensland. In South Australia she was a board member of Nexus Multi Cultural Arts Centre, the Charles Sturt Memorial Museum Trust, Vice President of the Mitcham Village Arts and Craft Association.

She has worked across a variety of media and was the first artist in South Australia to major in two areas in the new degree course. In the early 1980's she was working in mixed media using mirrored Perspex on canvas while designing a plastic robot that included electronics.

She has always been drawn to the area of marine art. Born in Victoria, she grew up in Ferntree Gully. In those days this area was considered the country, Melbourne was just a cluster of lights around Port Phillip Bay. She was to see the sea for the first time when she was five, an experience that was to have an ongoing influence on her creative work. A clear sunny day, she was fascinated by the sparkling light upon the water.

Throughout her artistic work is a thread of movement like the ripples on the water. She has continued to be fascinated by reflections and mirror images often playing on contrasting aspects, physical/spiritual, outer/internal worlds, realistic/abstract.

In her boat paintings, she is concerned about the contrast between the reality of the boats and the abstract quality of the reflections. This is evident in the work 'Boat Reflections' she has been particularly interested in night harbours inspired by the harbour in Hobart during the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. These works highlight the contrast between the natural and man-made aspects make an exciting colourful and dramatic affect. Her studies in music and drama create a fascination for colour and stage lighting. She also continues to be influenced by studies into Asian Art, particularly Japanese Prints. The expressive qualities of line give a musical and poetic feel to the work as she explores all the elements of line and pattern, different times of day and the varying seasons.

In recent times, due to new materials, Penelope has returned to explore the technique of printmaking. The expressive qualities of line give a musical and poetic feel to the work, as she explores the elements of line and pattern, different times of day and the varying seasons. This now developed an interest in the surface texture and assemblage. This is combined with a moral responsibility to work sustainably recycling and using found objects.

Over the last few years along her interest in Maritime art, she has been working on collage using canvas as a Textile. This has also included eclectic Architectural buildings that have shaped our history. The present day is a combination of Multi-Cultural influences. The essence reflects many cultures and many religions into a harmonious collection of textures, stitching, drawing and paintwork.

