



Artist Sally Stokes, whose new exhibition is set to open at Annandale Galleries. Dry Australian outback feeds Sally Stokes' river of creativity.

Elizabeth Fortescue

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THE Australian outback and its rich palette of colours are a source of never-ending inspiration for Dural-based artist Sally Stokes.

Painting trips have taken Stokes to a vast ephemeral salt lake in Western Australia, to Purnululu National Park with its extraordinary rock formations, to Bell Gorge in the Kimberley with its beautiful stepped waterfall, to Ndhala Gorge near Alice Springs and Hancock Gorge in Karijini National Park.

These and other remote and dramatic landscapes spring to life in the lively tapestry of shapes and colours that are the hallmark of Stokes' paintings.

With an exhibition of Stokes' works set to open at Annandale Galleries, Telegraph Arts asked Stokes to write a paragraph about three of the paintings that will be on view.

NDHALA GORGE 3



“Ndhala Gorge is in the East MacDonnell Ranges, out of Alice Springs. This gorge is a very sacred place. It has ancient engravings of the caterpillar dreaming, and lots of other engravings that encourage one to look at every rock surface. There is so much mystery, nothing is as it first seems, visual surprises everywhere as I stroll up the gorge and find places to sit and draw and let the place speak to me in its own language. One walks through sliding hills, the cypress and white gums against amazing soil colour that vibrates the soul. Every now and then a pond of water resonates the reflections of the place, which seem to tell the story different than looking directly.”

PURNULULU I



Purnululu I, by Sally Stokes.

“Purnululu is the old/new name of what westerners used to call the Bungle Bungles. Purnululu National Park is a world heritage site in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. There are (artist Philip) Guston-like hills going in every direction, striped with warm iron colours and ochres. Birds fly, plants grow, rocks become cathedrals, passages allow one to walk and explore. It all looks so different from each direction. It’s another world, a touch of the ‘other’ that welcomes and embraces one, and leaves one feeling great joy, as awe-struck with some knowledge of this ancient place.”

AYRSHIRE HILLS



Ayrshire Hills, by Sally Stokes.

“These hills near Mt Isa in Queensland are a burst of colour and shape after the long flat drive west. They burst with plant life, strange soil colours and shapes that change the more one looks. We pull off the road every trip west here and I get out the paints and just meditate on the strange beauty in front of me. The colours glow. Lines flow through the hills. We have reached and been reached.”

*** Sally Stokes: Conversations with Colour, a view of the outback, June 6-
July 8, Annandale Galleries, 110 Trafalgar St,**