



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

ART & ARTISTS OF THE CENTRAL WEST

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAND

Amanda Penrose Hart
Studio, Sofala



OVERVIEW

Occupied by the Wiradjuri since time immemorial, scene of the first rural expansion in colonial Australia and then a major gold rush, the area just west of the Great Dividing Range from Sydney has a dramatic landscape and a storied past from which generations of artists have sought inspiration, including major artists such as Russell Drysdale, Donald Friend, Jeffrey Smart, Margaret Olley and Brett Whiteley.

Led by Distinguished Professor Peter McNeil, our seven-day tour from Sydney explores the heritage, landscape and vibrant visual arts scene of the Central West. A major feature of the tour is visits to the studio-homes of practising artists, whose work is represented in major national and international collections.

We also savour the region's fine food and wine with meals at excellent restaurants. Unique accommodation at historical homesteads turned-luxury stays in the heart of Mudgee and Orange, and a night in Bathurst, make for an experience not to be missed.



TOUR LEADER

Distinguished Professor **Peter McNeil** FAHA is an award-winning design historian. Peter has a BA Hons, Research Masters and PhD in art and design with a focus on Australian and European art from the 18th century to the present day.

TOUR DATES

May 11-17, 2024 | 7 Days

TOUR PRICE

\$5,595 per person, twin share
\$1,580 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$500** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Mudgee (3 nights), Bathurst (1 night), Orange (2 nights)

INCLUSIONS

6 nights' accommodation in centrally located boutique hotels. All breakfasts, 3 lunches, 4 dinners and 1 wine tasting. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 10.00am on Saturday 11 May, at Central Station, Sydney.

The tour ends at c.5.30pm on Friday 17 May, at Central Station, Sydney.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D and HT for High Tea and WT for Wine Tasting.

Saturday 11 May

Sydney to Mudgee

We meet at Sydney Central Station at 10.00am. We depart by coach to Medlow Bath in the Blue Mountains for a High Tea at the Hydro Majestic Hotel, an eccentric and legendary institution created by Sydney retailer Mark Foy in the 1920s. In the afternoon, after crossing the Blue Mountains, we visit the little-known Maiyingu Marragu indigenous rock art site near Lithgow. There are ancient 'stencil' paintings of hands on a rock ledge and a women's birthing area, reminders of the very long indigenous occupation of the region before the arrival of Europeans. We continue north to Mudgee, our base for the next three nights. Dinner is in a local Mudgee Restaurant. Overnight Mudgee (HT, D)

Sunday 12 May

Gulgong and Mudgee

Just north of Mudgee, the town of Gulgong retains an authentic gold rush heritage and has several places of interest. On our first stop we'll visit Guntawang, a property that has a long rich history dating back to the very first land grant and the birthplace of Henry Lawon's mother. We'll then visit the Holtermann Collection of photography. The 3,500 images of the people and places of the NSW gold rush are an astounding visual record for the time. They were made for Bernard Holtermann, a German immigrant who struck it rich when he found a 153kg nugget at the Hill End goldfields in 1872. The photographs won a Silver Medal at the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle Internationale and are today recognised by UNESCO. Our next stop in Gulgong is the Henry Lawson Centre. This celebrated poet spent his childhood in the region with his mother Louisa, an influential early feminist. The Centre celebrates his life and writings. We return to Mudgee for a long lunch at The Zin House, where we'll dine in the modern farmhouse, savouring the seasonal farm-to-plate dishes. The later afternoon is at leisure. Overnight Mudgee (B, L)

Monday 13 May

Hill End & Sofala

This morning we take the dramatic back road to Hill End, famous as a Gold Rush town and later as a mecca for the artists who settled in the area from the mid-1950s, seeking

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Meet the artists

Since the 1950s, the Hill End Central West has attracted leading Australian artists. The tradition continues and on the trip we will meet several contemporary Australian artists in their studios, all of them inspired by the heritage and landscape of the region.

Fine food and wine

The climate and terrain of the Central West are perfect for producing high quality food and world-class coolclimate wines. Fine dining at some of regional NSW's best restaurants and a wine-tasting in the emerging region of Orange allows us to sample both.

Regional Art Museums

There has been a lot happening in the arts scene in the Central West recently. Enjoy the priceless historical photographs in the Holtermann Collection Museum in Gulgong, the newly opened Mudgee Arts Precinct and the refurbished Orange Regional Galley, home to one of NSW's best regional collections.

Gold Rush Heritage

A walking tour of Hill End, together with visits to the towns of Sofala and Gulgong, allow us to experience the ambitious heritage of the Gold Rush, which lasted from the 1850s until the 20th century.

Lino Alvarez at
La Paloma Pottery



to capture and mythologise the spirit of the Australian bush. Thanks to these pioneering artists, the pretty village remains the home of several artists of note. On route, we visit Golden Gully, a much-painted site outside the village and enjoy a well-timed coffee break on arrival. Our first visit in Hill End is to a group of English Cottages compassionately conserved in the hands of the now owners – artist Genevieve Carroll and photographer and printmaker Bill Moseley. Taking on a 40-year lease from NSW National Parks & Wildlife in 2005, they have dedicated themselves to the property’s rebirth and their home and vintage press studio studio is now reminiscent of another time. We then visit La Paloma Pottery, established by Mexican potter Lino Alvarez with his partner – actor and performer Kim Deacon. Specialising in big pot commission work, Lino will take us through his award-winning pottery workshop before touring their adjacent 1865 wattle and daub miner’s cottage. Following a break for lunch in town, we take a stroll through Hill End in the footsteps of both fortune seekers and prominent Australian artists. Later in the afternoon, we travel along the Turon River to Sofala where we visit the home and studio of landscape painter Amanda Penrose Hart, winner of the 2017 *Gallipoli Art Prize*. Amanda moved from Sydney to this property, which includes stretches of the original coach road and goldfields, to paint the landscape she loves. As well as a studio visit, we enjoy a gourmet dinner cooked by the artist herself! We return to Mudgee in the late evening. Overnight Mudgee (B, D)

Tuesday 14 May Bathurst

This morning we depart Mudgee for Bathurst, visiting the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG) on arrival. One of the oldest regional galleries in NSW, BRAG is known for its collection of “Hill End” artists of the mid-20th century, including Russell Drysdale, Donald Friend and Jeffrey Smart. After a break for lunch, we then take a guided tour of historic Abercrombie House, set in stunning grounds at Stewarts Mount just west of Bathurst. This 1870s gem was home of the Morgan Family for half a century and our tour takes us through the main areas of the 50-room Scottish-baronial mansion, along with the grounds, gardens and outbuildings of the property. After checking into our hotel in the late afternoon, with time to freshen up, we then make our way to Bishop’s Court Estate – a beautifully restored property, which was once owned by the local bishop. Now owned by Christine LeFevre, our visit begins with pre-dinner drinks and canapés in the courtyard, before enjoying an elegant dinner together in the private Chapel. Overnight Bathurst (B, D)

Wednesday 15 May Orange

Departing Bathurst by coach this morning, our first visit is the home and gardens of Colleen Southwell located in the picturesque Central Tablelands of New South Wales, just outside of Orange. A professional paper sculpture artist and garden maker, Colleen invites us into her tin cottage studio, hugged by her country garden, where she explains



Genevieve Carroll in her
studio with Peter McNeil

HOTELS

Mudgee, Perry Street Hotel

(3 nights)

Located in the heart of Mudgee, this two-storey historic property built in 1862 enjoys only 13 modern suites and is a stunning example of Victorian architecture.

www.perrystreethotel.com.au

Bathurst, Mantra Bathurst Hotel

(1 night)

Perfectly located in Bathurst's CBD, this hotel is a stone's throw from the restaurants, museums and cafes of the centre of town. The hotel offers 50 newly refurbished rooms and suites.

www.mantrabathurst.com.au

Orange, Byng Street Boutique Hotel

(2 nights)

A beautiful juxtaposition of historical homestead and contemporary architecture, this luxury hotel is located in the heart of Orange's heritage precinct.

www.byngstreethotel.com.au

WEATHER

Expect cool autumn weather for our trip, with temperatures around 5-10°C most mornings, rising to 10-20°C degrees in the day. Bring a warm jacket for the evenings. There are several outdoor activities, so wet weather gear is advised.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to 5 hours of physical activity per day
- keep up with the group at all times
- negotiate challenging sites, which are often uneven and unstable
- climb stairs and bridges
- stand for one to two hours in galleries and museums at a time



her meticulous art making process, inspired by nature, both wild and cultivated. We are then met by an indigenous elder who'll share more about the rich and vibrant culture of the Wiradjuri nation in central New South Wales, while we sample some native Australian bush tucker foods. Our next stop is the excellent Orange Regional Gallery, re-opened in early December 2021 after an extensive refurbishment. The Orange collection includes important works by Sydney Nolan, John Olsen, Roland Wakelin and others. Later we check into our hotel, with the afternoon at leisure. Overnight Orange (B)

Thursday 16 May

Millthorpe

A later start this morning, we travel to heritage listed Millthorpe, where we take a heritage walking tour of the town, followed by some free time to explore the village and its historic buildings. After a break for lunch, we spend the afternoon sampling the award-winning Angullong Wines in their historic bluestone cellar door. With vineyards at the foothills of Mount Canobolas, an ancient volcano, this family-owned winery specialises in the vibrant, cool-climate styles common of this region. Returning to Orange, there is time to relax and freshen up in our hotel before we enjoy dinner together at the historic Union Bank Restaurant, including local wines. Overnight Orange (B, WT, D)

Friday 17 May

Sydney via Portland

Departing Orange today, we make our way to the town of Portland – a 'company town' built to house workers at the Portland Cement Works. The Works closed in 1991, but recently a private philanthropist has purchased the entire site and is rehabilitating it as an arts and entertainment precinct, respectfully renamed The Foundations. We tour this exciting project with the site manager, and visit the foundry and studio of resident artist Harrie Fasher, now widely recognised as one of Australia's leading sculptors. Harrie's large scale works in steel, wood and bronze, many featuring horses, are represented in collections from Canberra to New York, and you may have seen her work in Sydney's *Sculpture by the Sea* over several years. Following Harrie taking us through her studio and forthcoming show, artist TC Overson then guides us through her studio – once the old bath house building where the workers showered after long shifts. Following our studio visits, there will be some time to wander around the town and spot the recreated vintage advertising signs that now adorn the local shop walls. We end our stay in Portland with a cafe lunch, before our coach takes us back to Sydney's Central station, arriving at c.5.30pm. (B, L)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Jamal Fairbrother** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

jamal@academytravel.com.au