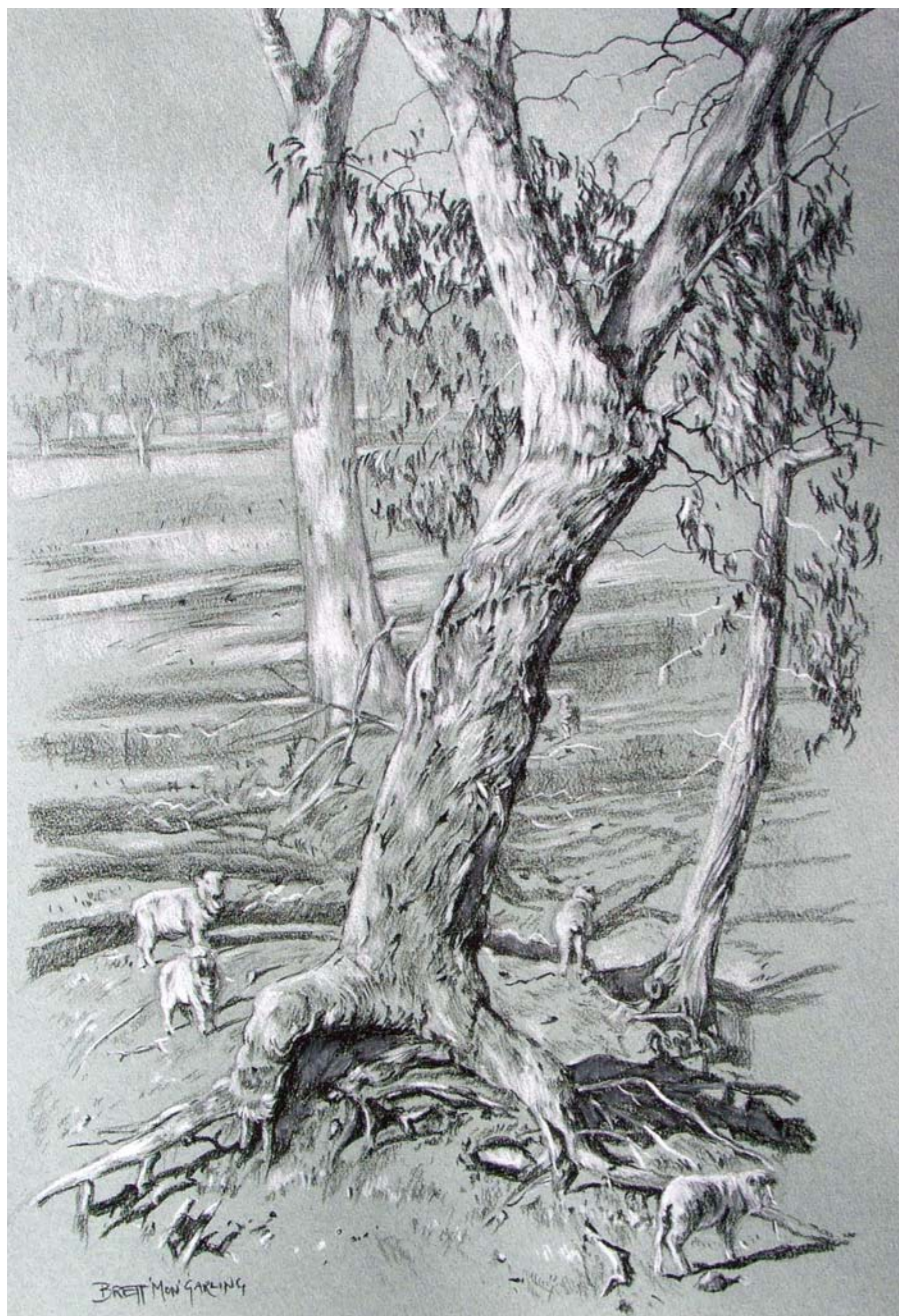


# Drawing the Australian Landscape

A considered approach to landscape drawing from the recognised expertise of an accomplished artist and sculptor who loves the Australian bush.



Contributed by Brett 'Mon' Garling

**T**hroughout my life, I've been impressed by the Australian landscape. As a child holidaying on the coast; at my homes at Lightning Ridge and Narrabri. The landscape has always evoked a deep emotional response.

At times the immediate response to the landscape can be best caught with the spontaneity of the humble pencil.

When I was young, it was rare for me not to be drawing – preferring to have pencil in hand more so than anything else. As I matured, both physically and artistically, I felt it necessary to take a logical step and paint. Painting was seemingly an acceptable medium to produce 'finished' works.

It wasn't until I met the magician of landscape painting, Les Graham, that I discovered that drawing could be an end product in itself ... not just a means of working up ideas.

Les produced magnificent large-scale landscape drawings which captured all the magic of the landscapes – with a pencil. His inspiration led me to pursue landscape drawing as a finished medium.

Drawing outdoors can be extremely rewarding, but also overwhelming for the beginner. Just finding a subject can quite often be difficult with so much to choose from. I find the best way is to use a viewfinder – whether it be a cardboard cut-out type, or simply using my hands to form a 'window'.

Once a subject is located it is often difficult to concentrate on just the



focal area of the scene. As you cannot draw and hold up a viewfinder simultaneously, it is important to place reference points down on your page first – locating the drawing.

With all of my drawings, I tend to use only HB and 4B pencils, thus simplifying the choice of materials.

Many of my plein-air drawings are done within five to ten minutes, with colour notes attached for use when painting later (because time did not allow me to paint on-site).

These drawings are usually very broad and spontaneous ... whereas major drawings done plein-air (like painting plein-air) may take one to two hours, depending on light conditions and subject. Some studio time finishing off is common with larger works.

Taking a photograph can be useful as a reference for a later date, but try not to rely on photographs too much – using them dulls the spontaneity of working from life. Works done from photographs often appear flat and lifeless. I'm not saying don't use them ... just don't get into the habit of relying on them solely.

The greatest joy for me in working outdoors is the thrill of being there – experiencing the moment. At first you might battle with developing your skills to cope with working outdoors. But once you have conquered the challenge, your enjoyment will be immense. Each of your works then becomes a memory

of the experience ... and it is usually difficult to part with these pieces.

The gallery of painter/sculptor Brett 'Mon' Garling is located in Railway Street, Wongarbron – near Dubbo in the central west of New South Wales. ■

