



JOE FURLONGER
Into the Blue

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6 – 27 June 2026

When Joe Furlonger was around eighteen, he recalls being on a commercial fishing ship, somewhere between Darwin and New Guinea—“about thirty Ks out, where I couldn’t see the land anymore.” It was “a spooky, little feeling,” says Furlonger—but one that settled into a sense of calm.

Over fifty years later, Furlonger’s marine paintings take the reverse aspect—from shores and headlands, overlooking the water. His days as a fisherman are long behind him. (“I’m no longer a participant,” says Furlonger, “now I’m an observer.”) But from Central Queensland to the South China Sea, Furlonger continues to reflect upon the ocean and the vessels that sail across it.

His reverence for the sea is a complement to what he admires in the landscape. For decades, he has travelled west from his studio in the Samford Valley, northwest of Brisbane. The land there is flat and vast, broad enough to see the curvature of the earth. Looking out to sea, he finds similar inspiration: “It’s that spatial thing I’m looking for,” says Furlonger. “I’ve found minimalism, or a version of it, in the environment.”

Into the Blue has paintings of recent travels as well as memories from earlier times. There’s Hervey Bay—sheltered by K’Gari, no surf, in a “light, misting rain.” There’s Gladstone—Queensland’s largest port, as expansive as Sydney Harbour (“minus the coal and the aluminium”). And there’s Sydney itself—where Furlonger made “scratchy, little drawings” at Elizabeth Bay. Back at his studio, those drawings became paintings that “leaned on a bit of Brett Whiteley, whose Harbour paintings I really admire,” especially those depicting Sydney in grey weather.

But beyond this, Furlonger's observation and memory align with world affairs. From the news on the ABC or SBS, or the business section of the newspaper, he is drawn in by images of tankers and cargo ships in the Strait of Hormuz: "I like the fantastic shapes," says Furlonger, "and the changes in shape as containerisation has moved along. They used to be more streamlined, but now these ships have a big, boxy shape—like a galleon."

As a young man on a fifty-foot fishing boat, Furlonger was awestruck by these hulking, monstrous vessels, barreling past at a rate of knots. In his paintings from the 1980s, tankers were "sinister figures." Now, seen from the shore and after several decades, these same ships become focal points for contemplation. Each tanker may be one thousand feet long and carrying one million barrels of oil or more—but in Furlonger's paintings, they are small in the great, blue sea, their forms marked by a brief gesture or suggested by a box of lines.

For many years, Furlonger has mixed his own paint from pigment powder and PVA glue. That control over his materials has allowed him to work as he likes, typically in watery layers, thin "to the point where it's just hanging there." Recently, he learned that Russell Drysdale would turn older canvases around and paint on the reverse. Some of the smaller paintings in this exhibition make use of these "antique surfaces," cut and re-stretched from larger pieces of Belgian linen. The difference in surface was immediate: "the paint soaks into the canvas a lot more and it takes a few coats to get an image out of it." That responsiveness to his medium creates subtle variation from painting to painting, each with its own surface and depth according to its subject and its form.

Furlonger is not a narrative or history painter. But he speaks about Monet, whose studio shook from the artillery on the Western Front, yet who continued to paint immense, reflective garden pictures. And he mentions, too, the shanshui ink paintings of Chinese literati artists, who concealed political messages in ostensibly serene landscapes. "They painted boatmen on the river or philosophers' little huts," says Furlonger, "but historically they were painted in hot political times." In a decade of pandemic, war and political discord (all of which, as it happens, have made us acutely aware of our reliance on shipping) these paintings stand somewhere "between nostalgia and escapism," what Furlonger calls an exercise of "contemplative optimism, considering current political circumstances."

Now seventy-three, Furlonger finds he is often "working on memories." A recent drive out west over fifteen days with fellow painter Jun Chen was invigorating, but the travel that used to sustain his practice is becoming gradually more strenuous. The ocean, it seems, has allayed some of these concerns, providing somewhere for Furlonger to contemplate—on the places he has been, on the places he has yet to go. The known, and the unknown, as he ventures into the blue.





Rainy Moreton Bay

pigment & PVA binder on canvas

189.5 x 246.5 cm, 191 x 248 cm (framed)

\$32,000



And the Ship Sails On
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
124 x 107 cm
\$14,000



Fishing Fleet, China
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
196 x 147 cm
\$20,000



Cabin Cruiser
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
82 x 91 cm
\$8,000



Fishing on Sandbanks
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
76 x 76 cm
\$6,000



Central Queensland Fishing Boats, Light Blue
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
150 x 135 cm
\$18,000





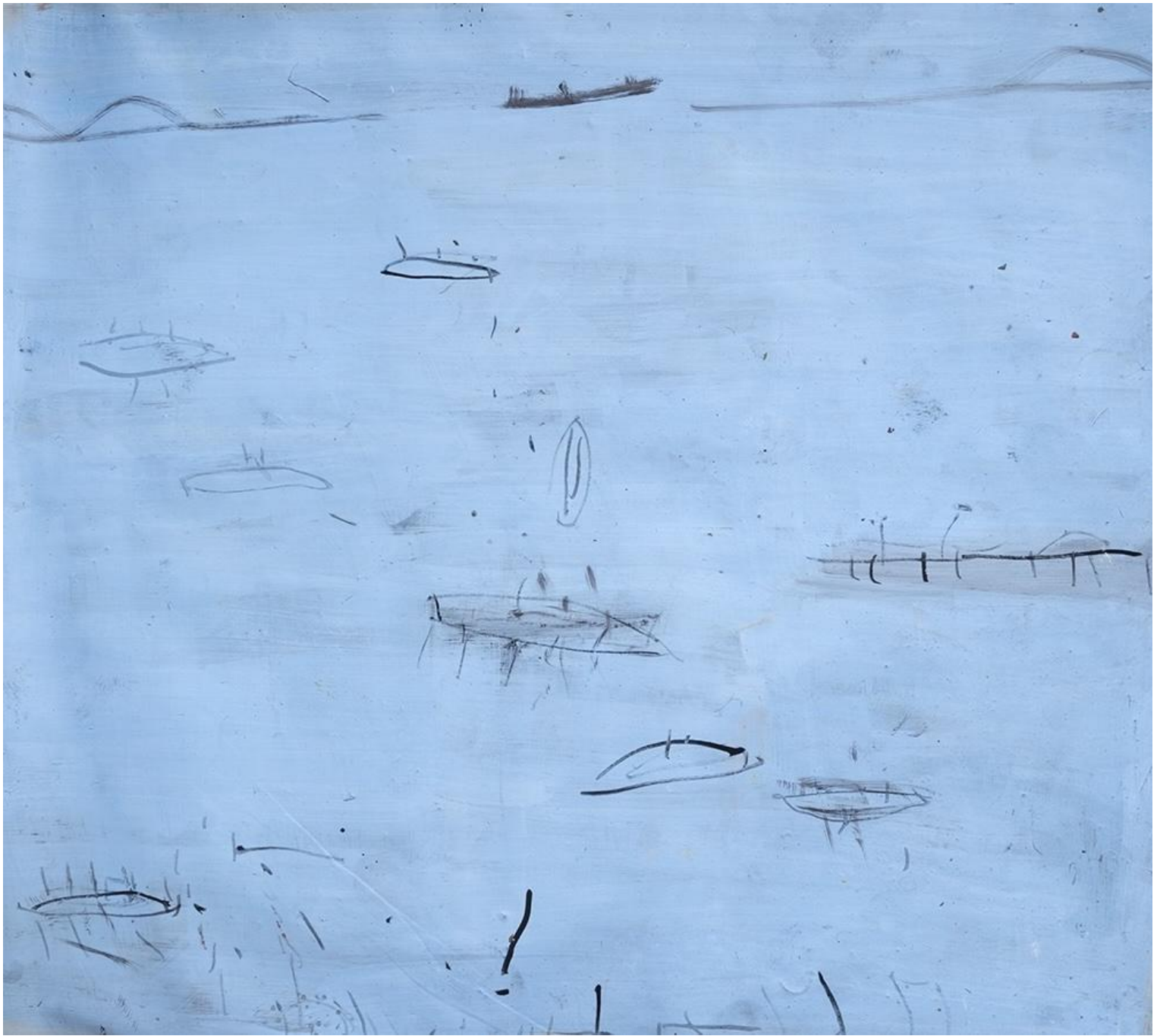
(previous) *Ships off Gladstone*
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
83 x 87 cm
\$8,000

Brown Boats
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
50 x 23 cm
\$1,800

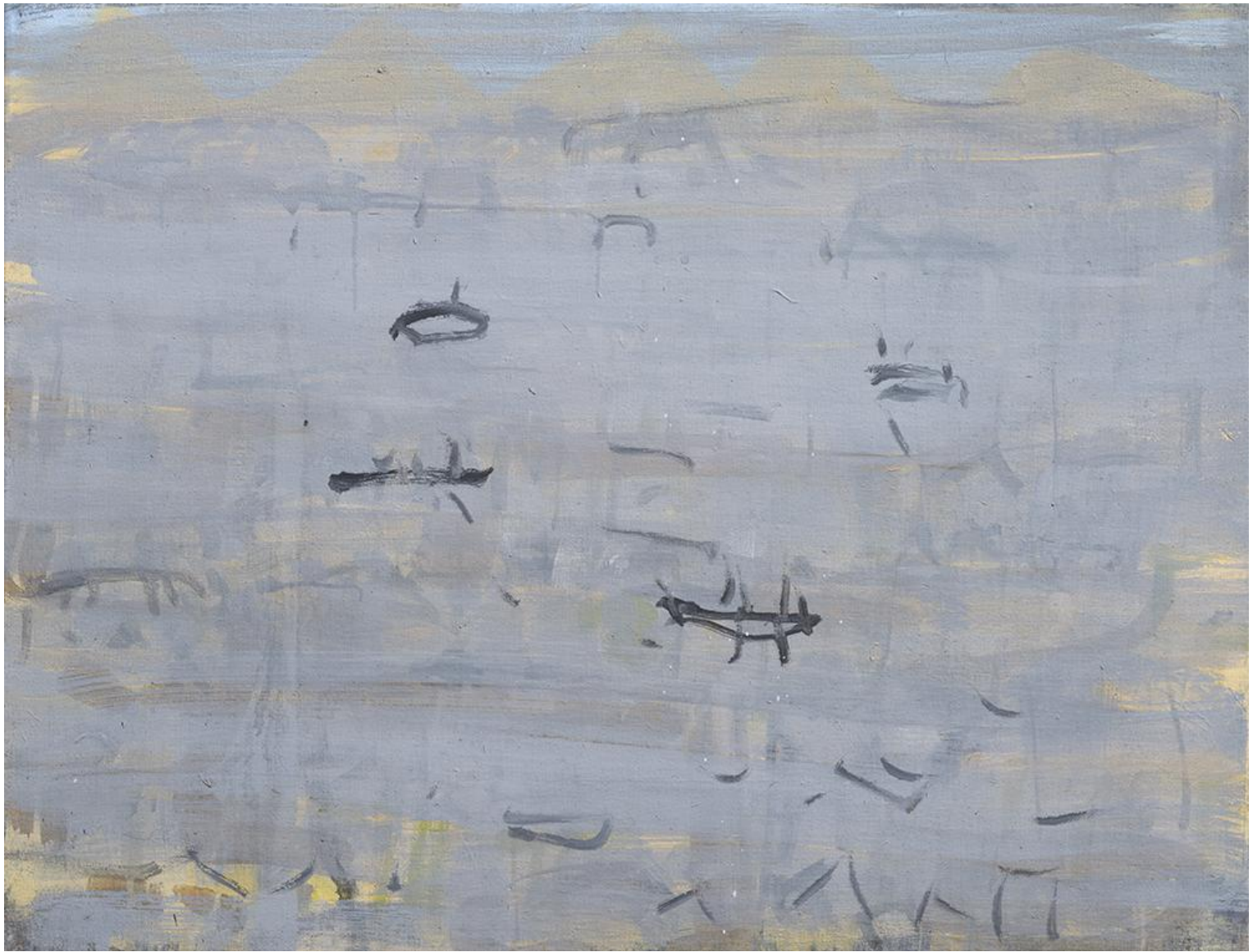




View From Sydney Heads
pigment & PVA binder on board
60 x 50 cm
\$3,500



Central Queensland Fishing Boats, Mid Blue
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
150 x 135 cm
\$18,000



Yellow and Grey Sea
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
104 x 78 cm
\$8,000



Speedboat, Redcliffe
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
95 x 71 cm
\$8,000



View From Elizabeth Bay
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
45 x 35 cm
\$2,200



Overcast, Harvey Bay
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
76 x 61 cm
\$8,000



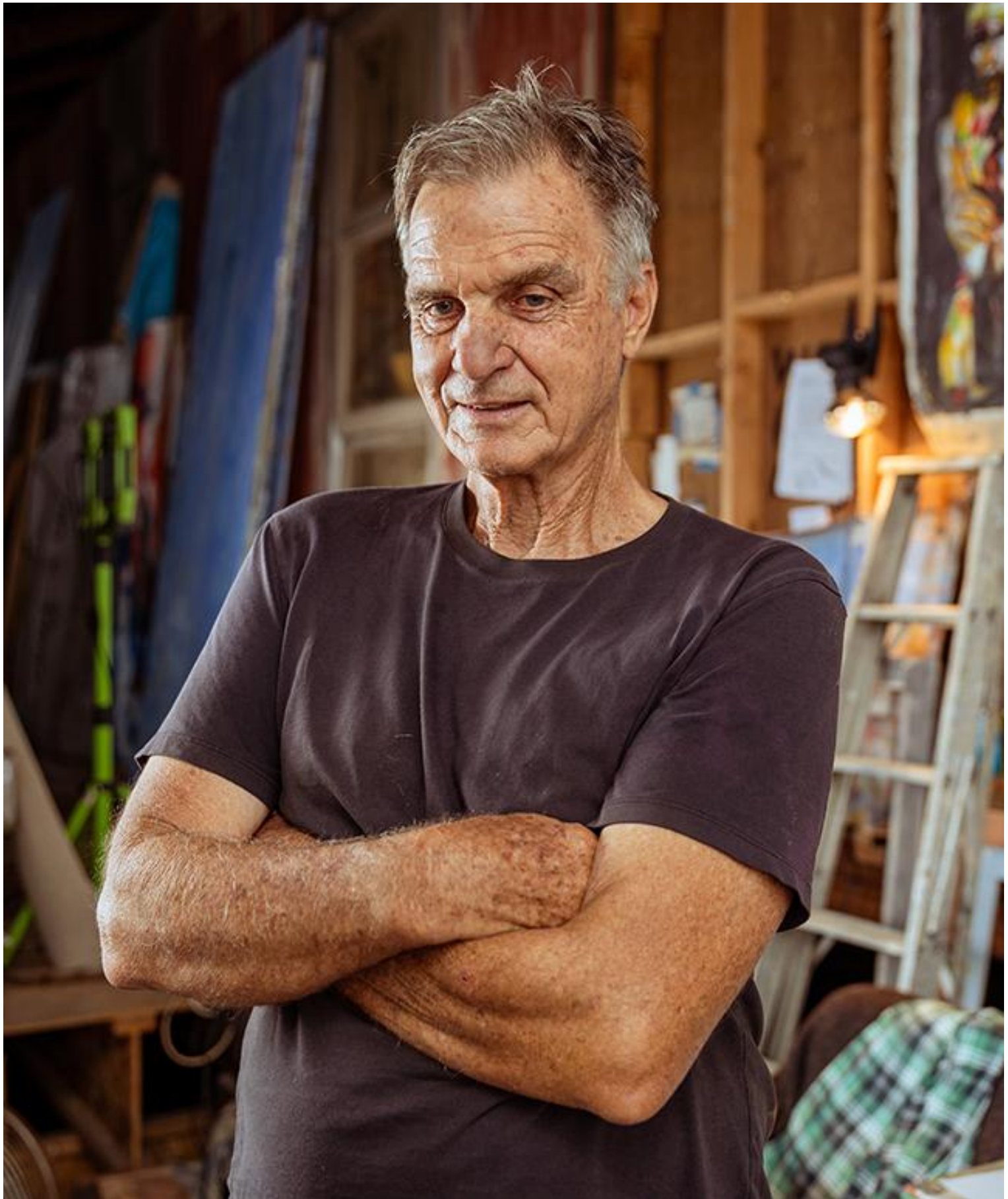
Tuna Fishing
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
91 x 62 cm
\$6,000



Tankers
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
96 x 70 cm
\$8,000



Boats Anchored, Elizabeth Bay
pigment & PVA binder on canvas
76 x 50 cm
\$3,950



JOE FURLONGER CV

EDUCATION

- 1978 Diploma of Art, Alexander Mackie CAE, Sydney
1976 Associate Diploma in Painting, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Water Works, Redland Art Gallery
2024 Landscape, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2022 Joe Furlonger: Horizons, QAGOMA, Brisbane (Aug 2022 – Jan 2023)
Joe Furlonger: Land and Sea, Bruce Heiser Projects, Brisbane
2019 Survey Exhibition, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2018 Inland Mariner, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2016 Capricorn Coast, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
2012 The Balonne Breaks Out, The Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Bays, Claudes Restaurant, Sydney
2011 Joe Furlonger Works on Paper 1981–2011, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Adam and Eve, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2010 The Glasshouse Mountains, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2009 The Samford Valley, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
The Samford Valley, Auckland Art Fair – Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2008 China, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2007 Three Australian Painters, Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen China
Circus, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, NSW
2006 Furlonger: Circus, Bronzes, Woodcuts and Paintings, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2005 Circus, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2004 Improvisations, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2003 Central Queensland Landscapes, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2002 Land, Sea, City, Drill Hall Gallery, ANU, Canberra
Joe Furlonger – Figure and Landscape: Works on Paper, New Contemporaries, Sydney
2001 Sydney: Paintings and Etchings, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
2000 Moreton Bay, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1999 Joe Furlonger Survey, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Gold Coast
1998 Queensland Landscapes, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1996 Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1995 Vietnam Paintings, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Paintings after New Guinea, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1994 Circus Royale, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1993 Furlonger at Indy, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Gold Coast
1991 New Work, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
Madonna and Child, The Crypt, St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney
Figure and the Sea, University of NSW, Sydney
1990 Madonna and Child and Bathers: Prints, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

- 1989 La Mer et l'Enfant, Gallerie Cadran Solaire, Troyes, France
Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
Air and Space, London
1988 Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
1986 Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney
1985 Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
1982 Community Arts Centre, Brisbane

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Paper, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Terrain, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
DEFIANCE 30, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2024 Defiance 24, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Stockroom Selection, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Summer Salon, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2023 Defiance 23, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Landscape 23, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Work on Paper, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2022 Summer 22, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2021 Spring 1883 Art Fair VII, Bruce Heiser Projects, The Hotel Windsor, Melbourne
Odd Bedfellows, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
Defiance 21, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Abstract 21, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Small Drawings, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
2020 Defiance Turns 25, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Ann Thomson and Joe Furlonger, Painted Ceramics, Sanbao, Defiance Gallery
Odd Bedfellows, QUT Art Museum, Brisbane
2019 Paper, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Abode, Bruce Heiser Projects, Brisbane
Mixed Grill, Bruce Heiser Projects, Murwillumbah
Distinct Perspectives. The Work of Joe Furlonger and Bill Yaxley, Bruce Heiser Projects, Brisbane
2018 6 Artists 7 Days, The AWC Newhaven Exhibition, Defiance Gallery
Group Exhibition Mary Place, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Group Exhibition Newtown, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Abstract Landscape II, Defiance Gallery Newtown, Sydney
Abstract Landscape, Defiance Gallery, Sydney
Glazed, Bruce Heiser Projects, Brisbane
2017 Carry On Luggage, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
Wild Places, Wild Things, Heiser Gallery, Brisbane

2016 Summer Show, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
 Land and Sea, Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney

2011 Abstract Landscape 2016, Defiance Gallery, Sydney

2007 Three Australian Painters, Guanshanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen, China

2000 Bonheurs des Antipodes, Amiens, Musée de Picasso, France

1998 The Australian Drawing Biennale, Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra

1995 The Central Queensland Art Purchase, Rockhampton Art Gallery

1993 Off the Wall, Gold Coast City Art Gallery

1990 Twenty Australian Artists, Galleria San Vidal, Venice Biennale

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2026 ACAR Art Prize, Finalist

2018 Artist in Residence, the Nock Art Foundation, Hong Kong, China

2011 Tattersalls Landscape Prize, Brisbane (Winner)
 Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (Finalist)
 Tattersalls Art Prize, Brisbane (Finalist)

2010 Redcliffe Art Prize, Brisbane Duke Prize, Gold Coast (Winner)

2009 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

2004 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

2003 Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

2002 Fleurieu Art Prize, South Australia (Winner)

2001 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

1999 Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

1998 Air and Space Studio, London (Winner)

1997 Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

1992 Archibald, Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (Finalist)

1988 The 2nd Moet & Chandon Fellowship (Winner)

COLLECTIONS

HOTA Collection

Redland Art Gallery Collection

Gold Coast City Art Collection

SGIO Collection

City Council of Innisfail, Bundaberg

Maryborough Phillip Morris Collection

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Queensland Art Gallery (QAGMA), Brisbane

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Griffith University

University of New South Wales Collection

Queensland University Art Museum

Queensland University of Technology

Art Bank Collection

The Australian Club, Sydney

Logan City, Ipswich and Maryborough, QLD

The British Museum, London

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jack Howard, Into the Blue Exhibition Essay, Defiance Gallery 2026

Louise Martin-Chew, Cover Story, Artist Profile Iss 45, 2018

Stylish Living, Vogue May 1991

Alberge D, The Democratic Way to Buy Modern Art, The Independent (London) 28 March 1989

Brennan B, Hues Club, Vogue Living, Sydney, Dec 1987

Cochrane P, Joe's Energetic Vision of City Life, 2 Aug 1991

Cochrane P, Citibank's Art Renaissance, Aust. Business, 6 Sept 1991

Cochrane P, For Joe, It's Sydney Or The Beach, 6 Sept 1991

Fern L, Interaction of Art and Setting, Sydney Morning Herald, 3 May 1991

Hanley J, All That's Fit To Print, Good Weekend, pp. 49-55, 27 April 1991

Hynes, Victoria, Old School, The Sydney Morning Herald, 23-29 Nov 2001

Johnson A, Galleries, Vogue Australia, p.143, July 1991

Ludbrook. R, Vogue Entertaining, p.26, Apr/May 1992

Lynne E, Human Bondage With No Sign of Dependence, The Australian, May 1991

McCarthy S, Bright Black Future, The Bulletin, pp 138-140, 31 Jan-7 Feb 1989

McDonald, John, Review, Sydney Morning Herald, May 1998

McGillick P, Welcome to the Programme, Financial Review 3 May 1991

Nowra, Louis, The Perfect Wave, HQ Magazine, March 2000

Louis Nowra, Tracey Cooper, John Walsh, Joe Furlonger Survey, Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Dec 1999

Nowra, Louis, The Australian Drawing Biennale, ANU Drill Hall Gallery, 1998

Seper G, Off The Wall, Vogue Entertaining Guide Feb/Mar 1992

Madonnas make their Mark on Furlonger, The Australian, 21-22 July 1990

Smith I, Joe Furlonger Exhibition Catalogue, Cadran Solaire Chapell de L'Hôtel Dieu, Troyes, France 1989

Walker C, Figuring the North, Follow Me Gentlemen, Jan 1986

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GALLERY at Mary Place | Est 1995

12 Mary Place Paddington NSW 2021 | 02 9557 8483 | defiancegallery.com | enquiry@defiancegallery.com