

Beach Dreams

The pictures in this exhibit show a number of beaches that are purely from my imagination. Where do such ideas come from? There is no doubt that many of these wave paintings have emerged after my “misspent” years surfing the beaches of Newcastle. In some pictures I see parts of the local landscape. In other pictures the landscapes are more imaginary.

These dreaming images don’t surprise me. I tend to think of all my paintings as pictures of something inside my head, rather than pictures of something from the “real”, outside world. Of course, “What is the real and imaginary?” is an interesting question.

Here then are some of the imaginary waves and beaches that have lived in my head over the last 25 years. My imagination moves in waves as well. So the wave is a nice metaphor for the way ideas emerge into my mind, into my pictures and into my Beach Dreams.

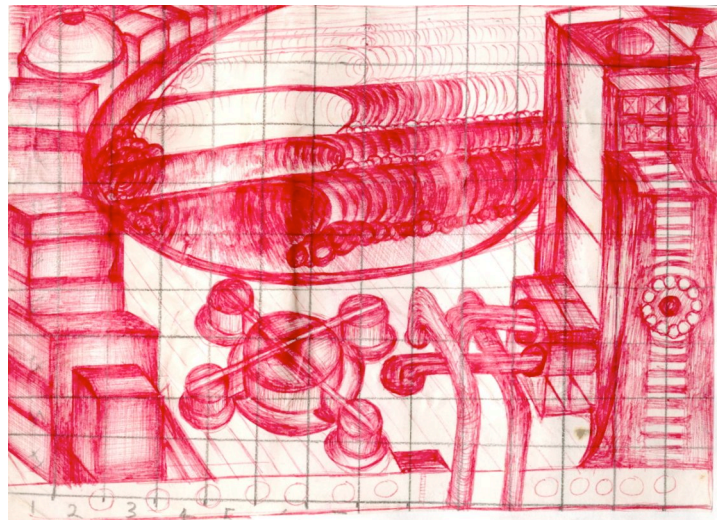
(Hey s’hhh – don’t wake me!)

keith nesbitt

Fusion Point (1981)

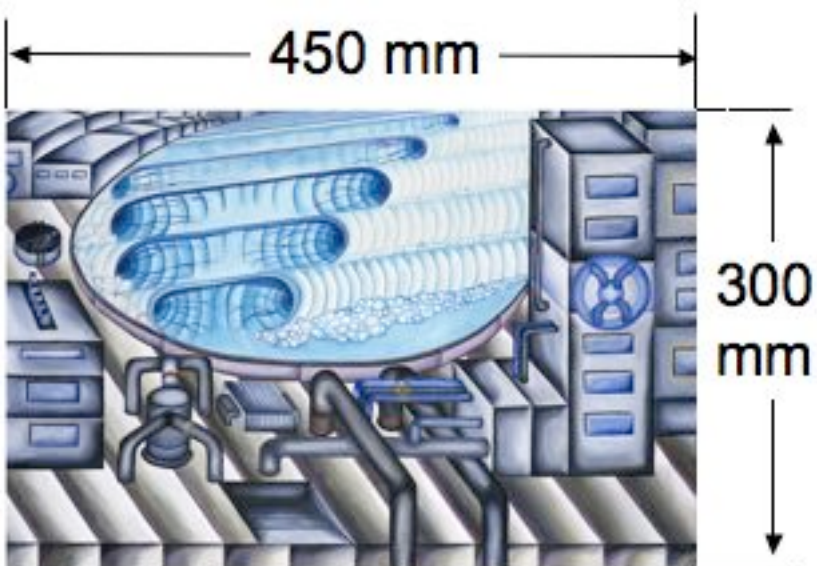
This picture was finished in 1981 from an idea that began in 1978. Fusion Point was a complicated story about a nuclear power plant designed to work from fusion rather than fission. Fusion power is quite a clean and efficient way to make energy and here we can see the extra energy being dumped back into the ocean to create very regular waves that break across a perfect bank of old submerged solar panels. These solar energy panels having at some stage been covered by rising water levels resulting from global warming brought on by coal-fired power plants. It all makes for a machine-like wave.

Yes it's quite a long "science fiction" story. Although somebody did once suggest that it was a picture of BHP steelworks in my mind. That might be true, for the smoke stacks from the steel factory provided many Newcastle surfers with the best indication of wind direction. So the surf and BHP were always linked in my mind.



Original ink sketch for "Fusion Point" (1978)

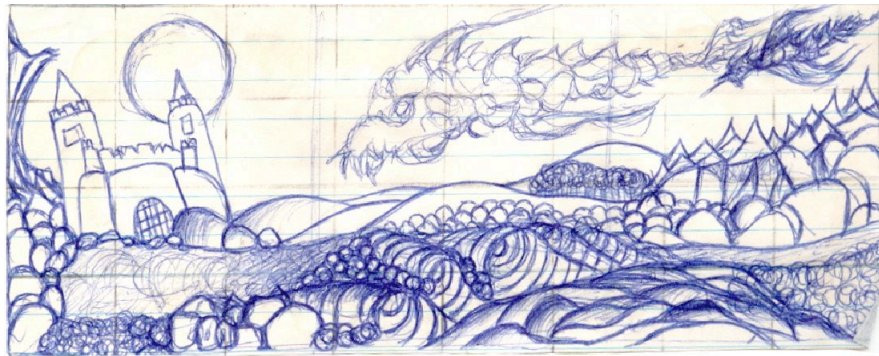
Now I also like to think about Fusion Point in a different way - as a phase transition between opposite states. For example, where man meets nature or where reality meets make-believe.



Limited Edition of 10 Prints

Where Dragons Fly (1994)

This picture was painted in 1994, from an original sketch completed in 1992. It finished almost the way I first imagined it.



Original ink sketch for "Where Dragons Fly" (1992)

The picture was a metaphor for "true love" This is certainly something that can have a strange effect on your imagination. The picture shows a fairy tale land with rolling waves and a magic castle. The clouds are making pictures in the sky and they look like dragons. In our imaginations is perhaps the only place where dragons fly. The two dragons also appear in the story below and there is also a related song called, "*Once Upon a Time*" which is now on the second Strange Things album, *Tilt-a-Whirl*.

Sky-fly and the Sea-dragon

Sky-fly was a dragon who flew through the air,
as light as a feather with barely a care.
As she crossed the sea she was suddenly spied,
caught in the blue of a Sea-dragon's eye.

Sky-fly was dark and the summer sky pale,
as she dipped and she dived and turned on her tail,
to splash in the sea where the cool waters flowed,
down in the waves where the Sea-dragon rode.

Sky-fly was enchanted by the Sea-dragon's curse,
two bright jewelled eyes that looked into hers.
She couldn't escape though her will was still strong,
she was held by the sound of the Sea-dragon's song.

Sky-fly went below to the Sea-dragon's home,
below the blue waves where the Sea-dragons roam.
Would she never more fly on her cloud-covered road,
for all time within a Sea-dragon's abode ?

Sky-fly was happy and saddened by love,
for she wanted to stay and yet fly far above.
The Sea-dragon felt the same sadness start,
for the same love lived in the Sea-dragon's heart.

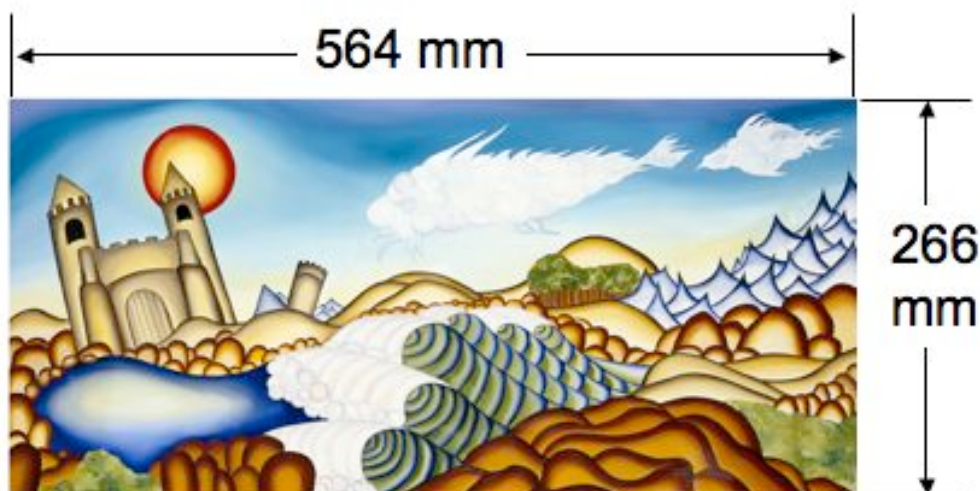
Sky-fly knew that Sea-dragons could fly,
but the heat of the sun makes a Sea-dragon die.
They must fly close above the cool water seas,
in the cool breath of air called a Sea-dragon breeze.

Sky-fly was woken from sad dreams one night,
lifted up in the arms of the Sea-dragon's might.
As they swam from the deep to the dark summer's skies,
there was a light in the jewels of the Sea-dragon's eyes.

Sky-fly bathed in the waves under moon's gentle light,
and watched as her Sea-dragon burst into flight.
"Let's fly to the stars !", came the Sea-dragon's roar.
"At night there's a place where Sea-dragons soar !".

Sky-fly wept so happy and spread her light wings,
to dance in the sky where her Sea-dragon sings.
She knew now forever where happiness lay,
to be there wherever her Sea-dragon played.

Sky-fly swims so cool by her Sea-dragon's side,
as the sun looks down warm on the great ocean tide.
Then under the stars when the day passes by,
is the place where the Sky and the Sea-dragon fly.

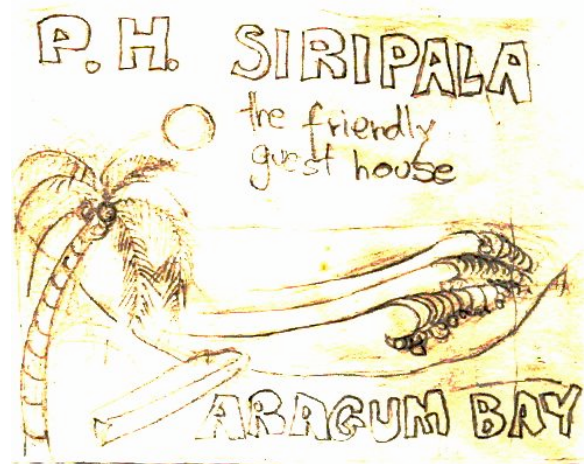


Limited Edition of 30 Prints

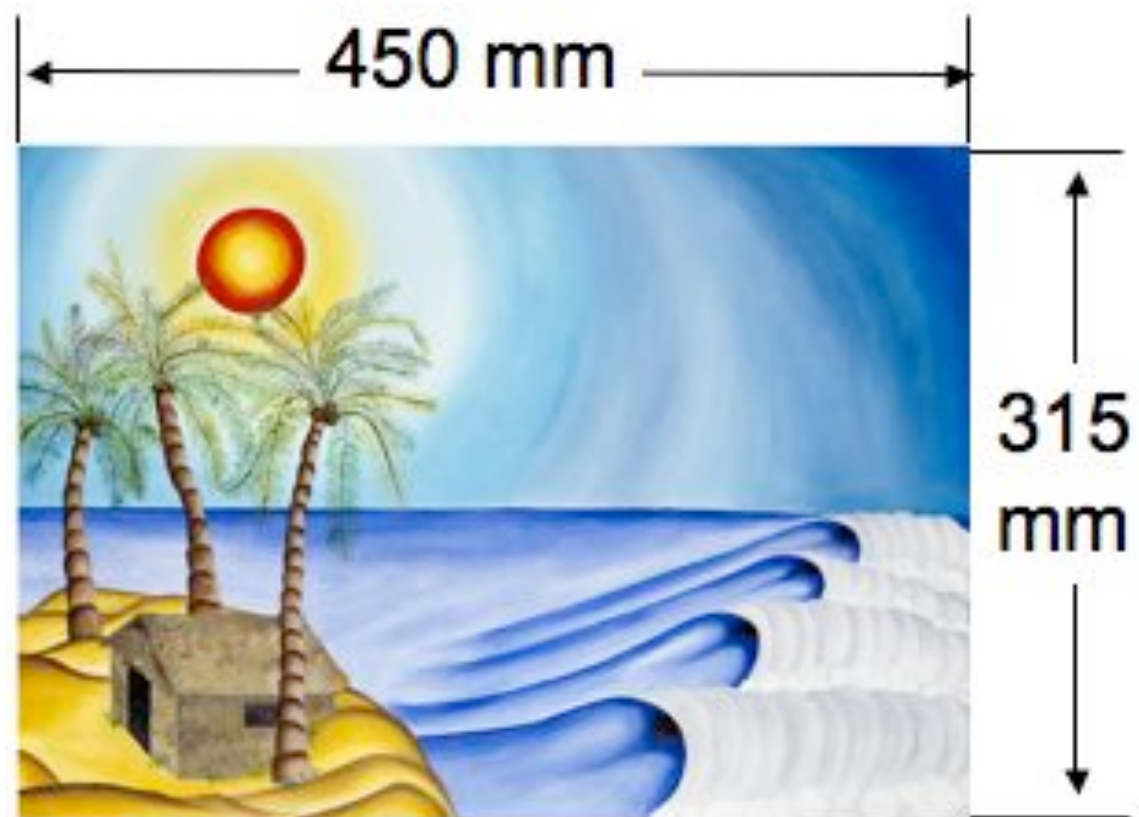
Sky and Sea (1993)

This picture was painted in 1993. It is more from the real world than many of my pictures. The original idea for the picture actually came from a surfing trip to Aragum Bay, Sri Lanka in 1980. The warm summer skies, palm trees grass huts and a nice right hand reef break stayed on my mind.

In Sri Lanka, we stayed at P.H. Siripali's Guest House. While there I painted a sign for him, although I didn't have very good materials to work with. The original sketch was for a better sign that I was going to paint in Australia and take back one day. Unfortunately I haven't got back yet.



Original ink sketch for "Sky and Sea" (1980)



Limited Edition of 20 Prints

Sea (1994)

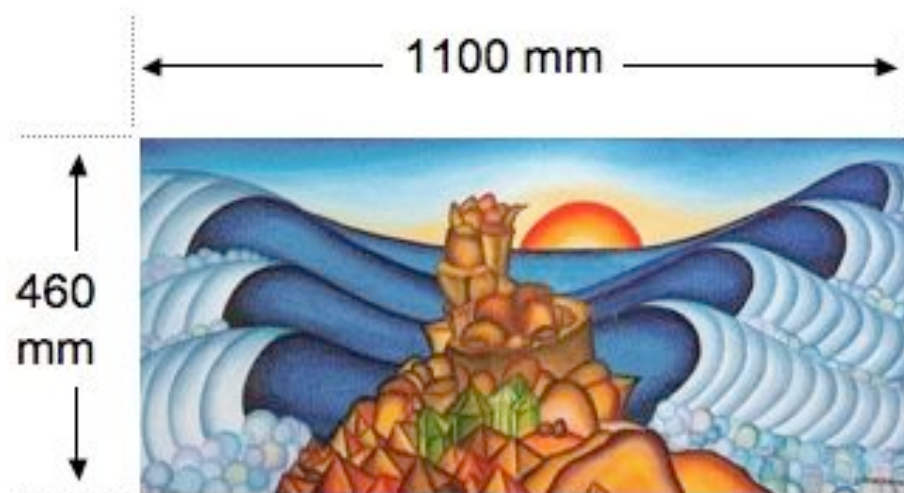
This was painted in 1994, just as it appeared in my head. Normally I sketch the picture first and then copy the sketch onto canvas for painting. In this case I just started with a blank canvas and painted the sea on it.



All the familiar ingredients associated with the beach appeared in my mind....

Sea, Water, Sand, Rock, Wind, Sea.

This left and right break has a nice summer feel to it and I painted a similar pattern for the recently finished picture called, "Visions on the Harbour".



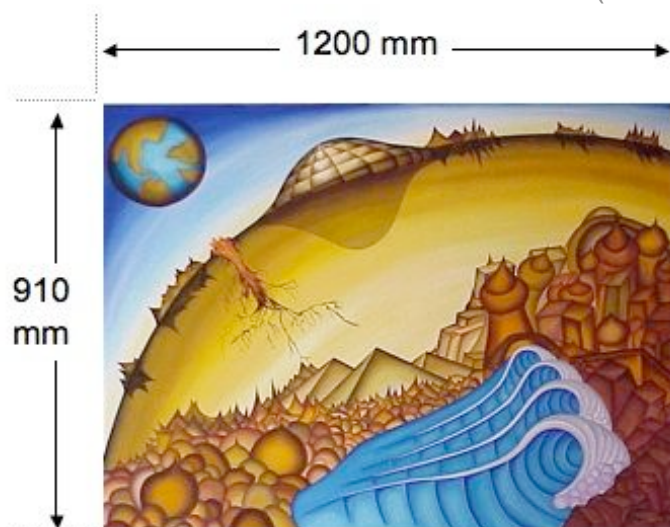
Original for sale.

Forces of Change (2000)

This picture was painted in 2000, from the original sketch made in 1990. I used to read a lot of science fiction and I sometimes when the surf gets crowded I think of travelling around space looking for perfect waves on other planets. So I tend to think of this as a surf trip to outer space. It's one of my favourite pictures but I was also sitting next to it when I first saw the 2004 tsunami in South East Asia was reported on TV. Since that time it also makes me think of those tragic events.



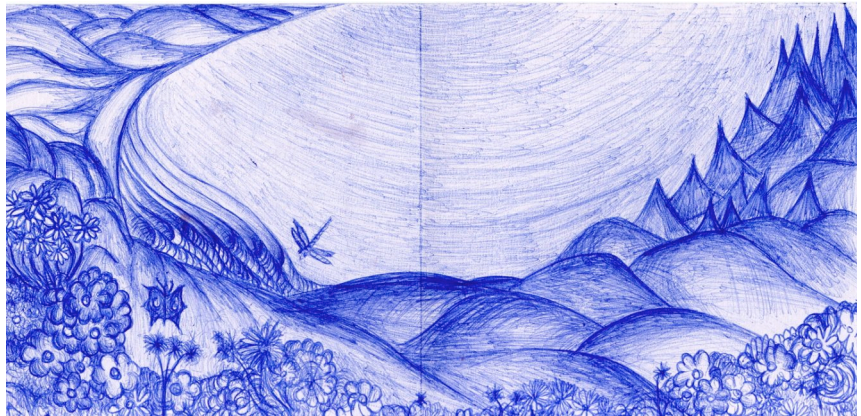
Oil on Canvas (2000)



Not for Sale. Limited Edition Prints to be offered in 2008.

Information Metaphor (2001)

This picture was drawn in 2000, during my fascination with butterflies and dragonflies. I was also working on my PhD and designing visual displays that mapping information to perceptual elements such as colour and shape.



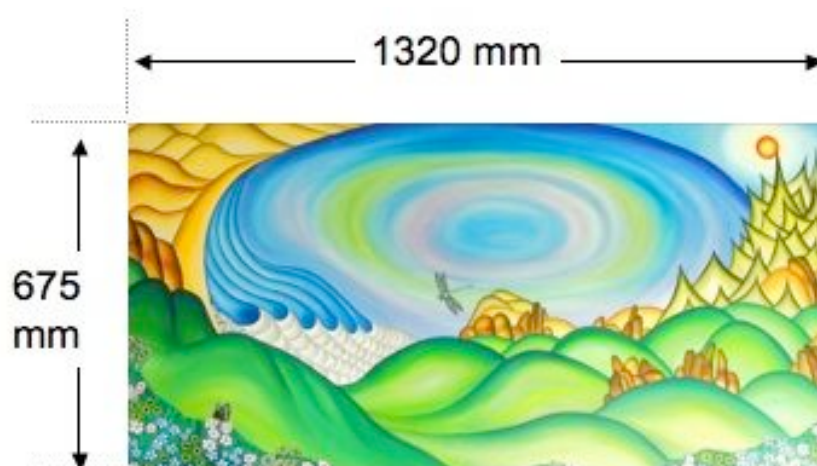
Original ink sketch for "Information Metaphor" (2000)

So in this picture, each flower could represent a different company on the stock market and the colour might represent the price of that stock. The problem with designing such information metaphors is that any object on the real world can be used to display information. Everything is an information metaphor.



At the time of the picture I was also running a lot around Glenrock Lagoon and so some elements of the picture were influenced by the scenery there.

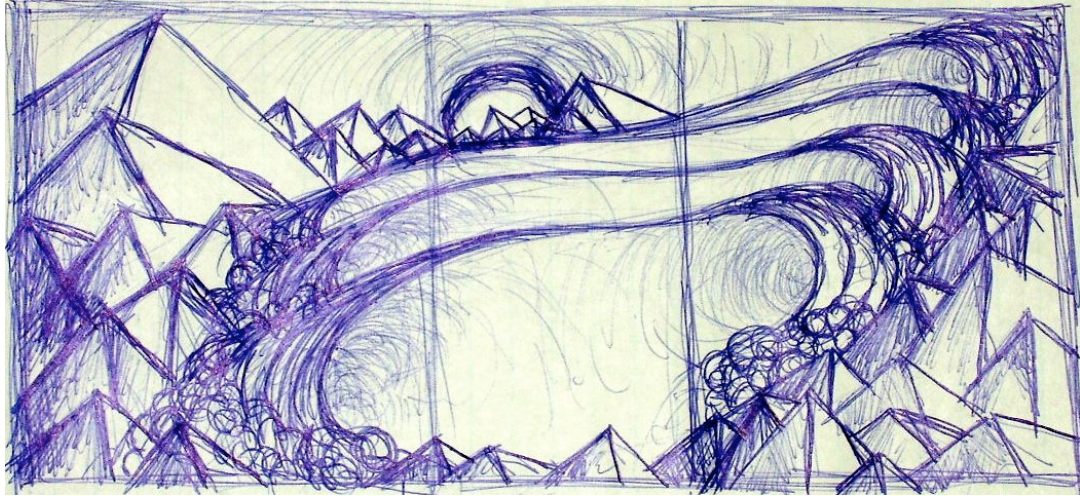
The picture soon found its way into lots of other things. It was adapted into a real-time display of stock market prices. It also featured on the front cover of the first Strange Things album, called *Landscape*.



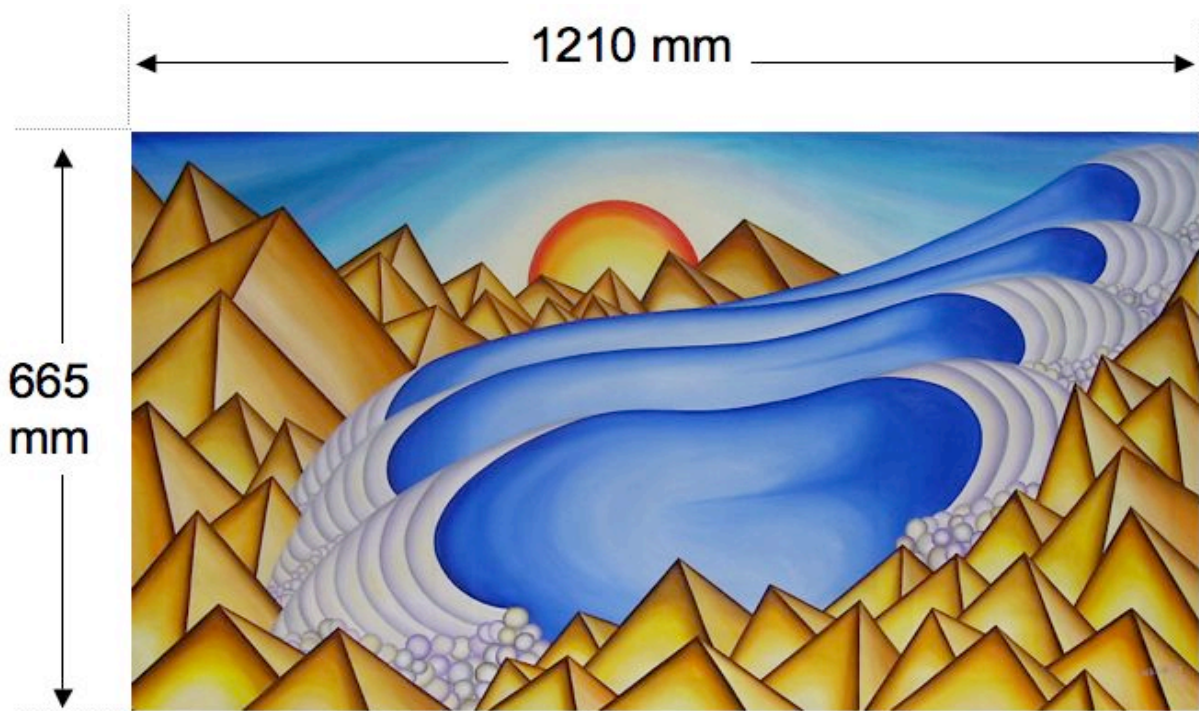
Not for Sale. Limited Edition Prints to be offered in 2008.

Visions on the Harbour (2007)

This picture was on my mind for a long time, although I only sketched it down in 2006. The picture was started after I returned from Boston in June. I think the idea for this picture all started because I wanted to build some modern glass, metal and wood pyramids by the harbour, on the old BHP steel site. It took further shape thinking about the right-hand surf break in Newcastle harbour. The pyramids also remind me of the old cement tank traps that are littered along the harbour wall.



Original ink sketch for "Visions on the Harbour" (2006)

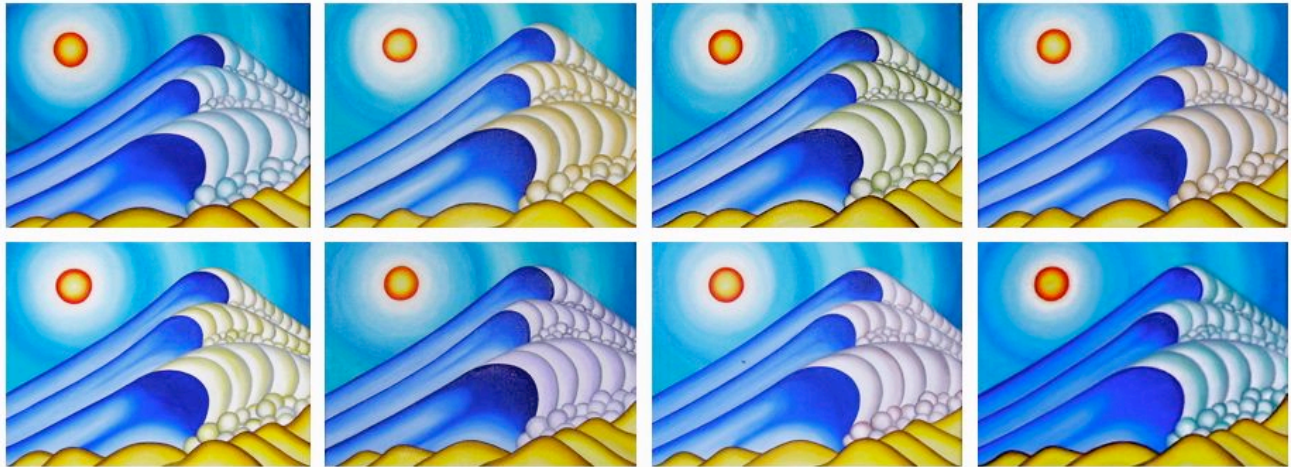


Oil on Canvas (2007)

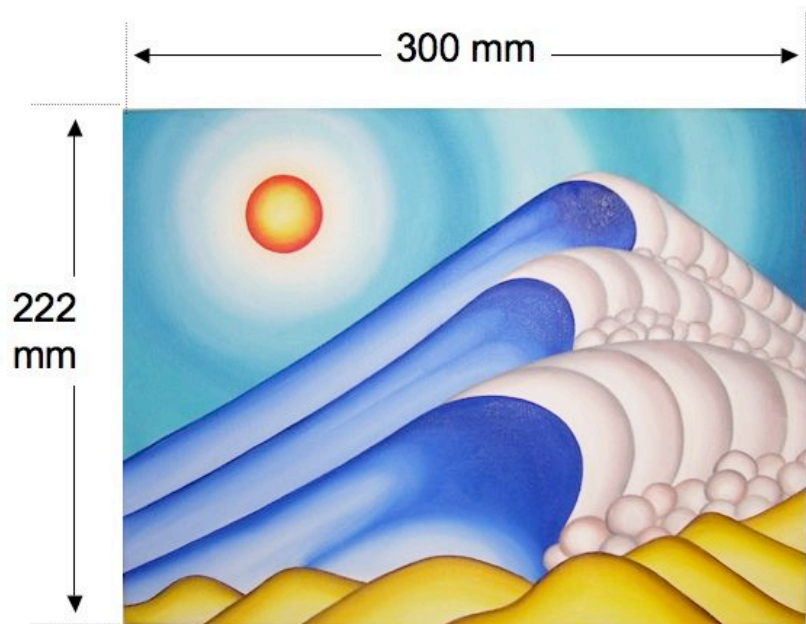
Original for sale.

Jailbreak Eight (2007)

This series of 8 pictures was started just before I headed off to the Maldives for a surfing trip just after I started these in July, 2007. I did eventually end up in a right-hand break called Jailbreaks.



The pictures make me think about recurring patterns in ideas. However the picture is also about breaking patterns. For me they are very symbolic because they signal the end of a pattern I was breaking free of. I had become a prisoner of my own patterns and so the name “Jailbreaks” is quite appropriate for more than one reason.



Oil on Canvas (2007)

8 Originals for sale.