

robyn sweaney

Paradise Lost

March 11 to March 25 2023 – Official Opening Saturday 18 March 3 – 5 pm

Paradise Lost is a small series of paintings of original Gold Coast houses, some are gone (demolished) and some still exist...maybe?

These types of houses were once a common feature of the streets and suburbs along the southern Queensland coast, each are unique and evoke a past era of relaxed beachside living.

Some are simple beach shacks and others a little more stylish with echoes of the influence of the modernist movement particularly from the post war era. Sloped skillion and 'butterfly' roofs, striped awnings, stone feature walls and chimneys and decorative panels, iron or brick work.



Artist Statement

The Gold Coast, the traditional land of the Yugambah language people, like many other coastal towns and cities across Australia began as a holiday destination for people from nearby cities and surrounding areas wanting a break from a working life.

Initially buildings were constructed that catered to short term accommodation needs. Some of the first types of housing were boarding houses, small motels, flats, bungalows and then fibro shacks (when the government-imposed restrictions on the size and materials that could be used for buildings during the war years).

During the post (second world war) era with increasing optimism and growth and as people gained more disposable income, affluence and style, architects were engaged that were inspired by the international modernist movement and contemporary building design that had begun in Europe and then America, including Florida and Palm Springs in California.

From the late 1960s and 70's with improvements in concrete construction, increased plane travel and demand for accommodation, more and more high-rise buildings were constructed particularly in Surfers Paradise. To make way for this ongoing development many of the more modestly scaled architectural heritage buildings were demolished.

For many years on trips to the gold Coast from my home on the north NSW coast I would photograph some of my favourite places as different owners altered fencing and plantings in the gardens.

The last few years has seen a boom in development and demand for more condensed and largescale buildings subsequently land values have skyrocketed meaning a loss of many of these last remaining vestiges of these past simple beachside streetscapes and houses. These beach houses that are often on larger blocks are considered to have little or no architectural or heritage merit so people see no value in their continued existence. They are just but a fading memory of another time and lifestyle. I wonder will there ever be future regret about the non-existence of these types of houses? The larger scale development is now not just confined to Surfers Paradise and is creeping its way down to more southern suburbs like, Mermaid Beach, Palm Springs, Miami and Burleigh Heads. This series is in a small way honouring some of these more humble places that are vestiges of the old coast.

On exhibition from 11 March 2023 (same day as *Lost in Palm Springs* opening at HOTA) Official opening the following Saturday 18 March 3 - 5 pm.

29 Tedder Avenue, Main Beach, QLD 4217 **Postal Address:** PO Box 985, Main Beach, QLD 4217

Phone: 07 5561 1166 **Email:** info@antheapolsonart.com.au **Web:** www.antheapolsonart.com.au