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## PREVIEW: TONY LLOYD: LOST HIGHWAYS

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Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale

Story **Sam Leach**

**"Traveller, your footsteps** are the road, and nothing more; traveller, there is no road, the road is made by walking."  
Antonio Machado.

These words resonate deeply with the paintings of Tony Lloyd, a painter for whom the road as both image and metaphor has been central. In September the Gippsland gallery in Sale, Victoria will be presenting "Lost Highways", a survey show covering ten years of Lloyd's work.

Exhibition curator Simon Gregg says that this will be the first time audiences will see Lloyd's work on such a scale, and be able to appreciate the breadth of his vision. "Tony Lloyd's paintings provide a compelling dialogue on the human condition. His works are full of suspense and drama, and never fail to immerse us completely. He is a master of light and tone, fathoming surreal twilight worlds from spaces we routinely inhabit", says Gregg.

Along with the road, the aesthetics and history of cinema inform Lloyd's work. Lloyd is an inveterate film buff and his work is rich in references to films. He takes extraordinary pains with the surface of his paintings and achieves an effect which is soft and luminous. As with the cinema, the screen, that is to say the surface of the painting, seems to disappear and we are left with nothing between us and the image.

However Lloyd is not content to simply quote from films, nor is he hinting at any sort of narrative. In his work, he is continually searching for the universal metaphor—the scenes which stick in the mind because they recur in multiple settings with multiple meanings. The road is one such symbol, and the complexity of Lloyd's treatment of this symbol over the years is hinted at by Machado's poem. In Lloyd's paintings language becomes irrelevant. What is being hinted at is some kind of meta-truth that encompasses many possible meanings. The images thereby make available an insight which cannot be understood completely using language

"I've always thought of my paintings as being individual parts of a greater whole, each one is another view into a world I am creating so to bring together a decade worth of works will be a chance to see the most complete vision of this world to date," says Lloyd. "We have titled the show Lost Highways because the road is a recurring theme in my work but also because I think of each show as a kind of storyboard for a road movie, each painting is another glimpse along the way. I'm hoping that when all these works are brought together this sense of journey will be deepened."

Gippsland Art Gallery  
Port of Sale Civic Centre  
68 Foster Street, Sale, Vic.  
T +61 3 5142 3372