

THE NEW ZEALAND

# ARTIST

M A G A Z I N E

Series 5 Volume 5 Issue No. 29  
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Part 6

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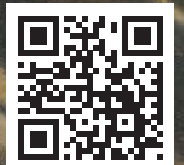
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**The Team**

*On the cover: 'Firenze' - Georgette Thompson - Oil on canvas - PG 15.*



**MEGAN LAVIN-McISAAC**  
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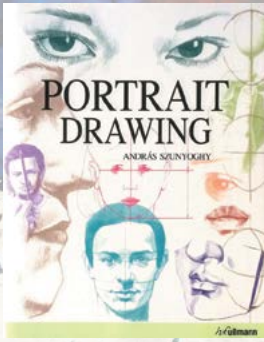
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 CONTRIBUTING WRITER  
 Kathryn Samirah Millard. Award winning artist. Has a Diploma in painting from the City and Guilds of London Art School. Kathryn is the Northern Representative for PANZ (the Pastel Association of New Zealand).

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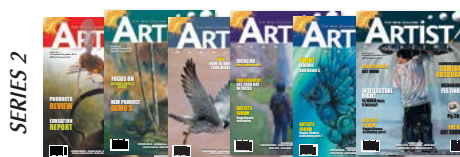
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July/August 2018



# a note from the studio...

Hello there again!

I do hope you are keeping warm and dry, wherever you are in this beautiful country.

A slightly smaller magazine this issue albeit bursting with interesting information.

Our six featured artists are revealing a tremendous amount of talent, and we have a new page reviewing 'hot off the press' books from Search Press Limited, which will be available at Gordon Harris.

We have a demonstration of some excellent new paint brushes from da Vinci on pg 20, and an exciting new product to work in conjunction with your coloured pencils on pg 42.

Dougie Chowns once again entralls us with words of wisdom and experience on pg 28, and we wander about Salvador Dali's home town with Robin and Bronwyn Dwane on pg 18.

Our Exhibition and Events pages are full of results of recent award ceremonies, well worth a read, starting on page 47, while in Societies and Groups, Sue Edmonds tells us about 'Two Views of Waikato' and Riversdale Arts gears up for their 2018 Mixed Media exhibition which also marks their 45th exhibition. Congratulations!

Enjoy your magazine, and remember, deadline for submissions into the September October 18 issue are due by 31st July.

*Meg, Rob and Eddi*

Send your letters to:  
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# Letters

Just wanted to thank you for sending me the new magazine. It looks great, you guys are doing a great job, first class magazine.

Just to give you a quick run down on our progress. We have just begun negotiations with a film crew and host from Pakistan. They want to do the series over there, so with any luck we should be there in the next twelve months to watch what they are doing.

We have a paint company that wants to work with us in Israel and get the series onto Israeli TV. We have also heard from Germany and have people negotiating getting the series onto a number of channels over there as well.

Our team in the UK has started filming UK artists and our team in the US begins filming there shortly as well.

We leave for the states again in two months to film in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and California so this year will be busy.

I am hoping to get back to NZ at the end of this year to wind this years schedule up and film some more great artists. In the end our platform will be one of the largest in the world, it is heading that way rapidly now days.

Thanks again guys and keep up the great work you are doing, all the best,  
*Graeme Stevenson CIYL*

I love your magazine and I am also an artist. I do watercolour and mixed media. I have a blog: <https://debrinaaltered.blogspot.co.nz/>

That will give you an idea as to what I get up to. I do art for the love of it, and occasionally I put it out there to make a bit of money to pay for my art supplies. I am actually a librarian by trade here in beautiful Oamaru - but it's the perfect place to be because the library, its people and the environment is just so gorgeous.

I'd be very happy to be featured in your magazine (I am a writer too...so happy to contribute in anyway there as well). All the best,

*Debbie Price-Ewen*

Thank you so much for sending me complementary NZ Artist Magazines. I'll take one to Pablos Studio and keep the other one available for my own Artist Sessions people to browse while they're in my studio.

Much appreciated,  
*Morag Stokes*



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Image:  
2017 Winner Patricia Hollis

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# Gabby McKenzie

Written by Eddi Te Koha-Williams



***Gabby McKenzie is the epitome of a quintessential Kiwi fan-girl. Her great love and deep respect for New Zealand's rich history and modern diversity has inspired her to create vibrant portrayals of our illustrious native species and landscapes. Her paintings depict various scenes; all of which include great references to our 'Kiwiana' culture, as well as tidbits alluding to the cheeky humour of a typical New Zealander. An extremely talented artist, Gabby has afforded us a glimpse into her creative process and the inspiration behind her quirky characters.***

Hailing from Otago in the picturesque South Island, Gabby was raised to appreciate the literary lessons of beloved children's authors such as Roald Dahl and René Goscinny. She also developed a lifelong passion for art. It was thanks to her uncle, a man of many talents, that she was able to cultivate and hone her unique story-telling abilities through illustration and paint.

"As a child, I loved storybooks, and it was the illustrations that would really hold my attention. The stories and poetry created by Roald Dahl, as well as the Asterix and Obelix

series, appealed to my wild and vivid imagination. I owe thanks to my uncle who would often babysit and take me on many adventures that shaped my view of the world, resulting in my current techniques and style.

"My uncle was a creative genius who recorded music and painted billboards by hand in the days before computerised graphic design. He wrote music and poetry, sang opera, sketched illustrations, and played various musical instruments. During the school holidays, he taught me how to paint, and care for my tools, as well as to write poetry. Once, he even made me solely responsible for building a scarecrow to keep the kingfishers away from the fishpond. It was a magical time, and it created in me a strong appreciation of the arts. Today as an adult, the things that I value most are the creative teachings I discovered in those early years."

Due to these influential moments, Gabby continued to follow her artistic passions through to adulthood. "I'd continued creating throughout my school years, taking art as a School Certificate subject in high school. After leaving school and spending 10 years doing administration work, I enrolled at the Western Institute Of Technology in Taranaki and, in 2002, was awarded a Diploma of Visual Arts."

"I've sold my paintings for many years but I made the final push to becoming a full-time artist after my son was born in 2014. I wanted to demonstrate to him that it is important to dedicate yourself to something you are truly passionate about.

"I've found that being an artist allows me to explore my fascination with quirky scenarios and humorous characters, and I am definitely guilty of infusing my animal subjects with human quirks and emotions. I try to instill feelings like serenity, pride, curiosity and confusion into the character of the creatures I paint. Sometimes they end up embodying certain characteristics, even when I don't try."

Gabby's inspiration is found in her surroundings, in New Zealand's wildlife, as well as in the people of Aotearoa. "I have a genuine love of this beautiful country and its spirited people, and I feel we are spoilt for choice of artists in Aotearoa. So many New Zealand artists have inspired me, from potters and painters, to glass casters and printmakers. Usually I am most affected by work in vibrant colours, or those that express sentimentality for a being or place. My preferred subject is anything connected to the history, flora, fauna and people of Aotearoa – a very wide lens – and it's always exciting when



***'Kakapo Stepping Into The Light' - 200 x 150mm. Acrylic on canvas.***



*'Life Of The Party' - One Winter's Night In The Woodshed series - 250 x 500mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

someone recognises something in my artwork that relates to their own experience of living in this beautiful country."

"At the heart of my 'artistic vision', is the need to create something beautiful that celebrates the lush environment we have; to remind us that it is a treasure, and hopefully motivate people to protect it for future generations."

After inspiration has been found and an idea formed, Gabby then gets to work fleshing out the design and layout of her next creation. A lot of research goes into her work as well as obvious time and effort to bring her subjects to life. "I have a bit of a wild imagination, and I love that no two days are ever the same. I like to investigate my subjects' history, habitat and surrounding environment, and make detailed pencil drawings and notes about them in an attempt to fully learn about their life or situation."

"Depending on the subject, I may wander down to the museum looking for an early settler's lantern to scrutinize, or to a library looking for photographs of birds' feet. The next day I could be found staring at a rock to ascertain how to paint its lumpiness. I'm really hands-on during this stage, going so far as to place myself in my subjects' shoes and asking whimsical questions like 'if I were a gorgeous bird, what colour party hat would I adore?' or 'would a Kakapo read the newspaper?'"

"Once I feel I've discovered all I can about my subject, my next step is to transfer my image to canvas, which I do using an overhead projector (OHP). When the image is drawn, I move on to mixing my palette."

"I love working with acrylic paints, as I don't have the patience to wait for oils to dry. Over the years I've developed ways of working with acrylics to create certain washes and glazes so I can achieve the effects I want. I use Atelier Artists Acrylic paint as it has good coverage and flow, and will hopefully last for a long time. I usually apply a couple of coats of Liquitex Professional Varnish to protect the paintwork and bring up the original lustre of the colours."

"I premix most of my colours on a palette in advance, and paint in under-layers; slowly working up levels of detail across the whole painting simultaneously. I have a checklist so that I don't forget to

paint in certain details as there have been a few times when I've nearly sent off a painting of birds with no feet! My favourite bit of technology while painting is a special LED light bulb I have in my desk lamp that emits light very similar to daylight. Using this means I can paint into the night and mix colours knowing that they'll have the same effect in the daylight."

"I've found over the years that silence is not conducive to productivity for me, therefore Radio New Zealand National has become my



*'Kereru In The Karaka Tree' - 400 x 300mm. Acrylic on canvas.*



*'Not From Round Here' - One Winter's Night In The Woodshed series - 250 x 500mm. Acrylic on canvas.*



*'Paradise Shelducks At Wanaka NZ' - 150 x 300mm. Acrylic on canvas.*



*'Whio NZ Blue Duck' - 200 x 150mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

happy companion during the day and, if I'm painting into the night, I will stream art documentaries on YouTube or listen to Ted Talks.

"Right now I'm working on a series of paintings in my One Winter's Night In the Woodshed series. I was researching information for another series when I came across some interesting information about fantails (piwakawaka): they usually nest in pairs but in the southern regions they huddle together

in groups inside any buildings they can get into. This allows them to share body heat and survive very cold temperatures. I immediately thought about how cute that would be, and thus began the Night In The Woodshed series.

"My visual diary is crammed with sketches for new work and I'd love to have more time to churn out more. In another five years I hope to be further along my huge list of birds and landscapes I want to paint."

Gabby's work has gained a lot of attention over the years, and in 2017 she submitted her painting 'Whio NZ Blue Duck', which gained award-winning recognition. She also participated for the first time in other competitions. Despite the success however, Gabby admits there have been times where she has experienced the painter's version of 'writers block'.

"After being awarded the Mollie & John Pledger Award for my Whio painting, I then participated in my first Dunedin Art Show. It was a great opportunity to talk to fellow artists from all around New Zealand

about their work processes, and it gave me a wonderful insight into various techniques and mediums. It's no secret, I love to talk, so being able to connect with such an array of artists was just mind-blowing.

"In the build-up to these shows however, I did find my creative flow obstructed at times. Making art is always a constant test of my dedication; some days the paint flows off the brush

and gorgeous things appear on canvas; and other days it's fumbly; the only paint colour that I'll mix will be mud.

"The lesson I draw from these 'mud mixing' days is to work hard while your flow is happening – even if it does lead to those 2am bedtimes – and that the best way to stay in flow is to paint and create constantly. Because of this, my favourite saying has become 'Before success, chop wood. After success, chop wood'.

"Art making is a labour-intensive process, and those who do succeed work consistently toward their goals – it's about playing the long game. It can be really satisfying to progress in your skill level and receive recognition for your ideas. I am learning to be more disciplined and procrastinate less, but I do still find myself pulling weeds in the garden or raiding the fridge when I should be in the studio!"

Gabby McKenzie is currently a member of the Otago Arts Society, the Queenstown Arts Centre, and a supporter of the Caselburg Trust. Her paintings are



*'The Guiding Light Of Taiaroa' - 300 x 680mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

vibrant, with beautifully bold hues of reds, blues and greens that stand out against their complementary colours. Her animal subjects portray human sentiment through various expressions, her references to the unique culture of New Zealand are a true delight, and her paintings are wonderfully drenched in symbolism depicting New Zealand past, present, and future. Gabby McKenzie's work can be found on her website [www.swankyjoe.blogspot.co.nz](http://www.swankyjoe.blogspot.co.nz) which also features short comics and humorous illustrations that are a great read on a cold morning. Otherwise, she can be contacted through her Facebook Page @GabbyMcKenzieArtist. [N](#)



*'Grandad's 40 Winks' - A Cup Of Tea And A Lie Down series - 200 x 200mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

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# ART MATTERS



With Ira Mitchell-Kirk

***With the gap between handcrafted wares and mass-produced products widening daily, the demand for quality, artisan wares is increasing. Now is a perfect time to be a creative, generating an income from your art with the overheads lower than ever before, thanks to online sales and marketing.***

With a minimal budget, I started my art business six years ago and, after many ups and downs, plus numerous times I could have thrown in the towel, I am now at a point of feeling as though my work is getting traction. I was advised when I began that success generally takes 10 years; it's so true. There is no secret recipe for building an art or craft business – if there was, I would have read that book cover to cover already. I'm often asked where to begin or how to simply make a living from art so I thought I would share some of my journeys.



Firstly, write down what you want from your art. Do you want to create full time? Make a certain amount of money, travel, help your community? Think this over seriously as these become the core values of your venture, which can be referred to in times of indecision. The three values for myself were creativity, community and travel; focusing on these stops me wavering into areas that don't support them.

Discipline is so important. Create a schedule for work and play. I set an alarm on my phone, switch off the incoming alerts for say three hours and get stuck in creating. Then it's time to do another task, possibly book work or set up for an afternoon class, for the next hour. Then it's time to meet a friend for coffee as being self-employed can be a lonely business and being anti-social can be soul destroying.

Book in time to exercise, catch up on social media, cleaning, research, writing and meals, whatever you need



to do. Before I had a schedule I had no idea where my time went each day; like money it just fritters away if you don't set a budget.

Networking is vital but not with the mindset of 'what can this person do for me', rather 'what can I do for them'. Others can smell desperation a mile away; change your mindset and you are

much more attractive and sweeter-smelling as a business peer. Referring back to your core values will help you in deciding who you reach out too.

The community is important to me so I contribute time and energy to groups that align with my values. Doing good has created a positive ripple effect in my life, with returns never expected but delightful when they appear. Keep your eyes open to gaps in services and think up ways your creativity can make a difference – and don't be shy to approach businesses. If you have thought seriously about their services and can come up with a finished product, they will either say yes or no. The odds are that simple: 50/50. I have found they generally appreciate the fact that you have thought of them and welcome products that have been made specifically with them in mind. This is the bedrock of solid and loyal relationships with clients. Make sure they know you care and look after these relationships going forward. Thinking of ideas is part of being creative and part of the beauty of being self-



employed; you can come up with ideas and make them happen.


Getting out there and being brave are huge steps for some people but this simply has to be done. You are the best spokesperson for your art and people want to hear your story. This is why it's so important to create what you love and not follow the trends, which fade very quickly. My first point of sale was weekly local markets, selling prints and jewelry, talking to customers and getting vital feedback which helped me hone my craft and build a database of loyal followers. That's where being an artist is so rewarding, having the ability to create pieces that others can relate, especially when you are there to tell your story. That emotional contact is so important; it reinforces your legitimacy as a creative person which we so often need as social creatures, and sustains us when we go back to the studio for hours of solo time.

I used to be shy which was getting me nowhere other than full of self-doubt, so I had hypnosis and enrolled in drama classes, went to



business networking groups to practice my elevator pitch and found other art friends to have art-talk time with. Just get out there; go to gallery openings and make a point of finding the artist, introduce yourself and congratulate them.

Getting established takes time. Getting your name and art known is a slow burn as it should be. No one wants to be popular as that burns out overnight. As David Bowie said "Just keep doing what you do and they will find you". My warning alarm has just gone off, so it's time to stop typing and get on with painting. Have a wonderfully productive and happy day.

I will be writing more on this next edition. If you have any questions, you are welcome to email me on [artbyira@hotmail.com](mailto:artbyira@hotmail.com). 

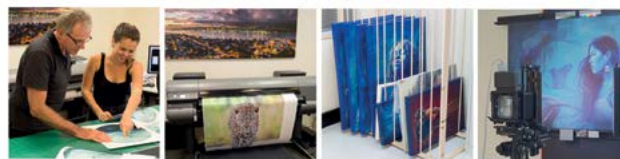
## **GOLD** *Ancient Water Gilding In Contemporary Art*

This August, at *Thistle Hall Gallery*, the Florence Academy trained artist *Tatyana Kulida* will bring her expertise in an ancient water gilding technique to Wellington with her next exhibition *Gold*. In the last throws of winter, *Gold* brings the warmth and sunshine to the Gallery walls on the happening Cuba St. The exhibition presents a number of recent paintings and drawings by Tatyana that feature the traditional gilding technique while portraying contemporary and modern subject matters. Visitors are also warmly invited to the painting and gilding demonstrations that take place during the exhibition week which runs from **13th to 19th August 2018**.

Tatyana's work can be found in private collections in the UK, USA, Europe and Australasia as well as in the permanent collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Connecticut and Cameron Museum of Art, Wilmington, NC.  *Pomegranate, oil on gilt red wood.*



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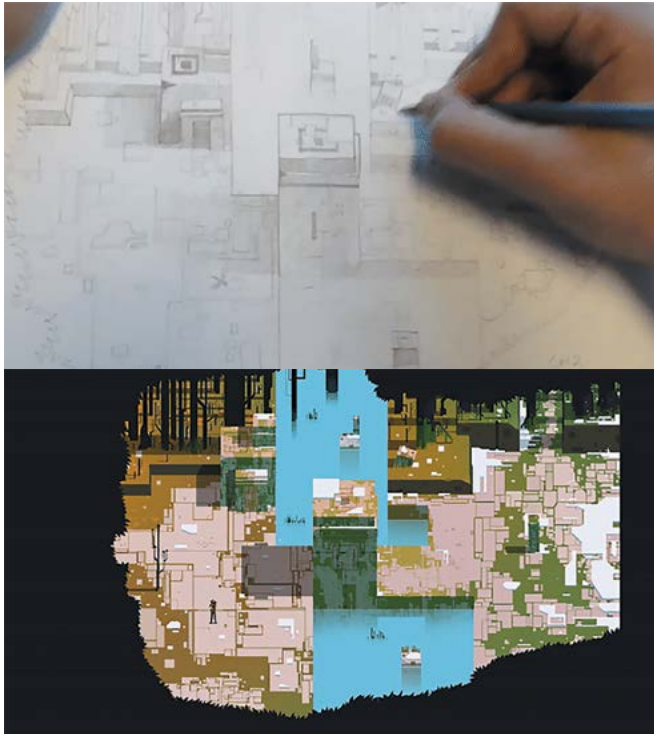
# ATONE

## AND THE VIDEO GAME ART FORM



By  
a.k.a. Ben Costeloe,  
Sid Bardiya and  
Patric Corletto

*Video games are a new and often misunderstood art form. For decades, many people cast them off as a waste of time or perceived them as capitalist products with no artistic or cultural value. However, times are changing, and a lot has happened in the 46 years they've been around.*



*From drawing to game - Wild Boy Studios.*

In truth, video games are experiencing a creative renaissance of epic proportions. Online marketplaces, streaming services and digital downloads have upended traditional distribution methods, allowing for games of all shapes and sizes to become accessible to anyone with a computer or smartphone. Beneath the polished veneer of the highest profile 'AAA' games\* with their multi-million dollar titles lies a sea of independently created games; works that embrace the obscure, tell compelling stories, present visually breath-taking worlds, and challenge players to not only perceive thematic elements but to also participate in their formation.

Of course, whether or not our game ATONE will be praised or panned has yet to be seen. We believe that what we're doing is unique and exciting but it's going to be another year before it comes out! The creation of

ATONE has been long and arduous, but when all is said and done, we'll be able to say that it's our own unique artistic creation – and that is the most important trait an indie game can have.

Our NZ-based development company, Wildboy Studios, began at Massey University when Sid Bardiya and Ben Costeloe decided to pitch a video game concept for one of our papers. On finishing our degrees, we came to the conclusion that we wanted to share our idea with the rest of the world. To do so, we recruited a talented coder and fellow university student, Patric Corletto, to round out our team. At the end of 2016, the three of us began working on an adventure game called ATONE; our first indie video game.

ATONE's world and plot are inspired by the rich history and diverse stories of Norse mythology. The game chronicles the life a young warrior named Estra and her journey to discover the truth behind her father's death, 12 years after his passing. Along the way, she encounters mythical beasts and beings of all shapes and sizes. It took us several months of research and storyboarding before we had our first draft of the narrative. This was crucial to developing the game's characters and environments. To further enrich the story, we decided to search for a writer/editor to assist us. Fortunately, we were contacted by a UK-based writer, Rebecca Haigh, who signed on to add to what we had so far.

Our next step was to focus on the game's art style and animation. Our first inspiration was animator Genndy Tartakovsky and his TV show Samurai Jack, which portrayed comic book-style animation through a cinematically dramatic lens. Another big inspiration was the indie game Sword and Sworcery, which used distinct pixel art, selective colour palettes, and a nature-driven atmosphere to tell its story. We're also very fond of the artist Dave Chenell who uses simplistic shapes to create a calm mood with saturated colours. But even after crafting our own visual style, we felt like something was missing. In late 2017, we ventured into the forests and native parks surrounding our hometown of Wellington, where we gathered colour palettes and sketched trees, animals and rivers that we incorporated into a fully realized art style.

While visuals play a significant role, this is only one part of a video game's success; the biggest allure lies in the gameplay. So after we crafted a visual identity, we took a step

back and asked for feedback from professionals who had design experience.

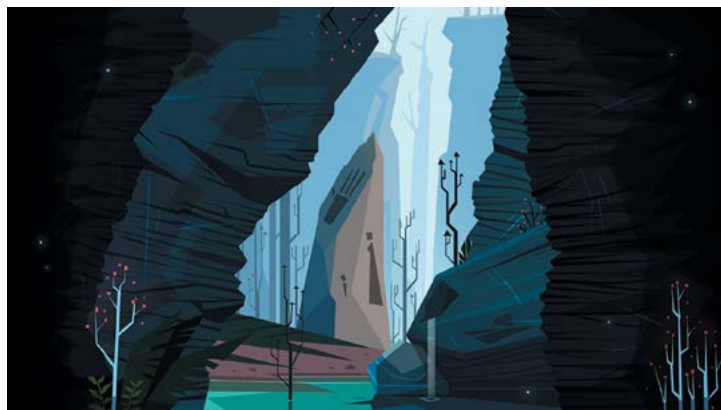
One of ATONE's biggest gameplay components is its puzzles. In the beginning of 2018 we acted on advice received from others in the industry and simplified some of our in-game puzzles, after being told they were too hard to decipher. Then we began to tackle the largest undefined aspect of the game: combat. We came up with a rhythm game combat system designed to test players' button synchronization skills. The goal is to hit keys at a point that syncs with the beat of a song that plays during battle, similar to games like Guitar Hero or Dance Dance Revolution. However, instead of trying to pull off the perfect musical performance, the player's combo skills dictate the outcome of a fight between our main character Estra and one of the enemies she encounters. Because music plays a dominant role in ATONE, we spent countless days trying to find a composer that matched the genre and style we wanted.

At this stage, we had gained a decent number of social media followers and were starting to receive offers from composers who were interested in what we were doing. The person that stood out from the crowd was James Shuar, an Australian musician who goes by the name of Luminist. After listening to some of his previous work, which included analogue reproductions of some soundtracks from Nintendo's Metroid series, we felt that his electronic style matched our synth-oriented vision for ATONE's score.

After Shuar entered the collaborative process, the final person to join our team was Jim DeLuca, a US-based music publicist who wants to break into doing work with video games. He's been helping spread the word about our work, which hopefully leads to people actually playing the finished product.

We're still hard at work on ATONE with hopes to release the game in 2019. The three of us still have a ton of art and code to complete, but we're strapped in for the long ride. Our goal is to showcase what we've created over the past two years at upcoming exhibitions like Gamescom and PAX AUS, where we hope to gain insight from players. With a lot of work and a little luck, ATONE will get finished soon and take its place in the creativity-driven indie video game landscape. [N](#)

*\*From Wikipedia: In the video game industry, AAA (pronounced "triple A") or Triple-A is a classification term used for games with the highest development budgets and levels of promotion.*



Cave Concept Art - Wild Boy Studios.



Winter Concept Art - Wild Boy Studios.



Character Sheet - Wild Boy Studios.

We are hard at work to bring this game to life. Follow Atone's progress on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

#wildboystudios #atone #atonethegame  
www.atonethegame.com

# Connecting through Art

**Formally trained in graphic design, Georgette Thompson has never lost the drive to express herself through paint. Starting art classes at Art Metro in 2014, under the tutelage of Livia Dias, the frequency and productivity of Georgette's art has blossomed.**



Currently practicing her art in her spare time, outside full time work as a graphic designer at Harvey Cameron in Christchurch, Georgette likes to challenge herself consistently to improve, whether painting a tricky face, complex scene or object.

"I love choosing to create either realistic or imaginative works. I use oil painting to challenge my technical abilities, striving for realism. I get satisfaction from conveying a scene or portrait convincingly, whereas I turn to wash and ink drawings as a form of relaxation. In these drawings I have no set outcome in mind, the process controls the outcome, which in turn makes the results unique. I like that I am not fixed to one style or medium. It is also



**'Rueben the Dog' - 350 x 450mm. Oil on canvas.**

rewarding watching the viewer's experience of my works. Seeing others enjoy my work is such a buzz."

Her ambition when painting portraits of those who have passed away is to bring life and connection into the piece for the loved ones left behind to enjoy. "This is something that photographs do not necessarily achieve," she says.

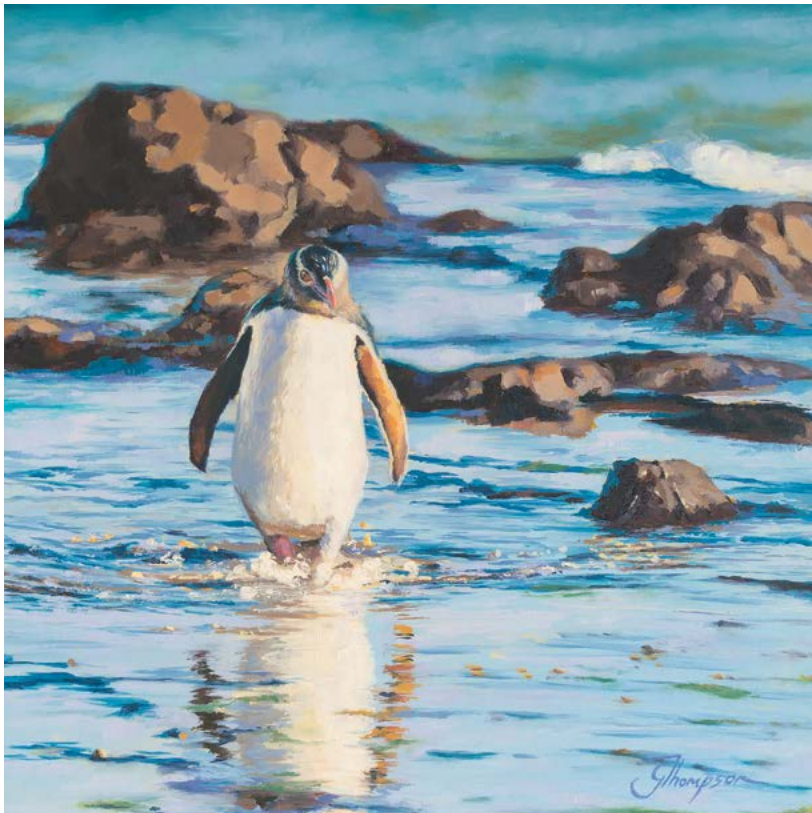
Feeling a connection to people and places provides much inspiration for Georgette, as do greats like Rembrandt, Dali, Monet and Graham Sydney. "I now take on commissions of people I may not personally know, yet I still take the same approach, trying to learn as much about the subject as possible. I feel that the subject reveals something of itself during the time spent sketching or painting and that this knowledge is embedded in the final piece. I also have a very active imagination. I express this in my watercolour wash and ink drawings which often create surreal creatures and dream-like scenarios."

Closer to home, her past tutor Livia Dias has inspired Georgette greatly with her observation of the colour and form of the world around us. "She taught me the importance of creating a focal point using both composition and brushwork."

Reluctant to make her art a 'chore', Georgette has the ambition of becoming a full time artist, perhaps venturing further into illustration and storytelling. "I love painting realistic landscapes and portraits but I would be interested to see my fictional characters painted in oils. Taking the surreal dream-like characters and painting them in a realistic manner could bring these stories further to life."

Her favourite medium is oil paint, and she has come to appreciate the extended working time that this medium allows. "It sure beats acrylic paint in this regard, and I don't miss the palette drying out on you halfway through!"

Georgette no longer attends Art Metro but



*'Time to Reflect' - 203 x 203mm. Oil on panel.*

has nothing but praise for the school and her tutor, Livia Dias: "Attending Art Metro taught me about the use of oils and developed my confidence to approach more complex subject matter. Painting more regularly helped me build a body of work I am proud of. I enjoyed being part of group exhibitions, one of which landed my photo in the December 2017 issue of 'Metropol' magazine."

Mistakes have led Georgette to wonderful realizations especially with her ink drawings: "Starting with a random line or squiggle as if to say 'Right, now what are you going to do with that?' From there I build what often turns out to be a crazy character. There is something about going in 'ink first', no pencil, that I find so liberating. Nothing is ever a mistake, just another challenge to work with."

Explaining the way she approaches a painting or drawing, Georgette states: "My approach with my oils is about building the layers. Based on an acrylic wash I then sketch out the scene or

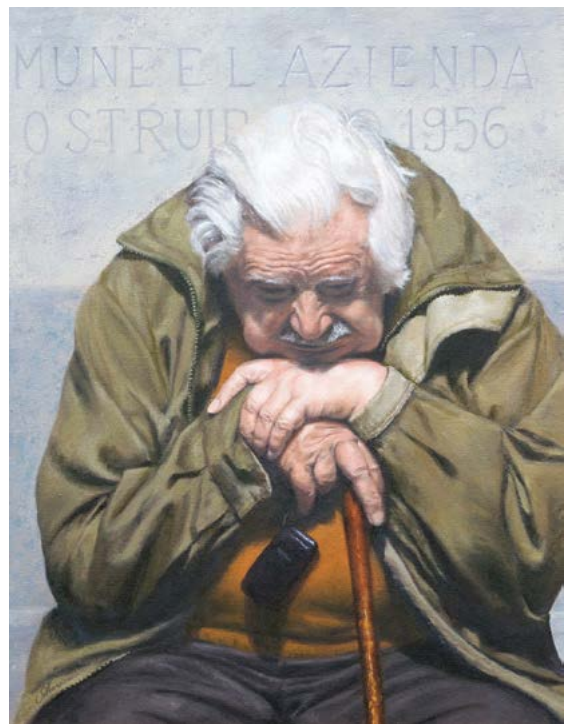


*'Grazing in Glentunnel', 700 x 400mm, Oil on canvas.*

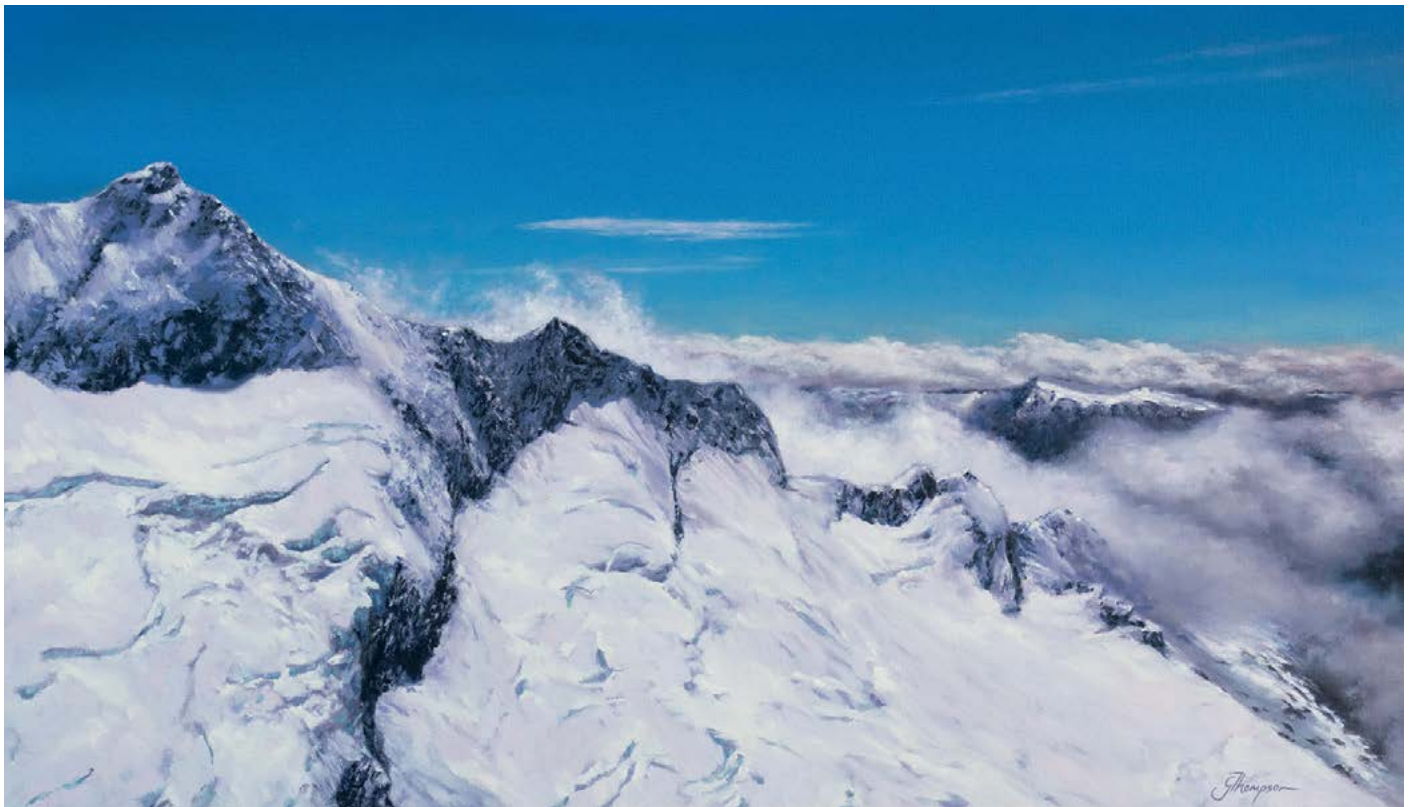


*'Major Menagerie's Travelling Circus' - 297 x 420mm. Wash & Ink on paper.*

portrait with water mixable oils. I focus solely on the values of the shapes, using only one colour to make sure I have a solid structure to use as a base for the following colour layers. From there it is a matter of building up the colour layers until I am happy with the level of detail."



*'Firenze' - 350 x 450mm. Oil on canvas.*



*'Mt Aspiring' - 700 x 400mm. Oil on canvas.*



*'Grandad Jack' - 350 x 450mm. Oil on canvas.*

“For my wash and ink drawings I use a rather different approach. Here, I let the process control the outcome rather than starting with a fixed idea. I paint out watercolour with no purpose in mind. After it dries, I then use my imagination to let the watercolour shapes reveal hidden stories. I simply bring them to the forefront with pen for others to see. The process is therapeutic with often surprising results.”

Her favourite piece of equipment is her small mop brush, which she finds very handy for softening edges where appropriate. “I mainly paint with Rowney and Maimeri Puro for my oil colours. I find the strength of colour and consistency of higher quality than others I have tried. I use Winsor & Newton mixable oils for lower layers. For my watercolour sketches I use Maimeri and some Winsor & Newton. I sketch my ink drawings with Staedtler pigment liners.”

Georgette likes to listen to Spotify when she is painting; there is a great variety of music available to suit the mood she finds herself in. She also enjoys sailing, summer hockey and has recently learnt to ski. “I love getting out and seeing our beautiful country with walks and camping.”

Proud of her accomplishments thus far, Georgette lists them: “I am immensely proud of showing my first solo exhibition in January of this year. Held in the Arts Centre in Christchurch, this exhibition showcased years of work in one room. It was amazing to see the public’s reaction to my work. This year I have exhibited in many group exhibitions in Canterbury and Dunedin. I am



**'Troy and Bailey'** - 356 x 279mm. Charcoal on paper.

also proud to have an Honourable Mention in the New Zealand Artist Cheeky Challenge 2017. A painting that I am particularly proud of is 'Firenze', a portrait of an old man in Florence; this was a real challenge with the lines of the face and the wrinkled hands. I get such delight passing this daily in my personal collection." 'Firenze' is our cover photo for this issue. Ed.

"Currently I am working on a large portrait commission, with many side projects. The portrait is the largest I have attempted and is also the first to include two people. I love the challenge of capturing their personalities within the painting. As the layers progress I get excited about the detail I can bring to life.



**'Leaf Man'**, 210mm x 148mm, Ink & Acrylic Wash on paper.

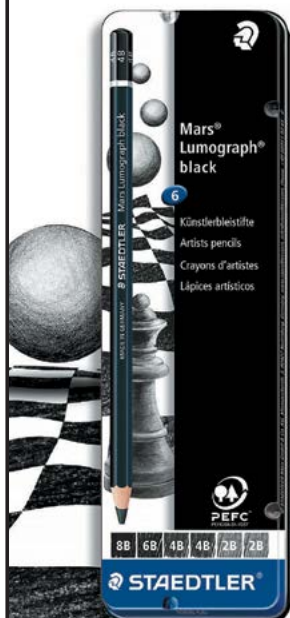
I recently completed a commission of a local scene of the Canterbury Plains viewed from Mt Hutt which reveals the beautiful patchwork of farmland divided by hedges and fence lines. There was much detail to capture and it was also the largest landscape I have done to date."

For new artists, Georgette advises to "get yourself out there. For too long I was too timid to share my work. It is obviously a scary thing to show your work to others but it is also the most rewarding. Try it."

She has work in New Zealand, Australia and the United States. See more about Georgette here: [www.georgettethompson.com](http://www.georgettethompson.com) 

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# Visiting Dali

Written and photographed by  
Robin and Bronwyn Dwane

*Our trip took place in September/October 2005 and I am still amazed that the gantry above the motorway bypassing Toulouse showed that there was 350 km to travel to reach Barcelona. No customs to stop us as we drove from France to Spain, so it was an easy trip. I imagined a 350 km trip south from Whangarei and where we may have ended up – probably somewhere near Taupo!*

Cadaques.



**W**e wanted to follow the Salvador Dali Art Trail from France to Barcelona, and some of my memories are still very vivid. My respect for art and artists in general enabled me to appreciate the passion and talent that was very obvious in the works of many of the great artists we viewed whilst overseas.

Our long weekend away from France was spent mostly in Barcelona which meant we were left with a quick trip through the Costa Brava and only a drive through Figueres so no time to visit the Dali Theatre-Museum. Onwards we drove to Roses, a modern town popular with tourists with nice cafés, bars, restaurants and a beautiful long beach with fishing boats moored out in the bay. After a short stop in Roses, we decided there was no need to dig deeper in this beautiful Catalonian town and we headed for Cadaques.

We travelled on a long winding road through the mountains of Cap de Creus, with spectacular views over the surrounding hills and rugged coast, and arrived to discover a beautiful and seemingly ancient town constructed mostly of whitewashed buildings built on the hillside facing out to the amazing coastline that is the Punta de sa Costa. We wandered around getting a feel for the area, and found a hotel to spend the night.

## Cadaques

The next morning, which was the day we were due back at the south of France property we were managing, we decided to head out to Portlligat to visit Salvador Dali's house – a series of interconnected houses that have been turned into the Casa-Museo Salvador Dali.

We arrived at the house to find that, apart from another couple, we were the only ones visiting. After paying for our tickets we commenced a journey through the most amazing and interesting house we have ever been through. Dali lived here until 1982 and this was the place he and Gala (his wife) called their real home. It was a rambling structure progressing uphill, spread out in a succession of spaces linked by narrow corridors, with slight level changes and blind passageways. It was packed with a huge array of objects belonging to Dali. The areas were decorated with carpets, whitewashed walls, dried flowers, velvet upholstery and antique furniture, giving a cosy atmosphere. Windows of all different shapes and sizes framed the wild and rugged landscape, recognisable in many of Dali's works.

In 'The Empora Triangle' written by Sebastiá Roig with photography by Jordi Puig, Dali explained in that he and

Gala were the “children of Jupiter and Leda”. They had been hatched from eggs like those decorating his garden. The moment they broke the shell that protected them, they became immortal brother and sister.

After viewing the house and wandering around the outside area, we could appreciate what Dali loved about this place. We left knowing that it must have given him and Gala great inspiration and comfort. The topography is awesome and reminded us of some of the New Zealand coastline that we love. Rugged and rough with no quarter given by wind and sea in stormy weather – but also beautiful, peaceful and calm on sunny ‘Costa Brava’ days. N



*Bronwyn in the Courtyard featuring white washed walls, seating and paved floors.*



*The house at Portlligat.*



*The dining room.*



*The shrine with snake winding its way around the pool area.*



*Courtyard complete with Pirelli tyres and Marilyn Monroe-type lips.*

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By Evan Woodruffe

# STUNNING NEW TOOLS FOR FLUID PAINTING

*It's no exaggeration to say: the new-generation synthetic Casaneo range from German brushmaker da Vinci revolutionises fluid painting techniques. Before Casaneo, only natural hair held the largest volumes of fluid, particularly squirrel hair; but squirrel is also very delicate, really only suited to watercolour paints.*

Acrylic colours are especially damaging to natural hair brushes – synthetic fibres are best for acrylic painting techniques. While da Vinci had developed new-generation synthetics to mimic the fluid reservoir of some types of natural hair many years ago (the Cosmotop-Spin for sable, and Top-Acryl imitating bear-hair), the deluxe qualities of black Russian squirrel hair – exceedingly soft and thirsty! – were harder to emulate. Three years ago, da Vinci released the Casaneo range,

with wavy synthetic fibres mimicking the soft, fluid-hungry squirrel hair brushes. Being synthetic, Casaneo can be used for any painting media, including fluid acrylics and India ink, offering unbelievable fluid capacity with a much cheaper and robust fibre than squirrel. It's vegan too!

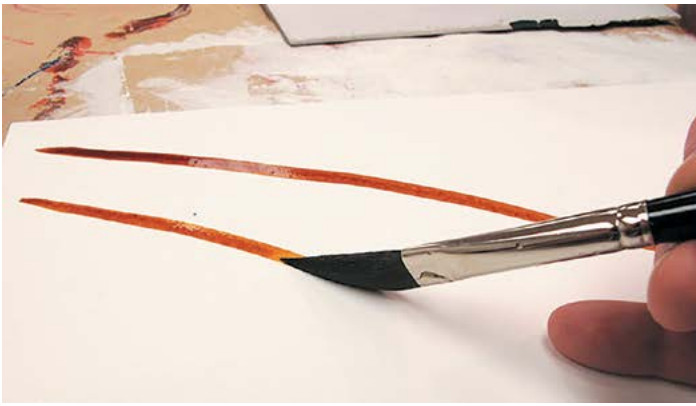
Now da Vinci add exciting new shapes to the Casaneo range, extending the type of marks you can create to offer new painting possibilities.



Da Vinci Casaneo Liner DV5599

The Casaneo Liner brush carries a large reservoir of fluid in the Casaneo body, feeding it down a needle-sharp tip of Colineo synthetic (see DV88 below), so you can paint metres of continuous line without lifting your brush to refill.

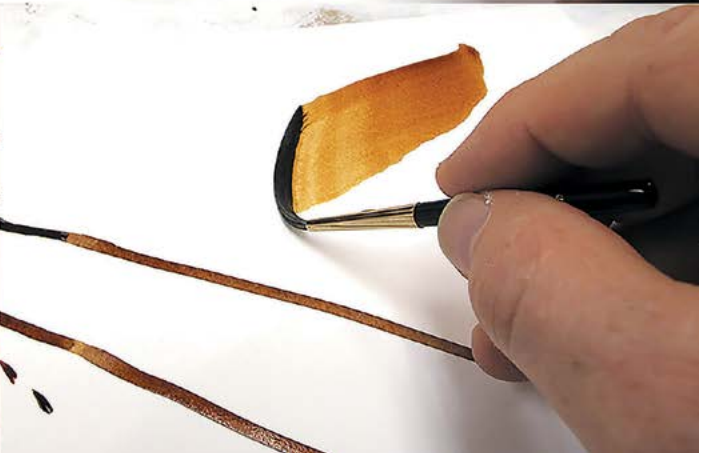
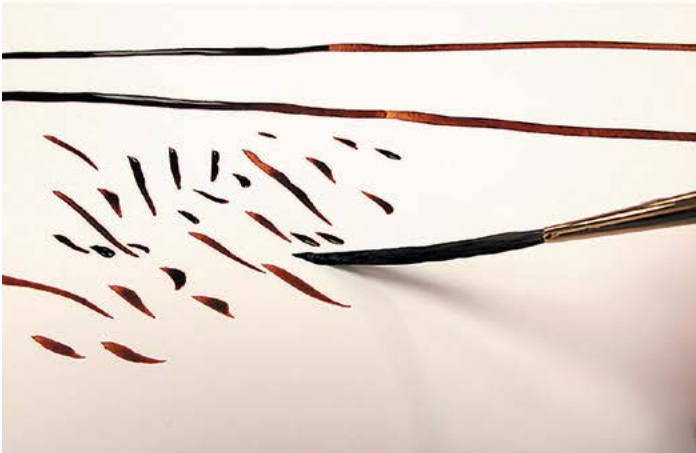
This is the closest a brush comes to a refillable marker, and with advantages: you can easily change colours, there are no blockages, and the tip doesn't fail on rougher surfaces.



**Da Vinci Casaneo Slanted Edge (Dagger) DV5597**

The Casaneo Slanted Edge is a soft dagger striper ideal for creating lines, both straight and curved, and for cutting-in on tricky areas of paintwork, such as corners. The asymmetrical shape is extremely versatile for calligraphic and pin-stripping techniques, perfect for point-to-blade

handling. While this shape was available in the petite-handled pin-stripping range, the new Slanted Edge has a standard sized handle, a thicker body and is available in two sizes.



**Da Vinci Casaneo Short Stroke DV1298**

There's nothing short about the Casaneo Short Stroke's super-tapered 55mm body! This is the same extra-long brush head as the Casaneo DV706 pin-striper, but fitted to a standard sized handle to maximise handling possibilities.

Despite the narrow body, the Short Stroke holds an incredible amount of fluid for creating long lines, loose mark-making using the fine tip, or laying the brush on its side for sweeping calligraphic marks.



**Da Vinci Vario-EFFECT DV88**

The new Vario-EFFECT is like the da Vinci Vario-Tip brush on steroids! The fat round body is made of a special synthetic fibre mixture that holds an incredible amount of fluid; this is fed down multiple (about 30!) Colineo fibre

tips to provide an amazing array of parallel marks. Whether wanting to create hair, grass, abstract lines, cross-hatching, or any number of compound effects, this brush truly revolutionises fluid mark making! [N](#)

# *Expressions* of the Sun and Moon

**Otto Gruebl** PHOTOGRAPHER  
ASTROPHOTOGRAPHER

***The New Day Café in Parua Bay, Whangarei Heads is currently holding an exhibition of stunning photography by Otto Gruebl until 12th August 2018.***

Otto is a qualified psychiatrist with a tremendous talent for photography. Starting in 2009 with Astrophotography, especially of the sun and moon, when he lived in Gisborne, he photographs the sun with specially equipped telescopes and imaging equipment in White Light, Hydrogen Alpha Wavelength and currently is the only one in the North Island doing images of the sun in CaK. He uses a Micro Four Thirty Camera Olympus Pen 5 for photographing eclipses of the sun and moon and photos of sunsets, sunrises and twilight sky.

He is member of the Royal Astronomical Society NZ (RASNZ), Auckland Astronomical Society (AAS) and Gisborne Astronomical Society (GAS) and member of local Southern Stars Observers in Whangarei (SSO). [N](#)



**Otto Gruebl with his 60mm Lunt Telescope and a Lunt Ca K module and equipment for imaging the sun.**



**Otto at The New Day Café in Parua Bay with his magnificent display of his photos in relation to sun and moon printed on canvas.**



# Hooked on Books

Sponsored by Search Press Limited. The books featured on this page will be available at Gordon Harris.

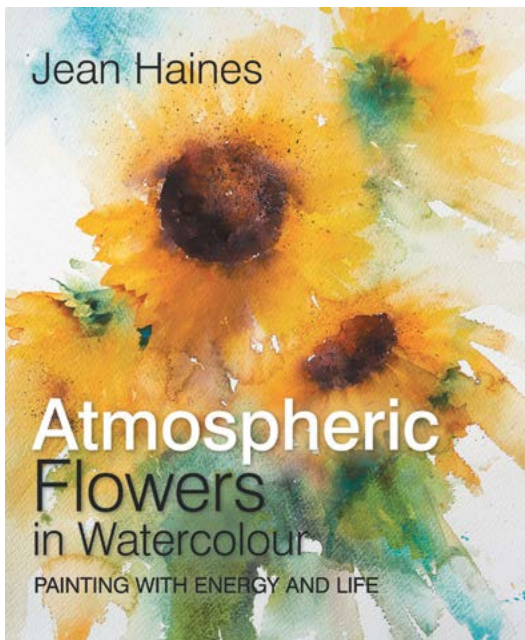
## ATMOSPHERIC FLOWERS IN WATERCOLOUR

*In this beautiful book, best-selling author Jean Haines shows you how to breathe life into your flower paintings, and experience the pleasure that can be gained from the art of painting flowers.*

Jean Haines is arguably one of the worlds most accomplished and inspirational artists, and in this, her fifth book, she explores one of her most beloved subjects - flowers. Taking inspiration from her own beautiful garden in the English countryside where she lives, Jean takes you on an artistic journey that not only teaches you how to create gorgeous paintings, but also shares with you the joy to be gained from the simple act of painting flowers.

In this beautiful book, Jean explains with passion and enthusiasm how to loosen up your painting style and include just enough detail in your paintings to portray the essence of flowers, bringing them to life on the paper and infusing them with vibrancy and energy. She shares unreservedly the materials and techniques she uses, provides a wealth of expert tips and advice, and guides you step-by-step through numerous studies and projects. Throughout the book there are many glorious examples of Jeans paintings of a dazzling variety of flowers, providing an abundance of inspiration for artists of all abilities.

Jean uses Daniel Smith materials in this book but other materials can be used to achieve similar results. **N**



The New Zealand Artist Magazine

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# Magnus

*From the moment he could walk, Jack Magnus McDonald, who prefers to be known as Magnus, created and built things. He was four years old when his parents took him*



# McDonald

*on the Interislander ferry and he was so infatuated by the vessel that he spent the following two weeks at kindergarten reconstructing it out of Weetbix boxes. It ended up so big that his parents had to tow it home on the tandem trailer behind the farm truck.*



'State of the Nation' - 500 x 750mm. Acrylic on canvas.

Although Magnus never had any formal training, he has been surrounded by a strong network of creative minds while growing up, offering support, inspiration and guidance. As a naturally observant person, most of his skills have come from watching and learning.

While the desire to create has always been present along with his fascination – bordering on obsession – with objects, it wasn't until he won a local art competition that he decided to take art seriously. "My winning piece was a contemporary, multi-media composition on corrugated iron which represented the now-ruined Christchurch Cathedral. The prize money was mind-blowing

for 16-year-old me and, on top of that, I sold the painting to the local law firm. I was hooked."

Magnus' father, Mark McDonald, is an established



ABOVE and INSET: Magnus working on 'State of the Nation'.



***'Mt Victoria' - 1130 x 600mm. Acrylic on board.***

artist who became well known in the 80s for his vibrant, moody prints of Mount Taranaki. Magnus enjoys his fathers mentoring, and the talent is strong in the bloodline.

We asked Magnus about who inspires him and the artists he admires: "Before I proceed, I urge you to take this with a grain of salt. The artists that I admire influence my art in a variety of ways. Some influences are tangible and visible in the style of my paintings. Others are less obvious, like the legacy I am trying to create.

"To single one out is impossible. In terms of painters, the Spanish maestro Salvador Dali is right up there. I was a naïve art critic wandering the Tate Modern museum in London when I spotted his work 'Metamorphosis of Narcissus'. It was so powerful and technically impressive that it left a lasting impression.

"Rap music also imprinted on me from a young age. I would listen to my Eminem LP cassette on my morning bus ride to St Joseph's primary school. My religious education teacher would've been horrified to know what my ears had been consuming just minutes before our morning prayers. Let's just say Eminem's sermon contradicted that of the good Lord.

"Another one is Compton rapper Kendrick Lamar. He recently became the first rapper in history to receive the Pulitzer Prize. He has shown that poetry comes in many forms, and I hope one day my art reaches people the same way his has."

Magnus is very proud of every piece he has created, but what really excites him is when others are equally proud of his work. "Hearing people talk about my work



***'Canterbury Lakes' - 770 x 330mm. Acrylic on canvas.***



**'Kurow Corner' - 770 x 330mm. Acrylic on canvas.**



and knowing my paintings are in pride of place in people's homes is really cool," he says. "Art is so underrated that one never appreciates its value until the art is absent. If I can add a little bit of meaningful art to the world, then I will be a very happy man." His ambition is to create an impact in the art world.

Currently in a transitional phase, Magnus is moving from simple landscapes to symbolism-heavy, suburban settings, to humanity and our impact on our natural surroundings. This has been partly inspired by his bohemian move to Fitzroy in Melbourne. "Expect to see my paintings evolve from short-burst endorphin-spiking pieces to metaphors

that stay ingrained in your mind and harass your consciousness long after they have disappeared."

"I recently completed my latest work 'State of the Nation' which uses downtown Auckland as a scene to describe the mis-prioritised state of this material world. The piece took over 150 hours to complete. I have also resumed a painting of the Wellington waterfront which I started in April 2017. These paintings will help form the basis of an exhibition I will be having in the next 12 months."

Magnus advises that taking time with the sky in your painting is a productive idea: "Although it may appear simple compared to the rest of the painting, I still find it one of the hardest parts to get right. Do it on a cool day so the paint stays blendable for longer and don't stop until you are 100% happy with it. A bad sky is very difficult to rescue and can cause headaches later on."

He says that an ideal composition strikes the balance of raw beauty and human interface and he always prefers a prominent geometric shape in the foreground, with perspective lines that meet at an ambitious vanishing point in the distance. "You can have all the technical ability in the world but if you don't compose your scene right, no amount of brushmanship will save you."

"When pulling together an idea for a painting, I nearly always have an object with sharp geometric lines as the focus of the scene.



**'Pier 3' - 750 x 600mm. Acrylic on canvas. INSET: Magnus working on 'Pier 3'**



*'Matapouri Bay' - 770 x 330mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

I usually throw multiple photos into Photoshop and use this to help build my compositions.


"After priming my canvas with gesso, I start painting the sky. I usually do this before the sketch as it allows me to blend with freedom and reduces the chance of creating unwanted texture between the horizon and the sky.

"Once the sky is painted and I have finished sketching, I work my way from the back to front. The vibrancy, tone, texture and contrast increase as I get closer to the foreground, which helps to depict a realistic sense of depth.

"The last step is to apply a couple of layers of clear, glossy varnish. This protects the painting as well as enhancing the strength of the underlying colours."

When it comes to canvases, Magnus doesn't really prefer a specific brand, opting to get his canvases custom stretched using professional archival quality materials. He enters the 'zone' when he is painting, so listening to podcasts is impossible as he needs his attention for the paintings. So he plays hip-hop and New Zealand reggae and, as he stands at his easel, he uses the freedom to 'bust out a few moves'.

To new artists, Magnus says: "You can be the best artist in the world but if no one lays an eye on your work then what is the point? Marketing is a key skill in the life of any artist. I am not talking about trashy flyers or posters in the local café. What I am talking about is telling a captivating story which resonates with a specific audience and builds your profile as an artist. Balance your time between the easel and the people."

Solid advice there. Magnus has artwork in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. See more of his work here: [www.magnusandco.co.nz](http://www.magnusandco.co.nz). 



*'Commissions Hero' - 600 x 450mm. Acrylic on canvas.*

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# Artists Forum

## Sketch Club

### A CREATIVE NON-EVENT AND WHO HAS WHAT?



By Dougie Chowns

**What does 'the artwork in the home' tell us about the person and a possible 1985 Radio series:**

*"Compliments from Training Captain Hutchinson, Mr Chowns. We are about 150 miles south of Tonga and about to reach our cruising altitude so now is a good time, if you would like to come through to the flight deck, to do your interview....."*

*This is another side of 'creative art' that I hope will interest you, my readers.*

In 1985 while initiating the Whangarei Art School with Community College; presenting a weekly 'Community College Newsletter' on Radio Northland; with a one man exhibition and Artist in Residence in Obidos Portugal followed by another in my home in the 1880's art colony village of Bushey, Hertfordshire; I had the idea as a budding radio host that while away I might interview an interesting and unusual range of people to discover what art they had on the walls of their homes and why.

I wanted a wide range of people from very different social backgrounds to make an interesting sound series. Artwork crosses all boundaries, be it 'high art', 'art popular' or simply kitsch. It all has its place and people have walls to fill. But who buys it and what they choose is another thing – a different story for each person or household, perhaps. I often hear people who are not artists or known in art, making quite positive comments about art – are their comments valid I wonder?

So, equipped with a small, quality tape recorder, I made contact with an internationally known ex-colleague, an author of dozens of art books, as well as a poet and major London art critic, a Buckinghamshire farmer, a cleaning lady at Sotheby's art auction house in Bond Street, and Air New Zealand, who agreed I could talk with their Training Captain on the first leg to Honolulu en route to Los Angeles and London.

I was about to talk with him sitting in

the cockpit jump seat as we cruised north east en route for Honolulu. I envisaged a possible series for Radio Northland with interviews to follow once I had made this first attempt. My coming shows and Residency were an ideal opportunity to make an interesting magazine mix rather like my remembered childhood BBC Radio 'Desert Island Discs' where subjects were asked what six gramophone records they would like with them should they be stranded on a desert Island. My concept was for a half-hour mix of talk and music about the arts, graphic design and performing.



Air New Zealand Logo.

Air New Zealand Captain Hutchinson, in a relaxed Kiwi accent, told me that "the old lady was a bit slow tonight and heavy". The buzz of electronics and low light, the instruments a mass of blue and green; all looked comforting. I have enjoyed aircraft since my wartime childhood and always cast a long look at Jean Batten's Gull hanging in departures at Auckland Airport. In about 1947, two Gulls of the same type were chartered by an uncle to fly us home from a holiday on the Isle of Wight. I would always look at Jean Batten's stored tail fin in my father's



*Jean Gardner Batten, CBE, OSC was a New Zealand aviatrix and became the best-known New Zealander of the 1930s, internationally, by making a number of record-breaking solo flights across the world.*

Pickford's Depository store as a youngster; she even signed a photo for me. I still wonder if I might have flown in that same airplane – or at least had a one in 16 chance of doing so, as only 34 were manufactured. Fighter pilots were heroes to us wartime kids, influencing me to apply and later serve in RAF Fighter Command– so that night in 1985, passing high over Tonga, was more than rather special.

Settled behind the pilots, I switched on and started my interview. My voiceover led in: "Tonight 'Art in my Life' comes from the cockpit of Air New Zealand 01 at 33,000 ft etc..... what art do you have on your bedroom wall, Captain?" The surprise in his voice made for a good start. "Actually, quite a large print of a wartime Wimpy staggering out over The Wash", he said. "I used to fly them in the War".



**'Wellington over the Wash' by Chris Gold.**

He described the image but did not remember who painted it. Gosh, I thought, that's a bit unromantic for the bedroom. "Did you or your wife buy it?" I asked. "Oh, I did", he said. "Actually the only painting I did buy; other paintings in the house my wife accumulated over the years. Most others were popular prints; no original paintings other than those painted by our grandchildren."

The Captain also had an interesting range of films, shows and classical music he enjoyed which I planned to cut in to our sound tape later to enhance the interview, a bit like 'Desert Island Discs', along with a little background on the Wimpy bomber that he'd flown on missions over Germany.

The idea was going well for me, as did my other interviews, all done in much the same style. Paintings or prints in interviewees' homes featured both classic as well as many popular works of that time which were sold by the thousand



**The Last Bales - David Shepherd.**



**'The Red Skirt' by F.R.S. Clement - the most popular reproduction from Boots Cash Chemist art prints department throughout the UK in the 1950s. Even Vera Duckworth from Coronation Street had one on her wall.**

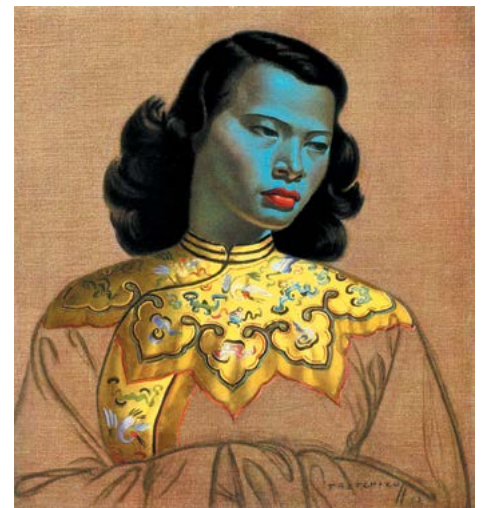
like the 'The Red Skirt', 'The Last Bales' and of course the Tretchikoff series, all of which today have become collectors' items despite being totally kitsch.

Boots Ltd., the cash chemist in every UK town, was a great source for locals getting their first home after the war. In my teens, I always visited to look at the artwork, subject and styles. Not like today, where you can browse the internet or local art shows with wine and cheese. These were new ideas yet to come.

However I am not sure that those 'not in art', as such, are any more informed about art and artists today. Kitsch and art popular from local furniture shops is readily available and is certainly bought, but by whom? Is it by my local councillor who is also making decisions about city art awareness?

Colour radiation energy can likely be damaging mentally; colour may depress or excite, calm or even make one dangerous. At one time I thought I would volunteer to be, like the electricity or building Inspector, the 'City Art Inspector'. I am keen to know what people who are very vocal about backing a local museum or gallery actually have on their own walls. It might be a bit of an eye-opener. I would expect at least a few valuable or promising originals – but do they practice what they preach? Or do they just go for something to match the curtains and sofa?

Often very nice people – one meets them with a free wine the artist has supplied – will politely say "I do like that, but



**'Chinese Girl' by Vladimir Tretchikoff – 1952–1953. Oil on canvas.**

we don't have the space on our wall." Conversely, visit an art lover or artist's home and you will likely find the works are stacked up one above the other; it has to be a very good original to get its own wall.

Not many, I believe, understand art terms or the difference between a range of media and mass-produced, so-called originals. "Look dear, if you run your fingers over this painting you can feel the thickness of the paint!" My local newspaper recently featured a photo of printmakers and their wood cut print, printed from particle board, captioned as a 'Lithograph'. Didn't the journalist know 'litho' means 'stone'?

You may remember I loathe the word 'screen print' used as an art term. It is a process term. Eating Pig instead of eating Pork? Although I liked charging Guineas not Pounds, so you may find me picky and inconsistent, and you are right, but artwork is not something I do just for money. My works are my children, and I like to be accurately reported.

When judging a show in the Far North years ago and instructed to determine the 'best oil painting', everybody was very upset because I ignored an acrylic artist who was infinitely more mature. There is a big difference between gouache and watercolour, and the two require drastically different skills. What if Chinese white is used on a gorgeous pure watercolour to flick in the seagulls or ship's rigging? Believe me, it's ruined! However, this would be totally acceptable for a commercial artist working on a piece intended for reproduction. Gouache is opaque, not transparent and gives a different colour range – like coffee with cream rather than brandy in a glass. Many spoil a good watercolour by using white – downgrading their skill, in my opinion. For me, a watercolour is only a watercolour if the artist skillfully leaves the light areas dry in a painting.

You might say I am finicky but, again, I appreciate the virtuoso skill of head and hand. Mixed media also has its place and should be recognised as such. Mixes of paint and crayon, charcoal and wash, collage and house paint are all expected. Also many shortcut products are available today –

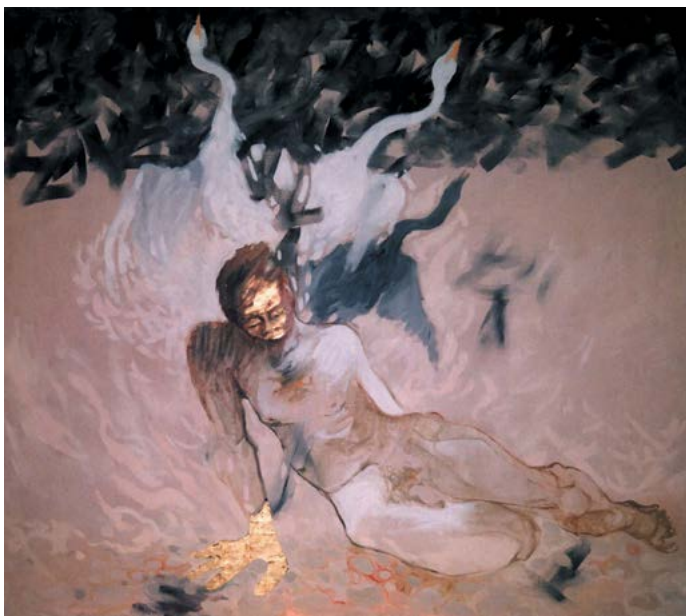


*Fashion Drawing by 1950s Guy Demachy, a french artist retained to draw for Clarks Shoes and Wolsey Knitwear. During his career, Dougie drew sketches before commissioning Guy to do the finished artwork.*

rubber blocking out fluid, felt pen, oil crayons and gold felt pen, to name a few. Pure Gold leaf however gave my 'Child of Llyr' painting, retained in the Presidential Suite in Timor-Lesté, a quality that only gold can give. I didn't grow up with the many products available today, so please forgive me. I am sure we would have used them in the commercial world. We got up to all kinds of tricks to achieve a special effect for the camera; a 4B pencil can point up a fashion drawing wonderfully.

It says something about an owner when poor artwork graces the wall in a home – especially if they are vocal about art in the community. What do your councillors have on their walls? How many of them annually spend as much on artwork as their annual wine or beer budget? How many highly paid art educationalists have actually bought the artwork that their homes are often full of – or were they gifts from grateful students hoping to make a living? It's hard to move a thousand dollar painting every four weeks – and that's only \$12,000 a year before materials and costs. Should the low income artist also pay for your wine as well, while you ponder?

My cleaning ladies in the art auction rooms were delightfully informed with bucket and squeegee mop in hand. I enjoyed making those interviews but I scared the pants off my local radio station chief, nearing retirement, on my return. The tape cassette has been heard only by a very few and the programme series never developed – maybe a bit ahead of its time? I still think a similar series would make good listening.



*'Child of Llyr' - Dougie Chowns. Currently in the Timor-Lesté Presidential Suite - Life-size figure. As the boy metamorphosis into a swan, his face and the hand changing into swans feet glow from real gold leaf.*

I also made many artist videos which, interestingly, are only now valuable since the people featured are dead. One was in Northland with artist Garth Tapper – an hour-long, face-to-face, with Garth ad-libbing his views about art and artists. He didn't care for some popular writer critics. It's a treasure in itself, as this was his only video interview.

I enjoy all creative projects immensely. In earlier days, I was a highly paid international creative director and a brief and budget would set my mind's wheels in motion. I was in my element working under urgency, often pressured to come up with that of which others were incapable. However in a small rural pool, my life has changed. But it's still who I am and what I do, isn't it?

On behalf of all professional artists hoping to achieve a living, it is often forgotten that they are only as good as their next commission. Also, it's thoughtless to commission foreign artists, as good as they are, when locals desperately need recognition, accolades and income.

# CHRIS BOOTH

*World renowned sculptor Chris Booth has been hard at work on his latest living sculpture 'Te Wai U O Te Atakura', in Northland's popular subtropical destination Whangarei Quarry Gardens.*

Chris has been working on the piece with Rata Kapa over the past few months and it was completed recently when the final piece, a two-tonne stone, was hoisted by crane onto the top. Te Parawhau hapu kaumatua, Pari Walker, Fred Tito and Johnny Nathan blessed the sculpture with a dawn karakia and formally named the sculpture 'Te Wai U O Te Atakura – The Milk from the Breast of Te Atakura', Atakura being the goddess/spiritual entity that is seen upon the rise of the sun, from the world of the dark and the ancient to the world of the light and the living – like the birth of a child.

Whangarei Quarry Gardens was generously gifted funds by a local philanthropist to go towards a permanent sculpture. Gardens Manager David McDermott says "Chris's sculpture represents a new chapter in the Gardens' story, one which our staff, trustees and volunteers are very excited about. The impressive scale, considered materiality and symbolic kaupapa of this work aligns beautifully with the Gardens' aesthetic and vision. We wholeheartedly thank the donor for her generosity. We also thank Chris and Rata for sharing their passion and craft while on site at the Gardens." Artist

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As a creative, I am full of concepts covering many issues: traffic flow; written copy; airline in-flight visuals; the possible New Zealand Rabbit Pie industry; my own city's lack of identity; awareness in the community of colour blindness and deficiency; the value of traffic roundabouts; their savings in pollution and fuel, to name but a few.

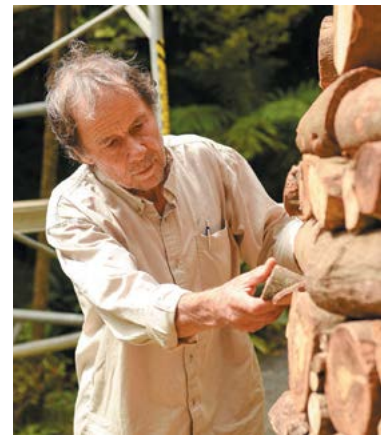
"This chap is too much, he thinks he knows it all," do I hear you say? At 81 and as a trained creative artist and problem-solver, I have been around internationally for a while. I have discovered that unless one attaches a \$20,000 fee to a solution that's supposedly better than a local's, it's thought you can't be any good.

My godfather's advice on my 21st birthday was "Dougie, don't play chess with people who don't know how to play chess." Sadly, I never learned. I expect those at the top not to be lacking in appreciation of creativity and creatives in general. Hey ho – many a brilliant creative concept is passed over. Expect it, friends. N

Chris Booth says "The main living aspect is fungi, the greatest recycler on the earth and a vital organism for the health of the majority of plants and animals. In these living sculptures I collaborate with fungi. The fungi consume the organic material causing the boulder to ever so slowly

descend to the ground.

Depending on the wood, it could take 70 years or more. The piece is fifth in a global series of Varder living sculptures. Varder is an old Nordic word for cairn. Varder I and Varder II were built in Denmark in 1998, 20 years ago, and are still being consumed by the greatest recycler, fungi, as planned. Varder I has moved only about one metre in this time. Varder III and Varder IV are in the Netherlands, III is 14 years old and IV is two years old. I hope to spread this Varder series through other countries with their other cultures. N



# Going with the Flow



**Mastering art is an endeavour that requires a vast amount of patience spanning decades rather than days; an ability to remain fluid and open-minded, yet still in the moment. South African native and Kiwi artist Martha Mitchell has grown to understand these fundamental lessons over time in her bid to perfect her paintings of human expression and sentiment through portraits. An insightful individual and a motivated family woman, Martha shares how she has found balance in life through artistic teachings. Written by Eddi Te Koha-Williams**



**'We are Water' - 380 x 760mm. Oil on canvas.**

Martha Mitchell grew up on a small farm just outside of Pietermaritzburg; the second largest city in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, known for its mountainous terrain and beautiful landscapes. Growing up surrounded by such natural magnificence, Martha has always displayed a flair for creativity which resulted in her choosing art as a staple class in high school, before going on to gain a Bachelor of Arts Degree at the University of Natal, majoring in Fine Arts.

"I have always been interested in art. To me, creativity is something that I can't suppress or ignore. I need to express the ideas and thoughts that occupy my mind, and this has always driven me to pursue art as a career. After university, I taught in schools for a number of years in South Africa, all the while continuing to create in my free time. Since moving to New Zealand in 2008, working for wages has been put on the back burner more often than not, and I've become more focused on honing my own creative abilities in the last nine years."

Just prior to the Mitchell family's move to New Zealand, Martha had been offered a teaching position at Tikipunga High School in Whangarei. Excited at the prospect of overseas travel and new opportunities for her husband and young children, Martha gladly accepted the offer and the Mitchell whanau made the journey into the unknown – a decision that would prove rewarding for all.

"We moved to New Zealand in 2008. We came straight to Whangarei from Auckland Airport, excited, as we were to finally see our new home. We had never been to New Zealand before, and my first impression was that I couldn't believe how green everything was. Despite my hometown being a mountainous region, the South African climate is greatly different to that of New Zealand's; our flora and fauna being dryer rather than lush like the environment here.

"We drove to Whangarei via Helensville in a rental car, with the ocean on the west, and then driving past Ruakaka, the ocean was on the east. We were amazed that we had crossed the island. This was another contrast to South Africa – a gigantic country in comparison, where driving the same distance is paramount to a quick visit to relatives in the city – whereas here in New Zealand, those few hours travel are enough to traverse from one coast to the other. We love living



*'Musings' - 1000 x 500mm. Oil on canvas.*

in Whangarei and the lifestyle has been especially suited to raising children.

"After teaching at Tikipunga High School for two years, I felt it was time to look inwards and really dedicate my efforts to my own passions. I cut down to working three days a week at various schools, and the rest of my time is dedicated to artistic endeavours as well as expanding my visual platform. I've done this by taking part in exhibitions, competitions, and life drawing seminars at the Quarry Arts Centre in Whangarei. I'm really dedicated to the idea of holding my own solo exhibitions at this point in time so, just under a year ago, I decided to rent studio space at The Quarry. It is a wonderfully creative space with a supportive community that is really involved

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*'Things to do Places to be' - 1210 x 910mm. Oil on canvas.*

in the arts. They have great constructive critiques, great ideas and information to pass along. Here, we really do believe that helping others is akin to helping yourself."

As with most artists, Martha has dabbled in different mediums during her years of creative exploration and learning, however she has come to prefer oil paints as her chosen medium.

"I've chosen this medium because of the beautiful effects achievable with techniques such as layering and blending, as well as the ability oils have to capture the endless variety of tones, shadows and highlights that mark us all as unique and individual human beings. I am drawn to figurative work because I feel that faces and human figures are a challenge to capture due to our complexities.



*'Ode to a Family Man' - 1210 x 910mm. Oil on canvas.*



*'Tino' - 605 x 915mm. Oil on canvas.*

I've found the subject provides a never-ending source of inspiration.

"I often combine symbolism with the human face and figure to create an expression of my ideas. I aim to capture not only the outward likeness of the sitter, but also to capture something of their spirit and personality. I take part regularly in life drawing at the Quarry Arts Centre in an effort to improve my accuracy and knowledge of the human figure. This endeavour springs from my belief that good drawing is the foundation of painting."

Martha's secondary interest and subject preference also plays a vital part in her creative journey. Not only is she a student of Humanity, but she is also an advocate for the symbolic force behind the global resource that is Water.

"People, faces and the human body are my preferred subject however I have also worked on a number of hand and water paintings. Water is life and is precious, and should not be taken for granted. I love the way water slips through the fingers and reminds you that you can't hold on to life... it has to flow. I am not much of a conversationalist and communicate visually much better than with words, which is why I've worked on a number of canvases to interpret and embody these beliefs."

In an effort to capture and display her interpretation of this ideal, Martha participated in an exhibition that runs from 5 May – 25 July 2018 at the Geoff Wilson Gallery in Whangarei, the exhibition's theme being Water.

"I am working on a more surreal and symbolic piece at the moment – this is a painting I am doing just for me and to satisfy my own inner artist. I am currently adding the finishing touches to a painting about the life-giving force of water which is for the 'Great Plate' annual fundraiser 2018. I am also busy completing a portrait commission as well as a portrait of my husband. I like working on a couple of paintings at the same time due to the time it takes for oils to dry between layers."

Like most artists, Martha has her own routine for the development and stages of her work. "I start with an idea and sometimes it takes a while – weeks or even months – to evolve. I start with preliminary sketches, as well as photos and reference materials. I then begin transferring my design to canvas with thin paint, usually raw umber or brown, sometimes over a ground. Once I am happy with the positioning of the subject, I will do a simple colour layer before moving onto glazes and details."

"The last stage usually takes the most time as I tend to work in many thin layers, adding translucency to the work. I use Winsor & Newton Artist Oils as well as a variety of brushes of assorted brands. Recently, I have started to use odourless solvents such as Gamsol to reduce the fumes in my studio.

While I work, I like to vary my music on Spotify – mostly an Indy-rock play list with jazz, electronica, classical, and folk or rock thrown into the mix. I'll listen to almost everything except rap and country."

Martha has admitted to human error on occasion but for the most part, she seeks to find the lessons in such mistakes.

"I have made a few absent-minded mistakes in my life, such as not putting the dehumidifier on in the same room I'm painting in, before trying to varnish on a damp day, resulting in a sticky coating that didn't want to dry. I learnt from that moment. Other times, the lessons to be learnt from trial and

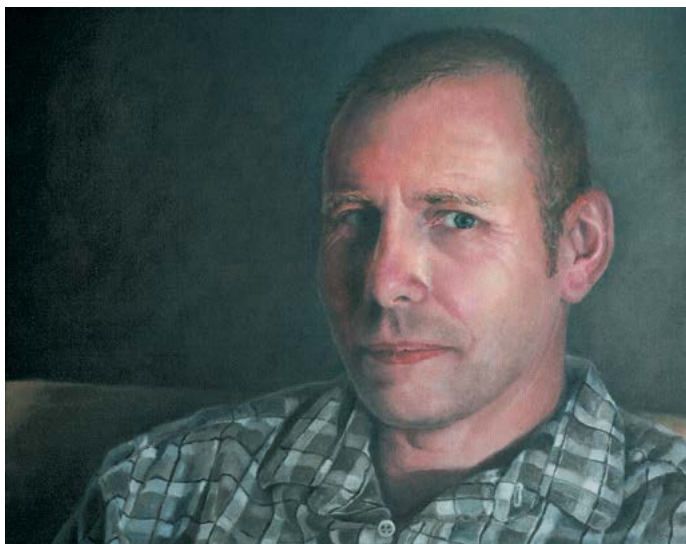
error have revolved around patience and self-confidence; a lot of people have tried to offer assistance and advice throughout my career, however it hasn't always been the most useful. So the biggest lesson there for me is to listen to your gut, and do what makes you happy.

"I've also found that to be an artist, there are definitely a few things you'll require over time; like a clear vision, strong will and thick skin. I haven't quite mastered these yet and still find myself in situations where my belief is shaken. At times like these, I just stick to a short and sweet chant of 'Practise, practise, practise,' reminding myself that I'll get where I want to be in the end if only I try."

Years of dedication and study have definitely paid off for Martha, and although there is always more to learn, she is definitely on the right track. Just this year, Martha was awarded second place in the Adam Portraiture Awards with 'Things to do, Places to be'. The biennial



'Harmony' - 455 x 455mm. Oil on canvas.



'My James' - 510 x 405mm. Oil on canvas.

award is considered New Zealand's premier portrait prize and is for portraits of New Zealanders, by New Zealanders.

Annette Lambly of the Whangarei Leader describes the painting, which is of Martha's son Oliver, 14 years old at the time, and his dog Maddie. The painting aimed "to capture more than just a likeness, but something of their personalities. Drawn by the energy and enthusiasm of both Oliver and Maddie, Martha attempted to capture their tension, and the feeling that they are about to spring into action."

Angus Trumble, who judged the competition and is Director of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia, described the painting as "an unusually elongated format, with such tensions and expectancy that were impressive; the subjects look as if they might topple forward and into ebullient, unstoppable action at any moment."

Forever an artistic pupil and master oil painter, Martha Mitchell is a woman unstoppable. Her keen eye for detail and focused mind has enabled her to create bewitching masterpieces; achieved with a level of realism that is too complex to recreate. Her palette and use of contrasting colours has enabled her to truly create pictures that tell a story of a thousand words; every painting is a moment captured that is filled with emotion and underlying tension, which invokes in us the sense that we have stumbled into a private moment or situation.

If you would like to get in touch with Martha, or view more of her work, you can contact her through her Facebook page @MarthaMitchellArtist, or visit her website [www.marthamitchell.co.nz](http://www.marthamitchell.co.nz). 

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# Pastel Pieces

BY KATHRYN SAMIRAH MILLARD

*The sky is of fundamental importance for a landscape painter. If you look outside on any particular day, the mood or emotion of that day will be affected by the moisture in the air, how many clouds there are, what type of clouds they are, and whether there is any mist or rain. A grey, moody sky sets the tone for the whole landscape and you might choose to paint with low contrast, creating a softer, more contemplative feel. If it's a bright sunny day then you might use stronger contrast and more colours, creating an energetic picture and a more optimistic feeling.*



It was English artist Turner (1775-1851) who is said to have stated on his death bed "The Sun is God". Despite living in near poverty towards the end of his life, he had travelled widely in Europe especially to Venice, where I imagine the light is sublime. John Ruskin, a leading English art critic (1819-1900), described him as the artist who could most "stirringly and truthfully measure the moods of Nature". As Turner grew older, he used his oil paints more and more transparently, striving to depict pure light.

Beyond every sky there lies our sun so, in a way, Turner is right to give the sun such an important place in the scheme of things. Without the sun lighting our world, our surroundings would be black like deep space.

This photograph illustrates that the sky is not a flat, even blue. The atmosphere that surrounds our planet is actually spherical, following the shape of the globe. It consists of nitrogen (78%), oxygen (21%) and other gases (1%, including carbon dioxide). During daylight, the sky appears to be blue because the air (made up of gas

molecules) scatters the shorter blue wavelengths of light more than the longer red wavelengths; a process known as 'Rayleigh scattering'.

I like the fact that astronomers call the sky the 'Celestial Dome' as it gives me a more three-dimensional picture in my mind's eye when I look at the sky to paint it.

## **Why is the sky lighter on the horizon?**

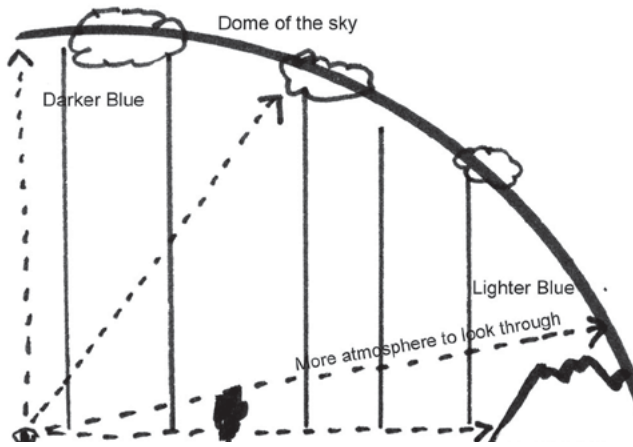
In the photo on the left, you can clearly see that the sky near the horizon has faded to a lighter, greyer blue. Sometimes it can take on the colour of a green tinged cerulean blue or it can become a rose-grey 'haze'.

The reason for this is that the sunlight must travel through a greater volume of air at the horizon, and the molecules of air (nitrogen, oxygen etc) have re-scattered the blue light waves in so many directions and so many times that less blue light reaches us.

Conversely, if you look upwards to the zenith of the Celestial Dome, we are looking up through relatively less atmosphere and thus less scattered light waves. If you look at the top of the photo you will see a darker, slightly warmer blue hue.

Before impressionism, indeed before alla prima painting, oil painters would typically paint

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the sky in first, let it dry and paint the trees, clouds and other elements over the dry passage. This makes sense, as we want the gradations of the sky to be consistent across the painting and popping in a bit of lighter coloured sky up near the top of the picture would not ‘read’ correctly (unless it is in close proximity to the sun, that is, when the light gets affected by the Solar Glare creating a dull grey effect).

As pastel painters, it’s important to map out our sky early on but as we don’t necessarily want to build up a thick layer of pastel we have to be careful to manage the sky and hills or trees where the edges join. I often put in the sky first, by working from the top to bottom of the page, being careful not to put too much ‘product’ down to start with so adjustment layers can be added as the picture goes along. It’s crucial at times to begin with a light touch, a whisper of pastel. Using a harder pastel is also recommended for this reason.

As we saw briefly in the previous article, atmospheric (aerial) perspective is all about this shifting in values, lightening as you want to move something further into the depth of the picture plane. But the sky is not just shifting in value from the top (zenith) to bottom (horizon) – you must also consider where the sun is as well. So you must check side to side for that too!

To sum up: to create the third dimension all colours become cooler as they recede from the eye, and get lighter in value. The atmosphere that we are looking through also has an impact on what we see. We look either up to the zenith (a relatively short distance and amount of atmosphere) or towards the horizon, a relatively larger distance. Looking through the atmosphere we see the effect of light being diffused by the scattering of light waves. The ‘thicker’ the atmosphere, the less blue the sky appears.

The sky is therefore the key to a landscape and must be observed carefully at different times of the day so you become familiar with the continual dance of light as we turn slowly through space, in our perpetual diurnal dance. ■

***“You are the sky. Everything else – it’s just the weather.”***

**Pema Chodron, American Buddhist nun (b.1936).**  
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# McGREGOR ALLEN

Written by Eddi Te Koha-Williams



*Four years ago, McGregor Allen discovered one of his greatest passions and enjoyments in life: the malleable substance of clay. Through the use of various tools such as the revolutionary 'Pimple Popper', and small rakes, McGregor has moulded, shaped, and sculpted dull clumps of clay, then cast his creations in bronze to produce whimsical beasts that would not look out of place in a sci-fi movie. He also specialises in realistic figures and playful animals from all around the world.*

Working for New Zealand Post during the day, and as a full time sculptor at night, McGregor has honed his talents to produce life-like, interactive sculptures that garnered widespread praise during an exhibition at Sculpture on the Peninsula.

The Allen family was shattered when McGregor's elder brother and idol was diagnosed with terminal cancer; it was an event that would change them forever. Despite the harrowing and at times

overwhelming sense of sadness and frustration that comes with such crises, McGregor's brother stayed strong throughout it all – encouraging his family to soldier on in the face of hardship, and to have as much tenacity and durability as a bronzed warrior; steadfast and resilient.

Encouraged by his brother's strength, and emboldened by his own anguish, McGregor carried within him the need to help his brother and, as an artist living in an age where communication with those near and far is just a click away, he knew he could make a difference. Enclosed in his studio, surrounded by his tools and equipment, he was determined to immortalize his idol and capture his brother's memory through clay and bronze.

"In my brother's honour I have begun sculpting a Chatham Island Robin, which I plan to auction off with all proceeds going towards cancer research. With these Black Robins – my brothers' choice of bird – buyers will receive a wonderful token from me to show our thanks for donating to an incredible cause."

Like most siblings, there was always a playful rivalry between the two brothers; however as McGregor was the younger of the two, this was mostly overshadowed by the high esteem and awe with which he viewed his brother.

"Although I'd never really been 'creative' growing up, I had always envied my older brother's artistic talents – he was always drawing and painting, and he was so incredibly talented. He really inspired me, and I've always wanted to be as good as him. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to surpass his talents in drawing but, despite this, I know that I've found my own niche with clay.

"It was during my teenage years in Graphics and Technical Drawing classes that I began discovering the depth of my own creative talents. I had thought about being an animator throughout my earlier years as I had always loved movies, and when I enrolled at Hagley College in 2014, I knew that typical



*Bronze Toads.*



academic classes were not my thing as I have dyslexia. So I ended up studying mainly art classes such as design and animation, photography and painting. This was the first time I had ever done art in my life, and I soon realised it was the only thing that really interested me."

It was during this time at the forward-thinking and innovative Hagley College, that McGregor stumbled upon his chosen medium. The school, based in Christchurch, is one that has perhaps unwittingly assisted several New Zealand artists in their endeavours to become the wonderful creators they are today – such as acrylics artist Ruby Whitty.

"During a lecture in animation, my teacher Gavin showed us a video from YouTube of someone sculpting, and told us we'd have the opportunity to give it a go at some point in the year. I remember just being so taken aback by seeing this creature created in oil-based clay that I knew I had to try it for myself.

"That night on my way home from class, I picked up some Super Sculpey; a clay that I wouldn't use these days but it was enough to get the results I wanted at the time. I came home, drew a little character, and then began sculpting and working the clay until I was satisfied with the first half of the process. I then finished off by baking and painting the completed work.

"When all was said and done, I sat back and was just in a state of awe. Never had I felt such calm satisfaction, as well as a strange mix of euphoria, humility and sense of accomplishment, all at once. I felt as if I was in love for the very first time. Since then, I have been in constant search of knowledge trying to better myself – I know I will be a student of sculpture forever, and will always relish the process.

"From this growing passion and subsequent dedication, I received an Outstanding Scholarship for Animation at Hagley College. My work toured across New Zealand in NZQA's Top Art Exhibition. After this, I created my first bronze piece of a New Zealand falcon or karearea, and exhibited it at Sculpture On The Peninsula – this was a defining and very proud moment for me. It felt so good seeing how people reacted to my art. Everyone came up to pat her, and really got to experience my work in a more physical and interactive format. It was very motivating to see that I can create things that others will enjoy, and

The New Zealand Artist Magazine

**Bronze Kunekune.**

having the public react so well to it was such a gratifying feeling; it really gave me a huge push in my sculpting."

After finishing school at the end of 2015, McGregor still had his sights set on working in the movie industry, creating sculptures and figures for use in animation and other projects.

"I decided to move to Wellington, as I really wanted to work on my skills as a sculptor, so I just spent a year practising every day to really hone and improve my talent. That year of full devotion really pushed me forward. My abilities grew in leaps and bounds, and I continued to fall more in love with the process to the point where I wanted to do nothing else but sculpt and create. Living and working in this creative space eventually led to the revelation that I didn't want to be creating art for a company or corporation that isn't as invested in my work as I am, and I realised that to stay true to myself and my work, I needed to move forward as a solo creator. The reason I'm doing this is to create my own art, and not be constricted or restrained by another's vision of what my creations should be."

Since moving back to Christchurch, McGregor has endeavored to find that perfect balance between work and art. "I have two full-time jobs right now; one as a postman, and the other an artist – dedicating every other available minute to my art, and producing as many bronzes as I can; some for client commissions, and others as edition pieces available through my website: [www.mcgregorallen.com](http://www.mcgregorallen.com)."

"My sculptures all start with an idea; I begin by creating a gestural form in clay that shows the emotion of the idea that has been dwelling in my mind. Once I've captured this,



**Bronze Gelada Bunch.**

I will then look at my references and refine the loose shapes into my chosen subjects. If I'm able to take my own reference photos, I always try to do so – otherwise I'll improvise with photos from the internet. I'm finished when I feel that I've fully captured the character and emotion in the clay form. Lately it's been figurative and wildlife sculptures that I put my own character twists on. The ideas for my pieces come from taking in the world around me. As I'm taking everything in, usually many things will pop into my mind, and these thoughts roll over and over in my head for days, until I've decided what I want to represent, after which I'll refine the idea until I have a solid foundation to start from.


"I sculpt in oil-based Chavant medium plasteline, although my end product is always bronze. I have played around with resin, however bronze is the medium I like to use because I want the sculpture to be durable. This allows the viewer to touch my sculptures and experience art in an unconventional way.

"My favourite tool to use is a 'Pimple Popper' – I didn't know they were a 'thing' until I saw one in a pharmacy and instantly thought that would be a fantastic sculpting tool. I now own two of them. They are the tools I use the most, other than my hands, for detailing and texturing. I have many other tools that I enjoy, all of which I make myself – mostly different sized rakes for smoothing out the clay.

"I try to use my hands as much as possible for the first days of a sculpture; getting the underlying form is the most important part, and most of the time there is no better tool for that than your hands. I just love the feeling I get when I first start a new piece and it flows from my hands to the clay; it's the feeling of putting life into my characters that I enjoy.

"I try to be fully devoted to sculpture but juggling work at the same time is something that is quite hard for me. Admittedly, being scared that my work won't be well-received and being worried about how it will end up as a finished product can be a nuisance as well as a motivational drawback, however it's the enjoyment of the process that keeps me grounded and helps to refocus my mind.

"When I believe that my sculpture is almost done I will go out and try to just observe the subject that I'm sculpting. Almost every time I've done this, I come back to my workbench and adjust my work. Clay is always workable; you can't be scared to change things at any point – if it will make the end result better, then it's always worth it. This happened at least three times with my latest fantail piece. It was like fantails were following me everywhere I went; almost as if their chirping was actually the bird telling me 'to go home and fix that sculpture' – one of the best pieces of advice I've ever followed."

Now aged 21 and still a relatively new artist on the scene, McGregor has accomplished much, with two sculptures on display at the Magma Gallery in Christchurch. The New Zealand Artist Magazine is confident that his work will soon be highly regarded, especially with his upcoming bronzed Black Robins and other pieces to be auctioned in memory of his brother, and in support of ongoing research into cancer treatments. Details of the auction are yet to be released, however more information and updates will be available through his website as work nears completion. Moreover, if you would like to donate to help the Allen family's cause, or further research into cancer prevention and treatments, you can contact your local Cancer Society via their toll free number 0800 CANCER (0800 226 237) or through their website [www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz) 



*Karearea in clay.*



*Bronze Karearea.*



*“In the end, I want my art to not only inspire and help other artists, but also to stand out and make a difference in the world. As a new artist myself, I encourage you to create things that you are passionate about.”*



*Bronze Mawlyhandaziza.*

# Brush And Pencil

## COLOUR PENCIL PRODUCTS DEMO

*Earlier this year, after a long wait, a shipment of exciting new colour pencil products arrived in New Zealand and are now available to artists here. They are the brainchild of Alyona Nickelsen, whose colour pencil art has received numerous awards and has been featured in a number of international publications, including The Artists' Magazine, International Artist, and Colored Pencil magazine. Alyona's vast knowledge of colour pencils and years of studying her medium of choice give her a unique insight and understanding.*

**H**er first book, Colored Pencil Painting Bible, describes techniques which allow colour pencil artists to create vibrant colours and great colour saturation. It is the go-to book for many colour pencil artists. Her second book, Colored Pencil Painting Portraits, goes a step further and introduces her new Brush And Pencil products, elevating the humble coloured pencil to new heights, comparable to oil paints, and achieving results similar to those of old masters such as da Vinci and

Rembrandt. Alyona chose portraiture as the focus for her second book but the techniques described can be applied to any subject.

The Brush And Pencil product line available in New Zealand includes two fixatives – the Advanced Color Pencil Textured Fixative and Advanced Color Pencil Final Fixative – along with the Color Pencil Powder Blender, Color Pencil Titanium White, and Color Pencil Touch-up Texture. All products are archival when used as intended. ►



### First layers

For best results, use rigid, non-absorbent surfaces with a good amount of tooth. In this case, I have used 8x10 Fisher 400 sanded paper mounted on conservation board. The first layer of Faber-Castell Polychromos is applied very loosely, holding the pencil nearly parallel to the paper and applying with little pressure. I have used two colours which took me seconds as opposed to traditional, slow colour pencil application. I also used a much smaller amount of pencil and did not have to sharpen them at all for this layer.

Next I have used a sponge applicator (Sofft tool for pastel) to apply a very small amount of Powder Blender to blend and smooth out my first layer. This is then secured with ACP Textured Fixative. To avoid droplets, the spray can needs to be shaken vigorously for about two minutes for the first use of the day and this should be repeated every two hours. In between, a quick shake will be sufficient to keep the fixative suspended in the propellant. Apply at room temperature at least 30 cm from the surface to avoid formation of larger droplets, and keep the nozzle clean.

◀ Both the ACP Textured Fixative and CP Touch-up Texture are used to seal and isolate previous layers of coloured pencil, making them resistant to subsequent odourless mineral spirit applications. They add more texture to the support, resulting in practically unlimited tooth for many more layers of colour pencil. Unlike workable fixative, the fixatives have to be applied to a non-absorbent, rigid support like sanded or gessoed paper mounted on conservation board.

CP Powder Blender allows smooth blending without harsh lines due to it being a dry powder as opposed to liquid solvent. It is non-toxic and performs best with oil-

based pencils but can be used with wax-based pencils as well on a surface pre-treated with Powder Blender. It also helps with adjusting, correcting or erasing colour pencil.

CP Titanium White is the safest and most opaque white available to artists today and a part of all white coloured pencil cores. It can be applied with a sponge applicator on toothy surfaces for maximum covering power and to create the brightest possible white in a composition. You can correct with mounting putty or secure with a spray of ACP Textured or Final Fixative. Alternatively, mix Titanium White with Touch-Up Texture to the consistency of your liking and apply with a brush for bright highlights.



While working on the background, I left the shape of the horse uncovered. It could have been covered with Frisket, but because I can cover accidental marks easily (thanks to ACP Textured Fixative) I decided to leave this step out. At this point there are easily four to six layers of coloured pencil and fixative in the background. While



applying the fixative to the background, I also covered the shape of the horse, which did not affect it negatively in any way.

After several layers of building the background, I added the first layers of the horse.



Up until this point I have been using oil-based Faber-Castell Polychromos, which blend very nicely and smoothly. For more detailed work, which doesn't require blending quite as much as the first layers, I am beginning to add Prismacolor Premier and Derwent Drawing, both



wax-based. Some of the highlights are created by applying white or cream colours on top of the near black of the background. Thanks to ACP Textured Fixative, the dark layers are sealed and there is enough tooth for lighter colours to cover darker ones.



Here I am adding some warmer colours to the sunlit area in the background and blending with a sponge and Powder Blender.

To brighten the highlights, I use Color Pencil Titanium White and Color Pencil Touch-Up Texture mixed to a paint-like consistency and applied with a small brush.

The shape did not turn out quite at desired but once the Titanium White and Touch-Up mixture has dried completely, colour pencil can be applied on top to correct

the shape and adjust the value and hue. More detail has been added in the foreground, adding light coloured grass on top of the darker area on the right.

To seal the painting, several layers of ACP Final Fixative will be added. Once thoroughly dried and a white tissue comes off clean from the surface, varnish can be applied. The painting is now archival and can be framed without the use of glass. [N](#)





# Riversdale Arts

***It's that time of year again and Riversdale Arts is gearing up for what will be an interesting twist for the Annual Mixed Media Exhibition. Riversdale Arts was started by a small committee in the 70s to meet the need for art and theatre to be an integral part of community life. A tutored art class, 'Still life with green apples', resulted in our first art exhibition. And now we are celebrating our 45th exhibition this year. By Christine O'Connor***


Riversdale Arts has its own art rooms which are used by the community for various art and craft, classes and meetings. For our annual exhibition, we have invited up to 80 mixed media artists from around New Zealand to exhibit in Riversdale's large community centre. Included is a cash and carry shop featuring work by exhibiting artists and invited craftspeople. There's also Café YUM for coffee, lunch and delectable treats.

Various classes are held during exhibition week and guest artists this year are collaborating in their artistry. Artist Janet de Wagt (Dunedin) and cake maker Jude Taylor (Gore) will combine their talents to produce an installation depicting our 45 exhibitions in Riversdale and the districts – something new and exciting for Riversdale Arts.

Installations of art will feature outside on the lawn and there will be floral art at the entrance. Three talented cake artists will be showcasing their skills – Brittany Thurston from Wanaka (White Rabbit Cakes); Kathryn Deaker of Te Anau (Cakes by Kathryn); and Tammie McWhinney of Tapanui (Cake by Victoria M. Edible Artistry – Have your cake and eat it too). Three spectacular and extreme cakes will be unveiled at the Gala night on Friday 20 July at 7pm and these will later be auctioned.

Saturday night's Wine & Cheese event will feature entertainment from Dennis Kirkpatrick. Wow, 20 thousand pies a day are made in a small country town and district with a population of 700 – Extreme baking. Most people have heard of the famous Jimmy's Pie.

Classes this year include 'Getting Prolific – Painting with Peter Cleverley'; 'Beginner's guide to watercolour' with Crosbie Grieve; 'Bend, knot and braze black wire' with Annie Bourque; 'Mosaics in Glass' with Jasmine Keir; and 'En Plein air – Out in the wilds' with Janet de Wagt.

The impressive portrait of Jim Geddes painted by last year's guest artist Stephen Martyn Welch at 'The Sitting' will be on display at the exhibition. The exhibition runs from Gala night on 20 July, then daily from 11am to 5pm. Follow us on Facebook or check out [www.riversdalearts.co.nz](http://www.riversdalearts.co.nz) for classes and details. 



**Janet de Wagt - out in the wilds.**



**Lynne Wilson tutor - raku class.**



**Arts committee 2017 Gala Night.**



**2017 Gala Night.**



**Waimea Plains by Janet de Wagt.**

The New Zealand Artist Magazine

# Societies, Clubs and Groups

## TWO VIEWS OF THE WAIKATO

Written by Sue Edmonds.

***You are never too old to have your first solo exhibition. Two members of the Waikato group Artnexus – Jean Horn and Vicki Carruthers – are exhibiting solo in adjoining galleries at ArtsPost in Hamilton from July to August. It will be 95-year-old Jean’s first solo exhibition.***

Exhibiting is not a new thing for these artists. Both were founding members of Artnexus which has been exhibiting for 18 years now, including shows at ArtsPost, the Wallace Gallery in Morrinsville, The Estuary Arts Centre at Orewa, and the Depot Gallery at Devonport. So visitors will be familiar with their work.

This year, as well as participating in the group show, Jean and Vicki decided to exhibit their landscape paintings side by side, with Vicki in the Ida Cary Gallery and Jean in the Margot Phillips Gallery at ArtsPost. However Vicki’s *In Form* and Jean’s *Waikato Reflections* display very different styles and experiences.

Jean has lived in and around the Waikato all her life, with many years spent farming. Her works present her perception of progression in land use, earlier farming practices, the rhythm of the seasons, and the generational commitment to the land. They recognise the extent of change in agriculture, and the effects of modernisation and current projects.

Vicki is drawn to landscapes and land features with strong forms that have been shaped by extremes. Her Waikato abstract paintings seek to

capture the essence of land and coast, with underlying permanent structures overlain by changes in use and the seasons. She also sculpts in marble, using each stone’s characteristics to shape her form, reflecting the permanence of landforms. Both art forms will be included in her display.

These shows combined will provide visitors with a comprehensive landscape experience of the Waikato: from structured abstracts in oils and three dimensional sculptures, to more realistic paintings in acrylic. All are reflective of Waikato’s different moods and atmosphere.

The exhibition opens on 20 July and closes on 20 August. [N](#)



*'Catching Oysters' - Vicki Carruthers.*



*'Key Elements' - Vicki Carruthers.*



*'Sundown' - Jean Horn.*



*'Fieldday Dawning' - Jean Horn.*

# GAYNOR NAIRN

By Megan McIsaac

## A Study – Whangarei Heads

*Gaynor Nairn is a talented artist with her own distinct style. While visiting her exhibition, which ran from the 29 May to 1 July 18 at Reyburn House in Whangarei, I came across a young gentleman*

*who was very taken by “the clean lines and colours” of Gaynor’s work. I heartily agree and in fact own two of Gaynor’s fabulous works.*



“I’ve attended many workshops, short courses, and tutoring from wherever I’ve been living. My most recent was six weeks with Lawrence Berry in Whangarei. At that course I was the only watercolour artist and at the end I saw no reason to change mediums. A year with Kimbra Taylor in Raumati had set the medium for me. Jackie Pearson in Wellington and Pauline Hailwood in Otaki also played a part in encouraging and continuing my love of and at times frustration with watercolour.

“I’ve exhibited my paintings in the Whangarei Heads Arts Trail with some success, if sales equate to success? I’m grateful for the encouragement of friends and family to this end. I was a stoneware potter, a member of the NZ Society of Potters for over 30 years so I am familiar with the exhibition scene and the difficulty of placing hours of work beside price. For most artists that is not realistic but we couldn’t not do it?”

See more of Gaynor’s work here:  
[www.gaynornairn.weebly.com/](http://www.gaynornairn.weebly.com/)



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# JACKI KEY

*Pursuing your passion as a career seems like common sense if you want to do work you will love, but when what you love becomes your day job, passion may quickly be smothered by toil.*

For photographer Jacki Key, making time for personal work is key in fighting off nine-to-five malaise, as it keeps the things she cares most about in the frame and ensures her love for the craft stays alive.

Our relationship with water is essential and complex, based on how we work, play, and live. In 'The Story of a Raindrop', Jacki examines the pervading influence of water on our

lives portrayed through a photographic essay of the Waihou River.

Blue Spring at the upper Waihou is internationally acclaimed for the purity of its water. The spring is fed from the Mamaku Plateau. It takes up to 100 years for the water to filter through the earth before emerging as the Blue Spring. The result is so pure and clean that it appears as a beautiful blue colour, while being virtually clear.

As the water moves from its purest underground form through wetland, bush, farmland and settlements, the quality of the water is compromised.

'Story of a raindrop' is produced to show what we are in danger of losing. Opening night is Thursday 19th July from 5:30pm - 730pm. Proceeds will benefit education and preservation of our precious waterways. [N](#)

## Lysaght Watt Gallery TRUST AWARDS 2018

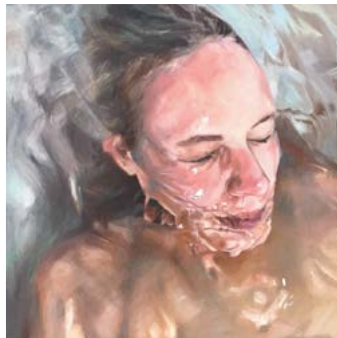
The inaugural Lysaght Watt Trust Art Awards were held in 2013 in the Lysaght Watt Gallery in Hawera, Taranaki.

The major prize of \$3000, along with several other sponsored prizes, has continued to attract entries each year from artists throughout New Zealand. An esteemed member of the New Zealand art community is invited each year to choose the overall winner. A gala evening is held at the Lysaght Watt Gallery to announce the winners and open the exhibition, with all works for sale on the night.

A different theme is selected annually and the theme for 2018 was 'Rising'.

All entries were required to comply with this theme. The sixth Lysaght Watt Trust Art Awards 2018 were announced at the gala opening on 3 May. A crowd of over 75 artists, sponsors, invited guests and Friends of the Gallery were in attendance. Judge Bill Milbank QSO spoke on the high quality of the works on show and complimented the artists on their work. A big thank you goes to the Lysaght Watt Trust which sponsors the Overall prize and also gives the Committee an administration fund to run the award show. We extend our thanks to all our other sponsors who have come on board to support and encourage the artists with prizes.

The theme for 2019 is 'Time out'. [N](#)



**TOP FROM LEFT:** • The Lysaght Watt Trust Overall Award: Nour Hassan, • The Meremere/Ohangai Rural Women Highly Commended 2D award: Joon-Hee Park

**BELOW FROM LEFT:** • The Neil Walker and Family Highly Commended 3D Award: Blue W Black, • The Greaves Electrical commended Award for 2D: Joy Prendergast, • The Beccard Motors commended Award for 3D: Di West, • The Tandem Group for The Local Artist Award: Jean Finer.

# PETERS DOIG MARLBOROUGH ART AWARDS 2018

By Helen Ballinger



*The Marlborough Art Society has been running the PDMAA in their Blenheim galleries for 18 years. The annual exhibition shows the work of artists working in traditional painting media, from all over New Zealand.*

A new award was added this year to a total of six awards up for grabs. The WildTomato Local Artist Award (\$200 plus a year's subscription to WildTomato magazine) for an artist from Marlborough or Nelson was won by Val Griffith-Jones from Picton for her acrylic painting 'From French Pass Road'. Judges commented: "Decisively antinaturalistic, the bold brush strokes, dramatic shapes and contrasting colours convey a personal subjective vision."

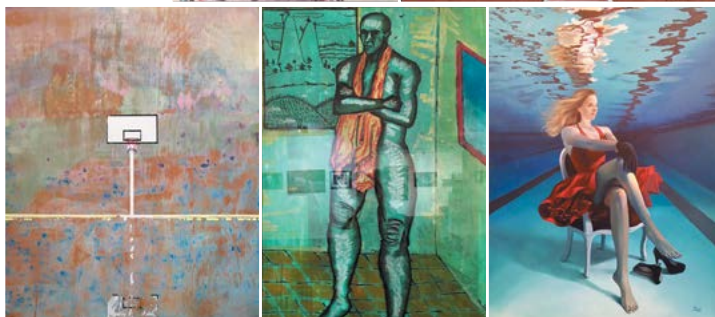
The James Picture Framing Award (\$300 plus a year's subscription to NZ Artist Magazine) was won by Anne Baldock from Dunedin for her mixed media work 'Fly on the Ceiling'. Judges commented: "The fundamentals of human existence are explored in this delightfully humorous painting."

The First National Real Estate Marlborough Award (\$500 plus a year's subscription to NZ Artist Magazine) was won by Sally Barron from Nelson for her oil on paper painting 'Jacqui'. Judges commented: "Abstract qualities present in the background space, light and contrasting tonal values add to the overall strength of this fabulous work."

The Tom and Nola Hurford Memorial Award (\$500 plus a year's subscription to NZ Artist Magazine) was won by Romelia Lopez-Diaz from Blenheim for her mixed media painting 'The Man in the Corner'. Judges comment: "Line has been used both as an interpretive tool and an expressive element in its own right. The limited palette of contrasting colours and deliberate distortion add to the overall strength of this work."

The second prize sponsored by Marlborough Art Society (\$1000 plus a year's subscription to NZ Artist Magazine) was won by Marc Blake from Queenstown for his mixed media on board painting 'Park'. Judges commented: "A sophisticated work that challenges aesthetic values inviting the viewer to question, interpret, reinterpret and discover."

The Supreme Award sponsored by Peters Doig Accountants (\$3000 plus a year's subscription to NZ Artist Magazine) was won by Ingrid Boot from Orewa, Auckland for her acrylic painting 'Lauren Boyle'. Judges commented: "Well executed brush work and comprehensive understanding of space, light and form are clearly evident in this striking painting." N



FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: 'From French Pass Road' by Val Griffith-Jones. 'Jacqui' by Sally Barron. 'Fly on the ceiling' by Anne Baldock. 'Park' by Mark Black. 'Man in the Corner' by Romelia Lopez Diaz. 'Lauren Boyle' by Ingrid Boot.



## GREATER AUCKLAND

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## 2018



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Painting by Kate Litherland 13-15 Art

# THE CAMBRIDGE OPEN STUDIOS ART TOUR

Written by two visitors with a camera.

*This event involved travelling around Cambridge visiting artists and their work spaces. We were excited about what we might find. Everyone was hoping for fine autumnal weather but Saturday began with rain and low cloud. Fortunately this disappeared.*



Our tour began on the Sunday in rural Te Miro, with a studio that looked out onto the Waikato hills. The first surprise was that there was not just one artist exhibiting but two: Beverley Lawrenson exhibiting lovely colourful paintings while her sister Lynley had a display of small delicate embroidery and jewellery.

The next stop was within the Cambridge town boundary to visit a studio that was previously an old brick garage. Here were small sculptures created with passion by Kate Burchett. Just a display, nothing for sale; then a second surprise as we discovered her husband Roger who was making beautiful guitars in a small adjacent space. This was already beginning to be a wonderful art tour.



We went on to visit Carole Hughes who had opened her home to the public. People were almost in a queue to experience this artist's colourful brushstrokes and feel the sense of joy in her paintings. We were made welcome and felt privileged to be invited in.

Then on to see Jill Matthew, a fused-glass artist who works in half a garage. She began a few years ago by melting glass in a small container in her microwave but has since moved on to owning a large kiln. Her husband and a young daughter also chatted to visitors who were interested in the colours, powders and bits of recycled glass.

Realising that we were hungry, we dashed to a Cambridge café for a quick lunch before proceeding to the Cambridge Camera Club. Members had put on a really good display with quality framed photos. Membership is growing and their talent was obvious in the photos displayed. They need to exhibit more often.

Now down a rural road to visit Catherine Haworth. She was the only pastel artist on the tour and had lovely images of horses and dogs that were hung on either side of a covered walkway and on easels. These display easels were just right for her subjects – made out of old totara batons.

Next we visited the Cambridge wood turners and Barry Harding, including work by an elderly master carver called Roger Dean. We wanted to touch the pieces and stroke the smooth wood. There were totem poles and mushrooms, walking sticks, vases, bowls, and those very special carved pieces by Roger. Just amazing. Then another surprise, as Dot Harding had her quilting on display including a work called 'Picasso'.

On we rushed, this time to find Phil Mead and Richard Horner who were still enthusiastic after many people had been in the conservatory looking at their watercolour and oil paintings as well as the garden.

Santie Cronje was next on our list. Santie had opened her home and we wandered from room to room enjoying original art or prints that were for sale. Her story telling art is very appealing and people were obviously pleased



# EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

with being able to talk to Santie and see where she painted.

Roto-o-rangi was the next place to travel to with Janet Smith's woolshed our target. Here in her kilns, Janet produces ceramic tableware from fish to candle holders, plates to vases. Seeing the kilns, the materials of her work and the results gives a much better insight than simply buying something without knowing the artist.

Into the car again. The next stop was Chrissy Taylor, her sister Felicity Merhtens and mother Diane Buchanan. We were impressed as all three were painting in the renovated barn that has become their studio. Each artist is very different. There were both originals and prints available. Again, visitors were delighted to be able to watch them painting.


We found Di Tocker and her cast glass studio with some art by Jennie de Groot as well. Her husband was able to talk us through the whole process in her workspace. We were impressed – how many partners know all about the method? And he told the story well.

We were running out of time. It was nearly 4pm by the time we walked through the gate to see the art of Kirsten McIntosh, displayed on her veranda, in the sunroom where she paints, and through her hallway. There was variety – acrylic works and resin-coated art. There were circles and rectangles, and wine glasses waiting to be filled after a busy weekend. We left her in peace.

It was now after 4pm. All artists' studios should be closed, the artists exhausted – but we made our last call to Lindsay Muirhead. He emerged from his studio which he hadn't been able to get to because he had been so busy answering questions and showing people what he did. On the easel was a painting still to be finished.

Our apologies to the artists that we didn't get to – Wayne Sinclair who paints impressionistic works in his gallery in the centre of Cambridge; Irina Gronous from Lithuania who paints in oils; Diane Parker who uses clay at her 'Spotted Dove' studio; Grant Jack who does droll prints; the Heritage Gallery; and the members of the Cambridge Society of Arts who had the banners flying and the music playing at their 'Painting Place'.

The intention was to give people the experience of seeing where artists work and if possible watch them create. It worked. We, like the other visitors, enjoyed ourselves. The presentation by all artists was excellent with a lot of hard work having been done.

For the artists the motto was "this is what I do, this is where I do it". Thank you. 





## PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING THE USE OF PASTEL

*The Pastel Artists of New Zealand recently had their National Annual Exhibition and Convention in Timaru. The Purely Pastel exhibition was held at the wonderful Aigantighe Gallery from Saturday 7 April to 22 April. It showcased the best of pastel work from our members. Several awards are given and this year the judges were Hamish Pettengell, curator of the Gallery; Walter Scott, founder of PANZ; and visiting Master Pastellist Leonie Duff from Tasmania.*



*Max Currie, President of PANZ, presenting the Master Pastellist award to Julie Freeman.*



*FAR LEFT: Past President Judith White was awarded the honour of Life Membership for her services to PANZ.*

*LEFT: Christine Abernethy working on her charcoal sketch.*

This juried exhibition is an opportunity for members to enter their best work and compete with other regional members from around the country. It also showcases to the public the wonderful medium of pastel that we are all passionate about.

This year saw a new section displayed called The Master Circle where master pastel artists showcase their work. On display were paintings by Julie Greig and Julie Freeman.

Our yearly convention is looked forward to by many members who find this event a great time to catch up with regional friends and newer members of PANZ. There is always a busy agenda over three days and this year was no exception. Julie Greig, the area representative, did a lot of the groundwork, supported by the PANZ

Committee. Friday saw us enjoying a bus trip to Oamaru where we visited the Steam Punk Museum and galleries, had a walk round the town, and lunch at Riverstone Restaurant. The opening of the exhibition, awards ceremony and a social hour were held on Friday night. There were a range of activities on Saturday and Sunday, from the Annual General Meeting and roundtable forum discussions, to demonstrations and art activities, pastel portfolio presentation and the much anticipated judges' floor walk around the exhibition. This is always a highlight – an opportunity to get feedback on the winning works, and other pastel paintings. The Convention dinner on Saturday night is always fun and informal, a time to relax and enjoy an evening meal together.

As an organisation, we love to celebrate the success of

# EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS



'Zeke' - Gavin Chai.



'Ngakuta Abstract 2' - Rose Rudd.



'A Place for a Bird' - Hannah Joynt.



'Maria of Eclectic Antiques' - Bill Burke.



'Troopers' - Julie Greig.



'She's Mine' - Michael Freeman.

## THIS YEAR'S AWARD WINNERS WERE:

**Winner – Gavin Chai with 'Zeke'.**

**Highly Commended – Rose Rudd with 'Ngakuta Abstract 2'.**

**Merit – Hannah Joynt with 'A Place for a Bird'.**

**Merit – Bill Burke with 'Maria of Eclectic Antiques'.**

**Merit – Michael Freeman with 'She's Mine'.**

**Merit – Rach McRobb with 'Seeking Sanctuary'.**

**Master Circle Winner – Julie Greig with 'Troopers'.**

**People's Choice – Julie Freeman with 'After The Rain'.**



'Seeking Sanctuary' - Rach McRobb.

our members in their artistic pursuits and Julie Freeman was awarded Master Pastelist this year.

This year's invited artist and judge was Leoni Duff, an internationally honoured Australian artist from Tasmania (see her website [www.art-in-pastel.com](http://www.art-in-pastel.com)). She has won many awards and tutors internationally. Leoni took two workshops during the Convention: 'Achieving a Powerful Landscape' and 'Silver and Lace, Learning to Paint Still Life.' She went on to other groups around the country sharing her expertise, and was very well received. Leoni also kindly did a portrait demonstration from a reference photo on Sunday, which she completed in her studio back in Australia. 📍



'After the Rain' - Julie Freeman.

# Nick Morte



***Born in Russia, Nick Morte attended art school as a teenager in the early 90s. Those years were hard in Russia and the teachers mostly worked for free, due to delays with salaries and insane inflation. The teachers were so dedicated that they often spent extra hours with the pupils, ensuring they got as much information as they could digest. However, instead of studying for a degree in fine art, Nick opted instead for civil law and qualified with a Bachelor Degree. He went on to become a tattooist, and now resides in Christchurch, where he is continuing his love affair with oil painting.***

**“**When I graduated from university, I already knew that I didn’t want to work as a lawyer but rather wanted to do something creative for a living. A few years before that, I’d tried tattooing a friend (just out of curiosity at first) and, by the time I finished my civil law studies, I was looking for a tattoo apprenticeship. This search led me to Moscow, where I stayed for a while and eventually became a well-established tattooist.”

In 2008 Nick started to travel, taking

his work as a tattoo artist with him. This journey lasted some years and took him to most of Europe, Australia and New Zealand. He finally decided to settle in Norway, staying there until 2016. But the Norwegian authorities deemed being a tattoo artist “not a real profession” – a decision that was baffling to Nick – and this meant he left Norway and the European Union.

He travelled to New Zealand and returned to painting again: “Just like at high school – painting to escape reality,

painting as self-medication, painting as a cure that heals the soul and clears the mind,” he says.

After taking a year off tattooing, he discovered that he might be able to make a living from painting. “This was the moment of true, infinite gratitude – I’m not trying to please the public but as long as my art seems to resonate with people, I’m happy to share it with wide audiences.”

Nick has found that working as an artist means everything to him. “Most of my old school friends are dead now because they drank themselves to death or overdosed on drugs. I managed to get away from that to become what I am now. But I have to keep pushing and challenge myself daily. If I stop moving, I will easily roll back to the very bottom of the hill that I have been climbing for so many years.”

Enjoying his social interactions as a tattoo artist, celebrating the various interesting personalities, people’s inner demons and beauty, provides a great deal of inspiration for Nick, as well as studying old and new folklore. “I have never wanted to do illustrations or actual portraits, rather I try and project objects through my own feelings, which often means a lot of distortion.”



***‘Fauna’ - 800 x 1000mm. Oil on canvas.***

However, the real 'fuel' for inspiration comes from nature: "I have to have woods or mountains within easy reach at all time, so I can function properly. I have always had this fascinating connection with forests, where I prefer to be alone. So much energy fills me that I can paint for a few days in a row after a good day's hiking."

As for the artists who have inspired Nick, he has this to say: "I have quite a few contemporary artists that I adore, but my heart truly belongs to 19th century Russian realism and classic symbolism. No matter how many times I have been to Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, I still get goose bumps every time I see the work of Ivan Kramskoi and Ilya Repin. I can feel the cold breeze when I look at Levitan's landscapes and smell the pine trees in Shishkin's forests. There are so many of them, but all my favourite painters pretty much belong to that same era in Russian realism: the 19th century, and only a few overlap to the 20th. Their technique is perfect and even though some people would find their subjects a bit boring, you just can't deny their excellence."

"Of course, I follow many modern artists as well: Paul Cristina, John Wentz and Nicola Samori are just the first three names that come to mind. My social media feed is full of outstanding, inspirational painters, and I love discovering new ones."

Freedom of expression is what Nick loves most about being an artist, something he feels passionately about and that can never be taken for granted. His particular ambition is to be recognised in the art world, at least on the same level he is recognised in the tattoo industry. "I'm not afraid of setting the bar high. I have accomplished a lot since I left my hometown and went chasing my dream, and another big step is really just another step. I'm full of determination."

Nick is currently working on a few music album covers in the form of actual paintings, which he is very excited about. "This is not only my self-expression, but also a collaboration with talented musicians that gave me the honour of illustrating their music. I used to do a lot of digital artwork before, but now I feel that everybody does it and the craft of cover art is losing its soul. I feel it is the same with movie and event posters; they all look awesome, but they also look the same. I'm trying to keep live painting alive, and I can't wait until these albums are released so I can actually show them. I'm obliged by the record label's contract to keep it secret until the announcement of the actual release date."

He is also using this time in New Zealand to work with his friend Andrew Swarbrick (featured in TNZAM Issue 17, July August 2016) at Andrew's custom tattoo shop in Christchurch, as well as painting large works during his spare time. "I'm happy to be here, I needed some peace and quiet and I'm enjoying it now."



*'Wanderer' - 600 x 800mm. Oil on canvas.*



*'Deep' - 1000 x 1000mm. Oil on canvas.*



*'Ad Missam' - 500 x 500mm. Oil on canvas.*

Discussing successes and obstacles, Nick feels his greatest success was when photos of his tattoo work were included in the exhibition at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, Norway, as part of the Take it personally – Stories of Jewellery and Adornment exhibition: "Being recognised by curators from the University of Oslo and the head of the National History Museum was worth more than all the trophies I've won at tattoo conventions."



*'Emily' - 600 x 600mm. Oil on canvas.*

He feels his greatest obstacle is his nationality, "I don't really fit in Russia, and I have to live overseas. I wish I was able to be happy and productive in my home country, but Russia is not really friendly to open-minded and creative people, and I have never felt welcome there, even when I was a child."

Nick has learnt that failure is an organic part of the learning process and is inevitable. "We all get upset about our mistakes, but it's natural, and there's always a good lesson behind every mistake. The most valuable lesson that I have learned over the year is to give myself space for possible mistakes, to prevent big failures. For example, I have stopped using a light table and projector for tracing because, while it makes things more precise, it limits me. So I'm trying to start my paintings quite loose, and gradually move from blocking large (and not necessarily accurate) shapes at the beginning, to small strokes at the end, when the shape and colour balance are correct. This approach gives me more freedom and makes it easier to correct possible mistakes without getting stuck on a loop of redoing something and just making it worse."

'The Beyond' is Nick's favourite subject, a twilight zone between dreams and reality or life and death. He has always been absorbed with symbolism in different cultures but feels the theme does not really need an explanation. "The mystery is much more fascinating than the reality and I prefer the viewer to have their own interpretation."

Nick's wife Nina is a professional model and photographer and assists him with his ideas, sometimes posing for him. Her wizardry with lighting is phenomenal. "One of our recent projects took us on an adventurous tour, shooting in abandoned churches deep in Russia. I can't wait to start painting from these references, they are truly amazing."

"For new artists, I say never give up. If you know what you want, you will get there – just don't expect it to be an easy ride. Take action today because there might be no tomorrow."



*'Clarum Somnium - Lucid Dreaming' - 400 x 500mm. Oil on canvas.*



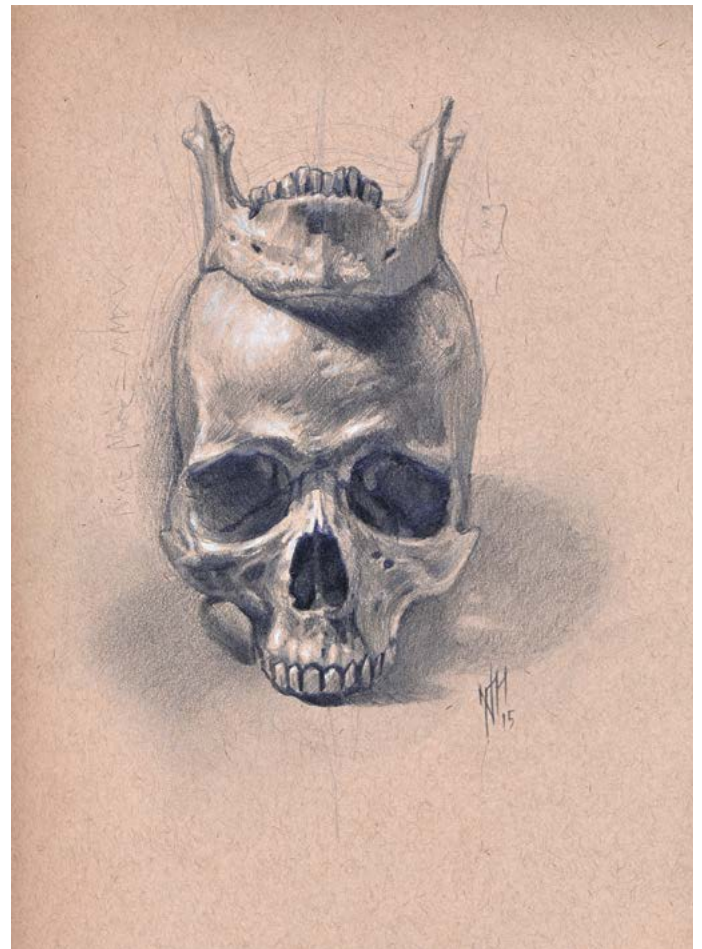
'Peace Out' - 700 x 800mm. Oil on canvas.



'Sisters' - 800 x 1000mm. Oil on canvas.

I saw so many talented people who went to try their fortune in big cities, dreaming of making it in music, art or acting. Most ended up getting full time office jobs instead, just to feel safe and pay the bills in time – after all, it's only temporary, right? Well, there's nothing more permanent than temporary. They still work as managers, and still dream about making it big but everyone knows that it will never happen. Dreaming big is not enough. Without hard work and sacrifice, your dream is nothing but a daze."

Nick has work all over the world, but you can learn more about him on <https://www.facebook.com/nickmortart/>. [N](#)



'King' - 200 x 300mm. Graphite on coloured paper.

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## SEVEN NEW COLOURS FROM WILLIAMSBURG

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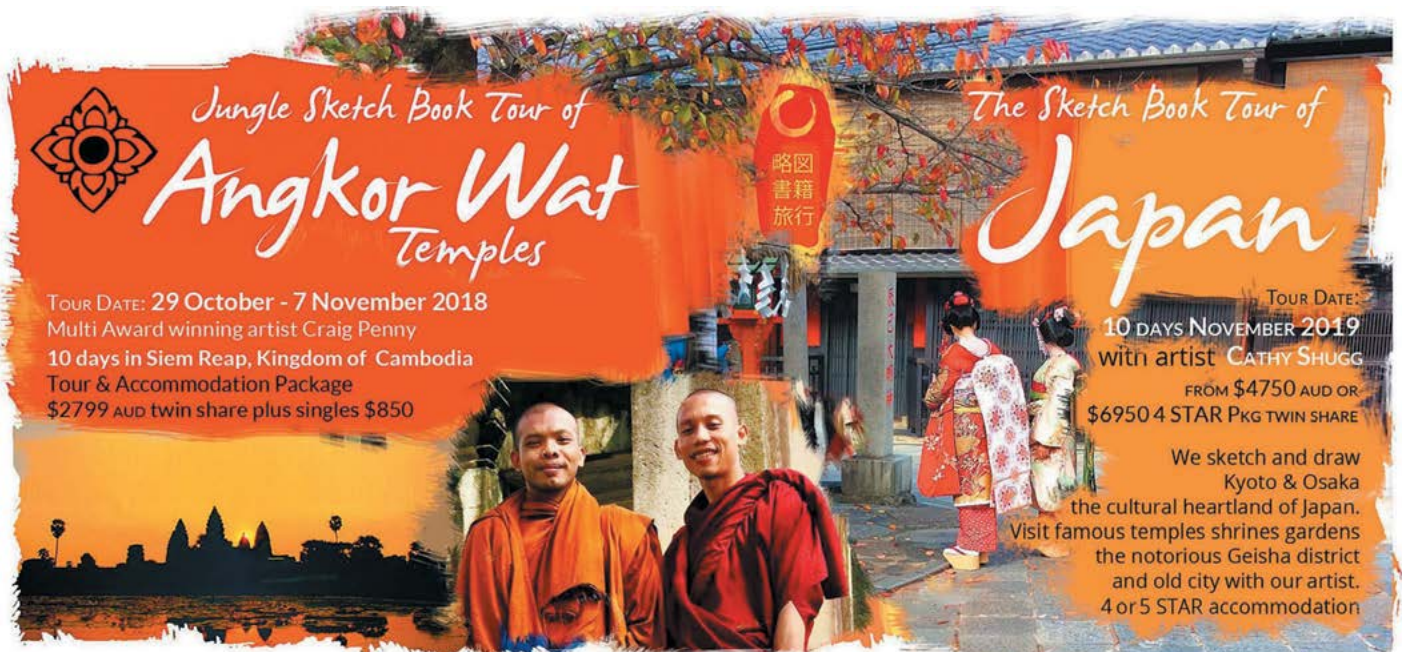
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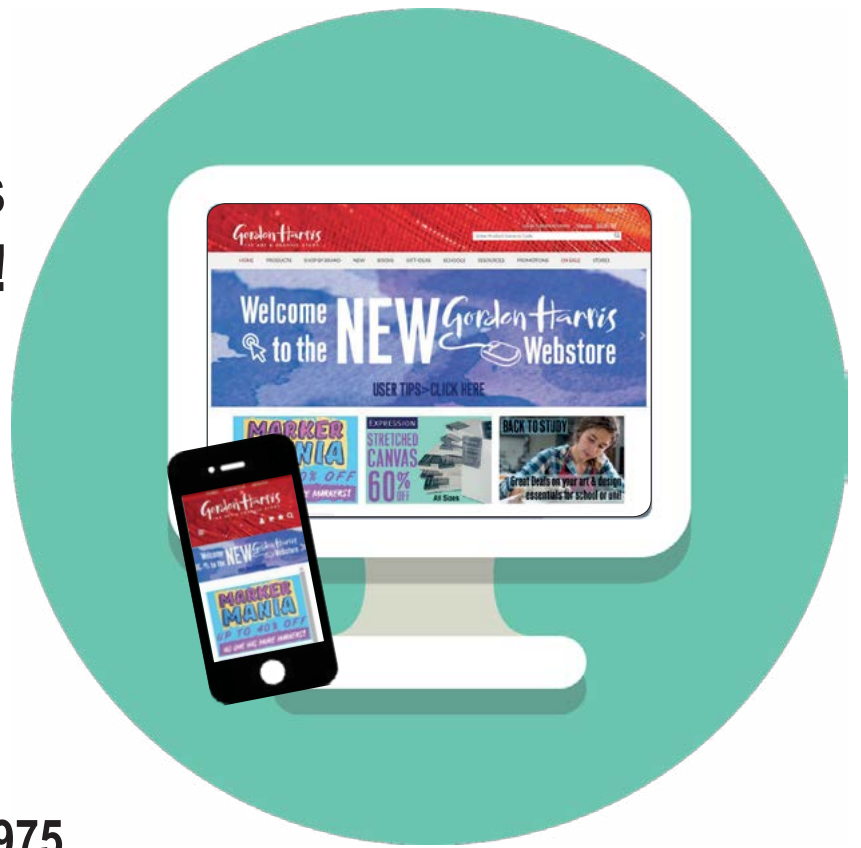
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