

# Capturing the rhythm of life

When teaching the process of creating art, I always find myself instructing students to 'think like a six year old'. This uninhibited view of the world, a mind still full of wonder and magic, is what I enjoy translating artistically. To stimulate the senses with the sweep of pure colour is my greatest delight.

Capturing the life of a subject, be it a tree, a building or a person, is a worthy challenge. All have personalities, and, like a chameleon, can change their colour and mood many times. As Australian artist, Roland Wakelin exclaimed... "I want to be able to make the picture sing with colour", I too, aim to evoke a sense of place and atmosphere via the canvas.

I am inspired by everyday subjects. Those objects and locations which surround me. I believe it is always best to paint and draw from your own experiences. This quest for experience, to be emersed in the everyday, has led me to lands far and wide. From dark French alley ways to searing Spanish sunsets. But painting and drawing should not merely consist of duplicating what is in front of you. The response, that creative dialogue one has with the subject matter, is the exciting, intangible medium for an artist. It's not what it looks like, but what it does to you, that counts. Often difficult to articulate, Edward Hopper said it best... "If I could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint."

My desire to convey 'how it feels' through colour and mood, using paint, pastel and charcoal is a delicious yet demanding (pre)occupation.

Being present to the rhythm of life is just a beginning. The recall of such sensory explorations are often an amalgamation of reality and experience. What we remember is often a dramatised version of the physical. This focus in my work has helped me develop a style that I define as 'fragmatism'. A style which aims to capture mood through heightened sensations of form and colour.

I have admired many great artists in Australia from the past who used exaggerated colour, shape and paint application to decipher their subject matter. Grace Cossington Smith, John Peter Russell, Horace Trenerry and Clarice Beckett to name a few. Others abroad, the Impressionists, the Fauves and Nabis, also sought to reveal an 'inner life' in their subjects in a new way. Artist's such as Delaunay, Kandinsky and Picasso experimented with colour and materials. Drawing their inspiration from nature, everyday happenings they challenged the way we perceive and translate experience.

My commitment now, is to be prepared to work hard at creating pieces that will engage others and transport them to an unknown wonderland that somehow seems vaguely familiar.

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