

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL ARTISTS

AUSTRALIA'S
FAVOURITE

Artists'

Palette

No 91

ARTISTS' CHRISTMAS
HUGE PRODUCT FEATURE

**FULL OF TIPS,
TECHNIQUES
AND IDEAS**

NOTHING BUT THE BEST
MEET MARIE GREEN

DRAWING INSPIRATION
WITH PAUL DORIN

A\$8.99

incl GST
NZ \$10.20 incl GST
US \$9.95
CAN \$9.95



7 62330 00015 7

EXCITING ARTISTS' DEMONSTRATIONS

Marie Green

Nothing but the Best

By Marie Green

This artist can never give away or sell any work which she does not regard as her best. Now she can look at any of her paintings and still be pleased with them ... and that's real peace of mind.



I have reached the magical French milestone of being 'a woman of a certain age'. My life began in Sydney quite a few years ago.

Now I live an almost idyllic life with my husband Tom ... on our hill near the Queensland town of Agnes Water 1770.

Five years ago, I left my professional life as a systems engineer and project manager in computer-telephony interfacing. Tom and I retired and decided to follow a relaxed lifestyle and enjoy the warm winds in our little part of paradise. After designing our new home, I felt an irresistible urge to start painting. That occurred on 16 October 2007, to be precise.

My studio looks out over green valleys to blue hills ... with the only sound being the native birds as they chatter amongst themselves.

I cannot imagine having any desire to paint something ugly or grotesque. Our home is our 'Paradise Found' and it evokes the strongest emotions and desires in me to be creative and expressive with my art in a way that will add beauty, and perhaps joy.

Every decade since 1975, I have done one or two oil paintings and then stopped. But art for me now is different, almost overwhelming; to the exclusion of everything except my husband.

I am largely self-taught, but my older sister was a fine artist whose talent was



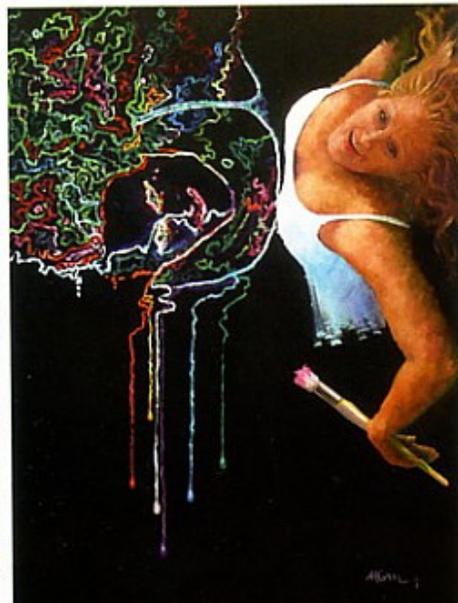
obvious from the age of about nine. My parents ensured she had the right lessons to foster her talent, and she continued taking workshops and lessons long after she became a successful artist. In the mid-'80s, we went together to Europe for five months to explore all the art museums. I learnt so much from that experience; much more than I realised at the time.

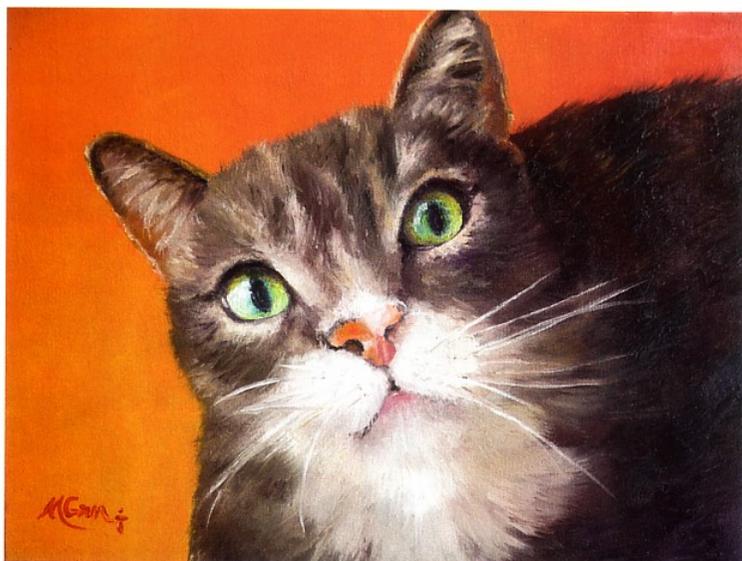
My way of 'teaching myself' was expensive but effective. Probably, the climate change police should have

been pursuing me. I only paint with professional oils on good stretched canvas. I follow all the techniques for creating oil paintings that will last several lifetimes (if not longer). However, from November 2007 to September 2008, I burnt 18 completed canvases. I can never give away or sell anything I think is not my best. And this has paid off because now I can look at any of my paintings and still be pleased with them. That's real peace of mind. No skeletons!

The reason I burn unacceptable work is symbolic for me – it burns into my head the mistake (or mistakes) I made. Fortunately I haven't made the same mistakes twice, although I have been very effective at making totally new mistakes!

All of my work is representational, with a good dollop of impressionism. I am perfectly happy to stand on the shoulders of giants such as Rembrandt, Monet, Roberts and Streeton ... just as they crafted their styles from previous





Masters. And I will not be frightened off (or have my ambitions deflated) by the 'art world' reviews praising as 'innovative and original art' such objects as embalmed sharks floating in some yellow fluid; or heralding as a masterpiece a painting of white on white with white highlights.

I have my style, I have my respect and passion, and I believe in myself. Equally importantly, Tom believes in me and my artistic aims. I don't need a gimmick. I am not going to do 100 paintings of the same object just so people will be able to spot a Marie Green on their friend's wall without having to decide the appeal or merits of the work. But they may of course spot a Marie Green painting by recognising my style eventually, I hope.

Another fallacy painfully repeated (by those who seem paid to repeat) is that to make one's mark as an artist today, one may only paint the current period. Thank goodness Zhiwei Tu, for example, ignores such claustrophobic restrictions.

I have started a series of 30 paintings covering everyday life in Queensland in the period 1895 to 1985. I will be working on this series while also doing commissions and meeting my other painting commitments. My aim is to bring to life memories which my father, my grandmother, my mum and my auntie have shared with me over many years. The first one I completed, '1895 Nubian Goats of Winton', celebrates the big strong goats that could stand tall enough to pop their head under a man's armpit. Originally they came to Australia from North Africa via England on the sailing ships, to provide fresh milk to the passengers.

There is only one significant piece of my art in my home. It is a self portrait, hanging in my studio, titled 'Allegory of Painting' ... in applause to the marvellous painter Artemisia Gentileschi.

I think an artist's portfolio is incomplete without a self portrait – and I wanted this one to show my transition from the technology world to my life in art.

Aside from the self portrait, there is only one painting of mine that Tom and I really would have loved to keep, and that was 'Right of Way'. But we agreed that – at this stage in my art career – my major work was better off going to the collectors who purchased it. They already had two of my smaller pieces in their fine collection

I N S I G H T



of art, and they are the sort of people who will treasure it and show it off in the best environment. What more could an artist ask for?

All my other pieces are currently exhibited at the Wide Bay Gallery in Maryborough, or waiting to go into an art competition; or they have already been sold. My very first sales (through my website) were to Canada, then the United States; and then Australians started catching on – thank goodness!

I haven't entered many art competitions due to the distances involved and the size of canvas I like to work on. However, I have been really thrilled with the success I have had ... especially this year winning first prize in the Queensland Alumina Ltd award with 'Right of Way'.

I have quite a broad choice of subjects ranging through animals, flowers, marine scenes, Outback scenes and portraits – and I am

drafting some figurative work at present. My husband and I work as a team in this, as in most things. He has a strong input at the conception stage and is my totally indispensable Head Critic. His very sharp eye and valuable sense of 'what works' have saved me from making some awful errors.

I hope we live for at least another 100 years ... because I have so much yet to develop and create! ■



Oils

Down the Barcoo

By Marie Green

Nothing, not even a single blade of grass, is just one colour ... and it is the joy of the artist to achieve a work of vibrant beauty. There is never a need to be stingy with colour.



STEP SIX AND FINAL STEP

STEP ONE

I often work from plein air sketches done with oil crayons and combined with photographic references. However 'Down the Barcoo' arrived in my favourite way – just as an almost

finished image in my mind's eye.

After preparing the canvas with two additional coats of gesso, lightly sanding at each coat, I loosely measured up the canvas into thirds vertically and horizontally. This brought the 'wide

open space' into manageable sections to commence the charcoal outlines.

I roughed in my centre of interest (being the mounted drover), and from there laid in the masses for the lightest and darkest areas before outlining the

MATERIALS

- East Art stretched canvas
– 30 x 40 inches.
- Atelier Gesso Primer – White.
- Winsor & Newton
Artists' Oil Colours.
- Floor easel.
- Sandpaper – P240 and P400.
- Faithful gesso brush.
- Vine charcoal.
- Kneadable eraser.
- Workable Matt Fixative.
- Shaving brush.
- Three long-handled bristle brushes.
- Twelve short-handled brushes
in a variety of sizes.
- Walnut Oil and Low Odour Turps.
- Winsor & Newton Artists'
Retouching Varnish.
- Imagination and memories.

dusty herd. I included just the suggestion of a hill and trees to develop heights. The canvas stayed on my drying wall for a day or so as I stood back, walked away, sat and cogitated, and made adjustments until I was satisfied.

If I cannot see movement at the sketch stage, then the finished painting is never going to work for me. Maybe that is why I don't attempt 'still lifes'.

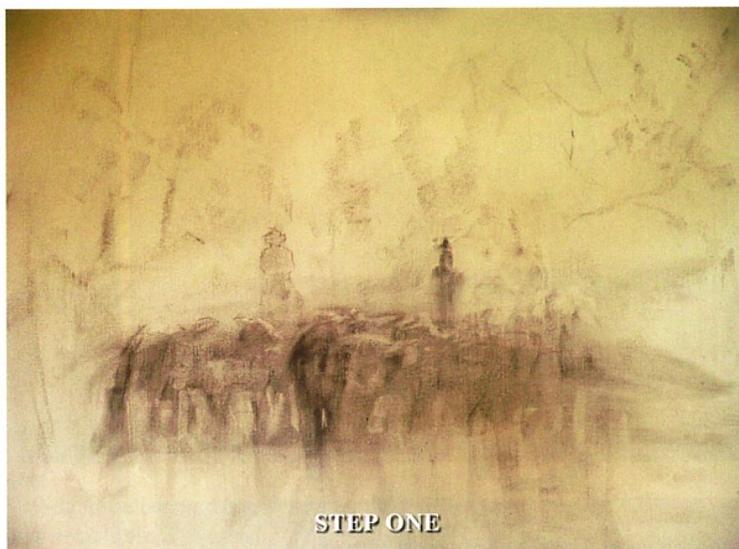
When I was comfortable that the sketch was the right backbone for the painting, I laid it flat on the deck and – with my old fashioned men's shaving brush – flicked off the excess charcoal. Next I sprayed with fixative and allowed the canvas a day to fully dry.

STEP TWO

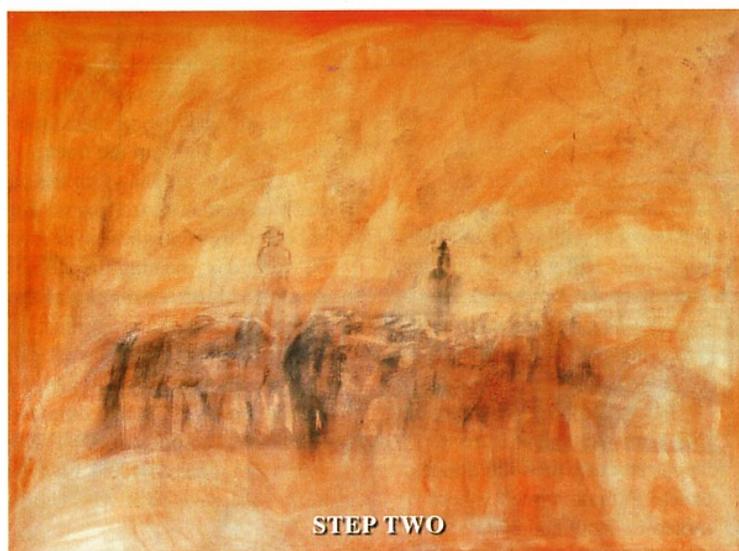
I laid on a light turps wash of Cadmium Orange that would blend or rub away, depending on my needs for an area. Besides, a wash removes the blandness from the canvas and gets an early excitement going.

STEP THREE

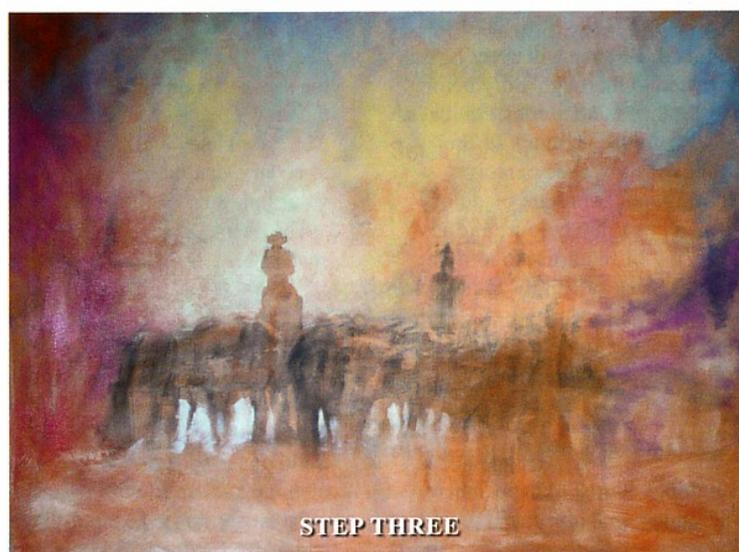
This is what I call the 'underpants' stage. It makes or breaks the final work. Here I laid in the broad masses of colours I wanted to play under the finished layers – peeping through, in a sense. It was more than a



STEP ONE

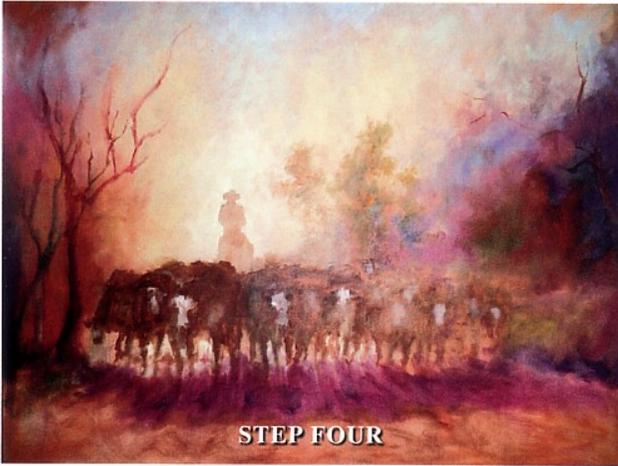


STEP TWO

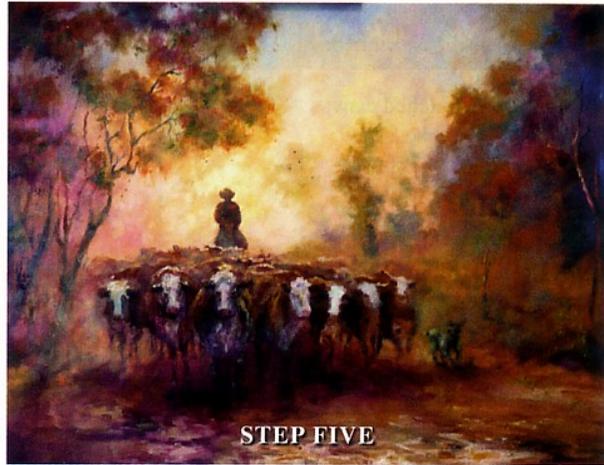


STEP THREE

DEMONSTRATION



STEP FOUR



STEP FIVE

ARTIST'S HINTS AND TIPS

- For impact: Remember warm against cool; hard against soft; and dark against light.
- Never try to add over paint that isn't either still wet or totally dry.
- More than three pigments mixed is begging to be mud.
- Paint or draw something every day.
- Do not sell or give away anything that is not your best. Burn it.
- Never buy any green in a tube except Phthalo. Green is best mixed by hand and eye.

stain and less than a discreet layer. It needed to thoroughly dry before proceeding, and that took two days.

I love to use as much of the rainbow as my eyes perceive. Nothing, not even one blade of grass, is just one colour; and it is the joy of the artist to allow visual senses full flight to achieve a work of beauty. There is never a need to be stingy with colour. Well ... that's my take on it.

STEP FOUR

Fun things started to happen here. The drover took on substance and I began work on the cattle as they

jostled and bumped each other along the road. Basic shapes with emphasis on darks and lights quickly progressed to interactions in the herd. The warm highlights at play on the beasts' backs were complemented by the cooler lights in their faces and reflections from the track.

Shapes and emphasis on the canvas periphery came next. A cattle dog appeared from nowhere – he lived but for a day, meeting his ultimate demise with all the dignity of these faithful friends. An artist must always be on guard for such unexpected visitors. They may 'seem like a good idea at the time' but can ultimately ruin a good composition. I also found a very pregnant cow leading the herd – she gave birth very rapidly!

STEP FIVE

Careful checking of edges now kept the sense of movement and directed the viewer's eye. The secondary areas were completed and checked again – to be sure that both the hues and the values played well off each other.

This was a large painting with a lot of shapes and quite an extensive palette.

STEP SIX

When the work was dry, I scumbled some of the dust effects with Phthalo Blue, Winsor Violet and Indian Yellow; and toned down some other areas with Raw Sienna.

So far for this painting, I think I had walked at least 25 kilometres

to and from the easel. I like to use short-handled brushes ... but of course I like to view my work from at least three to four metres away.

My favourite Rembrandt quote is: "A painting is not made to be sniffed!"

FINAL STEP

A wonderful artist friend and mentor of mine, Talya Johnson of Alaska, has many a time gently admonished me for rushing the penultimate step. And as in most matters, she is right. She calls this 'proofreading a painting'. Basically, it means taking the time to check for drafting errors such as shadow going in the wrong direction; or something like a six-fingered hand. It is vital to check that the finished painting delivers the initial concept (or better); and to ensure consistency of temperature in the scene; and check that all edges lead the viewer to the focal point. In short, one mustn't rush through the checklist that every artist keeps in their head or written down.

I had kept my palette 'leavings' in an airtight container so that any fixes I needed to make at this stage would match.

Since there were a few of dull spots where I reworked a small area, I freshened these up with Winsor & Newton Artists' Retouching Varnish.

The signature came last. I like the signature to blend into the work rather than interrupt the viewer's eye. I put the year on the back of the canvas; and I recommend a final varnish after 12 months if required. ■

