



CENTENARY EXHIBITION: Agnes Water artist Marie Green has been commissioned by Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum for a 2015 exhibition on 100 years of life in Queensland.

Artist travels in search of history

Agnes Water's Marie Green works on a commissioned exhibition of 100 years of life in Queensland



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REPORTER

WHILE road-tripping through large and unknown Queensland towns with her husband Tom, artist Marie Green met an old man who would inspire her artwork for years to come.

"I had this miner bloke ... he was 92 or 93 - he was very with it - no dementia," the Agnes Water artist says.

After a long day at the mines, the old man enjoyed his nightly ritual of taking his horse home with him from work.

"He was saying it was a rough life down there but we didn't have to worry too much about clothes," Marie says. "(They) had to wear headlamps and boots - and nothing else because it was too hot!"

"He said it was only ever a problem when we had visitors come down."

Marie, 67, is perched on her dining room chair when we visit her Agnes Water home.

She's seated among opened paint tins, brushes and a large wooden easel, while sharing stories from her

road-trip experience.

In 2015 the award-winning artist will launch her 30-piece exhibition 100 years of life in Queensland at the Gladstone Regional Council.

Marie said her exhibition would begin in the 1900s and would showcase an array of softer-coloured oil paintings to tell stories of life many years ago.

"What I wanted with this is to start off in the 1900s with the softer colours because in those days they didn't have bright coloured clothes," Marie says.

Marie's back catalogue is filled with vibrant coloured paintings - she's never met a colour she didn't like.

"I always said I'd never paint anything that wasn't beautiful and contained joy," she says.

"But I'm about to break my rule because the next paintings are for the 100 year exhibition."

Early last year Marie and Tom hopped in the car and travelled around the state for 10 days, searching for



travelling to Mackay, Charters Towers, Emerald, Maryborough and Gympie.

"We could have been gone a month except for the babies," she says, pointing to her yappy purebred Lhasa Apso.

Each day Marie and Tom would be on the hunt for locals to share their life stories.

One of Marie's paintings, Cook's Picnic, was inspired by a lady from Chinchilla who shared stories of her Saturday afternoon picnics with some young girls and a cook in the 1920s.

Marie points to a canvas with tranquil, rural landscaping, a few girls in shawls and a cook scattered by an outback fire - all painted in soft colours.

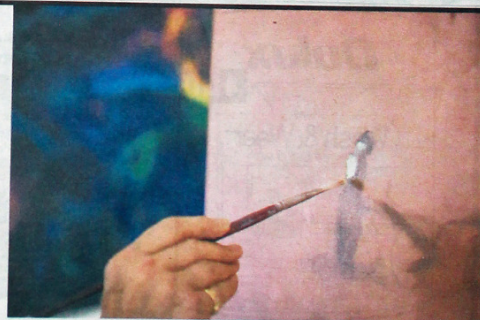
"She (the cook) always wore black silk gowns to the floor, but never anything else," Marie says.

Before the group would leave, they would ensure the fire was out.

"The cook would go and stand over the fire, lift her skirt and piddle on the fire to make sure it was out," Marie



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laughs.

"This lady - she must have been about 80 ... was pretty chuffed with herself telling us this naughty thing."

Before venturing into the painting world, Marie's career was far from artistic.

She spent years in the technology industry working as a systems engineer.

But reaching retirement age, and married to a man who adored swimming and surfing, Marie and Tom decided to retire to the beach town of Agnes Water.

It was after the move that Marie started painting, on October 16, 2007, a date she remembers clearly.

"It was one of those things sort of like an epiphany," she says. "I don't want to sound all mystical but this voice in my head said you're going to be a great artist. It was a very matter-

of-fact voice - not mine."

Today the artist boasts the most intriguing, delightful paintings.

"I really love people to walk into my paintings and belong there."

And while 2015 feels like light-years away for the artist, Marie has time to overcome some of her inner challenges for the exhibition.

She has currently completed three out of 15 pieces, painting when she can about four to five days a week.

"I'm an impressionist - I've always thought - how would that thing like to be painted?" Marie says gazing outside.

"I have to put myself in the scene."

As the interview wraps up and Marie is ushered into a chair for some photos, she quips: "I'd rather be painting more than anything else"

"That's boring, isn't it? A lot of people would rather go shopping ... but I just love painting."

