

Christopher Vidal

My Artistic Life

By Christopher Vidal

According to this artist, painting gives a sense of therapeutic well-being, allowing each of us to enter into a special dimension where time ceases to exist.



Wave

Christopher Vidal was born in Malta in 1972 and has been living in Sydney since 2009. Although not coming from a family of artists, Chris started showing his talent for drawing at around six years of age. At the age of 14, encouraged by his family and his art teacher, he attended drawing classes at the School of Arts, Palazzo de La Salle, Valletta, Malta. For two years he studied drawing, still life and sculpture in clay. In 1986, he participated in the 16th International Children's Art Exhibition, organised by Nippon Television Network, Cultural Society, Japan, sending in two of his watercolour paintings.

Unfortunately an art career was not on his mind at that time and hence he pursued a career in a completely different field, as a medical scientist. However, although he did not pursue a career in arts, his innate interest in art remained with him as he continued to explore different media and subject matters by a process of self education, research and other informal tuition. From the age of 16, he was commissioned on several occasions to work on different art projects within the local community in Sliema, Malta. His work included several large religious paintings on banners

and flags used in traditional local festivals. However this work was very intermittent due to work and study commitments and hence very limited time left for arts.

It was not until 2002 that his wish to develop his talent further started to kick in again. Still with very limited time available at hand, he decided to start exploring his capabilities in oil painting. So after buying his first set of oil colours and reading two books on the subject, he was ready to paint his first oil painting, which was a view of the old medieval city of Mdina. He became hooked to this medium and although from time to time he paints with acrylics and other media, still at the end of the day he goes back to oil since he finds that nothing else can exceed their flexibility and what can be achieved with them.

From this period of time, although not at a very fast pace, he continued to paint more regularly. He was encouraged by his wife and inspired by her grandmother, who taught herself to paint when she retired, and now regularly exhibits her work in the North-western region of Russia. In the new technological world with its fast lifestyle, he believes that to be a successful artist you need to make use of whatever is available to help you become successful. He uses the internet as a tool for learning and as a market place to advertise and sell his work, including his first oil painting.

With time he started to develop more his love for the landscape over and above other subjects. His inspiration comes from whatever the environment is around him, from his first paintings of the Maltese landscape to more recently the Australian landscape. In 2009 he moved to Australia with his family in search of better opportunities in his career as a medical researcher. Being a person who loves travelling and nature, Australia was the right place to be.

Travelling around the country and being closer to nature increased his artistic inspirations, productivity and



Hanging Rock



Mt Beauty



Sydney Harbour



Withstanding Time



On the Farm



Early Morning Snowy Mountains

desire to further develop his artistic skills. His current works mostly consists of Australian landscapes. Chris says, “When I started painting I started observing and appreciating more of what is around me, even the simplest things that are taken for granted in everyday life. Painting is a way of human expression and was in fact one of the initial ways of human communication before languages started to develop. My inspiration come from the beautiful and dramatic colours created when light at sunrise or sunset hits mountains, trees, oceans, or clouds. Through the colours of the skies, clouds and water I can express my mood at that moment. I am inspired by the sounds of the singing birds at sunrise and the sounds of the waves and winds on the ocean, which later I lay down on my canvas using bold brush strokes and vibrant colours”.

After a career in medical research and academia, Chris is now developing and focusing on his artistic skills and career. He mostly enjoys painting the Australian bush especially gum trees, old sheds and farm houses. His style is unique and is a combination of realism and impressionism. He is continuously improving his skills in a process of self learning through practice, reading books, watching online demonstrations and attending workshops by various professional Australian artists.

Chris is an active member of the Parramatta Society where he is part of the committee and managing the Society’s website and workshops. He is also a member of Oatley 101, Combined Art Societies of Sydney and the National Association of Visual Artists (NAVA). His aim in the coming years is to develop his style while establishing himself as a professional artist. During the last two years he has regularly participated in local art exhibitions and sold a good number



Eagles View



Three Sisters

of artworks through online sales, local markets, exhibitions and commissions. His works can now be found in private and corporate collections in Australia, Malta, China, UK and United States. Chris says, “It is nice to see people appreciating my artwork and ready to invest in it. This is truly encouraging for me and I am very happy that through my artwork I share with people my experiences of places they may never been able to visit and see for themselves”.

Chris gives importance to the quality of his artwork in all its aspects, including the quality of materials that he uses, beginning

with stretching his own canvases to the final framing to present his works. He currently works at his home studio in Baulkham Hills, where besides painting he offers other services including custom picture framing. The painting process starts by drawing a very rough sketch of the basic composition and shapes followed by an underpainting either using acrylics or diluted oil paints in odourless mineral spirit. Occasionally he also works “en plein air”, usually starting the painting on location and then finishing it at the studio, using reference photos, sketches and memories of the experience. The

painting is then built up in a number of layers, allowing the previous one to dry at least overnight. Although occasionally he works “wet on wet”, he prefers to allow the previous layer of paint to dry or at least to become slightly tacky to be able to lay down another layer of colour onto it.

For most of his paintings he uses two different palettes, one consisting mostly of cool colours for the background and another consisting of warmer colours for the main subject and foreground. This helps to create aerial perspective. Chris likes to use the palette knife especially for foreground work to add details such



Misty Gums



Mt Warning



In the Bush

as rocks, tree trunks, foliage, snow caps and water ripples. For him one of the most important and crucial aspects of painting is to understand the use of the colour wheel and to learn which colours to use, when to use them, their physical properties and most importantly how to mix them. He uses a very limited palette consisting of two types of each of the primaries, earth colours and white. He might add small amounts of other commercially available ready made colours mixed

with other colours, but this is so little that he only used half tube of Viridian and Cadmium Orange in 10 years.

Chris believes that as anything else in life, we never know enough and so we are constantly learning. This also applies to arts, so he encourages people to try to paint and to keep on painting even if they have a couple of disasters at the beginning. "You can only improve by painting more and more (brush mileage) and learning from your mistakes. While painting

you will enter into a new dimension where time does not exist, a trance that gives you a sense of wellbeing that for so many people is also therapeutic."

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Ormiston Gorge