



Christopher Vidal

# Observing & Appreciating

**Landscape Painting:**  
A way to merge my love for arts, science and nature.

From childhood, drawing was one of the ways I spent my free time and used to escape boredom at school. In my adolescence, I developed a keen interest in science, especially biology. My Grandpa's garden was the place where I used to spend quite a significant amount of time playing with plants while carrying out some experimental projects from my biology classes. At that time, my artistic inspirations were not fuelled by nature, since most of my time was spent at school

or studying, however, I always used to sketch and draw what I observed around me.

I spent two and a half years attending the School of Arts, learning mostly drawing from life. Drawing from life improved my observational skills, including seeing the detail of colour and form in everything. Life took me towards a different career path, choosing science and medicine. With time, my interest and love for nature grew up with me. I believe that this has to do with our inner sense of

belonging to the natural environment. My innate interest and love for arts and creativity was still alive deep inside, and from time to time I used to experiment with various media until the day I decided to have a go with oil paints.

For the last four years I've been painting with oils almost every day. It became more of an addiction or obsession. During this short period of time I've learnt a lot, much more than what I've learnt during the previous twenty years. I learnt, developed and improved my painting techniques and control of the medium. In the process, I also improved my observational skills, especially how I see and perceive colour in everything that I see around me.

After experimenting with various subjects, I now find that painting landscapes is my passion. I can confidently say that landscape painting merged my love for arts, science and the natural world. Australia

is a great country in a various ways. In Australia I had the opportunity to travel and experience various habitats, from the tropical north, temperate south and beautiful outback. Nowadays I paint only places that I've visited, since I feel that my personal experience should play a significant role in the painting process. Ultimately this is from where my inspiration is born.

Clearly, I can see that there is a lot in common between arts and science, unlike what most people think. Both science and painting are based on observation of what is around, and through that observation an idea (or inspiration) is born. Both the artist and scientist need to come up with a plan or strategy on how to transform this inspiration into something more tangible and for both you need to be creative. Using their respective tools and techniques, both will have to execute what they >>

## Paintings

Above left: The Three Sisters from Leura  
Oil on Linen  
Above: Twisted Driftwood, Oil on linen





### Paintings

Above: Tides out Cape Conran Vic, Oil on linen  
Right: Early morning Light, Oil on linen

planned to do in order to bring that inspiration into reality while communicating a message with their audience. However, only knowing the techniques and theories does not make you a real artist or scientist. It's the creativity which makes them both stand out from the crowd. It's the ability to create which makes you a real artist. I now believe that real inspiration and creativity to paint landscapes only comes from the direct observation of nature itself. That is why nowadays I cannot paint using photography only as my reference without actually having visited the place.

I notice that as time passes, the struggle to find the right subjects to paint increases. It increases not because there are no subjects to paint, but because I am constantly searching for the reason why I want to paint that particular scenery. I always search for the challenge of what I want to communicate in that

scene. This could be a game of light and shadow, or a beautiful glow in the sky. Nature is a great tutor, but sometimes it presents to us very complex situations of light that are very difficult to translate onto a canvas using paints.

My work is constantly developing, and this especially applies for the subjects I choose to paint. Currently I am working on a series of painting from selected scenes and subjects from all my travels around the country during the last five years. This series of paintings are to be exhibited at Gallery One88 Fine Arts, Katoomba, NSW, from 25 – 30 October 2016. I spent hours browsing through the thousands of photos that we took during these travels. While doing so, I always try to recall back the experience itself and try to go back to those moments. I try to relive the moments and again feel the same feeling I had on that day. Our brain is

magnificent at doing this. Somehow the brain can take you back in time, almost experiencing the same feelings when you smell a particular scent or listen to a melody. The same happens when browsing through photos of places you've been to.

Besides the scenery, I also find interesting subjects or details of elements that make up the landscape. This might include subjects such as trees, interesting rock formations, and water. Here is where my scientific interest comes into play. I was always amazed at how nature works in its entire splendor. Therefore, when I look at a tree, I will also see how amazing this tree is, and how it grows and moves slowly towards the basic elements that it needs for its survival such as light and water. In addition, I will be seeing how this tree is able to survive the other elements such as strong winds. The curving branches give it strength to withstand the

constant force of gravity in a similar fashion to the architecture of our skeleton. All this is inspirational for me. So choosing possible painting subjects is an ongoing process, and if at some point I feel that I am drained of inspiration, all I need to do is to again immerse myself in nature.

My style of painting significantly changed during the last couple of years. I consider myself as self-taught in oil painting since I never had any formal tuition in this medium. My style of painting is traditional realism, although I use the occasional impressionistic techniques. I am influenced by a number of local contemporary artists such as Robyn Collier, Andrew Tischler, Nathaniel Provis, John Wilson and Kasey Sealy.

After choosing a subject, I start planning how to execute that particular painting. I approach each painting differently, depending on what I am





# Christopher Vidal

## About the artist

Christopher Vidal is a Maltese-born artist living in Sydney, who is inspired by nature, expressing himself on the canvas using traditional realist painting. His works are found in private and corporate collections in Australia and internationally. Chris is an art tutor teaching drawing and painting in oils for beginners and intermediate students at the City of Parramatta Art Society Art Studio in Parramatta. He also teaches children drawing and painting at the City of Ryde Art Society. He also works by commission. His upcoming exhibition is to be held at Gallery One88 Fine Arts, Katoomba Street, Katoomba from 25 – 30 October 2016. His works can be seen on <http://www.christopher-vidal.com.au> or on one of his social media networks.

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## Paintings

Left: ovetts Leap Look-out, Oil on linen  
Below: Afternoon Lights Whaler's Way, SA, Oil on linen

trying to achieve. I start by preparing a number of sketches to find the best composition using either a number of reference photos or else previous sketches done on location. Sometimes this planning phase takes longer than the actual painting process itself. There are a number of important considerations to take in order to create an artistic representation of the subject. I paint in the traditional way of indirect painting, building up the painting layer over layer of thin paint from darker to lighter tones, adding more form and details as I go along. For me, a successful painting is when I see that my objective was reached, and the only significant recognition is when a person decides to buy my work.

To conclude, I believe that during the last four years, thanks to painting, I started observing and appreciating more what is all around us. I started seeing the world, especially the natural world, in a different perspective. Painting the landscape merged my love for arts, science and the environment. I always wish and hope that my work will not only be an addition to home décor, but also a way to share my experiences with the viewer of places that they might never have had the opportunity to visit.

