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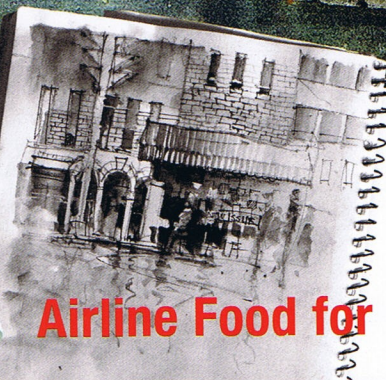
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The 3 Basic Concepts that Contribute to Being an Artist



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FINALIST GINNY PAGE, Copenhagen, Denmark, *Silk Garments*, oil, 9 x 14" (22 x 35cm)

MY INSPIRATION

I find inspiration for my paintings in patterns, texture, colour, the effect of light, and last but not least, intricate detail in both nature and every day objects. *Silk Garments* was created quite by accident, as I was in the process of painting a life size model looking into a mirror and wearing a beautiful silk liberty print dress. The dress had been given to me by a dear old lady when I was a child and the garment is now almost 100 years old. My model was trying on a multitude of different outfits as I couldn't decide which looked best for the painting, when suddenly she folded up the two garments she had been wearing and put them on a table top. I noticed how the light played on the fabric, creating shiny reflections from the teeny bright flower print onto the cream coloured silk chemise, and there was the idea for my new still life painting! I ended up painting three life size model paintings, as I couldn't decide on the dress plus the little study of "silk garments".

MY DESIGN STRATEGY

I spend hours and hours setting up an idea for a composition and getting it to work. The best ones are often unexpected, impulsive and simple. I love to challenge myself by choosing complicated subjects. The sport is in seeing if it can be done in paint and losing myself in intricate and fascinating details, for example, a crystal bowl full of light bulbs or a pile of dead flies! A painting also has to be appealing to the viewer and to tell a story, and normally I do not paint the most extreme ideas. I experimented with the garments, painting and adding all sorts of other objects - an old perfume bottle, a silver jewelry box with a necklace hanging out of it, a wine glass, and my beloved dead fly, and ended up removing the whole lot. "Less is more"is one of my favorite quotes.

MY WORKING PROCESS

I always work on an nr.13 portrait canvas. Nothing else can compare. The surface is a dream to paint on and a must for intricate, detailed work in oils. My palette is almost always very limited (3 primaries, Van Dyke Brown and Titanium White), but I wanted to capture the vivid colors and the irregularities in the silk shantung material, so it was necessary to change a few colors. I used Sennelier Intense Red instead of Cadmium, Viridian (never ever used before), plus a Violet, (borrowed a squirt from one of my pupils). These extra colors can capture the hot orange, pink and purple shades of the flowers.

The material was set up on a dirty green umbra background. The strap of the chemise was necessary so the viewer could see that it was, in fact, an under garment and also gave an interesting contrast to the rest of the painting. A detailed sketch was done on paper to start with, directly from the subject, then a smaller detailed drawing was made directly onto the canvas. As the material could stay fixed without decay for as long as needed, I painted directly from life until one of my antique dealer colleagues came by on an unexpected visit and picked up the flowery dress and said, "this is nice, where did you find it?" EEEK...my composition was ruined, but luckily it was almost finished and I had a photo as a reference, just in case, so I managed to get it finished!

I use a dry brush technique with many layers, working like a watercolor from light to dark (an old habit from years of illustrating in gouache). I always tape the canvas to a piece of hardboard whilst painting and decide the "final cut" half way through the process, as I always change my mind about the size, and often at the last minute. All paintings are given a thin layer of homemade damar varnish after one year of completion to bring out the colors and to give a protective and lustrous finish.

MY CONTACT DETAILS

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for a work entitled

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