

ARTIST'S STATEMENT  
EVELYN ANTONYSEN

Fluidity, transparency, serendipity and gentle gradations of hue with contrasting soft and hard edges. Such is the beauty of painting with a wet style of watercolour; not an illustrative method, but what I call "real" watercolour. It is a bit of a Zen experience, mindfulness, as pigment is carried by water to settle in various ways on the cotton paper surface. I have painted scientific type illustration, botanical works and fauna, especially birds. I have also exhibited precisely executed miniatures, usually landscape, in oils; in control, carefully painting exactly what I had in mind. But watercolour can be so much more. It is a partnership where the medium itself has a say in what develops. That is what I love... the challenge, the journey and the surprises. But it is not careless randomness, there is much decision making along that journey. It is not purely chance happening. I choose my paper type, usually pure cotton of 300gsm or heavier, according to what I am painting. Fabriano Torchon extra rough for rocky textures, Saunders Waterford Rough for seas with a sparkle of light on the water, Arches cold or hot pressed for illustrative styles. And I select the brush according to what I know it will do: a hake for broad washes, a rigger for final calligraphic marks while a taklon angle shader is my current favourite for jagged rocks. For rounded pebbles, a squirrel teardrop and a long extra floppy squirrel mix dagger if I want to suggest vegetation without getting obsessed with detail. Something Max Angus succeeded in. But it is not just the choice of brush, it is the way it is handled. On the most part I use a light touch, caressing the paper so as not to make the surface look tired and worn, dancing the brush across the surface. Sumi e has influenced my bush work immeasurably.

I am largely self taught, learning through "constructive play", where I constantly analyse what happens. Being a Science and Maths teacher before, as friend and fellow artist Richard Klekociuk put it, "I came to my senses", I do analyse constantly. Science also showed me the Physics of light and colour, the Chemistry of pigment and the behaviour of water, alongside the drawing skills required for accurately recording observations in Biology and Geology. My tertiary art qualification at Devonport TAFE focused on acrylics, drawing and pastels. Finding a good watercolour tutor to draw and render the colour in washes in an illustrative manner where subject rather than mood tends to be the focus, was not hard but I wanted more freedom. Other media were fine for those works but watercolour could offer a way to express emotion and mood. I have been to wonderful, single day to full week, workshops along the way. Special times with, among others, Max Angus, Ron Ranson, Tony Smibert and Robert Wade; all wonderful watercolourists, encouraging freedom, encouraging a bold approach. I have many books to peruse, the most cherished signed by the author. I also learn from my students, especially the brave ones who quickly become immersed in the joy. I analyse what they do, what looks good and what doesn't and we talk. I love teaching/sharing the passion. Subject wise, Tasmania has it all for me; my birthplace, my home. When I went to see the Degas exhibition in Melbourne I was so pleased when I read that on going to the USA to broaden his experience he realized his heart was still in Paris and he had to paint where his heart was. That is what I feel about Tasmania and within our island it is the waterways that constantly call. Yes I love water, paintings of it with a medium that uses it.... fluidity.

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