

**This month's
Lang's Gallery prize.**

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Winsor & Newton prize.



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Terry Jackson

Pencil Strokes

By Terry Jackson

Here is an amazing graphite artist whose favourite subject is wildlife. This lady truly delights in the fact that so many textures that can be achieved through the stroke of a pencil.



I live and work in the eastern Adelaide suburb of Rostrevor, in South Australia. I was born in Gawler. My home is in the lower foothills with water catchments running past the front of the house. This attracts all kinds of wildlife from the hills – like possums and koalas. An abundance of birds visits the garden.

My 'studio' is a small room crammed with two large desks (one for the art, one for the computer); storage cupboards filled with art gear; and other things that don't fit anywhere else in the house.

As an artist, I am fully self taught and always looking to improve my technique.

I am passionate about wildlife, Nature and realism. I like to work in a way that shows the subject as it really looks; and I love to see the way that other artists also tackle this objective.

I've always been interested in art from the perspective of looking at it, admiring it and wishing I could do it, and I have always been artistically inclined in some way. I have enjoyed crafts, painting with the kids when they

were young, and dabbling with paints. I never really had any thoughts about becoming an 'artist'. In 2005, I had just qualified as a counsellor.

My career as an artist began quite accidentally in March, 2005 – when I decided to try to draw a triple portrait of my sister as a gift for her fortieth birthday. Many people at her party saw it; and I was asked to do more, for other family members and friends. For Christmas 2005, I was given a print by graphite artist Gary Hodges. I loved it.

I decided to try and draw a tiger's face. Although the first picture was quite crude (on the wrong paper and using terrible pencils), it actually looked like what I was trying to draw. It didn't take me long to improve the technique to get a much more realistic look.

I immediately invested in better materials. It made a vast improvement. I looked at other artists' work on the Internet and picked up a few tips here and there.

A whole new cycle began for me, and I haven't looked back since.

I'm a hobby artist who would one day like to transition to professional status. Because I'm a late bloomer, I'm still finding my feet and learning the ropes. It's a whole different world from being a housewife.

I now use graphite (on paper). I have used soft pastel (on pastel board) and coloured pencil (on paper or drafting film). My favourite medium by far is graphite. I love the way it can produce so many textures and 'colours' from those little grey sticks. I use Staedtler clutch pencils rather than wood encased – as the weight remains consistent. I use a variety of erasers ranging from normal erasers to pencil clutch types to electric. I also use a lot of Blu-Tack for lifting, shaping and erasing. I occasionally use graphite sticks when larger areas need covering; or for large dark lines. And I use a variety of stumps for blending and to gain different effects.

My selection of coloured pencils includes Faber Castell Polychromos, Lyra Rembrandt and Derwent Coloursoft. I mix and match these when producing coloured pencil pictures. For





my pastel work, I use Rembrandt soft pastel sticks and CarbOthello pastel pencils.

Although I began with portraiture, my favourite subject is wildlife – whether it be furry, feathered or finned, slimy or smooth. Each subject has so much character and personality that is all its own; and there are so many textures that can be achieved through the stroke of a pencil. It's just so much fun to bring it out to a point where people say they would love to 'feel' it. I have been very fortunate to find many

great photographers who give their kind permission for me to use their photography as reference material.

My work has been in several art shows. I have sold some pieces, and won a People's Choice award for 'Pride and Joy' in my very first competition in 2007. In 2008, I was also thrilled to be accepted into the Waterhouse Natural History Art Prize where my artwork 'Happy Endings' was Highly Commended. Recently, after having sold four originals in two art shows, I have just found out that I have

once again been juried into the 2010 Waterhouse Art Prize.

Anyone who produces beautiful artwork – particularly wildlife – is completely inspirational to me. I aspire to be as good as them; and maybe one day I will be.

My family members are supportive and encouraging. My children have made it clear that I also inspire them ... and they keep me going. My younger sister Barbara is my biggest inspiration. Without her, this journey never would have begun. And without the





encouragement, support and love of my partner Dave Edwards, it may not have continued.

I belong to PASA (Pastel Association of SA), the Port Community Arts Centre, and 'Artworkers'.

To date, my most successful artwork (entered in the Waterhouse in 2008) was 'Happy Endings'. My most outstanding work is yet to come.

I have experienced several drawing disasters. I have a koala which I've started at least three times ... and it just never gets any better. I'm not sure

why; but I don't think I'm meant to do that one. The same has happened with a pair of polar bears. Another disaster was a fairly large and complex drawing that required erasing for negative values. The problem was that I was using unfamiliar paper. I was more than halfway through when I had to erase a particularly stubborn bit of graphite. That's when the surface of the paper came off! I couldn't erase and I couldn't cover it up. The drawing was ruined completely. It turned out that I was using a watercolour paper which

was poorly coated, and the surface just came away.

My works are usually displayed through art shows, which is where almost all sales of my work occur. I have yet to hunt down a gallery, but I will find one eventually. My pictures are also available as limited edition giclee prints.

I particularly admire the work of UK artist Mike Sibley. His graphite work is the most outstanding I have seen. His attention to detail is remarkable. Another highly admired artist is Jason Morgan





(also from the UK) whose wildlife painting is unsurpassed; and of course I have to mention Gary Hodges ... my first inspiration to try drawing animals.

There are a few things I do prior to sitting down to work on my art. First, I make sure there are no distractions around the house that need attending to. I also need music. I'll listen to everything from relaxing classical to pop or rock, or even heavy metal, depending on my mood at the time. I find it enables me to concentrate better and keeps my mind from wandering. Also, I burn oils or incense to create an aromatic atmosphere. Overall I'm a fairly disorganised person but these small things help me to get to the point where I'm ready to sit down and concentrate. My problem is that I am a born procrastinator ... and unless everything is right, I'll find any excuse not to sit down and draw. But once I start, I'm fine.

BEACH STUDIO

ORIGINAL ART WORKS
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I believe that everyone has a talent, whether it's in art, music, writing, gardening, cake baking ... anything. It's just a matter of finding that talent and acting on it. Never believe that you are too old to make a change or try something new. If you have a talent for art, you never know where it might lead or what you may achieve!

I advise my peers to learn from mistakes and work to remedy problems by perhaps using a different approach or even trying a whole new medium. Experiment with technique and practice the work – even if it's just scribbling to find different textures or to discover which pencil does what. If striving for a realistic approach, don't just look at what you're trying to do – but really 'see' what you're drawing.

My ultimate goal as an artist is to be recognised as a professional; and to never stop learning and improving my work. ■



Artist's Palette

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chris vella

Chris has been on a passionate journey experimenting and exploring abstract expressionism for 30 years. Her love of oil paint is obvious, the work itself always thought provoking and often meditative. Chris's Art Space is the working studio/gallery of Chris Vella.



www.chrissartspace.com

Graphite

Group Hug

By Terry Jackson

Very few artists are capable of exploiting the potential of pencils with as much creative flair and unmitigated skill as this talented South Australian. Here she describes her process for producing this charming piece of work.



STEP ONE

After lightly sketching the outline, I load a tissue with graphite powder and define the darker and lighter areas of the drawing. This gives me an idea of the different areas and how it has to be shaded.

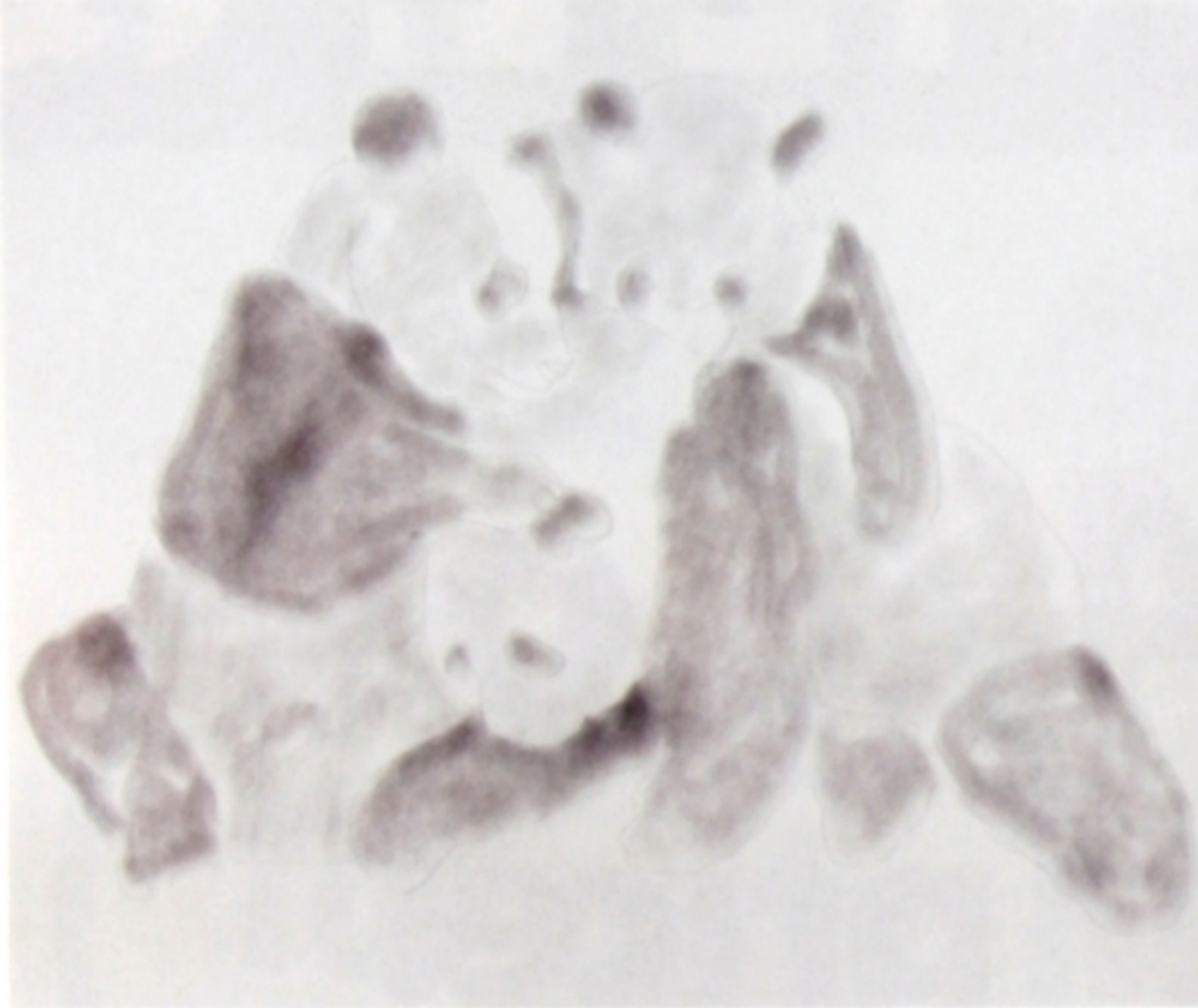
STEP TWO

Starting at the top left side, I begin to fill in detail. I would normally do the eyes first – but in this particular work, it wasn't as important. I work my way from top to bottom, left to right, adding extra dark areas with a graphite-laden stump,

filling in with thousands of pencil strokes, and erasing 'hairs'; then I do it all over again until the fur has the right 'depth'.

STEP THREE

I work my way across the



MATERIALS

- Mellotex paper: 610 x 475 mm.
- HB and 2B Staedtler clutch pencils.
- 2B graphite stick.
- Tuff Stuff eraser.
- Paper Mate 'E' Racer.
- Plastic eraser.
- Blu-Tack.
- Paper stumps.
- Tissues.



page, again working from top to bottom, repeating the steps above.

STEP FOUR

At this stage I generally go back over what I've done, further deepening fur texture if necessary and darkening or lightening where required, while checking shadows and highlights.

STEP FIVE

When I'm almost finished, I go over the whole thing – adding strokes here, erasing there, until I'm satisfied. I then clean up the graphite smudging around the drawing, and voila! Finished! ■