

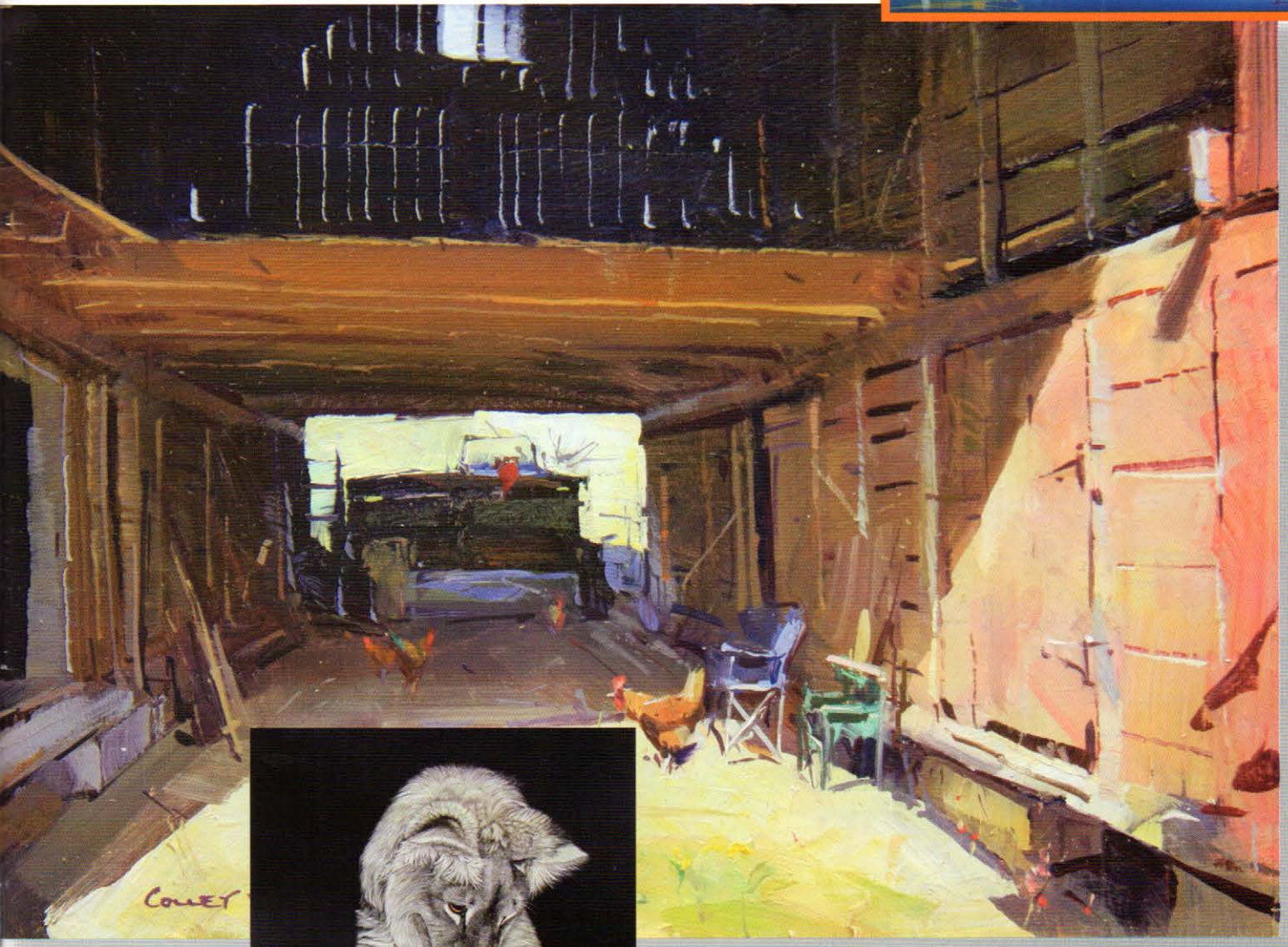
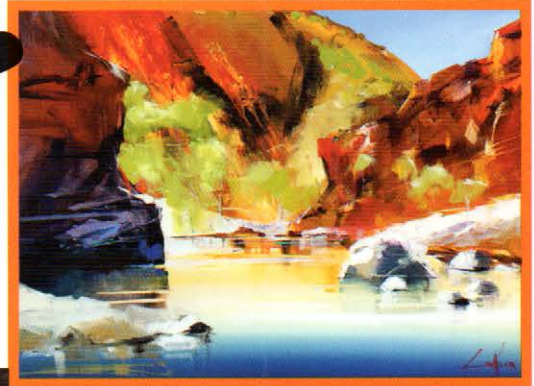
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NOVEMBER 2013

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Australian ARTIST®

Paint This Before Lunch!



Painting Interiors in Oils

**Try Your Hand at
ScratchBoard**



Set a deadline when painting from photos to encourage spontaneity and originality

Just Attack It!

By Craig Penny

"I think that to paint a successful painting is not so much to have tamed the beast, rather to have been taken along for the ride and still be there at the end of the experience. For me painting is like life... give yourself enough skills, knowledge and integrity, and then set yourself free to take what is thrown your way. You don't need to tame and control the painting for magic to happen... you just need to be there at the end."

Massive geological forces created the towering red walls of Ormiston Gorge, located within the West MacDonnell National Park, 135 kilometres west of Alice Springs. Ormiston Gorge showcases spectacular geology and landforms. It was my first visit and I was tempted to take a swim in the nearly permanent water hole, but was warned that it was only safe to do so in the warmer months. As an artist I took plenty of photos and completed several sketches. I couldn't wait to get into the studio.

My approach

I paint from photographs more than I do plein air painting; a legacy from my illustration days. The benefits of painting in the open are obvious but it comes with a range of challenges, like defining the subject or scene, where to start and what can realistically be captured by a brush or pencil.

Nothing beats open air painting for developing and improving observational skills, but the convenience of a photo is here to stay.

Shipwreck Creek, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm

One of my favourite places to visit, Shipwreck Creek, part of the Croajingolong National Park.



Guidelines

1. If you think you have the perfect photograph to paint, leave it as a photo, otherwise you will just duplicate it.
2. Use your own photos.
3. Choose a photo that lets you be creative and interpret the scene.
4. Be prepared to crop photos and explore layout and design ideas within it.
5. Because something is in the photo, it doesn't have to be in your painting.
6. Set a deadline when working from a photo and try to stick to it.
7. When painting, look more at the painting than the photograph. I suggest discarding the photo when you think you are two thirds or three quarters through the painting.
8. Don't let the photograph dictate the final outcome.



Chapel Street, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm
 Bold loose brush strokes create the energy of busy Chapel Street, Prahran.

Cambodian Watercolours



Local Village 1, Siem Reap, 56 x 40cm



Local Village 2, Siem Reap, 56 x 40cm



Old Market, Siem Reap, 56 x 40cm

Siem Reap, Cambodia, full of energy, colour, contrasts, tourists and great local markets. With subject matter everywhere, it's a great place to paint.

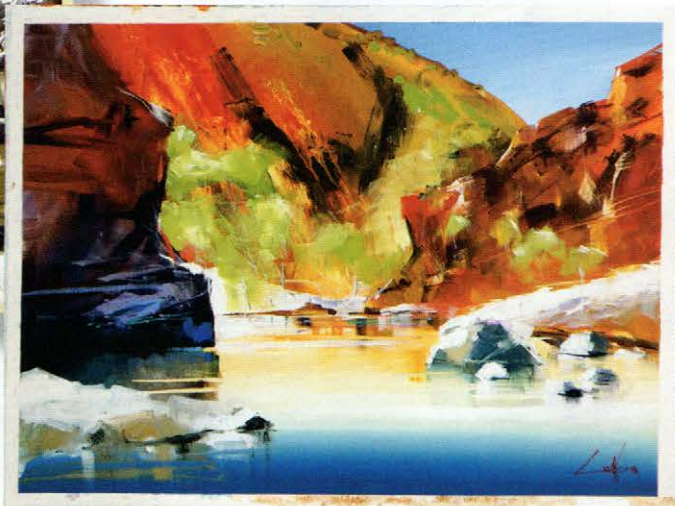
my art in the making

Paint *Ormiston Gorge* in 2 hours



from
◀ This
to
▼ This

Before Lunch!



10:00 AM

STAGE 1 - 15 minutes

Preparation and drawing

I soak a piece of *Arches cold press 356gsm watercolour paper*, approx 153 x 103cm, and staple it to a wooden board that won't bow, let it dry and give it a coat of gesso. Once dry, the staples and the edge of the paper are covered with masking tape and I mask out the painting area.

I start drawing, which is done quickly and loosely with an HB pencil. It only takes a few minutes. As I am working from a photograph, I find the quicker I draw the better. This allows more interpretation of the photo.

I am aware of the **key structural elements** of the photo to help me compose the scene. Key visual points may be things that finish half way, or a rock formation that protrudes out about a third from the side, or where the water starts about a third from the top.



10:15 AM

STAGE 2 - 15 minutes

Attack and blast off!

My approach to all of my work is to attack it. I set a deadline and stick to it. I lay out the palette of colours I think I need, in the way of open jars of paint. I prefer to get raw paint from open jars and mix colour on the surface I am working on. I only use my wooden painter's palette when I need to mix up a specific colour in a small quantity. Large quantities I mix up in a small plastic container that has an airtight lid.

With a 5cm flat brush, I apply a mix of *Cobalt Blue* and *Titanium White* for the sky and dry it with a hair dryer. For the large land mass in the background, still using a 5cm flat brush, I use a combination of *Hookers Green*, *Red Gold* and *Titanium White* on the right hand side. I intensify the colour using *Permanent Orange* and introduce brush strokes of *Burnt Umber* to suggest the darker areas.

I take the painting off the easel, tilt it and using a spray bottle, blast out the paint and let it run. This helps create the weathered look on the great wall. I dry it with a hair dryer or you can allow it to dry in the sun. Be careful here - although this is messy and a bit of fun, be sure to spray downwards, or you will risk splattering paint all over your clean sky.



10:30 AM

STAGE 3 - 10 minutes

Backgrounding

Using *Permanent Orange*, I introduce the large mass of rock coming in from the right. A pale mixture of *Red Gold*, *Hookers Green* and a lot of white is used in the background mass to add contrast and bring out its edge. A stronger mix of green is used to suggest distant tree foliage.

TOP TIPS

- A good rag watercolour paper probably doesn't need gesso when using acrylics, but it does help to slow down the absorption rate of the acrylic paints
- I like doing warm-up sketches, as you would for a life drawing; the drawing process warms me up for a quick, spontaneous painting
- I always use flat brushes, usually Da Vinci impasto brushes and Da Vinci green-handled student brushes. I also use house-style painting brushes that have hog bristle, along with a range of flat nylon brushes and some nylon rigger or script brushes
- The paints I use are thick structure type or heavy body type paints. I prefer Matisse, Atelier and Golden brands for this purpose





10:40 AM

STAGE 4 - 10 minutes

Detailing

Detail is introduced into the land mass on the right. *Red Gold* and *Burnt Umber* goes in on top of the *Orange*, blending in while still wet. Using a three quarter comb brush on its edge, I suggest facets and layers in the rock face. Straight white is used to create highlights. I mix more warm green, using *Hookers Green*, *Red Gold* and *Titanium White* and use it to suggest distant tree foliage.

10:50 AM

STAGE 5 - 10 minutes

Adding colour

The areas bathed in light at the base of the land masses are quickly blocked using *Titanium White*. The rock face on the far left is blocked in using *Permanent Orange*, *Burnt Umber* and *Light Violet* towards the top. For the bottom half, I used *Permanent Orange* blended with *Dioxazine Purple*. Some strong brush strokes of the purple and *Burnt Umber* are added using the three quarter comb brush.



11:00 AM

STAGE 6 - 20 minutes

Onto the water

To cover up the drips, I put down the first coat of paint for the water. I let this dry thoroughly; the last thing I want to see is orange drips through the water. I started with *Titanium White* at the water line, with a hint of *Yellow Oxide*. More white was added as I worked down. When I was nearly back to pure white I blended *Prussian Blue* and ran it off the bottom of the painting. I used a 5cm flat brush to do this.



11:20 AM

STAGE 7 - 20 minutes

Second coat and reflections

The water gets a second coat; it's the same as the first, but this time I suggest detail at the water's edge, where the water meets the land mass in the back of the picture. *Australian Sienna* is used with downward strokes (a three quarter flat brush is used for this) and a small amount of *Burnt Umber* is added to define the water's edge. The *Prussian Blue* towards the bottom is strengthened. I let this dry thoroughly again.

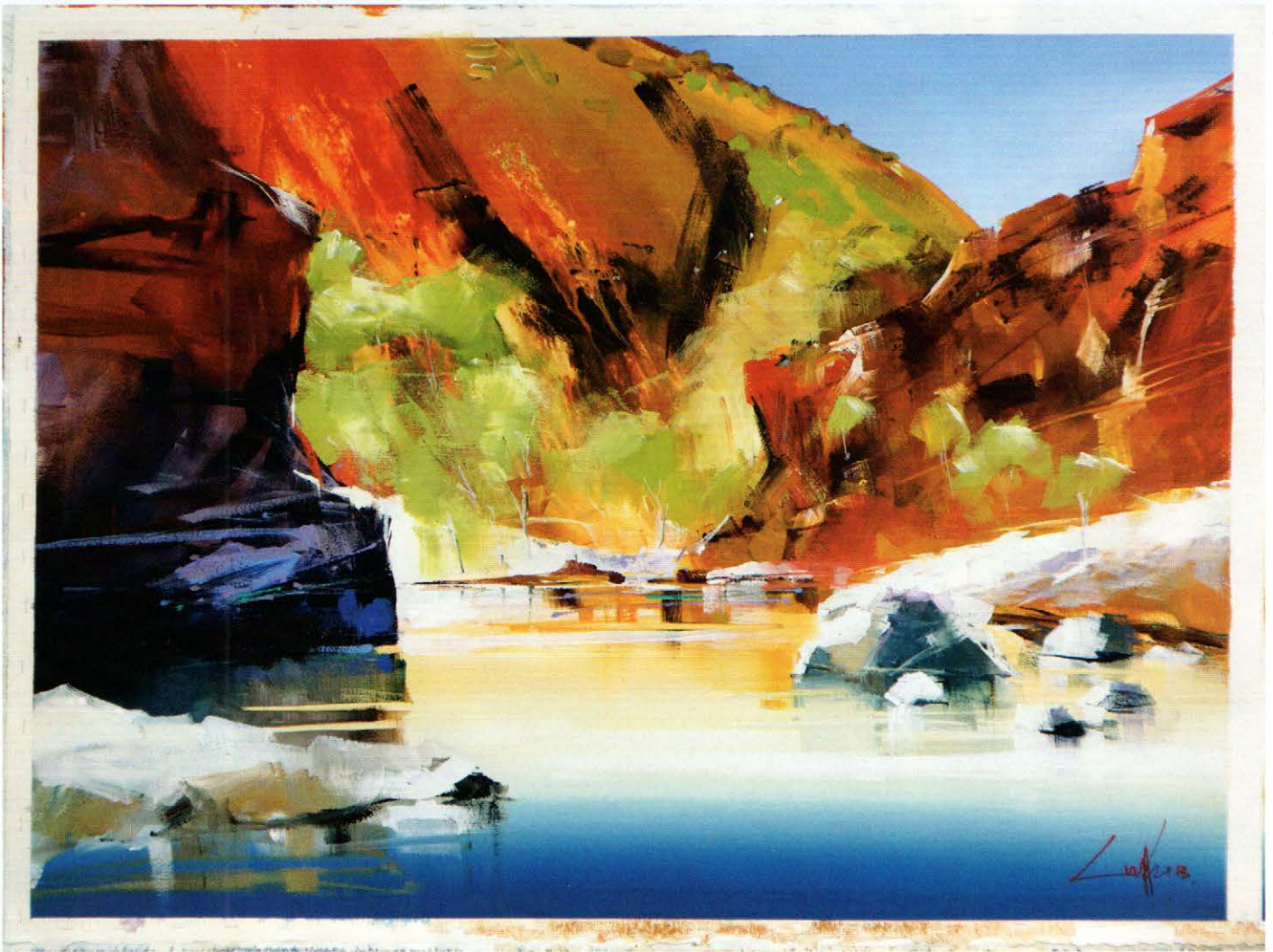
I build detail by strengthening the white in the areas bathed in light and suggest shadows using *Australian Sienna* and *Light Violet* combined. I apply some loose strokes of *Sky Blue* and *Light Violet* to the left hand rock face and some *Prussian Blue* at the very base of it.

Rocks protruding from the water are added with *Titanium White*, and with *Prussian Blue* and *Burnt Umber* in the shadow areas. *Light Violet* is added for some interest. For the reflections of the rocks and the land mass on the far left, I simply drag down wet paint with flat brushes and make a wash. With the edge of the brush I lift out the paint to break up the shape of the reflections. A suggestion of a protruding rock formation is added to the foreground on the left and reflections are added.



Dog Walk, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 92cm

A simple statement using broad strokes and thick, bodied paint with heavy impasto medium.



11:40 AM

STAGE 8 - 20 minutes

Completion

The painting is almost complete. With my rigger or script brush, I added some finer detail. Simple tree trunks, distant birds and some edges on some of the rocks were introduced. More white was added to the rocks in the very foreground and some random colours that can't be seen in the photo were added. These colours can be *Aqua*, *Salmon Pink* and *Light Violet*. This piece took me two hours - I allowed three hours at the outset. When working from a photo, I find I can create a more interesting painting if I work quickly.

MY BEST TIPS

- Learn from other artists, but don't copy them.
- Take yourself outside the square, learn something and the use it inside your comfort zone.
- Set yourself a deadline.
- If you think you have the perfect photo to paint from, leave it as a photo.
- Get emotionally involved in the painting process.

“When working from a photo, I find I can create a more interesting painting if I work quickly.”



***From the Light House*, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm**

I love the depiction of afternoon light in this painting and the contrasts of thick, heavy paint and the soft blending.



Blue Couta, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm

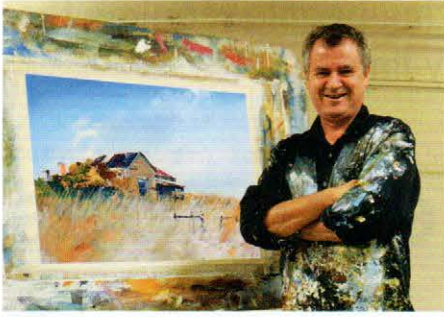
Depicts the light of the Mornington Peninsula across Port Phillip Bay.

“My approach to all of my work is to attack it. I set a deadline and stick to it.”



Broken Fence, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61cm

I enjoy the isolation of this subject - an old abandoned house outside Coleraine in Western Victoria.



about the artist

Born in Victoria, Australia in 1961, Craig showed an interest in art and drawing at a very young age. His love of art saw him enrol in the art course at Hamilton Technical School in 1976. At the age of 16 his artistic interests extended into ceramics and sculpture, and he constructed several wood-fired kilns in his parents' backyard.

Craig studied art at Ballarat University, where painting and graphic design attracted most of his attention. He pursued a successful career as an illustrator in the advertising industry and became a member of the Illustrators Association of Australia.

Craig's career has progressed into a range of mediums including skills in computer graphics. As a result he has also undertaken a successful career in teaching both traditional drawing and illustration at Victoria University and Swinburne University. Throughout this time, he has never lost his love for using traditional methods and subsequently has specialised in watercolour and acrylic painting. He is a highly sought tutor and conducts popular tours to overseas locations. Craig is represented by galleries in Australia, Singapore, Cambodia and the USA. He is a signatory member of The Australian Guild of Realist Artists.

His artwork may be seen at the following website: www.craigpennyart.com.au

Lighthouse, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm

Big brush strokes with lots of impasto medium with the paint. I really enjoy the colour and energy in this painting. Completed very quickly.



King Valley, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 122cm

A large painting I really enjoyed doing. I gave myself a deadline of three hours.

