

The Heart For Art

INTERVIEW WITH ALISON PERCY WORDS BY BERNADETTE TORRESAN



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERNADETTE TORRESAN



"I remember watching my father drawing a bird, meticulously counting the feathers which fascinated me."

There are moments in life when you meet someone with an energy that resonates with yours. They see the world just as you do and it is refreshing to see their face light up when discussing their passion, just as your own.

I was fortunate to spend time with Alison Percy, a popular local artist with a passion for landscape and exploring the world through innocent eyes.

Raised on a farm in Jindera, on the outskirts of Albury, some of Alison's fondest memories were spending time on the farm, visiting paddocks, in particular the timber paddock and sitting on the 'carry all' on the back of the tractor to feed the sheep.

"Tipping the seed bag left a long trail of seed. It is interesting to look back and discover there was a passion for trees and fluid line way back then!"

Studying art throughout high school, the love for art has been a part of Alison for as long as she can remember.

"I feel very fortunate to have worked in the creative industries from the age of 18, training as a designer and studying visual arts in the evenings."

"One of my first most memorable moments was soon after I started using ink - as I laid my first stroke, the life model appeared as a landscape while capturing the form of the figure and this has led to an ongoing series of 'nudescares' and 'figurescares'."

After completing an Associate Diploma in Visual Arts in 1987, Alison took part in her first group exhibition where she sold her first figurative drawing.

"A red dot was rather a special thing to see!"

"One of my earliest paintings was a floral diptych that was in the same exhibition. I hand stretched the canvas and seized it with rabbit skin glue and used washes of oil paint to mimic the delicacy of the beautiful Papaver nudicaule - Icelandic Poppies. An enquiry was made about purchasing the artwork but I wasn't ready to part with it (silly me, she giggles) ...the painting has been on our kitchen wall ever since."

Since starting her family, Alison has been working as a freelance designer, illustrator, interior design consultant and calligrapher.

"Our children are now young adults and I have more time to spend pursuing my visual arts practice."

Picking up the paintbrush again around 10 years ago, Alison slowly started to create a few pieces that found their way in to hair salons and various local businesses.

"In May 2013, I started life drawing again after a 27 year break and I haven't looked back since."

Currently producing paintings and drawings across figurative, floral and landscape genres, her work is fresh and expressive, drawing influence from the art of Japanese calligraphy and the use of intuitive layering of line and colour.

"I use my energetic and passionate nature to depict my delight in transforming the multi faceted work using various mediums."

"I like to explore natural forms - across figurative, landscape and floral subjects. The landscape throughout the Murray region provides such great inspiration - from the magnificent Murray River, along the Kiewa Valley and up onto the High Plains! The work I'm producing reflects my interest in the balance and sensitivity of line (especially the fluid line). I feel a quiet energy while working with dry and wet medium mark making - this expresses an honest connection through me as an artist and onto the surface of the work."



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Exhibiting in galleries in and around our region, Alison spends her days actively working across both art and design and has made available limited edition fine art prints of the work that comes with a certificate of authenticity.

"I had my first solo exhibition in May last year and have just completed my third which is really exciting."

"I am loving the constant change and progression in my artwork journey, with my 'ah ha' moments which is rather special when it happens."

Long admiring the work of John Olsen, with the joy and energy in his work along with his use of fluid line, Alison states she would love to paint with him.

"Pushing lines across a canvas or over paper, we'd finish the day off with him cooking paella!"

"I read an article in the Good Weekend magazine in 2011 and it gave some insight into the man. His love of the Australian landscape and of 'thoughtful, meandering conversation'...enjoying a fulfilling life...His works reveal a sense of freedom', 'nature is his muse', '...his despair over the decline in handwriting which is self-expression...' quotes from the article that all resonated strongly with me. I'm keen to see his exhibition currently on at the NGV."

WHAT TIPS CAN YOU GIVE ASPIRING ARTISTS OUT THERE?

Enjoy the process - keep an open mind to small discoveries and connections along the way. Push aside the voice of self-doubt in your mind to keep moving forward. Take your work to the people - they won't see your work if it just sits in your studio!

WHERE CAN WE FIND YOUR PIECES?

"I've recently had my third solo exhibition which is a wonderful way of bringing people together to share my work and discuss my journey! I have enjoyed collaborating with many wonderful local, like-minded businesses in Albury who showcase my work. I also sell my artwork direct from my studio by appointment only and have a website, Facebook and Instagram page."