

Master Pastellist, Regina Hona walks through professional tips on making pastels more vibrant.

EXTRA ZING!

By walking through two paintings on the same subject you can see the difference which the choice of mediums makes. It's not just the colour of the pastel which can make a painting ZING but also how you use the pastels. The versatility of pastels are endless, from drawing to full on painting, but also soft layering or 'glazing' effects which I often use in my work.

My process tends to be :

- ◆ I begin a painting by loosely drawing the composition on my paper with charcoal as it blends very easily with pastel.
- ◆ I first block in the values and colours that I see for the whole painting.
- ◆ I then refine the painting, working from the background forward.
- ◆ I leave small details and any strong lights to the very end,

A Bygone Era, pastel on AS Colourfix Elephant paper, 46 x 66cm, (below)



From Charcoal to Pastel

**Yarra Rowing, AS Colourfix
Elephant paper, 25x25cm
(Top right)**

**Oarsome,
charcoal on stretched linen
92 x 92cm, (bottom right)**

My Inspiration

I am always on the lookout for unusual subject matter, preferably related to water, and this one struck me as exceptional. It is only a small piece but one that gave me immense joy. I ended up creating a second larger charcoal work (92 x 92 cm) of this subject as I loved it so much.

Design or Composition Strategy

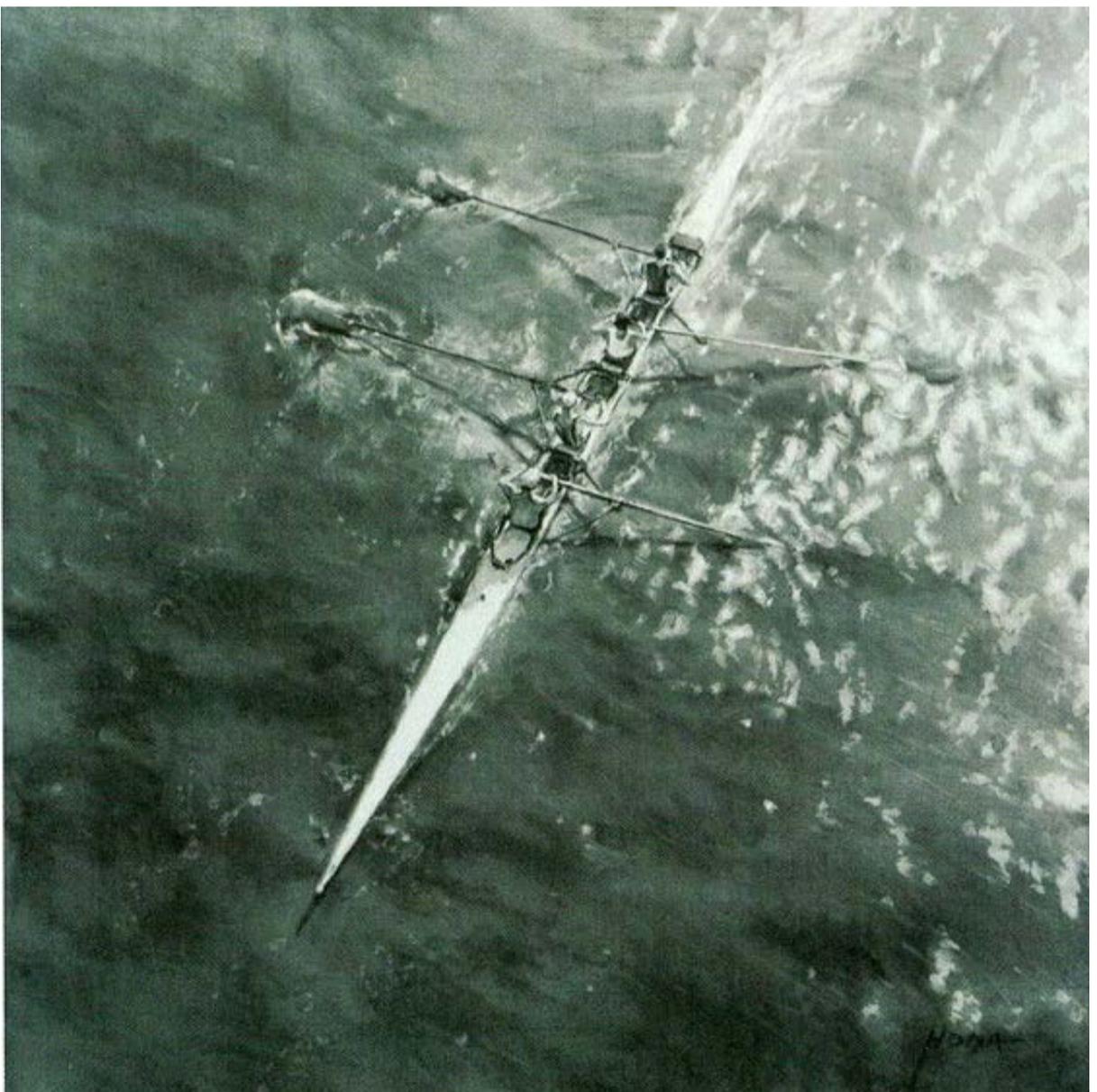
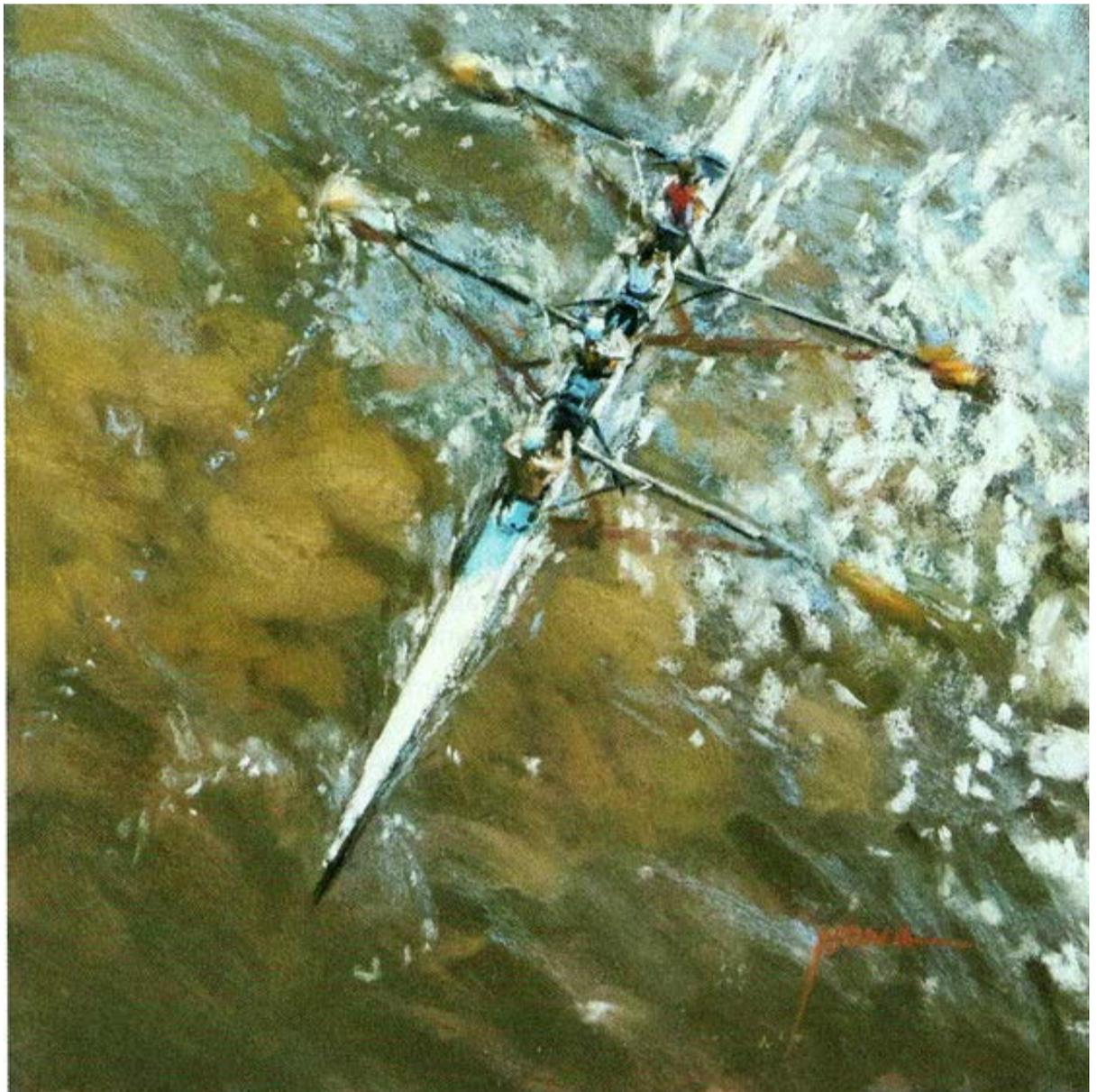
The angle and placement of the rowing boat was pivotal in my design. The unruffled water at the bottom anchors the glinting water above it and the little glimpse of red and orange complemented by the blue, provide the focus and energy I was after.

Technique or Working Process

This painting obviously had to be done from a photo as the rowers went past me under the bridge in a flash. I used the colour elephant in Colourfix paper, I don't believe in hard and fast rules that I must start on the boat or the water first. I tend to paint more instinctively and often find myself jumping all over a painting depending on the colour I have in my hand.

Why Pastel and why it has worked for this painting

The effects we can achieve with pastel are endless, and here I was able to finish off with super soft creamy white pastel to enhance the glint on the water.



My Top Tips for using Pastels

1. The use of complimentary coloured pastel paper for your subject adds that extra zing and life to the work as specks of colour invariably show through. They act as an underpainting, so don't try to cover them up.
2. If possible avoid any blending especially if it means you lose the effect of specks of paper showing through.
3. My second choice of paper is using a neutral mid-tone colour that works with any subject such as AS Elephant or Aubergine. Remember also that a warm toned paper will help to enhance the warmth in a subject, conversely the same happens using a cool toned paper.
4. Pastels generally appear more vibrant when you do not blend. If this is your preferred style however, make sure that you always put pastel back over areas you have blended to give back vibrancy and energy to the work.
5. Because I generally use the side of the pastel when painting, my colours tend to automatically blend together especially if I am using a bit of pressure. It's also the faster way to capture a subject when painting plein air.
6. Regardless of the brand of pastels you may use, pressure plays a huge part in their application. It's important to begin with light pressure and to build up the layers and values gradually until you are sure that things are progressing as planned and you are happy with the composition, values and colours.
7. Although this is not just pastel related, I recommend your signature should always be added with great consideration. It is never a case of always on the right or left only in one colour. It has the power to balance or unbalance your painting specially if it is long.

If unsure, check by writing your signature with a black marker pen on clear cellophane and hold it over the painting to judge where it looks best. The blessing is that should you still get it wrong, scrubbing it out and correcting the error before putting it in a better spot is so doable with pastels.

About the Artist

Regina Hona AGRAF

Regina has been drawing and playing with paint from as far back as she can remember but she never planned an art career early on as it offered too much insecurity. So there was no art school, but rather she gained an Associate Diploma in Private Secretarial Practice and employment that led to roles working for company Managing Directors and later as Secretary/Bursar in private schools.

Regina was introduced to oil painting during the summer holidays when she was twelve but wasn't until early 1980 just after she married that she seriously began to study classical tonal oil painting with Helga Ivanyi for four years, who had trained under Lance McNeil. Since then she has studied pastels, acrylics, watercolour with other notable artists, and now predominantly paints soft pastels, oils and charcoal.

Her love for painting has taken her on many paths, from receiving top awards for her work in competitions and exhibitions, to travelling Australia, Italy and the Greek Islands teaching workshops, classes and giving demonstrations. Her participation in Melbourne artist group Fusion6 has inspired her to lift the bar and aim for greater heights in her art career, namely entering national competitions. She has been a finalist several times in portrait prizes and winning Best Works on Paper in the A.M.E. Bale Art Prize.

Her style can vary a little with her choice of medium but she likes to experiment with light, colour and form and tries to show an alternative way of seeing the world through her unique compositions.

I love the world around me and want to share its beauty, and my...

positive connection with it in what I paint. "I paint what I like without trying to please everyone unless it is a commissioned work."

The subjects she loves and feels inspired to paint the most are the human form and water, particularly reflections in water. Regina hopes that viewers and collectors are inspired by the honesty and integrity captured in her work where she likes to invite a sense of wonder and exploration.

When Regina is not in her studio, she can be found painting outdoors having stimulating art discussions with her fellow Fusion6 artists, or visiting other friends and family members. She feels her life is very full and rewarding.

Regina's artwork can be found lighting up public and private collections in different corners of the world. She sells her work through galleries and exhibitions and it can also be found printed in several art magazines and book publications. Regina is a Fellow of The Australian Guild of Realist Artists, an honorary Life Member of The Pastel Society of Victoria, for her contributions to art.

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WORKSHOPS:

Malvern Artist Society, Malvern, Victoria

Email Regina for upcoming workshop details and Painting Holidays

In Repose, pastel on AS Colourfix Aubergine board, 88 x 64cm, (opposite)