

# Mel Brigg

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Painting is a spontaneous reaction that happens when the brain sends screwed up, creative messages to the hand, the hand normally does everything in its power to ignore those signals... the creative brain takes a path to the unknown, and manipulates the moment... that is the path we should follow as artists. Failing that, we will become commercial entities. We will lose our gift, and become script writers for the uninformed... and we will leave this world, frustrated and unfulfilled.

I paint not because I want to, but because I must - I am compelled to paint to convey my feelings and my message. Painting is a powerful way to make a statement about anything that moves you. You can paint an evocative landscape or you can make graphic comment about social injustice, tragedy and the singularity of the human condition. Art painted with feeling can remind people of the reality of our planet. I have the power to reawaken my viewers to the beauty and colour of nature.

My painting is mostly an expression of my love of nature, animals and the wide open spaces of South Africa and Australia. To be in harmony with my environment is very important to me, as it is to understand it – be it social or political. So even on the odd occasion I have taken to challenge the system on canvas, somehow the landscape seems to surface.

I draw inspiration from the interior regions of Australia. The vastness and intensity of light, combined with the spirituality of the indigenous peoples, are a never ending source of subject matter for me.

I try to portray this in my work by using materials such as sand, bones and skin. Hints of tribal symbols combined with heavy textures, impart a feeling of the powerful energy forces which surround these desert people – a possible link from the past with Africa where I was born and raised.

What you see in a landscape may give you an overwhelming sense of peace, or it may threaten or intimidate you. I can paint an evocative landscape or I can make a graphic comment about social injustice, tragedy and the human condition.

There are dozens of artists I admire but I think Van Gogh and Turner had the greatest impact on my early years. I also enjoy Gauguin, Matisse, Van Dongen, Picasso and Moore.

No doubt as our country changes, so will I, and hopefully grow with it, perhaps in a more abstract expression. To simplify my subject and possibly become a touch more bold with my brush and palette. Yet I am always aware of Van Gogh's words: "To be able to create something great". He often used the word "beautiful" – a word often frowned upon in today's art circles. I think time is the greatest teacher, and if one paints honestly – fulfillment will be the greatest reward and for the time being I'm happy with that.