

A BIOGRAPHY OF SORTS BUT MAINLY ABOUT PAINT
Firstly, what follows might benefit from a liberal sprinkling of salt.
Secondly I love paint; thirdly, it isn't mysterious it's just paint: pigment, filler and dryers and in varying degrees depending on need and quality, and of course colour – black and white are colours too – black and white is probably my favourite. All painting except house painting I respond to in varying degrees of interest and fascination. Historically my preferences pretty much begins with Giotto, on through the Primitive Italians, Rembrandt's etchings - and many of Fred Williams London etchings - and then on to the early Western Expressionists to the American Abstract Expressionists and a handful of English artists, mostly figurate such as Roger Hilton, Stanley Spencer, and Edward Burra, even David Hockney even Francis Bacon even Andy Goldsworthy. Actually I like heaps of artists including many Australian ones; I even like some of Geoff Koon's work. Most work of a photorealist bent leaves me cold – I mean, terrific but so what; a bit like the work of so many digitally obsessed photographers. Maybe I'm just showing my age and anyway this isn't intended as a catalogue of who I like and don't like. Lately I'm muchly impressed by Andy Warhol's contribution.

My direct early influences were the works of Van Gogh and Toulouse Lautrec et al: it's what the school curriculum dictated. Outside of school it was the work of African and Polynesian artists, not that many of them were aware they were making art regardless of what Picasso and Braque said.

Now what the most recent most dynamic most genuine painting is by indigenous artists, but like me, indigenous artists aren't immune from making the occasional bad painting. People who see my recent work for the first time think Jackson Pollack; fair enough; it's practical and occupational hazard. I am now paying homage to Jackson Pollack; my paintings are more like Jackson Pollack's than I thought at the time. Most of us readily identify; nor do they derive from similar sources or if you look closely do they look anything like the Jackson Pollack's you think they look like think Jackson Pollack's work, or lot of it, is outstanding. I think through the efforts of James Mollison was lucky indeed. Personally I am glad he purchased a later work. I have seen Pollack's and Rothko's in the flesh, mainly in America, which is lucky for me because neither reproduces the flesh, unlike quite a lot of work that does and is often finished in the flesh. Fashion aside that has this quality and not just because of the way it is painted; whether representational or otherwise good painting is good painting. My current is applied directly from a four-litre can of high gloss varnish for house paint onto 14 x 14 inch cotton duck stretched over a wooden stretcher. The laid down the Nolan didn't do with Ripolin. Bonnie beat Ever since seeing the only painting – in the flesh – wanted to use house paint but it was too – cheap and nasty - and advice of my eldest – the museums would buy it - prohibited. And I like painting bits.

The downside to acrylic, at least to an old painter-in-ones, is the absence of the ever present smell of turps and oil, the tubes whose lids won't open, the table as palette covered with boxes of tubes and old brushes and the scrapings of rejected work and so much of it over the years that it now looks a lot like The Great Dividing Range. Oils don't go off like acrylics, they do go hard though even the expensive buggers.

My paintings aren't just action, and see what transpires. A lot of the actual time I spend on a painting is spent on the peripheral of the bare canvas lying on the floor of the workshop. I wait I think I look, something will happen. Like any of the painting I have done over the years I have, the all-rights, the gee that really works, the fuck me's what a ripper, the cock ups, the maybe redeemable with a bit of courage, and the out and out failures. And just below them the blissfully few that fill me – only momentarily – with the awful recognition I've just wasted all that material and money on what, on nothing; enough money we could have had a fantastic weekend away in a city hotel.

That's what painting – paint – my painting is about, for the moment at least.
Andrew Southall March 2013

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Begin.
End.
Nothing in between,
Nothing else to add.

Showers early,
chilly, top of 12; possible local flooding.
But.
Since you're a long time dead
don't complain make jam,
show a weed compassion.

Of the roughly eight billion people on this planet the only one -
apart from you - who regularly rings, often to the point of
irritation, is my ninety-two-year-old mother. Is this significant?

I wonder what Vincent and Paul and Pablo
and George and Sonia and Edvard and
Margaret and Georgia and Joseph and Fred
and Augustus and and and Sid and Salvador
and Stanley and Francis and and Lucien and
Mathew and Graham and Helen and
Vanessa and Frida and and and Wassily and
Katsushika and Hans and Tom and Paul and
Gabo and one-hundred-thousand others
including Marcel and Andy and Ursula
would have to say about Instagram Google
and oven-baked-chips? Good question hey.

Unexpected good fortune
Provided not only the means but the incentive
To buy a fabulous small but significant Pablo Picasso painting
But I have to say my life is pretty much the same.

'Painting is dead' goes the catchphrase. So
does this include drawing, sculpture,
printmaking, performance, installation,
video, text, happenings, sex, love, tax, death
and of course the boogie woogie bogeyman?

Highbrow lowbrow nobrow
what difference does it make
has it made will it make?
I am reminded of childhood
and the annual small-town fair:
best tomato best burnt match tray
best knitted hot water bottle cover
best of all the lucky dip and the
excitement you might pull out a yo yo
or a packet of matches or a comic
yet where are they now, the comic
the yo yo the toffee apple?

Our world is structured so *the first mouse*
often scrambles into non-existence and the
second and third get to squabble over the
cheese but soon enough their bid for non-
existence comes, thereby amply illustrating
the unwinnable conundrum, first to win the
race is most often the first to lose it.

What would I like?
Gee that's a hard one -
only kidding.
I would like to be beside you
walking out of night into a day
we neither fear nor particularly
desire, in itself sufficient.