

Berit Kruger-Johnsen

The only artist in my family was my grandfather, who I never met. He went mad during the Depression era and was institutionalised. I think it would be fair to say that becoming or being an artist didn't have the right connotations in my family. I grew up in the Oslo region in Norway. We had ready access to the sea, forest and mountains and nature played a major part in my life. I did love drawing and after graduating with biology as my major, I got accepted into the only graphic design school at the time in Oslo. So, a suitable compromise had been made, drawing and design with a purpose and tangible outcome.

I was lucky enough to be attending the school during a time when they had two wonderful British illustrators lecturing. They had a Laurel & Hardy act going and my final portfolio was heavily weighted towards illustration despite it being a minimal part of the school's programme.

I lasted a year in the advertising industry after graduating and have worked as a freelance illustrator since.

I have always had itchy feet and have never needed much of an excuse to go travelling. I fell head over heels with an Australian on one of my journeys and have lived in Australia, mostly in Melbourne, for the best part of 13 years now. With family still in Norway I try to head over as often as possible.

I feel so blessed having grown up with the sea and the forest at my doorstep. I have had my most memorable moments out in nature, but I have had this pull towards the city since my student days in Oslo. Those long walks home in the middle of summer nights, through empty city streets, were just as special.

There is inspiration in so many things; objects for their sculptural shapes and what they represent, a line in a song or a quote, a fraction of a video clip. I use objects as metaphors; the paintings are like little narratives. I suppose they are a natural extension of illustration. I act as my own client. Most of all they are about emotions and the scenes are theatrical, like sets in an opera or a play.

I have always been interested in the power of visual symbols and how they can convey such strong messages across cultures. At some level we all seem to have the same visual library that is subconscious. And then there are all the symbols that have been manufactured through history and how they tell their own stories.

The use of colour is so important to create a mood. I would like my paintings to have a timeless feel but I can see that they look nostalgic. I try to use light to create a bit of drama and a dynamic within the painting but I hope they have a bit of calm with a smile at the end of the day.

I try to have a strict plan and work to my own deadlines but I find it hard until I have been through the process of sorting out ideas and sketches. Once I have an initial sketch on paper I hunt for reference material. When I have enough to support the idea I work the sketch thoroughly, it has to stand on its own merit before I start to paint.

I transfer the sketch to the canvas, just the general outlines, and paint the first rough layer in an acrylic gouache. I work quite fast to keep a flow in the picture and to beat the time since it dries fast. By now I have generally made all the decisions and I can relax into painting with oils, straight from the tubes in thicker strokes, blending and fusing. I like to move between two pictures, and find that I lose track of time. The final finishes are with thin washes to create a cohesive calm.

It is such a joy to work with oils, the way it glides on and how easy it is to manipulate. I have been precluded from using oils for so many years, working to strict timelines, so I'm having a wonderful time these days.

My studio is my haven and stepping up the stairs with my foot warmer Earnie the Schnauzer two strides ahead, signals the start

of the day, usually around 9 am. I fire up my computer and connect with the world through my e-mail. After getting on top of messages and general office work I ll attack what is most urgent for the day. A good day is a productive day with a tangible outcome so the sooner I get to sit down and paint the better. Every day is different, it all depends on where in the process I am, whether I m working on ideas or get to sit down and paint. I do like to sort out a series of sketches and line up a couple of weeks of painting at a time with as few interruptions as possible. I can get quit obsessive once I m at this stage and only surface when I really have to.

Copyright Notice: This document was generated on ArtRev.com on 10/1/2020 2:28:59 PM (U.S. Eastern Time Zone) - Copyright 2020 ArtRev.com, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The entire contents of this brochure is the property of ArtRev.com and/or its content suppliers. You may not modify, copy, reproduce, republish, or distribute any portion of this brochure without the prior express written consent of ArtRev.com, Inc.

Authenticity & Price Match Guarantee: Shop with confidence. ArtRev.com is proud to be the first online art retailer to offer a " [lifetime authenticity guarantee](#) " with every limited edition or original work of art. Most limited edition and original artworks ship with a Certificate of Authenticity free of charge. This certificate is an official and valuable document that most insurance companies require in order to insure artworks against damage or theft. ArtRev.com will make every possible attempt to match or beat the advertised price of any major Internet competitor, art gallery, or frame shop; given that they are authorized to sell the item from the publisher or artist, and have the exact item in stock available for immediate sale.

Disclaimer: The biography shown in this brochure is not meant to be a complete and comprehensive exploration of the life of the featured artist and is not guaranteed to be up-to-date. While information provided about each artist is carefully studied and reviewed prior to publishing; ArtRev.com assumes no liability for the content provided on this page. Biography Last Updated on 11/6/2006 2:43:45 PM. Please [let us know](#) if any information is out-of-date or inaccurate.