

SARA CATENA AND A FASCINATION WITH COLOUR



An eternal student of colour, Sara Catena is originally from New Zealand. She loves to use colour extensively in her vivid contemporary art.

As a small child, one of this artist's favourite pastimes was to lie on her back in the grass and stare at the glorious azure sky and the emerald trees. Although her mother politely repeated the likes of 'blue and green should never be seen', she always loved the play of complementary colours in Nature ... the yellow streak in the purple iris, the brilliance of the red and gold ornament on the rich green Christmas tree.

Sara Catena aims to entice others to be motivated to explore and experiment with

colour as she has. In her experience, it has been hugely rewarding and yielded enormous creative satisfaction.

"There are many qualities of colour to study," Sara says. "It is interesting to notice that our perception of colour is strongly affected by light conditions and reflections. This is shown when we see a paint swatch we like; then we take it home and it appears completely different. The light conditions and reflected colour make it look totally different in alternative surroundings. While painting, it is important to me to have clear unobstructed natural light – so I may see the colours in the cleanest way possible whilst working with them."

"Another aspect of working with colour which I am constantly aware of in my art is that of warm and cool colours," she continues. "You'll notice that warm colours step out at us (creating focal points of interest), whereas cool colours recede. It needs to be observed that it doesn't broadly apply that 'all blues are cool' and 'all reds are warm'. As you move away from true red towards yellow on the colour wheel, the red becomes warmer; and therefore moving from true red towards blue on the colour wheel results in the red becoming cooler. This is where playing and exploring with new colours on the palette allows your knowledge of (and eventually your intuition with) colour to develop."

According to Sara Catena, Van Gogh and other artists of his era began deliberately using colours to capture mood and emotion, rather than using colours realistically ... at a time when the invention of photography had dispensed with the need to copy Nature. Sadly the new practice was not embraced in Van Gogh's era; but rather condemned as

meaningless jumbles of colour. Conversely, we accept this today in our busy visual world.

In a letter to his brother Theo, Van Gogh is reputed to have stated: "Instead of trying to duplicate what I see before me, I make more arbitrary use of colour to express myself forcefully."

Sara Catena's intensive study of colour has given her many valuable insights.

"A colour is rarely seen in isolation, but next to one or more other colours; and it is this particular aspect of colour that really fascinates me," she relates. "The Fauvists (who I have studied at length) in the early 1900s were experimenting extensively with colour juxtaposition – the relationships between the colours and how they interact. When placed together, they noticed that complementary colours made each other appear brighter. Their idea was to use complementary colours as the form of a painting – to create depth, dynamism and vitality – with the subject secondary. Today, the idea of employing opposite colours to pull attention is used extensively throughout the commercial world, as well as in art."

Colour for Sara is the most powerful tool in achieving her artistic outcomes. She really enjoys this aspect of painting incredibly ... for her, art never seems mundane or dull because something new evolves with each piece. She sees her relationship with colour as an endless and organic process; a relationship that she treasures.

This artist's hope is that others may add at least one new colour to their palettes, and embark upon their own rewarding journeys. She urges her peers to 'have fun and flow with it!'

More of Sara Catena's work can be viewed at www.saracatena.com

EXPO ART DEFERRED

ExpoArt – which was to have been held at Rosehill Gardens in Sydney from 11 to 13 July 2008 – has been deferred until further notice.

Specifically created for the visual art industry, ExpoArt aimed to increase the awareness of art and encourage more people to become involved in art; while providing the industry with a unique opportunity to showcase important brands and

cutting edge products to a mass market.

While the art industry in Australia caters for a relatively small market (by world standards), there is a fantastic opportunity for such an event. There are a number of companies which have expressed interest in the event; however they have not confirmed their involvement, which has compromised the event. Without

the early support and commitment of a majority of key brands and companies, the event cannot be maximised for the overall benefit of the industry.

The ExpoArt promoter, Expertise Events, will advise potential exhibitors if they plan to organise the event in 2009. The promoter sincerely regrets any inconvenience.